



First Session — Thirty-Fourth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)

37 Elizabeth II

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Denis C. Rocan
Speaker*



VOL. XXXVII No. 63A - 1:30 p.m., MONDAY, OCTOBER 24, 1988.

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fourth Legislature**

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ALCOCK, Reg	Osborne	LIBERAL
ANGUS, John	St. Norbert	LIBERAL
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BURRELL, Parker	Swan River	PC
CARR, James	Fort Rouge	LIBERAL
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	LIBERAL
CHARLES, Gwen	Selkirk	LIBERAL
CHEEMA, Gulzar	Kildonan	LIBERAL
CHORNOPYSKI, William	Burrows	LIBERAL
CONNERY, Edward Hon.	Portage la Prairie	PC
COWAN, Jay	Churchill	NDP
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose du Lac	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
DOWNEY, James Hon.	Arthur	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Emerson	PC
DRIEDGER, Herold, L.	Niakwa	LIBERAL
DUCHARME, Gerald, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	LIBERAL
ENNS, Harry	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Laurie	Fort Garry	LIBERAL
EVANS, Leonard	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen Hon.	Virden	PC
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	LIBERAL
GILLESHAMMER, Harold	Minnedosa	PC
GRAY, Avis	Ellice	LIBERAL
HAMMOND, Gerrie	Kirkfield Park	PC
HARAPIAK, Harry	The Pas	NDP
HARPER, Elijah	Rupertsland	NDP
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HEMPHILL, Maureen	Logan	NDP
KOZAK, Richard, J.	Transcona	LIBERAL
LAMOUREUX, Kevin, M.	Inkster	LIBERAL
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANDRAKE, Ed	Assiniboia	LIBERAL
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
McCRAE, James Hon.	Brandon West	PC
MINENKO, Mark	Seven Oaks	LIBERAL
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	PC
NEUFELD, Harold, Hon.	Rossmere	PC
OLESON, Charlotte Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ORCHARD, Donald Hon.	Pembina	PC
PANKRATZ, Helmut	La Verendrye	PC
PATTERSON, Allan	Radisson	LIBERAL
PENNER, Jack, Hon.	Rhineland	PC
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	NDP
PRAZNIK, Darren	Lac du Bonnet	PC
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Turtle Mountain	PC
ROCH, Gilles	Springfield	LIBERAL
ROSE, Bob	St. Vital	LIBERAL
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	NDP
TAYLOR, Harold	Wolseley	LIBERAL
URUSKI, Bill	Interlake	NDP
WASYLYCIA-LEIS, Judy	St. Johns	NDP
YEO, Iva	Sturgeon Creek	LIBERAL

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, October 24, 1988.

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition and it conforms to the privileges and practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? (Agreed)

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): "We the undersigned request the Attorney-General to seriously consider the submission for funding by the Justice Committee of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and other Aboriginal organizations wanting to make presentations to the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry.

"The Aboriginal Justice Inquiry is conducting hearings in Manitoba that are of vital importance to restoring confidence in the administration of justice in this province.

"The need for effective carefully prepared presentations by Aboriginal groups to this inquiry is obvious to anyone who understands the purpose for the inquiry.

"The success of the inquiry will depend to a large degree both on the participation of Aboriginal people and the documentation of the extent of the problems of the current judicial system." (Petition of Paul McKay, Guy McPherson, Roy Harper and others.)

* (1335)

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Labour): I have the Supplementary Information for Labour for the '88-89 Estimates.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): It is my privilege to table the Manitoba Progress in Literacy Report prepared for Manitoba Education, Adult and Continuing Education, dated September 1988. Mr. Speaker, this is an important report which outlines a multiphase strategy for dealing with illiteracy in the Province of Manitoba. It also outlines the success that has been reached in models for developing a literacy program in this province. It is indeed unfortunate the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) did not consult with his own report, prior to establishing a \$300,000 boondoggle that was for—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I am sure all Honourable Members—order, please. This is a very happy occasion here. I am sure all Honourable Members would like to join with me in congratulating the Honourable Member for Inkster, Kevin Lamoureux, and his wife Cathy on the birth of their baby boy, Raymond Joseph. I am informed mother and son are doing fine.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Speaker: I would like to draw Honourable Members' attention to the gallery where we have, from the Limestone Aboriginal Partnership Directorate Board Lifeskills Program, twenty-five Grades 8 to 12 students under the direction of Mr. Charlie Monkman. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton). On behalf of all Honourable Members, I welcome you here this afternoon.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Mr. Speaker: I have a brief statement for the House.

I believe that all Honourable Members would want to note that yesterday was the 30th anniversary of the introduction, on October 23, 1958, of the publication of a Legislative Assembly Hansard in Manitoba.

This did not occur overnight. Perhaps a brief historical review will be of interest to Honourable Members.

The adoption of recommendations by a special committee of this House established in 1947 resulted in the installation of a sound recording and amplification system in the Chamber for the Assembly Session which opened on February 2, 1949.

Honourable Members were, as a result, able to obtain for the first time, verbatim copies, on request, of individual speeches or debates. Previously, the newspapers provided the only record of speeches made in the House.

In the years which followed, support for the publication of a Manitoba Hansard gradually increased. In 1952, 1956, 1957 and at the first Session in 1958, various Honourable Members introduced motions proposing the production of a Hansard. All were defeated. Hansard production, however, was begun at the opening of the second Session in 1958, immediately following the election held in that year.

I am sure that all Honourable Members would want to join me in expressing their appreciation to those people currently associated with the production of Hansard and to their many predecessors who were at one time involved in publishing the record of the speeches made in this House.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

**Canadian Wheat Board
Labour Practices Investigation**

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay). Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture has indicated his strong support for the Canadian Wheat Board, a position supported, I believe, by all Members of this House. It was therefore with grave concern that I learned that both the House of Representatives and the United States Senate have passed legislation making possible an investigation of the Canadian Wheat Board as an unfair trade practice.

My question to the Minister of Agriculture, has he been in contact with his federal counterpart, and what has been the response of the federal Minister of Agriculture to what could be a serious challenge to our marketing system?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): The Canadian Wheat Board has done an excellent job of selling export grain for the country of Canada over a long number of years. It is receiving attack from the United States because they do not believe they can compete with the Wheat Board. That tells you the Wheat Board has done a very good job. The Wheat Board is protected under the Free Trade Agreement and has no reason to fear actions that may be attempted to be initiated in the United States. Under the Free Trade Agreement, we will have an opportunity to dispute-settling mechanism and the working groups to be able to deal with our ability to defend ourselves. We have a quality organization which we know it can defend, and we are not afraid of attempts on that side of the border to change that.

Mrs. Carstairs: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, but I would have more confidence if the trade deal actually said it protected the Canadian Wheat Board.

Freight Subsidies

* (1340)

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): With a supplementary question to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), Section 304 of the trade Bill is being used now by some U.S. Senators to attack Canadian freight subsidies. Has the Minister been in touch with the federal Minister of Transportation in order to assure Manitoba farmers that the agreement cannot be interpreted in this manner?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, as I said previously, there will always be attempts on the part of the country south of us to prevent our quality products getting into their market and competing with them. If we are selling to them, that means there is a buyer down there. They recognize the quality of the products we are selling and they are going to attempt to try to stop us from getting that product in there because they cannot compete. I believe

the agreement gives us an opportunity to settle our disputes around the table where there is 50-50 representation. On that basis, we can defend our ability to sell our products into the United States.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, tragically it only makes reference to U.S. trade law. My final supplementary is to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay). The U.S. Government has raised the possibility of issuing a countervailing duty on grain and grain products imported from Canada. This certainly is counter to the concept of secure access to markets that the Prime Minister is boasting about. Will the Minister of Agriculture immediately launch a protest with his federal counterpart, indicating the unacceptability to Manitoba of such countervails?

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, the right of both countries to put countervail on is still in place under the Free Trade Agreement. I asked the hog producers how they viewed this situation because they had to protect themselves from countervail on live pork here about two years ago. They did a very commendable job of defending themselves but now, with the Free Trade Agreement, I asked them, will it be easier for you to defend yourselves on countervail action, which they are potentially facing on downstream pork products? They say very clearly the agreement gives them a much better chance to present their case and defend their ability to export into that market. The same will apply for all segments of the livestock and agricultural sectors.

**Social Programs
Funding Consultations**

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the First Minister (Mr. Filmon). Since this Government took office on May 9, we have seen significant program changes in a variety of areas with no consultation with the groups affected, for example, no discussions with seniors regarding the reduction in homemaker services; no consultation with Child and Family Services regarding cuts to the prevention program budgets; no consultation with the residents of the Souris Valley with regard to the Rafferty-Alameda project.

Now we learn over the weekend that the Welcome Home Initiative has been cancelled. Will the Premier (Mr. Filmon) tell this House what consultation he and his Cabinet colleagues had with St. Amant, the Manitoba Developmental Centre, and the Association of Community Living before they cancelled this program so unilaterally?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that Members of my Cabinet, Members of my Government have been meeting with people throughout the community, with various different organizations, with many different community interest groups talking about our concerns to ensure that when we continue, as we will be, the program of deinstitutionalization of our mentally retarded in Manitoba, that we will do so in a manner in which we provide the proper service support.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) knows full well the difficulties that we have had vis-a-vis the

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Winnerv Agency and the unfortunate case of Russell Smith, and our desire to have that whole matter reviewed to ensure, when we have people put out into the community, we have adequate support mechanisms in place to ensure that they are able to live productive and full lives in the community, as full as possible, and that we cannot take risks with them and we cannot put them in situations that put them at risk. We, as a new administration, obviously have the responsibility, which I am sure she would place on our shoulders, to evaluate these programs to ensure that they are operating to the best advantage possible for those who must have these programs.

To answer her direct question, I personally have met as recently as this past Thursday with Mr. Dale Kendal who is the Executive Director of the Association for Community Living, and another representative of the Manitoba Marathon to talk about what we might do for future programming.

* (1345)

Earlier this year, in about May or June, the Minister of Community Services (Mrs. Oleson) met with representatives of the Association of Community Living. We are indeed interested in their views. We are indeed interested in their contributions as we seek to bring forward good policies for the mentally retarded in Manitoba.

Welcome Home Program Replacement

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): I do not think anyone, at least not in my caucus, would argue that there were problems with the Welcome Home Initiative, problems which included inappropriate placement, lack of day programs, inadequate speech physiotherapy services. However, the question remains, if this Government believes that people should live in the community as opposed to institutionalization, what program has this Government put into place to replace the Welcome Home Initiative?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, we are faced with indications vis-a-vis the Winnerv Inquiry, that there are severe strains upon the service network for the mentally retarded who are out in our community. We are taking a number of steps, which are in various stages of development, to add to the good work that has been done in the past by Welcome Home and other initiatives for deinstitutionalization of our mentally retarded. Some of those steps that are being taken currently include a review of the residential rate structure, development of a training plan to address the needs of staff at these residential and day programs, continued follow-up with residential agencies to ensure that both qualified professionals and families are involved in all major decisions regarding client care and programs. Licensing regulations are being reviewed to provide more definitive guidelines respecting the minimally acceptable standards of care and so on. All of these things are ongoing.

We are doing exactly what I believe she would call upon any good Government to do, and that is to review

what has been accomplished to ensure that what is good and positive is being retained, and what needs to be improved is being worked upon with new programming. So, Mr. Speaker, I say to you that we are committed to improve the community-based services for the mentally retarded and to ensure that we can continue the program of deinstitutionalization on a positive basis.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please.

Mrs. Carstairs: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hear evaluation—good word. What I do not hear is a commitment to the continual deinstitutionalization of the mentally handicapped. Is this Government committed to a program, and will it table a program similar to the Welcome Home Initiative which welcomed people back into the community and did not leave them in institutions?

Mr. Filmon: We continue to be committed to ensure, as much as possible, that our mentally retarded are able to be accommodated in community-based facilities that are appropriate to their needs, that put them in a position where they are not at risk, but that is a position that allows them to live a full and, as much as possible, productive life. In so doing, we are evaluating what has been done in the previous initiatives, Welcome Home and others, to ensure that we retain what is good and that we improve upon those things that were problem areas, and indeed even she has to acknowledge that there were problem areas.

When we have a plan that provides for a better, more comprehensive alternative, we will put that forward, Mr. Speaker, but you cannot come forward without thought and just say, this is what we are going to do. We have done all of the evaluations necessary, we are going to do that. The fact is we are taking the time to do it and to do it properly and well, and I am sure that even the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) will commend that position.

MPIC Kopstein Report Availability

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation (Mr. Cummings). He has indicated to this Legislature on past occasions that when the Kopstein Report is completed and translated it will be released to the public of Manitoba in terms of the contents of that report and the recommendations of the report. Can the Minister now confirm that the report is indeed printed, translated and ready for release, and why has he not made it public today in this Session of the Legislature?

* (1350)

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister responsible for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation): It will be made available later this week.

Mr. Doer: The Minister has the report. He did not deny that in terms of my question. It is, according to his

word, available for release when it is translated and printed. Will the Minister please release that report today rather than holding it for four or five days so they can prepare the political spin they want on the report, as they did with the Rafferty-Alameda Dam Report, where they released it after Question Period with a glossy, sugar-coated press release, Mr. Speaker. Will the Minister release that report?

PUB Criteria

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): My second question to the Minister is, will he release it today and will the Minister indicate to the House whether social and economic criteria will be included for any review by way of the Public Utilities Board so that groups that are underwritten at a subsidized rate, such as farm trucks in a drought or handicap vehicles, will be considered in any review by the Public Utilities Board?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister responsible for Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation): First of all, I would indicate that the Kopstein Report is an in-depth report that will not need a spin put on it. The judge has done a competent job. In terms of the PUB approval, the PUB will pass judgment on the rates.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Concordia, with a supplementary question.

Mr. Doer: The Government will have to amend the Act and the Act will have the ability to have just strict and straight underwriting type criteria, or the ability to have criteria that are socially and economically broader.

My question is, is it the Government's policy to have broad criteria for purposes of rate review by the PUB, or is it going to have just narrow underwriting criteria for purposes of the review, which would mean that farm trucks would go up dramatically by a PUB review?

Mr. Cummings: The Member is anticipating what our Public Accountability Act might include, and I would indicate that he should wait until he sees the Act.

City of Winnipeg Growth Operational Cost

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Concordia, with a final supplementary question.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): A new question to the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme), urban sprawl costs people in this province millions and millions of dollars living in the City of Winnipeg, and we have resisted in our Government all attempts to expand—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. I have recognized the Honourable Member for a supplementary question. Would you kindly put your question?

Mr. Doer: My question to the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme), how much will the urban sprawl now

being proposed in the City of Winnipeg cost the taxpayers of Winnipeg? Where is the environmental and economic impact study of the operational cost to the residents of the City of Winnipeg?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Urban Affairs): The Member across the way should realize, until it comes through City Council and along the way, our staff reviews the costs and the circumstances, each case on its own. So I would suggest to the Member that at least wait until it goes through City Council.

MPIC PUB Rate Setting

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): My question is to the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation (Mr. Cummings). Last week, unfortunately, there was a series of contradictions between the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Deputy Premier (Mr. Cummings) on whether or not the Public Utilities Board would be retroactively reviewing the 1989 rates, or whether in fact the PUB would approve those rates before they were set in stone. My question to the Minister is, what steps is he taking today to ensure that the 1989 rates will be set by the Public Utilities Board?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister responsible for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation): I would advise the Member opposite that he should wait and take a look at The Public Accountability Act when it is produced and they will see exactly how we are proceeding.

* (1355)

Mr. Carr: With a supplementary, the Minister continually asks us to wait. He now asks us to wait till new legislation. If they were concerned about the issue, it would have been introduced weeks ago, and he has asked us to wait since June 30 to receive Judge Kopstein's Report. My supplementary question to the Minister is, will he guarantee this House that the Kopstein Report will be tabled in this Legislature before Thursday of this week?

Mr. Cummings: I said it would be tabled this week and it will be, and it will be tabled on Thursday.

Mr. Carr: Does the Minister intend, when he finally tables this report, to include along with it the Government's own reaction to the judge's recommendations, with its own blueprint on how to accommodate that study into the Government's own plans for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation?

Mr. Cummings: If the Member is so anxious to see what is in the report, perhaps he should also be equally anxious that the corporation is proceeding to make improvements in its operations. I can assure him that when the report is brought forward on Thursday that we will enter into a full discussion of the contents of that report and any actions that the Government will take from that time on.

Municipal Hospital Construction Project

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): The Municipal Hospital is located in my constituency, and I was pleased to note that on Thursday the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) was out to tour the facility and see for himself the conditions that the patients there are forced to live in and the conditions the staff are forced to work in.

There was a plan, in fact there is a plan, supported by the previous Government, to build a new hospital on that site and some \$1.3 million has been spent on architectural studies and engineering studies in order to tender in this fiscal year, to see that a new building is begun this year. I would ask the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) when we can expect construction to begin.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Given the good graces of Members of the Opposition, the spending Estimates of the Department of Agriculture ought possibly to be completed today. If that were the case, then the Estimates of the Department of Health are next in line.

Part of those Estimates of Health, as we approach the Manitoba Health Services Commission line is of course the Capital Program which is tabled and becomes public record. At that time, answers to which capital projects shall proceed and which shall be deferred for a year or done further study will all be answered at that time.

Hospitals Future Operating Cost

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Two of the buildings on that site were built, one prior to and one during the First World War. With changes in the use of the building, the fire escapes, which the Minister has viewed, are completely inadequate. It is impossible, should a fire occur in that building, to get patients out of the building. I would ask, if the Minister is not prepared to proceed with the construction of the new hospital this year, what steps are being taken to ensure that this situation is corrected?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Let me assure my honourable friend that I take very seriously the concerns that were expressed to me at the Municipal Hospital about conditions which have existed for a number of years, if not decades.

I am equally as concerned with some of the physical conditions at, for instance, the Health Sciences Centre where some of the actively used portions of that hospital date back 90 years. I am equally concerned when I tour the Misericordia Hospital and find similar capital construction needs. I am likewise concerned when I visit St. Boniface Hospital and find similar requests for upgrading. In total, there is anywhere from \$800 million to \$1 billion worth of capital expenditures that face the Government of Manitoba, regardless of whether it is a Progressive Conservative Government or the previous New Democratic Party Government.

Those decisions on capital are not taken lightly because they involve considerable future operating

costs. I am sure if the Honourable Member has the patience to wait just a short little while, we can discuss fully the Capital Program as envisioned by this Government for this current fiscal year and ideas on where the capital budget shall go in the future.

Capital Reconstruction

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, the patients and the staff at this hospital have been waiting. They have been waiting many years to see a new facility in place. This building was the priority of the previous Government. The funds were in place, the work has been done, we are ready to go to tender. I think it is absolutely unacceptable that we wait. These people live in that hospital. Some of them have been living there for 30 years. They deserve better than they are getting. I would ask the Minister, will tenders be let in this fiscal year?

* (1400)

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I toured the hospital, as my honourable friend indicates, last week. Certainly if it were not for the very excellent response of the staff there that the living circumstances of those patients in the Municipal Hospitals would certainly be less ideal than they are. I make no evasiveness in terms of the necessity for capital redevelopment at the municipal hospitals. But my honourable friend in dealing with the hospitals which happened, as he said in his first question, to be in his constituency, I unfortunately and Government unfortunately have responsibilities to 57 constituencies in the Province of Manitoba wherein, as I have indicated to him, in this city alone capital reconstruction is needed at Health Sciences Centre, Misericordia, St. Boniface Hospital, because sections of those hospitals are equally as old as Municipal Hospitals. The Capital Program that my honourable friend is so anxious to debate can be debated quickly if we get on with Health Estimates.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Literacy Programs Task Force Work Documents

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach). Can the Minister of Education tell us when he first learned that his very own department, the Adult and Continuing Education Division, had prepared a thorough report both on the background and strategies to be followed by Manitoba in dealing with our literacy problems? Can he tell us when he learned that this very thorough report had been prepared in September of 1988?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education): Mr. Speaker, it is a reality that industry in this country and in this province loses some \$4 billion as a result of illiteracy. In addition, we have a situation where more than 25 percent of our population is illiterate. When we ran for office, we said that we would consult with Manitobans to develop programs that would be beneficial and helpful to the population in this province.

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For that reason, we initiated a task force that would help us understand exactly where the areas of illiteracy are and how we can develop programs which are beneficial to Manitobans.

The report that the Member alludes to was prepared and was given to me as a working document, and will be used to assist the task force in knowing the kinds of programs that are now in existence in this province and how we can build on those programs to lower the rate of illiteracy in our province.

Funding Availability

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, the Minister did not answer the question. The fact is that this paper outlines a strategy for dealing with illiteracy in this province. My question to the Minister is, given that this paper does exactly what the task force was going to do—it outlines the problems, outlines the objectives and outlines a strategy for dealing with it—will the Minister now transfer the \$300,000 that he is about to waste as a public relations exercise on behalf of his Tory colleagues, will he now move that money into the area where all of those involved in literacy training say it is needed into the area of providing service to those who are functionally illiterate?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education): Unlike the former Government that did not want to be bothered with the facts but plowed ahead with programs that were disastrous for the province, this Government is going to consult with groups across the province to ensure that in fact programs that are implemented are ones which are going to be helpful to the residents of this province.

The report that the Honourable Member alludes to deals only with the activities that are undertaken by the Adult and Continuing Education Branch. However, illiteracy goes far beyond that. As a matter of fact, we have to deal with illiteracy rates in our schools, in our private industry. We said that we were going to consult.

Just this morning, the Honourable Minister of Northern and Indian Affairs (Mr. Downey) and myself met with an Indian Band who expressed to us their thankfulness for having an illiteracy task force and then, that way, they can have some input into the kinds of programs that are going to be developed in this province.

Mr. Storie: I am glad the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) referenced the fact that he is meeting with groups. Perhaps the Minister will take the time to meet some of the 90 percent of groups who applied for literacy training support and did not get it—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Does the Honourable Member have a question?

Mr. Storie: —groups who are providing training which is needed immediately, not in six months after this task force reports exactly what his department has already reported. Will you give the money to the groups? - (Interjection)- There was a question there.

I asked the Minister responsible for Education, the Minister responsible for literacy training in this province whether he will take the money and give it to some of the 90 percent of groups who applied for training support and did not get it? Will he give that money to them so they can actually do something instead of trying to appear like they are doing something like the Minister of Education?

Mr. Derkach: Programs were being applied for under the former Government and no programs were delivered by the former Government. Mr. Speaker, that is why we have an illiteracy rate in this province that is 25 percent. That is intolerable, Mr. Speaker, and we cannot continue that way. For that reason, we are going to put some money into a task force that is going to identify the areas where we have high rates of illiteracy, the types of programs we should deliver. We are going to move in a positive way and a proactive way and one which benefits the citizens of this province.

Affirmative Action Target Information

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): My question is for the Minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission (Mr. Connery). It has become obvious, Mr. Speaker, during the Estimates process that the knowledge and understanding of affirmative action, as indicated and exhibited by various Ministers, is woefully inadequate. Certainly we should all know that with any new program endeavours, in order for them to be successful, knowledge and support certainly must come from the top. My question to the Minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission is, since this Minister has indicated his desire to improve on the Affirmative Action Program, will he immediately move to, first, educate his own colleagues about affirmative action as a necessary beginning step?

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister responsible for Civil Service Commission): I can assure the Member that there is no need to inform our Ministers. They are very aware of the Affirmative Action Program. They are very committed to it. Affirmative action will progress in this Government, and we are moving very quickly to ensure that affirmative action is followed in the Civil Service. We have discussed it with our Ministers. There is no need to inform them. They are already very well informed.

Ms. Gray: I will let Hansard be the judge of the Minister's answer.

Program Delivery

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): As a supplementary to the same Minister, the Minister has assured us that the responsibility for the affirmative action coordination has been given more of a priority with his Government and that in fact the position has been elevated to an Assistant Deputy Minister level. Could the Minister tell us if Mr. Edgeworth, who I assume is being designated as assuming these responsibilities, is doing so on a full-time basis or does Mr. Edgeworth have other responsibilities as well?

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Hon. Edward Connery (Minister responsible for Civil Service Commission): As the Member should be well aware, the delivery of affirmative action has to, in the final analysis, come out of the Personnel Department.

What Mr. Edgeworth is doing is ensuring that the people in the Personnel Departments are aware of their responsibilities and aware of the Affirmative Action Program. He is very competent and capable of doing that. We have various committees that are meeting on an ongoing basis. There is a committee of Deputy Ministers that have met and are meeting on a continuous basis to ensure that the Affirmative Action Program goes forth in Manitoba.

Ms. Gray: I believe the Minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission (Mr. Connery) takes direction well from the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). They both do a good job of not answering questions.

* (1410)

Personnel Position Duties

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): As a final supplementary to the Minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission, usually job descriptions indicate four to six major responsibilities. Are the major responsibilities in Mr. Edgeworth's job description all related to affirmative action?

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission): No, Mr. Speaker, but affirmative action is part of that program. The delivery of the Affirmative Action Program is in the Personnel Departments. It is from that area that we will ensure that affirmative action target numbers are met and exceeded if we can.

Community Living Options Mentally Retarded

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns): My question is for the Premier (Mr. Filmon). The Premier's comments today on his policies regarding the mentally handicapped have only added to confusion around the issue and around this Government's policies and philosophy with respect to the mentally handicapped.

First, his Minister of Community Services (Mrs. Oleson), throughout Estimates, has said that this Government believed in a balanced approach and said it would study the Welcome Home Initiative. Then this weekend, the Minister of Community Services—and I think it is contrary to the spirit of what the Premier was saying today—said, without thought and unilaterally, that this Government would not initiate any program like Welcome Home, any community option.

Could the Premier please shed some light on what his Government's policy is with respect to community living options for the mentally handicapped? Could he tell us who to believe? Could he tell us why this Government keeps flipflopping on important issues for the mentally handicapped?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): The Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) would do much better if she

stuck to the truth. She can read Hansard, and she will not find that I said we were not going to initiate any programs on the mentally retarded. I said we were examining the successes and all of the experiences with the Welcome Home and we are looking for opportunities to develop a new program strategy for deinstitutionalization of our mentally retarded to ensure that they can live in the community to the fullest extent possible and live a productive life in the community. That is what I said, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Jay Cowan (Second Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Premier (Mr. Filmon) in his answer very clearly suggested that the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) was not telling the truth in this House when he said that she would do much better if she would stick to the truth. We all know that imputations of any Member not telling the truth in this House are improper, unparliamentary and in this particular instance, as are most instances with the Premier when he makes those charges, totally unfounded.

I would ask that the Premier withdraw those comments in the finest parliamentary sense that he can muster.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae), on the same point of order.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Our rules are clear about the use of language reflecting on one's untruthfulness, certainly if it is a deliberate untruthfulness. Nowhere in the First Minister's (Mr. Filmon) comments did he refer to the Honourable Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) saying anything untruthful in a deliberate way. The Honourable Members opposite, certainly in the Liberal Party, get things wrong daily in this place.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. McCrae: We do not accuse them of deliberate untruthfulness.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would like to thank all Honourable Members. I will review Hansard and I will report back to the House.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns): I will look forward to hearing the ruling on this very important matter, since I certainly resent the Premier's (Mr. Filmon) suggestion that I have not been telling the truth. If he had been listening, he would know I had been quoting from comments made by his Minister who said she would not initiate any program like Welcome Home.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: My question to the Premier (Mr. Filmon), since we do not know who to believe these days, since there is so much confusion around this issue, could the Premier confirm whether or not

community reports are true that this Government has frozen day programming, has frozen the establishment of new group homes, has cut off funding to the follow-up in the workplace program, has in effect removed all responsibility for community living options in the Province of Manitoba for an important group in our society, the mentally handicapped in this province?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, just for the record, to ensure that the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) does not leave anything on the record that should not be there, I will quote from an article in yesterday's paper, I believe it is, October 22. I am sorry, I am a little bit behind. That is Saturday's paper.

It says, "With respect to the position of the Minister of Community Services on this very issue, Olesen said her department will take more time to plan future programs so similar mistakes do not happen." That means planning future programs to replace Welcome Home. That means a positive thing to bring forward a program that will supplant what has been done in Welcome Home. Further, she said, and I quote: "I would never criticize the Welcome Home Program for bringing people into the community, but it was just done a little too fast without the proper planning," she said, "so now we have to play catch-up."—not negative, not refusing to go ahead, but building on what was there, improving on the mistakes of the former program.

That is what we intend to do. That is why I met with Mr. Kendal from the Association for Community Living. That is why I met with people to talk about opportunities for future expansion of community living for the mentally retarded, Mr. Speaker, totally the opposite to the impression that the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) wants to leave. She ought to be—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: Given the Premier's (Mr. Filmon) response, can I ask him then, since my comments were based on comments made by his Minister also in a newspaper article where she clearly said—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please.

Community Day Programs Programs Policies

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Member have a question?

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns): My question to the Premier is, given the concerns raised by St. Amant, ACL and organizations like the Touchwood Park Association who all have complained about freezes in day programming, what is this Government doing? What is the policy of this Premier and this Government with respect to basic community programs like day programming, rehabilitation efforts—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable First Minister.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Clearly, Mr. Speaker, there are problems that have been identified over the

past couple of years. I do not know what the Member opposite was doing when she was in Government. She must have been closing her eyes and her ears to the whole—she was not closing her mouth, but she must have been closing her eyes and her ears to all of the problems that were being identified with—(Interjection)—Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) could control himself. He sits from his seat and he tries to shout down every person on this side who gets up to answer a question. Mr. Speaker, it is rude, it is disrespectful and it is disruptive.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please.

Mr. Filmon: The fact of the matter is there have been problems. That is why we have an investigation inquiry into the Winnserv Home's problem. That is why we went through many gut-wrenching issues in this House whereby there were concerns expressed about the manner and the treatment in some group home settings for some of our mentally retarded because simply we do not have the support services in place and the infrastructure in place to do an adequate job.

Mr. Speaker, all we want to do is ensure that we do not repeat the same mistakes of the former NDP administration, that in our desire to have more of our mentally retarded living productive lives in our community, we do not just simply condemn ourselves to repeating the errors of the former administration. We can and we must believe that we can do a better job.

* (1420)

Mr. Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Orders of the Day, I would like to draw Honourable Members' attention to the gallery where we have with us this afternoon the Honourable Mitchell Sharp, former federal Cabinet Minister and Member of the Privy Council of Canada.

On behalf of all Honourable Members, I welcome you here this afternoon.

NON-POLITICAL STATEMENTS

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, could I have leave to make a non-political statement?

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Leader of the Opposition have leave to make a non-political statement? (Agreed)

Mrs. Carstairs: I know that all Members of the House would like to join with our caucus in celebration of this very special day, which is a celebration of the United Nations. It is regrettable that we were not invited to participate in ceremonies earlier today, but we certainly

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would not want this day to go by without making reference to this extremely fine institution.

Mr. Speaker, I suppose for those of us who have studied history and, in my case, having written my Master's thesis in history on the failure of the League of Nations, the founding of the United Nations was of great significance to all of us. I think that we are particularly to take pride in this nation in the way in which we have always responded to the United Nations. Certainly, our peacekeeping work, which this year resulted in a Nobel Peace Prize, would indicate of course that those throughout the world also take incredible pride on the contributions that Canadians have made.

In addition of course, the Liberal Party takes enormous pride in the other Nobel Peace Prize that was awarded to this country, of course, having been awarded to one Lester Pearson who led us with such greatness in the Sixties in this nation and who forged a new sense of Canadianism for all of us, no matter what their political persuasion.

Today, of course, we experience a United Nations that is, if you will, at its pinnacle. It has had tremendous success this year in helping to unite Iran and Iraq in a peacekeeping endeavour. The United States has once again decided that it would fund it in its appropriate fashion. Canadians, I think, can remain extremely proud that we have always been on the vanguard of supporting what we hope can be an institution which could ultimately result in lasting and world peace. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would also like leave for a non-political statement.

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) have leave to make a non-political statement? (Agreed)

Mr. Doer: I would like to also join in the celebration of United Nations Day. I believe the ceremonies in the Legislative Building today were initiated by the United Nations group itself.

I certainly enjoyed the music and the singing of the choir and groups and the activity in the building today. I wish the volunteers and the community that put on the event all the degree of success on this day and in celebration of our United Nations.

We were certainly very proud of the defence of the United Nations by the former Ambassador to the U.N. from Canada in terms of the potential cutbacks in the U.N. activity. We are very proud, and I think all Canadians have been proud, of the peacekeeping role of the United Nations over the years. It is the area of which there is a lot of publicity and certainly Canadians are to be proud of the peacekeeping role and the Nobel Peace Prize that has been given to peacekeeping forces across the country.

A lot of the activities the United Nations are involved in do not get the glamour of the peacekeeping mission. The whole area of poverty in the Third World, the whole area of the potential problems with food for our starving

billions of people in our world are also the areas that our Party would like to recognize today in terms of those very important priorities of the United Nations.

Indeed, the United Nations is going ahead on some of the major environmental issues facing our country and our world. The Brundtland Commission was just the beginning, I believe long overdue beginning, of getting some resolution to our environmental problems. We now live in a global society that is threatened by all of us and, believe me, the United Nations' key priority, I believe, for the next number of years has to deal with poverty and the environment. We have to work together as nations to solve these world problems that we all are faced with today.

Mr. William Chornopyski (Burrows): May I have leave to make a non-political statement?

Mr. Speaker: Oh, I am sure you will. Does the Honourable Member for Burrows have leave? (Agreed)

Mr. Chornopyski: As founder and director of the Block Parent Program, Incorporated, of Winnipeg, I take pride in advising this House that this week is Block Parent Week. The Block Parent Program provides refuge for children and seniors who find themselves harassed while being out on the street. The Block Parent house is easily recognized by displaying a Block Parent sign in the window facing the street. I would ask all Members of the Manitoba Legislature to join me in congratulating and extending best wishes to the 30,000 volunteers who are Block Parents in the City of Winnipeg. Thank you very much.

Hon. James McCrae (Attorney-General): I too seek leave to make a non-political statement.

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Attorney-General have leave? (Agreed)

Mr. McCrae: I would like to join today with my colleagues in observing the celebration of the 43rd anniversary of the United Nations. I think it is appropriate for me to refer to the absence of one person who is not a Member. The Honourable Mitchell Sharp has now left the gallery, but I think that person, if he had an opportunity to speak to us in this House today, could tell us a number of things about Canada's role in the United Nations peacekeeping forces over the years. Indeed, there has not been a peacekeeping force since the formation of the United Nations that our country, Canada, has not been involved in and represented.

The United Nations also plays a significant role in world health concerns, education concerns, and I believe more and more and more importantly of human rights concerns. We are all pleased to join obviously today with our colleagues in the Legislature in calling attention to this. I would like to lend my support to anyone who would like to observe today as the birthday of the United Nations.

While I am on my feet, may I have permission from Honourable Members to make one other brief non-political statement?

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Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Member have leave? (Agreed)

Mr. McCrae: I would like to join with the Honourable Member for Burrows (Mr. Chornopyski) in making reference to Block Parent Week. As one who is becoming more and more interested and more and more involved in crime prevention programs and crime prevention generally in our province, I too would like to pay tribute to all those who are involved in the Block Parent Program, indeed in any program which is a community-based program and is a neighbourhood kind of program.

I am a strong believer that crime prevention not only is a responsibility of police departments and Governments, but it is also the responsibility of you and I and our next-door neighbours. I feel strongly that the better we all get to know our neighbours and our neighbours' families, the better and safer our neighbourhoods are going to be. I think that principle has not been lost on those involved in the Block Parent Program, and I join with my honourable friend in paying tribute to the people involved with that program.

Hon. James Ernst (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): At the risk of prolonging the Orders of the Day, I would seek leave for a non-political statement.

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Member have leave? (Agreed)

Mr. Ernst: This morning I participated in the kick-off for Small Business Week. There are 45,000 businesses in the Province of Manitoba, 97 percent of which have less than 50 employees. Of that amount, 96 percent have less than 20 employees. So certainly small business in the Province of Manitoba is a very vital part of our economy, one that we want to see grow and prosper over time.

This week we will provide a number of areas of assistance to small business, heighten the awareness of the public of Manitoba with regard to small business.

I also want to pay tribute to the Manitoba Women Business Owners Association who, in conjunction with Small Business Week this week, have kicked off their first conference with respect to women in small business. We see that by the year 1990 it is anticipated that almost half of the new small businesses in Manitoba and in this country will be owned by women. Thank you.

* (1430)

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): I too would like to join Honourable Members to make a non-political statement.

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Member for Brandon East have leave? (Agreed)

Mr. Leonard Evans: I would like to associate myself with the remarks just made by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst). I had some experience

in the past in Small Business Week. I have had some involvement over the years in promoting this. I think it is an excellent effort and I recognize, as the Minister does as well, that a great percentage of the job creation is in the small business sector, much more than people realize. Most of these small businesses are Canadian-owned; they are locally owned. If we want to see more Canadian ownership of industry, it is small business that we have to support.

I am very pleased to see that he is keeping up with the tradition of the previous Government, which indeed had strong programs to support small business. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

COMMITTEE CHANGE

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Mr. Speaker, can I make changes to the Public Utilities Committee now?

I move, seconded by the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: Gilleshammer for Enns.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

MOTION 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 Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) in the Chair for the Department of Education; and the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks (Mr. Minenko) in the Chair for the Department of Agriculture.

* (1450)

CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY SUPPLY—EDUCATION

Mr. Chairman, Harold Gilleshammer: I would like to call this committee to order. We are considering the Estimates of Education. I believe the Minister has some information that was requested at our last meeting.

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education): First of all, I would like to table the information that was requested by the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) and also the Member for Sturgeon Creek (Mrs. Yeo) with regard to some of the programs and the surveys.

In addition, I would like to also table the contents of the opening remarks that I made with regard to—last Thursday, I guess it was.

Mr. Chairman: Proceeding to the Estimates, we are on No. 1. Administration and Finance, (c) Research and Planning: (1) Salaries, \$385,300.00. Shall the item pass? The Member for Flin Flon.

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Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Item 1.(b) Executive Support did pass. I believe you read into the record that we approved it.

Mr. Chairman: Yes. Sorry, I called for item (c) Research and Planning: (1) Salaries—the Member for Sturgeon Creek.

Mrs. Iva Yeo (Sturgeon Creek): Mr. Chairman, I thought that item had passed. Not Salaries?

Mr. Chairman: No.

Mrs. Yeo: Okay. I beg to stand corrected.

Mr. Chairman: Do you have a question?

Mrs. Yeo: No, I have not.

Mr. Storie: When we left on Friday, I had asked for a list of the research projects that the Minister of the Department of Education (Mr. Derkach), Research and Planning Division, had been involved in. The Minister listed off a series of reports that included AIDS policy, Small Schools policy, curriculum and so forth, after which time he ended and I requested whether the staff had been involved in any other research projects. He indicated that, yes, in fact the department had been involved in discussions with staff, announced that there had been one on education counsel, one on literacy, one on student aid, one on international study for international students, I think that was.

I would ask the Minister to perhaps tell the committee when he first learned of the existence of the Adult and Continuing Study on Literacy?

Mr. Derkach: The report, I believe, came to me, and I do not have the exact date, but in the first two weeks of September. It was in and around that period of time, late August, beginning of September. I do not have the date specifically.

Mr. Storie: Could the Minister indicate whether he had had an opportunity to read that report?

Mr. Derkach: I had staff review the report and I was given a summary of it. In addition, I have to say that I have looked at various parts of that report and have skimmed it, not in an intensive way but certainly I am familiar with many of the areas that were referred to in that report. If you ask me to quote it word for word, I do not think I can do that.

Mr. Storie: Perhaps the Minister could tell me what he sees as the recommendations coming from that report?

Mr. Derkach: I am sorry, could I get that again?

Mr. Storie: Would the Minister, for the committee's sake, outline his understanding of what that report recommends the province do in terms of planning for literacy training in the province?

* (1500)

Mr. Derkach: In receiving that report, we have consciously made the decision that this would be an important document. It was a working document which should be used by the task force in their review of the literacy situation in this province.

I think that there are areas in that particular document which are going to be of benefit to the Literacy Task Force in that this report has been prepared by the Adult and Continuing Education Branch. The area that the task force is going to be looking at is much broader than certainly is zeroed in or focused in on that particular report. I think the report has merit. I think it is going to be very beneficial to the committee as they go through and identify areas where we need to focus our attention.

When you have a major initiative like that, that was announced by the federal Government, we do not simply want to be seen as throwing money at programs and still maintaining a high rate of illiteracy in this province. We know that the illiteracy rate has been increasing in the province. We know that is not acceptable. We also know that we have to do something that is positive and constructive. In order to do that, I think that we have to identify where we are, what the needs are, where we should go. This is part of the mandate that the literacy task force has. Surely, it will be reviewing the contents of that document that was prepared by the Adult and Continuing Education Branch.

Mr. Storie: The more the Minister talks, the less I am convinced, if he read the report, he understands it.

The fact is that the report, which is quite thorough, goes over the history of literacy training. It talks about the models that have been used, the models at work and the models that do not work nearly as successfully. More importantly, it outlines what it calls a three-phase strategy for literacy development in the province—very clear, very concise. All it requires is a commitment to doing something.

It goes and explains that the first thing that should be done is expanding the projects that are working very successfully, that it needs a commitment of some new dollars. The Minister has an opportunity, instead of spending \$300,000 reinventing the wheel, of following through on a political commitment. He could actually be spending \$300,000 doing something in the field of literacy training. There is a great deal of expertise in literacy training in the field, not only in the Department of Education but amongst the groups who are providing support in the volunteer sector, in the non-profit sector, who have done significant work in meeting the real needs of those people.

These reports suggest that they expand existing programs. They suggest that we build up the expertise of the people providing services to literacy participants. It suggests that we coordinate better the activities between school divisions, our colleges and universities, post-secondary groups and the federal Government. It says the second phase should add new programs, new communities onto the current list of groups that receive support. It says, quite clearly, that there is 10 times the need out there than we are currently meeting

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in terms of the funding we are providing and talks about building linkages between the various educational groups in our community. Finally, it says that we have to develop new programming, new approaches, new materials for that community.

I am interested to know what is wrong with any of those recommendations. Why should Manitoba at this time be putting off doing something concrete to explore? I do not know what other euphemism the Minister might want to use for what he has assigned the task force. Why cannot we get down to the business of providing the training for people who need it?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chairman, as I had indicated in the House, we have a 25 percent illiteracy rate in this province, as high as that nationally. That is not an exact figure but it is in that neighbourhood. We have a loss to private business of some \$4 billion annually in terms of the dollars that are lost because of illiteracy. We have literacy programs on which we are spending some \$9 million annually, and yet our illiteracy rate is on the increase.

If the Member is suggesting that we should follow the same steps, the same unproductive steps possibly that the former Government followed, then I cannot accept that. We have to initiate new programs. We have to build on the programs that are already in existence. Many of the recommendations that are in that working document we were aware of in general terms. I think anybody on the street can tell you that, yes, we need more programs. Yes, we have to work more effectively with communities, but I think there is another question that is added to each of these. That is, how do you do it most effectively and most efficiently?

In no way has there been any suggestion by myself or the literacy task force that this working document was going to be put aside and not considered in any way, shape or form. I have indicated to the Member that, yes, we are going to consider that document very seriously in preparing our work that has to be done with regard to literacy in this province. When you are expending large sums of money, you want to ensure that you provide programs that are effective and efficient. You have to ensure also that we have programs that will impact positively on those people who need them. For that reason, I think any Government would want to consult with the people who are affected by those programs.

Why do we have a large drop-out rate in this province? Why do we have a large illiteracy rate in this province? Let us consult with the people that are affected and let us not tear down anything that has been done constructively. I think we want to build on those programs. We want to complement those programs, but I think there are new initiatives that can be embarked on. Whether we approach it in a phase 1 or 2 or 3 is not the question right now. It is to implement programs that are positive and will impact in a positive way on Manitobans.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Chairperson, the Minister keeps talking about implementing new programs that are effective. The implication is that somehow the programming that

is being provided already is, therefore, ineffective or inappropriate. It seems to me that if we are going to spend \$300,000 before we start setting up new programs, we should actually find out whether the programming that is in place is working or not. Can the Minister explain then why we are not taking the money to evaluate the existing programs to the extent that has not been done? Is he not admitting that he is trying to reinvent the wheel? Is he suggesting that the programming that is in place is not working? I think, if he says that, virtually everyone in the field will contradict him.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chairman, certainly the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) is not listening, because I told him that we are not going to be tearing down those programs that are working. We are not going to be reinventing the wheel. We are going to be complementing the programs that are already in existence and implementing new ones in areas where none exist. There are areas in this province where no literacy programs exist and where there is a need for them. I am sure that we want to identify other areas where perhaps there are problems.

That is what the task of the task force will be. That is why we have representation on the task force from a cross section of people. We have the Native community represented; we have the visible minority represented; we have the ethnic community represented; we have educators represented; we have industry represented. We have tried to put together a task force that indeed will cover a broad cross section which will consult with people, not on a partisan basis but people in Manitoba regardless of where they come from, who have those needs.

I think there is another important step. I think we have to hear what important groups like the Manitoba Teachers' Society, Manitoba Association of School Trustees, the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents have to say with regard to how they perceive illiteracy as being approached in this province. We want to hear from them as well. This does not take anything away from the document that was tabled.

I might also indicate that in the next few weeks we will be negotiating with the federal Government for programs to complement those that are already in existence, and also for the federal monies that have been set aside for combating illiteracy in this province. We are hopeful that those negotiations will yield some very positive dollars to help combat the problem.

It does not mean that we are waiting and doing nothing until such time that the report is in. In terms of evaluating the programs, the part of the task force will be to look at existing programs. When they make their report, I am sure they will tell us exactly how effective they perceive these programs to be. I am sure there are some very excellent—I know there are excellent programs out there because I have seen some of them.

* (1510)

Mr. Storie: The Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) is right. There are excellent programs out there. Many

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of them have been evaluated. They have been modified to meet the needs. I think, if that does not illustrate the fact that the department previously and continually works with these groups to improve the programming, I do not know what does.

The fact of the matter is we do not need a task force to go out there and start reinventing programs. Provinces are coming to us to ask us to share with them the model that we are using. The fact is the Minister has boxed himself into a corner by announcing a political agenda which he thought had sex appeal, during the election, committed himself to establishing a task force before he had thoroughly understood what his department had already done.

If the Minister would care to rethink his comments, he will know that there are areas of the province where we need literacy training, but I can tell the Minister that there are models on the shelf. There are models working in other communities which would be more than welcome in those communities if they could receive funding.

I asked him this morning to consider putting the \$300,000 which more than triples the funding to support advocacy, the volunteer sector, the non-profit sector, deliver training, to do that, so that we might actually have some result. I can say without one minute's fear that I am going to be contradicted, that this task force will produce nothing new, nothing new whatsoever, that we are going to spend \$300,000 following the Minister's agenda without regard to the thousands of people who could be assisted right now by putting the money into training.

I quote from the report itself: "As experience and expertise have been gained, a clearer direction has emerged, the result of which is this plan." It goes ahead to outline the multiphase, multiyear plan for addressing what is a very serious problem. I want to know what specifically the Minister believes it is possible to come up with which has not been tried in this province or others. Why are we spending \$300,000 to reinvent the wheel?

Mr. Derkach: The only political agenda is the one that the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) is on, and that is that he is almost fearful of what this task force may come up with. Therefore, he is very anti-literacy task force.

Mr. Chairman, I could tell you that one of the very important areas that has not been consulted with is industry in terms of what types of programs need to be developed. We want to hear from them as to how they perceive the problems of literacy. We want to hear from the Association of Manitoba Superintendents as to what they perceive to be real problems in literacy.

I repeat for the Member's information again, we are not going to tear down programs that are in existence. If the Member thinks we have been doing such a grand job at combating illiteracy, then he should ask himself, why do we have a rate of illiteracy in this province that is 25 percent? It is certainly not because we have got programs that are effectively meeting the needs of Manitobans. We have to do a better job. Simply

throwing money at a problem does not really solve it. We want to ensure that the dollars that are spent are going to be efficiently and effectively spent.

Mr. Chairman, in talking to groups, I met with the inner city group last week; I met with the Native Community Educators group last week; I met with a band council today. All of those people who I spoke with, who are ordinary Manitobans, who have problems in their communities with literacy are welcoming the task force. They are looking forward to contributing to that task force. I have received calls in my office from numerous groups and people who want to add their names to the task force. These people are not doing it because they think we are doing an adequate job in combatting illiteracy. They are doing that because they have something to contribute and they want to be heard. We said that we would consult broadly with Manitobans with regard to identifying the needs of Manitobans, and we intend to do that.

As a matter of fact, just today in Question Period, the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) was on that very point saying that we had not consulted enough with Manitobans. We want to ensure that Manitobans are heard because this is Manitoba's Government.

Mr. Storie: I am sure that people of Manitoba are gladdened to hear that this is Manitoba's Government. I think they would be more heartened if they saw that the Government was prepared to act instead of prepared to study. I know that the groups the Minister met with are not going to start tearing down the literacy task force. It has some sex appeal. I know as well that, if the Minister would have offered them literacy training in their program based on the projects, the kinds of models that have already been developed, they would have been much more appreciative than having the problem studied again by this Minister's task force. I am not denigrating any of the individuals who are involved or the groups that are involved. They too have a serious interest in literacy programming, but the Minister says we have successful models. Then why not use them? Why not go directly to the problem and address the problem instead of re-inventing the wheel by forming a task force to do what his department did?

Mr. Chairperson, the Minister talks about the interests of industry in the area of illiterate workforce. The Minister may know that Manitoba leads the country in programming to support immigrants in the workplace, English language use in the workplace. We have some very innovative programming that was developed in consultation with business. The fact of the matter is we do not need a task force the size and scope of this task force to examine those problems. They have been examined previously. That is why programs such as English in the Workplace exist to serve that need.

I would like to ask the Minister, given we are late in the year, the fiscal year concludes some four-and-a-half months, five months from now, will the Minister consider moving three-quarters of the dollars set aside for that task force into the direct support of programming in Sherridon, in The Pas and inner City of Winnipeg where there is an identified need, where there are already groups acting in the interest of

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Manitobans who are functionally illiterate. Will he consider doing that?

Mr. Derkach: We do not consider this literacy task force to have any sort of preconceived sex appeal, as the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) suggests. Perhaps he devised programs when he was Minister that would have sex appeal. This program was devised to combat a very, very serious problem in this province.

With regard to programs that are already in existence, I have indicated time and time again, we do not intend to destroy the good programs that are now in existence. However, we do want to consult with industry because they have some very important things to say about literacy and we want to hear them.

* (1520)

With regard to programs, I have indicated again that yes, in the next two or three weeks, we will be meeting with officials. Officials from our department will be meeting with officials from the federal Government with regard to some very concrete programs that can be implemented to combat illiteracy in this province.

So, Mr. Chairman, I am not going to tell the Member whether we are going to be able to divert any of the literacy task force money directly into the literacy field. I think the literacy task force has a very important task to do. We have designated \$300,000 to do this study. We want to ensure that this study is very complete and very thorough. We want to give the task force every opportunity to be able to travel throughout the province, to be able to consult with groups throughout the province and to be able to do a task at this that is going to give us the kind of format for programming that this province and the people of this province need.

Mrs. Iva Yeo (Sturgeon Creek): I in no way want to undermine the idea that we are safe from illiteracy in the Province of Manitoba. I certainly welcome programming for individuals who have difficulty communicating with fellow man and woman.

However, I recall back in the day when we listened to the Throne Speech and listened to the Lieutenant-Governor saying that a task force was going to be established to develop long-range strategies. The first thought that came to my mind as I sat and listened to the statement was, yes, we are in fact having difficulty with illiteracy in the country and in fact in our province, but why another task force to evaluate when in fact in 1986 the federal Government had already provided for such a task force?

I believe in my response—I do not have copies here—but I believe I made the comment that it seemed to me to be very surprising that this particular department would in fact undertake another such task force. That statement I made without the realization that this study had already been undertaken. I just learned about this this weekend and heard more about it today, and I have just now received a copy. So I did not even know that this had occurred. Had I known that, I think perhaps I would have been a little stronger in my opposition to the need for another task force.

I was even more floored when the Budget was presented. In the Budget Speech, the figure of \$300,000 was suggested, when I know for a fact that something to me as important as the High School Review Committee was only allotted, I believe, \$25,000.00. To have a \$300,000 figure allotted for a study on illiteracy on the very heels of a federal study to me seems, with using only common sense without having back facts, that is an incredible amount.

I have had phone calls in May, June, July from individuals who are concerned with the problems of illiteracy. I have now developed a file. I began writing to places such as O.I.S.E., contacting the Manitoba Association of School Trustees and the Manitoba Association of Schools Superintendents. In fact, I have been sent all kinds, reams, of information on the problems of illiteracy. I am anxious to look through this. I have not yet opened it but, in fact the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) is correct in his reading ability—and I have no reason to doubt that he was able to read what was in the report—it seems to me that there have been all kinds of directions given to the department already where they could certainly utilize this amount of money far more wisely for the taxpayers in Manitoba.

I would like to ask the Minister if he could tell us today the political appointee, who is the chairman of the task force, what that chairman's stipend is to be for her work as the chairman of the task force?

Mr. Derkach: With regard to the remarks from the Member for Sturgeon Creek (Mrs. Yeo), I find it somewhat surprising in that her Leader herself today called for us to consult more broadly with interest groups and affected people throughout the province. Here is a task force that is going to consult directly with the people who are affected by not being able to get a job, by not being able to read properly, by not being able to communicate effectively. The task force is going to be consulting directly with those groups and this Member for some reason chooses to say well, it is just another study.

It is more than another study, Mr. Chairman. We are committed to implementing programs that are going to be very effective. You cannot say in any way, shape or form that we are addressing the problem adequately when you have an illiteracy rate of 25 percent and growing in this province. The amount of the money that has been set aside has been set aside to ensure that in fact we do an adequate job in communicating and consulting with people across this province effectively.

With regard to the stipend, the people who are receiving remuneration are getting the same amount as most of the task forces or most of the new committees or committees that have been struck. The figure is \$110 for members and—I am sorry, I stand to be corrected—\$250 for this chairperson and \$150 for the members of the committee.

Mrs. Yeo: Per day, Mr. Chairperson?

Mr. Derkach: That is correct.

Mrs. Yeo: I would like to respond to the Minister of Education's (Mr. Derkach) statement about the

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Opposition Leader's (Mrs. Carstairs) questions in the House today. I think, if I could follow what she was saying, she was saying where interest groups have not been consulted that they certainly should be. Well, I would almost hazard a guess that almost each person coming to make a presentation for this task force have been consulted in the past in one way or another. I have volumes of material. Perhaps the Minister of Education would like me to send them down to him.

When I wrote to O.I.S.E., they sent two boxes of information and said that they would put me on their list, that they had all kinds of answers to questions that have been asked across the country. I have articles that have been written by people in Manitoba and there has been consultation with people such as MAST before on the concern of illiteracy. I cannot help but think that this fairly large amount of money could have been sent to various areas that are in need of increased programming. If there are, in fact, suggestions in this particular study, I would think that the funding could have been utilized much more effectively by addressing some of the statements made in this particular package here.

The Minister made the statement, and I do not know whether it was \$4 billion or \$5 billion but there was a loss of, I think he said, \$4 billion due to illiteracy. I am wondering, is that referring to the federal statistics or the provincial statistics.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chairman, just if I can respond to the preamble of the Honourable Member's question, the report that she has before her is certainly not one that covers the whole spectrum of illiteracy. That has been prepared by the Adult Continuing Education Branch. It does not deal with all the areas of illiteracy in the province.

Secondly, yes, we know that there is much information with regard to general aspects of illiteracy across the country, in North America, and certainly those will be the important issues there or the important comments there will certainly, I hope, be taken into consideration by the task force. However, we want to zero in on Manitoba. We want to zero in on finding out why do we have a drop-out rate as high as we do in this province? Why do we have a percentage of our students who are graduating from our high schools fall into the category of illiterate? Where is our system perhaps lacking in terms of providing quality education to these individuals who are finding themselves in that position?

Now, we have to address those things. We know that our education system is doing many, many good things. But on the other hand, we have to try and complement where there are deficiencies. Before we can do that, we have to identify the areas where those deficiencies are. Therefore, I do not apologize at all for the task force. I think it is a very important task force, has a very serious task in front of it. We are looking very much to the day when that report will be tabled so that we can implement even better programs than are already in existence in this province.

* (1530)

Mrs. Yeo: Mr. Chairperson, it was my understanding when the High School Review Committee was struck

that, in fact, the question of high school drop-outs, why do so many students leave our high schools in the province before graduating, that was one of the questions that the High School Review Committee was going to look at. It is my understanding that the results of a lot of the testing done in the high schools is that the marks are becoming lower and lower. I thought that the High School Review Committee was going to address some of those. Is this not a duplication?

Mr. Derkach: No, it is certainly not a duplication. I think the process of the High School Review was very much different from the process that is going to be undertaken by the task force. The task force will go out to the communities and will be talking to those students who have dropped out. In the High School Review, it is my understanding that representation was being made to the High School Review as it went around the province. But certainly my question is, how big a group of those students who have dropped out of school or who were illiterate after graduation had been consulted? Certainly we are going to cover all the areas in this task force review and ensure that those programs they are going to be recommending are going to be those that Manitobans feel are important.

Mrs. Yeo: I, like many others in Manitoba, cannot comment on the responses from the High School Review Committee because I have been waiting since last January to read them, but it is my understanding from having spoken with several members of that particular committee that they did in fact travel throughout the province, went up to Thompson, etc., and that there was representation from high school drop-outs, from the various organizations that the Minister has mentioned today.

Can I ask the Minister when the task force responses can be anticipated from this particular rather expensive task force that is proposed?

Mr. Derkach: First of all, with regard to the High School Review, I would like to indicate that I too have been waiting very anxiously and patiently for the report but, due to translation problems I suppose and delays, we are still awaiting that translation of that report. As soon as I receive it, I will be in a better position to comment on the review as well.

With respect to the task force, we have indicated that our hope is that the preliminary report of the task force will be in by the end of January and that the final report will be in by the end of March or as close to that date as is humanly possible.

Mrs. Yeo: Are you taking in account, Mr. Minister, the delay that we might expect because of translation time for this particular task force?

Mr. Derkach: In all honesty, that is very difficult to predict. Therefore, the time for translation has not been considered as part of the time for the report. The time that I am looking at is when the actual work of the committee should be completed.

Mr. John Angus (St. Norbert): Mr. Chairperson, through you to the Minister, I have obviously just

become aware of this, as a number of other people do. As I was late in starting at the meeting, I hope you will allow some questions. While they may be repetitive, it is the first time I have heard them.

As I understand it, your department has commissioned this particular study on literacy. Is that accurate?

Mr. Derkach: The report that has presently been circulated is an internal working document. The purpose of that document is to give us a better understanding and to give the task force a better understanding of the types of programs that are already in progress in this province. In addition, it is the department's responsibility to forecast how they would perceive the area of literacy to develop and their suggestions are certainly valued, but understand that does not cover the entire scope of illiteracy in the province.

Mr. Angus: Was this an internally created document or was it something that you contracted beyond the department?

Mr. Derkach: The document was an internal working document.

Mr. Angus: Were there terms of reference as to what they were to look at for that were not included with this? I have not seen them here.

Mr. Derkach: The document was undertaken by the Adult and Continuing Education Branch. I did not give any direction to that branch with regard to parameters that were to be looked at. That document was prepared for my information and was intended as a working document for the department.

Mr. Angus: You did request or commission this from your department then, Mr. Minister?

Mr. Derkach: Specifically, I did not request that particular document from the department. It was one that the department undertook to provide me with information, as is normal in any department to keep the Minister informed as to what goes on in the department. Therefore, I received it as information. It was meant as an internal document for the Minister's information.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Chairperson, through you to the Minister, I am sure you can appreciate the position that I, particularly as a new Member for the Legislature, find myself in. I have this document in front of me that was commissioned through your department. Reading between the lines, I hear you saying several times this was an internal document and not meant for my eyes, and/or the general public.

But I have also seen you suggest that you are going to be spending \$300,000 to do something that may, in fact, be at least partially done, and it bothers me to a certain extent that there are internal documents of this nature that we are not privy to, that under the recommendations, do not suggest a massive public hearing and/or going out again to try and identify the problem.

They do, however, Mr. Minister, through you, as I am sure you are well aware say—and I will just quote a couple of excerpts from it—5(2) says: "The need and effectiveness of community-based literacy programs is well-known and documented"; 5(3) says: "The need for ongoing training for workers in the field has also been demonstrated." It does not in here say, Mr. Minister, with respect, that you should appoint an independent committee and go out and start again researching it. What I hear it saying, Mr. Minister, is that the time for study is almost virtually complete. Now I do not have the same depth of knowledge on the difficulty as you do, but it seems to me that a better approach might have been to work something in tandem. I am not sure, you know more than I do about the difficulties and the totality of the problem, but it seems to me that when we are looking at spending \$300,000 to get an awful lot of the information that may, in fact, already be there that we are not getting a good return on the investment of our tax dollars.

I would appreciate your comments on this issue, if you would not mind.

Mr. Derkach: Okay, and I thank the Member for those questions because he asks them in sincerity and I take them as such.

First of all, the document, as presented, is that of the department meant for the Minister and for the Deputy so that it would give us a basis to discuss the kinds of programs that we are going to be negotiating with the federal Government in the next few weeks, as I indicated.

The reason for those programs is that we are not putting everything on hold until the task force review is complete. We want to continue providing literacy programs while the task force is undertaking its responsibilities so, therefore, everything is not on hold. In terms of what you mentioned, a tandem approach, that is specifically what our approach is. We are going to do the literacy task force because we know that there are pockets, there are areas, there are target groups which need much more than they are getting.

* (1540)

Now, simply throwing money at them does not seem to be the solution because we have an illiteracy rate that is increasing in this province and that has to be curbed. Now, the task force itself per se is not going to curb that illiteracy rate, but it is certainly going to give us, in Government, a better understanding of what types of programs we can go after specifically to target those areas where programs are needed. And, as I indicated, while this task force review is being undertaken, that task force has one single responsibility, and that is to take a look at the illiteracy rate and recommend on areas that are deficient and on programs that can be complemented in terms of what is there already. While that is going on, we will be negotiating with the federal Government for funding that has been set aside for this year to fight illiteracy in this province.

I might add one more thing. As you know, this province has done some positive things with regard to

illiteracy. In addition, other provinces have ventured in some programs that are yielding some very positive results. We do not want to operate in a vacuum. We also want to expand our horizons and expand our knowledge by gaining from other provinces, perhaps things that are working in there. Just because we have programs that are effective does not mean that we should become complacent and simply ignore the people out there who are crying for programs which will be effective and help them to gain employment and to gain their rightful place in our society.

Mr. Angus: We all agree on the need to take some positive and cooperative action to assist those people who have the problem. I note in this confidential document that there has been party-line-type calls, where you have more than one person on a telephone, conference calls with the other provinces to make coordinated efforts toward the Minister of the State.

Surely if you can get the decision-makers from other provinces together to cooperate on a strategy, to access the money from the federal Government, it would be a simple matter to ask them to send you the information that they have on the programs that they have and the reviews and the material that they have. I am sure you have done that. I guess my concern, Mr. Minister, still is the \$300,000 that you are investing, and I am unclear as to what you hope to get from the review. We will have to wait and see and I hope that will be a public document. I will ask for a definition on that.

But I would like some specifics. For instance, on page 7 of this confidential report, it says that in the fiscal year of '87-88 there were small grants provided to 14 literacy programs. Could I find out how much money that was? I do not know the specific programs. I am not sure of the Actuals on page 7, it is—I guess perhaps, Mr. Minister, while you are getting that or while the administration is getting that information for you, they can give me just an overview of how much money they do spend on literacy.

Mr. Derkach: Right now?

Mr. Angus: Yes.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chairman, it may be better if I were to take that question under notice and come back with the specific breakdown of the \$9.2 million that is spent yearly on the variety of literacy-oriented programs in the province. If I were to try to give you a complete and definitive answer right now, I think that would be very unfair.

Mr. Angus: As long as you do so, that you bring that back to the committee, the information of breakdown on the various programs. I might say that I do not have difficulty with you commissioning information from your department heads in this format. I might be a lot more persuaded if the report had indicated any sort of a need to go out and restudy the problem. I recognize the difficulty that you find yourself in and that this was an internal document that came to you.

If the No. 1 concern was identified as specifically identifying the problem, then I would be an awful lot

more sympathetic to what appears to be an awful lot of money being spent, in my opinion, in the wrong direction. That is perhaps why we are in Government on opposite sides of the fence and why we take different looks at doing things, and how we would do things differs, obviously.

I would hope that we would be able to get on the record that when the report does come in that the information will be public and will be made available to the committee and to the other Members of the Legislature. While I find difficulty in the method that you are doing, I hope that the results will be fruitful.

But I am sure, through you, Mr. Chairperson, that the Minister must have some feeling for individuals who are out there who do not have a job because they cannot read or write and yet they find out, through the grapevine, that individuals are being paid yet another \$250 a day to tour the province and try to identify the problem. On behalf of those frustrated people who are there—we know they are there; we know we have some programs—it seems to me, Mr. Minister, that we should be getting on with addressing the problems and doing the job. Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Derkach: I thank the Member for that question. I will have to indicate to you that the reason that my department did the study was not because they were going to start with the premise that we have adequate programs or inadequate programs. They started by informing me, as Minister, as to what is there, how they perceive this to be, and I think, regardless of what Government is in power or what Minister has what department, that is a normal way that you would probably receive information from within your department.

Mr. Angus: I guess I will find out.

Mr. Derkach: You are finding out now.

I would also like to indicate that the stipends or the per diems that are paid to the individuals are not out of line with other boards and commissions that are within Government. As a matter of fact, if you check across the country, you will find that we do not overpay people who have other jobs to come in and undertake these kinds of responsibilities.

I would also like to reiterate the fact that while this task force review is ongoing that we are in fact going to be embarking on other new initiatives, other new programs to help stamp out illiteracy in this province. Our bottom line concern is to try and implement programs whereby the illiteracy rate, instead of going up, will come down, and down substantially. Thank you.

* (1550)

Mr. Chairman: Shall the item pass? The Member for Flin Flon.

Mr. Storie: I do not think the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) wants to leave on the record the suggestion that this report was somehow prepared in advance for the task force's consideration. It was

prepared as background information for the task force. I do not think he wants to leave that on the record. He acknowledged that he did not request the preparation of this report. I think the Minister knows that this report is an overview of the progress that has been made, and it has been substantial.

I think it is instructive, if you look at the table of contents, where we do not just have a report that provides information to the Minister and gives him background that he can use or the task force. We have recommendations and conclusions. We have the preparation of a multiyear, multiphase strategy for developing literacy programming in this province. We have a report from his own department which usurps, makes redundant, the task force that the Minister is going to spend \$300,000 on. So let that be clear.

The Minister can waffle as much as he wants. The fact is that this report was intended to provide action, not further study. The fact that there are recommendations and conclusions, the fact that it comes here with a plan for the Minister indicates that is the case. So let us be clear on that.

No. 2, Mr. Chairperson, the Minister would like to express his grave concern about the problems of illiteracy. The fact of the matter is, and this report again makes it very clear, abundantly clear, that we have models that can work to improve the prospects of functionally illiterates in this province. We have the programs that work. The Minister says, yes, well there is no point in just throwing money at the problem.

I remind the Minister that this report says quite categorically that there is programming out there that works. We recognize it works. The staff in the Department of Education recognizes it works. Other provinces recognize that they work. Why are we not spending the money to do something? The Minister proclaims his concern about those who are functionally illiterate. Yet he spends \$300,000 re-inventing the wheel instead of spending the money on programming that we know works. We have as good a model as any province in the country.

The Minister has to answer the question. If we have programming that works—we know that it works; the communities out there know that it works—why are we not spending money on it if we are so concerned about it? The fact of the matter is that we have not increased spending year over year. The Minister is spending \$300,000 on a study when we are only spending \$137,000, if you include school divisions, on literacy programming. Why are we doing it that way?

This study gives us a blueprint for improving the services to those in this province who are unfortunate enough not to be able to read and write in a way that is satisfactory. So the Minister has deliberately chosen not to do anything. Despite his protestations to the contrary, he is doing nothing while people out there who could be assisted are not being assisted.

Mr. Chairperson, the Minister keeps saying we need to find those additional programs, we need to find the areas where there are loopholes. Can the Minister tell me which of the programs we currently offer are good

ones? Can the Minister enumerate those for me? Which of the literacy programs that we are offering, which of the models that we are offering, are good ones?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chairman, we can provide a list of programs for the Honourable Member that are working effectively. There are numbers and numbers of them that are working effectively. As a matter of fact, I think that those are available.

I have to reiterate the fact that we do have programs that are working. We are not reinventing the wheel and I have indicated this time and time and time again. This literacy task force will look at ways in which we can complement the programs that are already in existence.

Mr. Chairman, when this Member was a Minister, I can indicate to you that he obviously did not attack the problem in any effective way because the illiteracy rate in Manitoba has increased, as a matter of fact, even with the programs that are already in place. So obviously his Government did not do very much with regard to positive action in terms of dropping the illiteracy rate.

Our objective is to ensure that we have effective programs in place. I think experience has shown that you do not merely throw money at a problem. You first of all identify where the money should be spent effectively and then you proceed prudently. I think that any Government would want to do it that way. In terms of just haphazardly throwing money at a problem, you effectively spend money on programs.

As indicated by this report, this report does not cover the whole broad spectrum of illiteracy problems in the province. It addresses those problems that are concerned by the branch of Adult and Continuing Education. As I have indicated, there are other areas of illiteracy that have to be addressed as well. Regardless of whether or not the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) thinks that we are embarking in the right direction, I have to indicate that the literacy task force will continue its work. It will take this report into consideration. This report will be used as a means of developing programs and negotiating programs with the federal Government that can be implemented while the task force review is being undertaken.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Chairperson, the Minister keeps suggesting in his comments that we are just throwing money at the problem. Can the Minister explain to me how, if we have programs that are out there helping thousands of people, the Minister acknowledges, the staff acknowledge, the groups that are working with these people acknowledge that they work, how spending money on those programs in support of those individuals is throwing money away? What this Minister is doing is throwing money away so the record will be clear. We have programs that work. We have people who need training and this Minister will not spend the money there. Instead he spends it supporting his own political agenda which was established during the election.

Mr. Derkach: Let the record be clear that the narrow-mindedness of the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie)

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will not be something that will be taken into consideration in this task force review. Our agenda is to identify the areas where there are no literacy programs being undertaken right now, and there are many in this province where communities do not receive any literacy programs. The Member knows that full well. There are many small communities in this province where nothing exists in terms of helping these people who are virtually illiterate. They continue along their way, living off miserable means, either on welfare or living in terrible conditions because they cannot function, literally, in our society.

We will not continue on that road. We will identify what types of programs and which target groups require the programming through the literacy task force. We will continue to develop programs while the literacy task force is doing its work, and we will show that the results will be positive and the illiteracy rate in this province will decrease.

Mr. Storie: I have requested, on a couple of occasions now, that the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) be more certain when he talks about there are gaps and there are additional programs that are needed. He keeps returning to the dilemma that community space, individual space and that they cannot get access to literacy training. The point I have been trying to make with the Minister is we have the models. All we need is the money, that is all we need. So the Minister's professed concern for all of these individuals out there, his professed concern is just that, it is professed concern. It is no commitment to action, no commitment to really helping these people. The fact of the matter is we have \$300,000, triple, quadruple the funding that exists for support in our communities, for illiteracy programming is being spent to reinvent the wheel.

I remind the Minister that it is not only the Member for Flin Flon's (Mr. Storie) narrow-minded approach to this program which needs to be addressed. The fact is his departmental report says exactly the same thing. It says we have models that are working, and what we need is more money to be spent on them, access to more communities to this kind of programming, access by individuals to more of this programming. What this report says is that we need to spend money in that area. This Minister is choosing not to do that.

So let the record be clear that he is putting off supporting those people and their need by not addressing the problem in a direct fashion, instead has indicated today that he intends to proceed with his task force regardless of how it is viewed by the people who need the training, the people who deliver the training, Members of the Legislature, members of this community and perhaps members of his own department. He is bound and determined to go ahead with his task force because it has been announced, not because it is needed or not because he can identify today anything specific, anything concrete that is going to come about as a result of that task force, which has not been identified previously by this intradepartmental report or other report from other parts of the province or around the country. The fact of the matter is that he is choosing not to act.

* (1600)

The Minister keeps referring to the need to consult. The report mentions in a couple of places that communities that are delivering literacy training, literacy programming have been consulted, have been a part of the development process for these models. We started out in many cases with a completely different model than we ended up with. We have tried one-to-one tutors. We have tried the volunteer sector. We tried coordinators in the regions. We have tried many different kinds of models for implementing literacy training.

The fact of the matter is that we have also spoken more directly to the people who need the training. We started in the province in 1986, had the first of its kind in Canada, a learners' conference where we spoke directly to the people the Minister says he cares so deeply about. I, as Minister of Education, attended the one in 1987 when we talked about why these individuals in particular had been failed by the system, why they were functionally illiterate after attending school for a number of years, or why they had not had access to the appropriate public education. We went, and the department on a continual basis goes to these individuals, is in consultation with them.

I am interested to know what additional information the task force is going to provide when it comes to the needs of these people. How does the Minister hope to get any closer to them than having a conference where they are the focus of attention, where they provide the insights that the department and the people who develop the programming need? How is this task force going to get any closer to the problem?

Mr. Derkach: That was a long series of rhetorics that—I guess I cannot respond to every bit of it, but certainly all I can do is tell the individual that he himself has identified that they have consulted with communities who are receiving the literacy programs, but there are communities, and I have told you that before, that are not receiving any programming that need to be consulted. There are groups that are not receiving programming that need to be consulted.

(The Acting Chairman, Mrs. Gerrie Hammond, in the Chair.)

Our illiteracy rate in this province is increasing rather than decreasing and, if those programs that were developed by the former Government were completely effective and completely addressed the issues, then we would not have an illiteracy rate that is increasing in this province instead of decreasing. The former Government did not spend any money, even on a task force. Even on a task force they refused to spend any money to identify the problems. This Government has indicated that we will address this problem. We have initiated it by spending some money on identifying the target groups, the areas, the programs that need to be improved and need to be upgraded. That is a beginning, but it is certainly not an end.

The federal Government announced a very generous program to help stamp out illiteracy which this province will be able to access, and we will access those funds as time goes along. In the next few weeks, we will be

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consulting with the federal Government on programs that we have to implement in this province. That will happen and we will continue to develop programs while the task force study is being done.

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Hammond): The Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) with a final question.

Mr. Storie: It will be final for a short period of time.

Would the Minister indicate whether, instead of proceeding with this task force, he will go to the communities he has identified, and quite rightly so, as desiring access to literacy programming, will the Minister go to those communities and say, here are some models that have been found to work in the area of literacy training? We know you have needs in your community. We know that 8 percent or 12 percent or 20 percent of your population needs literacy training or could use it.

Will the Minister offer them models that are already in existence and provide them with funding? The Minister is indicating that he knows that there are communities out there that need and want support, and I know that the same thing is true. What I am asking is, let us not spend \$300,000 studying it. Has the Minister asked those groups whether they would be satisfied with or whether they would want to latch on to the existing programming and have it made available in their communities? Will the Minister please explore the possibility of doing something, rather than putting money out for a task force that is going to be of dubious value to anyone.

Mr. Derkach: The task force will go to the communities, will consult with the communities, will take input from the communities so that programs can be developed, positive programs can be developed.

There will be programs developed, as I indicated to the Member, on an ongoing basis. In the next few weeks, we will be consulting and negotiating with the federal Government for programming for these very groups that we are talking about, and the task force will continue its work while the programming goes on.

So, Madam Acting Chairperson, there will be money expended on the communities where literacy programs are needed and where existing literacy programs need to be complemented.

Mrs. Yeo: I think it is unrealistic for the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) to expect the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) to now back off of this appointed and well-advertised task force, although I share to some extent his concerns. I think it is difficult now not to study the problem of illiteracy, although it has been studied and studied and studied, and reported on and reported on, but it has been mentioned in both the Throne Speech and in the Budget, and the task force has been established. So I think it is a fait accompli.

Unfortunately, the Canadian Teachers Federation just sent me a letter just last week indicating that they believe that a very big reason for the problem of illiteracy that is found in our school-age children, not the influx

of the out-of-country individuals because we know that—certainly if I were to go to Peru tomorrow, I would also be illiterate in Peruvian or whatever the language is that they speak. The Canadian Teachers Federation has said that there is something, I cannot remember the exact figure, but over a million children living in poverty. I know for a fact that some teachers in my own school division have told me that some of the children go in and steal their lunches because they are coming to school starving. How can a starving child sit in class and absorb any kind of information? I think that is a known fact that hungry children cannot learn, and I think there has to be better cooperation with the Department of Community Services and the Department of Education so you do not need to spend \$300,000 on finding out that starving children cannot learn. I think it is just common sense.

Some of the other studies that I have read have indicated that when they have asked or tested people to see whether in fact they could read and write and understand communication, a lot who cannot read and write do not care, not all of them but there are a lot of them who do not care. They say they do not want to bother attending programs that will help them read and write. That is certainly not to say all, but there is a certain percentage.

So I think there are people out there who are accepting their way of life. There are people out there who care very deeply and walk around with a newspaper tucked under their arm to give the impression that they are in fact able to read and I think those are the people who we want to address, people who, as a recent documentary said, will order only the specials in the restaurants because they cannot read the menu. I think certainly these are the people who we want to address.

I still question, and questioned when I first heard about it, the need for spending that kind of money. The Minister has indicated today that the federal Government is coming up with fairly significant amounts of funding to assist in addressing the problem of illiteracy and I suggest that if the Minister knew that when the Throne Speech was prepared and the Budget Speech was prepared, and even before he announced the task force, that they could have been looked, some of this federal funding, and not taken out of the provincial coffers. I think to say that this document was prepared to assist the people on the illiteracy task force—well, maybe it was. But there is no way now that we can back off of having the illiteracy task force without having the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) with egg on his face. He certainly does not want to do that.

* (1610)

Surely the curriculum development people in our department, in our very wonderful Department of Education, as they are creating their language arts programs, as they are creating their programs from K-12, surely they are looking at the concern of illiteracy, the concern of the high school drop-outs. Surely these people, and it would be interesting to sit quietly by, read some of the material, come up with some recommendations, stuff them in a drawer, as this may

have been stuffed in a drawer, and then compare them with the actual responses that the illiteracy task force presents to us. I do not think that you need to have such a massive task force to come up with the answers for a lot of the problems.

I would hope that when the results of the task force are handed to us by the end of March 1989, that in fact a lot of these things will be addressed. I wonder if I can ask the Minister how long after having received the results of the task force will he be initiating the implementation of the recommendations from the task force, probably along with a lot of the recommendations that are indicated in this particular document.

Mr. Derkach: May I say, first of all, that I guess we could argue about our positions with regard to the literacy task force for ever and a day. I think what is important is our desire as a Government to do something constructive and positive to stamp out illiteracy in this province. We know that the illiteracy rate has been increasing in this province. That is a given. If the programs that we have in place today were working effectively, then why do we have that man walking around the streets with a newspaper under his arm who cannot read, and why is that person not being given the opportunity to access the programs that are available?

With regard to those students who are hungry and who cannot learn because they are hungry, malnutrition is a very serious aspect but that is only one aspect of children not learning. You cannot tell me that every student who is illiterate after completing a high school education is illiterate because he came from an impoverished or disadvantaged home. We had the case of the student who was 16 years old in something like the ninth grade and was reading at a Grade 2 level and yet had have been in the school system all along. Now if our programs are so effective and efficient, then why on earth do we have examples of that nature? And the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) says that has nothing to do with this program. That is a typical attitude for trade by his narrow-minded thinking.

We have to address all areas of illiteracy, regardless of whether it is in the adult area or whether it is in the area of school education. This task force is going to give us those ideas and give us the direction that we should be taking with regard to literacy programs.

With regard to when this report will be available and when we can implement its recommendations, I am very hopeful that by the beginning of the next school year, we will be in a position to implement positively programs which are designed to complement those already in existence and also new programs, because hopefully by that time the report will be in, its translation will be in, and we will have had time to distribute it to Members of the Opposition, to people in the community at large, and get input and then effectively implement programs.

Mrs. Yeo: It was interesting to hear the Minister say during the course of his responses this afternoon that the previous Government did not do enough to address the problem because the fact is that illiteracy is

increasing instead of decreasing in our province. Could I ask the Minister to take a stab at, after the task force responses are handed down and the recommendations are implemented, how long will it be before we might anticipate seeing a reverse in that particular trend?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Acting Chairperson, that is a hypothetical question, of course. We have a target date of 1990 as being the United Nations Year of Literacy. We are aiming at that being the year where we can make substantial gains in terms of dropping the illiteracy rate in this province. If the Member for Sturgeon Creek (Mrs. Yeo) is asking me to give a quantitative percentage of illiteracy by January of 1989 or December of 1989, that is a very hypothetical thing, and I would be very wrong at trying to even guess at what it might be at that point in time. Certainly the programs that we are going to be implementing over the next few months, which we are going to be negotiating with the federal Government for funds for, will hopefully be effective in addressing some of those problems as well.

Mr. Angus: Madam Acting Chairperson, I was hoping that we would have been able to get on with this, but I do have a couple of what I think are pertinent questions. As I mentioned earlier to the Minister, I had only just received the documents. I have only had a first opportunity to peruse it. In perusing it further, it appears that, and I quote from the document, "only British Columbia spends less than Manitoba's allocated \$100,000 on literacy." Is that an accurate figure?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Acting Chairperson, it depends on the types of programs you are referring to, whether they are community-based programs. If you talk about all programs of illiteracy within the province—and this is information that was gathered nationwide—Manitoba's contribution or the amount of money Manitoba spends on all programs connected with literacy is about \$9.2 million. Now certainly we know that when you talk about community-based programs and you are spending about \$100,000 or \$120,000 on those programs, that is not enough. We know that. But before we throw massive sums of money, let us know exactly why we are spending them and where we are spending them.

Mr. Angus: I appreciate that and I will go back to my original suggestions through you, Madam Acting Chairperson, that this document that has come out, and I will quote just from a couple of excerpts: "This proposal outlines a three-year strategy for adult literacy provisions in Manitoba. As experience and expertise has been gained, a clearer direction has emerged, the results of which is this plan."

Mr. Minister, if it comes down to you having egg on your face or this Government backing off, and/or reinventing the wheel or readdressing the issue of literacy when you apparently have a three-year plan on the table and that you have the opportunity of tripling the funding as opposed to going out and attempting to re-identify it, I would make the suggestion to you that you review the investment that you are going to be making and say to yourself, all right, perhaps the Legislature here has some common-sense approach.

Perhaps we can take one half of the money that we are going to be putting into the review, the tour group that is going out to gather the facts and implement portions of this plan and see about making it work.

Mr. Minister, I am hoping that we are going to be big enough that if we see errors that have been pointed out, legitimate errors that are being pointed out, that we can swallow our public image and say, yes, it is a better investment of our money. We will get better results. We have not spent a penny yet, and so it is simply a matter of redirecting the resources based on the three-year plan that apparently your administration has put in.

* (1620)

So either you do not agree with your administration, which means that they are not right, or it seems to me, Madam Acting Chairperson, through you to the Minister, that you are caught in a bit of an open switch and it is unfortunate. But if it comes down to defending the administration on a relationship of a plan that they believe will work and that they have identified as working, and it simply takes a little bit more money, then I would opt for putting the money into the program as opposed to putting it into the study. I think the study might be a bit premature at this time, just based on this information.

Mr. Derkach: As I indicated to you before, this document was prepared for information for the Minister. The wording in the document was certainly not something that I, as a Minister, had commissioned for the department to do. Neither was the direction given from the Minister.

However, I might say that the target amount of figure, I think it said that we would spend up to \$300,000 on a task force. The task force has just been struck. We have given them the mandate as to what we are expecting. If we find through the course that in fact we do not spend the entire \$300,000, we are not going to throw the rest of the money down the chute. We are certainly going to use that money in effective ways.

In terms of the suggestions that have been made here by the department, we have recognized that there are effective programs in place today. Simply, as I indicated, this is a working document which was given to me for my consideration. Certainly there are areas that I, as Minister, think that we should be addressing and I think that those have been identified very clearly. I could mention just a couple.

First of all, when we take a look at modes of delivering programs, are there better ways of delivering programs to communities than are even suggested in here? We think, for example, the distance education mode is one that can be used effectively and maybe we have to explore how we can best link up with some of the remote communities in delivering programs of literacy in this way.

Saskatchewan, as another example, has come up with a program that is very innovative. They are using computers to deliver some literacy programs. Now this is a different approach than what we are using, certainly

one that has been identified by them as being a forward-looking one. We wanted to perhaps take a look at how effective that is and how we can embark on programs of that nature.

So we do not want to be narrow-minded in terms of how we are looking at programs and saying we have all the answers. Obviously, we do not have the answers because our illiteracy rate is increasing. It is going the wrong way and we have not done enough in this area. I think that I am looking forward to this task force which is representative of a cross section of groups that I think are important.

We have spokespeople for, as I said, the Native group. I think that is very important, the ethnic community, the visible minority community, who all have something to say. We have had, and as I have indicated, phone calls into the department saying, look, I am really excited about the literacy task force. We do think that we can contribute effectively to the literacy task force. Can we be members of the task force? This has come after the task force has been announced. We have said, no, but we will use you as resource people to the task force. Your names will be given to the task force so that you are consulted, and we want to ensure that Manitobans are effectively consulted throughout the province.

Mr. Angus: Again, Mr. Minister, I recognize the chagrin that you must feel in finding this document to be public. I suspect it is a step towards open and honest Government where individuals of different philosophy can debate the substance of a policy or a decision and not have to worry about hidden decisions and hidden agendas.

Here we have an administrative report that clearly indicates in my mind, and this is only from a first, very quick reading but, as I read it, I pull out more and more information. I will quote to you: "It was interesting to find, however, that the flexibility which Manitoba has enjoyed has led to the development of several unique thrusts which other provinces have recognized and which are now forming part of their provisions."

Mr. Minister, this report clearly says that they are coming to us to get the information on programs to put together. While I appreciate that you are not going to be spending more money than you absolutely need to, the whole point of the discussion at a committee level of this nature would be that I am not sure that you have to allocate as much money as you have. I think (a) you run the risk of people spending up to the amount of money that they have been allocated and I would much prefer for you to put the emphasis on them to come back to you if they need an extra appropriation and justify it. That is the first thing, just from a pure business sense as opposed to saying, here is \$300,000.00.

At home, we used to call it the cookie jar syndrome. If the kids could not see the cookie jar, they would never ask for any cookies. So we do not want them to know how much money they have because, in this particular case, I think they might well find the necessity to spend it all.

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Again, Mr. Minister, I will point out to you that the Province of Saskatchewan, it appears, spends almost \$3 million on their program. I could be wrong on that. I am reading this report; it seems to be that they are spending \$3 million.

What it says to me in this report—and this is out of your own document—is that we are looking at the appropriate investment of tax dollars. We have, I guess, the Government saying we should go out and really study it and make sure there are more programs than those ones that were already being recognized throughout the continent as having taken a leadership position in and we may be able to do a better job.

While I find that encouraging, I do not know that we have the type of money that we need to throw around to re-invent the wheel. I would strongly suggest to you and to your colleagues to take a serious look at the worth of the programs we have in place and cut back on the funding that you have given to re-investigate the problem and direct some of those resources into making some of those programs that we have as effective as possible. You may even be able to take them into a situation where you can establish workshops for across the country where people will actually come here to learn what we are doing and we could be pioneers on this.

But if we are that uncertain of our own programs that we have to go out and spend three times the money that we spent last year to make it work—I will give you plenty of opportunity to correct me because, again, I have read through this and you have the staff and you have the figures at your fingertips. I would be very interested.

On another question, while you are talking on that, is I would like to know how much of this is federal funding and how much of it is provincial funding. Is it a cost sharing or cooperative-type thing that they will only give us money if we put in a dollar first, or will they give us two to one or anything of that nature that may colour the direction that we are taking? I am not sure.

Mr. Derkach: Madam Acting Chairperson, I would like to just make a general comment with regard to the question that was posed by the Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus). That is that with regard to spending money to re-invent the wheel. That is not what we are doing in this exercise. You said we are going to spend threefold what is spent on literacy programs in the province today. That is certainly an incorrect statement. Saskatchewan perhaps spends \$2 million or \$3 million on literacy programs. When you take a look at all the programs that Manitoba initiates with regard to literacy—and I have indicated to you before that English as a Second Language, Adult Basic Education and all of those are literacy-type programs—this province spends some \$9.2, I believe, million on literacy programs yearly. If we are spending those kinds of dollars on programs, innovative as they may be, and we still have an illiteracy rate that is at least as high as that is of the entire country, then obviously something is not happening correctly. We want to correct that.

* (1630)

With regard to how much money the province spends on community-based programs, the federal Government cost shares on a lot of the programs, a lot of that \$9 million. Last year, there was \$100,000 specifically spent for adult literacy programs by the federal Government, and these are community-based programs. We spent \$120,000 of our own money on community-based programs. In addition to that, there are all these other programs that are being offered for these disadvantaged groups.

I might say that we do have a very significant problem, especially with our immigrant women, for example, and their children. We have a problem with our urban Native community. We have a problem with some of our rural immigrant and Native groups and northern rural and Native groups. We want to be able to identify the types of programs that would be most effective in those communities.

We have a document here that talks about a certain area. It does not cover the whole broad spectrum of illiteracy in this province. It covers one area. I am not going to say it is an insignificant area. It is a significant area. But certainly we have got to look a little beyond this and say to ourselves, how can we best implement programs and what kinds of programs should we be implementing for these areas? There has been a target of \$300,000 set aside for the literacy task force. I have indicated to you before, if all of that money is not necessary—and we are not going to spend money where it is not necessary to spend it. These people that are on this literacy task force, I feel, are very credible. They are certainly responsible people who are not just going to act on the task force for the sake of spending money. That is not the way that this is designed.

(Mr. Chairman in the Chair.)

Mr. Angus: Mr. Chairperson, through you to the Minister, I did not mean to and, if I did, I will absolutely retract any disparaging remarks in relation to the members or the makeup of the committee. I am sure that they will do an excellent job.

Let me suggest to you that if this particular budgetary piece of information came to us as a group, based on the arguments that you are putting forward and that are in this report and the indication that there is only \$100,000 spent on the literacy program, at least as it applies to these effectively utilized programs, and you said to me, does the Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus) want to invest \$300,000 in studying this problem or would we prefer to take the \$300,000 and invest it into these programs that are existing to make them more effective and let them reach out to more people, I would vote for the secondary portion. I would vote to put them into the programs. I would put that money into those programs to get the results.

Mr. Minister, what I am saying to you is that with respect to the committee, you can have the committee, I guess, and you can have them look at it. I am not sure that we are not wasting our investment of tax dollars and that we have not already got programs in place and people in place, and on this, Mr. Minister,

we may have to philosophically disagree as to how we do it, but that is what makes up the committees. But I am sure, based on the limited amount of knowledge that I have and the information that is at this table, if we were given a free vote on this particular issue, we would vote to scrap the \$300,000 review committee at this particular time and put that money into the literacy programs to make them more effective. That is the way I think you should be considering going, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Derkach: The Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus) makes a point, except that he forgets that there are a vast number of Manitobans out there who I have talked to over the course of the last few months who have welcomed this initiative with open arms. They have said, finally, we are going to have a say in what the problems out here are, which was not there before. I would even recommend that the Member for St. Norbert perhaps tap into the task force committee and ask them what kind of responses they are getting from the groups that they are meeting with. I am sure he will be very surprised and encouraged at the kind of feedback that they are getting from the communities.

With respect to the programs, as I have indicated before, we are not putting any programs on hold. We have good programs in place; those programs will continue. You cannot tell me that the programs that we have in place cannot be improved or cannot be complemented. The delivery mode itself, is it effective, is it efficient? That is something that the task force will do. It is a task force that is at arm's length from Government; it is not Government studying itself. It is a group that is outside of Government. As a matter of fact, we want to make them as distant from the department as possible so that we, in fact, get an unbiased kind of community look at what we have out there and how we can better address the problem. That is the intent, and I do not think anybody can disagree with that.

Now we can argue night and day about whether or not we are going to spend \$300,000 or \$150,000.00. I am telling you that if \$300,000 is not required completely for that task force, \$300,000 will not be spent. Those people there are accountable, they are responsible people, but we do not want to tie their hands so that they cannot travel to Thompson or to Norway House or to Island Lake if they deem that is important for them to do to be able to communicate with those ordinary people who live out there, who are far removed from the city environment, who maybe some of us have some difficulty in relating to because we constantly live in a community where we are surrounded by all kinds of programs that we can access. These are people who live in remote areas. What is the best way to access programs for them?

This is what this task force is going to do among other things. I do not think it is a waste of money. We are going to be spending money on literacy programs as we go along. Nine million dollars is a vast amount of money to spend. We know we have got to spend more, but I think that the task force and the money that it is going to spend is an investment not only presently but for the future of those people who have

been disadvantaged and have not had the opportunity over the years for so long. In a day and age such as we are living in, it is completely unacceptable for us to have an illiteracy rate that is as high as it is in the province. If you take out the senior citizens right now who we deem to be illiterate by the definition, we still find that the rate is far, far too high. We have got to know how to address those.

All I am telling you, as Minister of Education, is I am trying to approach this in a very practical sense. It is not a political, as the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) said, sexy issue. That is not the purpose of this task force review at all. It is not meant to criticize what the former Government did. It is meant to look at the problem, to study it, to give us direction in terms of how best we can approach the problem so that in fact our illiteracy rate is not increasing but is going the other way, and that is I think the goal that we all want.

Mr. Chairman: Shall the item pass? The Member for St. Norbert.

Mr. Angus: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson. I appreciate the position the Minister has taken and I appreciate the eloquence with which he has put his argument.

I agree with you that we are not arguing political motivation. We are arguing or disputing solutions to problems. I will put to you that given the level of taxes that we have in the province these days, the investment of those taxes is extremely important, extremely important for all of the citizens. When I see that we have a recognized, identifiable problem, Mr. Minister, that we take the number of people that we helped with the indicated \$100,000 and we triple that number of people in the next year, we still have \$100,000 left to provide to a professional organization or to a group of professional volunteers, albeit however they are appointed, wherever they have come from.

But when I consider that we have spent less than half of that having a firm of professional chartered accountants review the whole financial picture of the Province of Manitoba, I am shocked and astounded at the position that you are taking. You are the Government and you have every right to push through the program. I am very respectful of the fact that we have identified the needs and that you are taking these initiatives, because, if the investment to study the problem can be related to the amount of money this Government is prepared to put into the problem, we might finally be able to start addressing it.

But I would suggest to you, Mr. Minister, that the report seems fairly clear in identifying those positive things and for the amount of money that you are suggesting that is being spent, we can drastically improve the program that is on the table right now for a great deal many more Manitobans without letting any more water flow under the bridge.

With that, Mr. Chairperson, I will pass. Thank you.

Mr. Derkach: I would just like to indicate one more time that it is not \$100,000, or \$120,000 that is spent. It is—

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Mr. Angus: On a point of order, Mr. Chairperson. This particular document has been tabled.

* (1640)

Mr. Chairman: On a point of order, the Member for St. Norbert. State your point, please.

Mr. Angus: Pardon?

Mr. Chairman: State your point of order.

Mr. Angus: I am going to state my point. The Minister continues to say that there is more money spent than this report indicates. This report indicates \$100,000 being spent in Manitoba on the illiteracy program and he keeps saying it is \$9.2 million. Somebody has got to be right.

Mr. Chairman: A dispute over the facts is not a point of order. The Honourable Minister.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chairman, if I may continue. If you take a document like this and try to apply it to the problem as a whole, you do not get the entire picture, and that is what I am trying to get across to the Members of this committee.

To begin with, the \$100,000 is the money that was allocated by the federal Government to fight literacy programs, per se. In addition to that, \$120,000 is spent by the province in addition to that. In an overall sense, we are spending almost \$9 million in addition to this on adult basic programs and ESL programs, and you cannot dispute that these are not part of the illiteracy programming. So let us not be confined to thinking that the only monies expended on fighting literacy in this province are \$100,000 that was given to this province by the feds or the 120 that we invest. So the problem is much greater.

So when you say that we are spending \$300,000 to study a \$100,000 problem, we are not. We are spending \$300,000 to study a problem that is costing \$4 billion to the private sector alone, to the industry sector alone, so it is not a small problem. I hope that I can gain the support of the people, not only for the study of the program, but also to implement the kinds of programs that we need in this province to fight illiteracy.

I thank you very much.

Mrs. Yeo: I am wondering when this particular study was initiated and by whom?

Mr. Derkach: I think I answered that question in the beginning when I said that this was a study that was undertaken by the Adult Continuing Education Branch of the Department of Education. I received that document in late August or the beginning of September of this year.

Mrs. Yeo: I do not think that answers my question. I remember you saying that, Mr. Minister, but what I am saying is who gave the directive to the Adult Continuing Education Department to initiate this particular

program? I know when you said you received the report, but I am wondering around when was the report initiated.

Mr. Derkach: I am not sure when it was initiated. It appears that it might have been initiated in and around the time of the election or thereabouts. It would be initiated internally and probably by, I would guess, the director of Adult Continuing Education because it applies specifically to that particular branch.

Mrs. Yeo: What I was trying to get from that was I wondered whether it was an initiation of the previous Government or whether it was an initiation of the current Government. I gather that it was not a ministerial initiated report, that it was a report that the Continuing Education Department felt a need on their part to do the study and that somewhere around March, April '88, they began doing their fact finding. In fact, the current Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) then received a report at the end of August, September. Am I right in making those assumptions?

Mr. Derkach: Yes. If I might add, to sort of make the picture a little more complete, as you know, there have been indications by the federal Government with regard to funding for literacy programs that would be made available to provinces.

In order for a province to go forward and request funding from the federal Government for programs within that province, there has to be some kind of a plan. Because this has been known for some time and federal officials have met with the department with regard to literacy programs, this has sort of all evolved. We had an internal report that was provided to myself to sort of give us an overview of what is present, and certainly it has given an overview for all of us in committee as to what is present in the province, and therefore that is how the report has evolved. It was not commissioned, I do not believe, by the former Minister of Education and it was not commissioned by myself specifically.

Mrs. Yeo: I am beginning to feel like the light is shining. Maybe I am a slow learner. I now have a better understanding of the initiation of this report and why it actually occurred. I guess it ties in with the federal study that was initiated in 1986. I gather there is some -(Interjection)- No? Okay, maybe I am not getting the light, so I will continue to ask a few questions.

We are, in Manitoba, anticipating a fairly substantial amount of funding to enhance programs to decrease illiteracy in Manitoba and the federal Government is going to give us a fairly substantial amount of funds. When do you anticipate being in receipt of these funds?

Mr. Derkach: As was announced in the federal announcement on literacy, there would be some \$12 million available in this fiscal year for literacy programs that provinces could access. As I indicated, in the next two or three weeks, officials from my department will be meeting with federal officials to negotiate for funds for literacy programs for us which will be implemented as quickly as we can get the money, I guess. That is

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sort of independent of the task force. The task force will continue to do its work. We have programming that is going to be going forward because we know that we require much more than we can get.

If you ask me specifically for how much money we are going to get, that is something that I cannot answer at this time except to tell you that we are certainly going to go for as much as we possibly can get. If you take a look at the experience Saskatchewan has had and the amount of money they have received, we are certainly going to be aiming for at least that same amount of money, seeing that their demographics and populations are somewhat similar to that of ours.

Mrs. Yeo: No, I have no intention of asking how much money you anticipate receiving and I would certainly support going for whatever you could get. The concern I have is with the fact that here we are with a fairly expensive task force going on, at the same time we are negotiating with the federal Government for a fairly substantial amount of money. I would think, to address the concerns of illiteracy when in fact we know a lot of the areas of concern, certainly there has been an increase in the percentage of illiterates in Manitoba. However, I think I would suggest to you very humbly, Mr. Minister, that the reason that this increase is going on is not because of a scarcity of research and investigation but because we have not had the funding and now in fact we are having the funding.

* (1650)

I have had phone calls, you have said you have had phone calls from people or your department has had phone calls from people saying they want to have input into this task force. I have had many phone calls, far more phone calls saying that they are opposed to this task force than people who have said that they would like to participate. I have had letters and phone calls who have said, why can the Minister sincerely say that he can justify spending \$1,600 per day just for the salaries of the people on the task force.

I got that figure by multiplying the number of people on the task force with the amount that he gave me, adding \$250 per day for the chairman of the task force. They may not be sitting every day, I hear the Minister say they are not sitting every day, no, but I am sure they are going to be sitting a number of days, and that is only salaries. That is not talking about the money that they are going to have to spend for the materials that they use, for the transportation, for the hotels, for the food, for whatever else they are going to have to spend. So I am just saying, I am asking the Minister if he can justify that kind of expenditure.

Mr. Derkach: The Member for Sturgeon Creek (Mrs. Yeo) in her comments just now said we know some of the problems of illiteracy in the province and she is quite correct. We know some of them. We do not know all of them, and that is the purpose for the task force.

With regard to the expending of funds per day, she has to be aware of course that the task force does not sit every day, as a matter of fact, not nearly every day. They may sit once or twice every two weeks, and that

would probably be the extent of the input of the task force because these people also have their own lives to live and they have their own jobs to do. That is why you give the extended period of time for the information to be gathered. We are going to access funds.

The Member says that she has received phone calls from people who are opposed to the task force. To date, I can tell you that I have only received positive phone calls about the task force itself. In discussing it with communities, when you explain to a community and to a group the thrust of the task force, the communities, I have to tell you, are very appreciative that they finally have an opportunity to tell you, to tell the task force what their problems are with literacy, how big the problem is. They can express themselves in terms of the needs and terms of the kinds of programs that they feel are important.

This morning, I met with a group that represented seven different Indian reserves and bands. This was not a small group. They represented a fairly substantial population of Natives in Manitoba, and their expression was that they appreciated a task force which was going to listen to them. They had not had any literacy task forces in their communities. Seven Indian bands in this province have not had any literacy task force in their communities.

Now, that tells you something. That tells you that the models that we have either have not been applied to all our areas, have not been applied appropriately or maybe we do not have the appropriate means to supply those programs. So let us get our act together, so to speak, and get on with the responsibility of identifying the kinds of programs that are necessary, how we can complement the programs that are already in existence, and then let us get on with the work in putting those programs in place so that those people can gain employment and gain their rightful place in our society.

Mr. William Chornopyski (Burrows): Mr. Chairman, I have a problem that does not need identifying. It is readily identifiable in my riding alone. I applaud the Minister for appointing this task committee because, no doubt, there are many, many problems out there that have existed for many, many months and many years perhaps that we are not aware of.

There is one problem in my riding that is readily identifiable and has been for many years. The previous Government knew about it, has not done a thing about it. I am wondering, and I do not know that I need to be very specific. I think you know what I am talking about. It is a case of people with alcohol problem. There are children who are 15 and 16 years old who have not seen the inside of a school, and nobody is telling them that they have to. We talked about illiteracy and I am wondering, what are you proposing, how do you propose to deal with this kind of problem?

Mr. Derkach: I thank the Member for that comment and that question because I think that you have identified something that goes on in your constituency. We have that very type of scenario in many, many areas across this province. It just does not exist here in the city or out in my constituency. It is all over the province.

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Yes, we do have to develop programs to make sure that those—we call them drop-outs but, as a matter of fact, many of them have gone to school very little in their lives. Those are the people who are going to be a burden on our society sooner than later. They are going to end up either on welfare, on unemployment, or they are going to end up in our penal system, and we have to address the problem.

I do not have all the answers. I do not think our department has all the answers. I do not think we as MLAs have all the answers, but I think that if we get an external group that can look non-politically at the problem, get representation from the New Democrats, from Liberals, from ordinary Manitobans, from people who have those problems, and if then they can come back to us and say here are the types of programs, you have very innovative programs, God bless you, but here are some programs that we think that you should be implementing that you do not have today. Here are some ways that you can complement the programs that are already in existence. That is what we want.

I am not telling you today that it is going to take the entire \$300,000, but I do not want to stifle that task force from doing a half-big job. We want to make sure that the task is complete, and then it is my responsibility as Minister of Education to take the recommendations and to apply them to that very type of situation that you have in your constituency. I am hoping that I can receive a letter from you as an MLA identifying that problem so that we can address that very, very serious situation.

Mr. Storie: The Minister indicates he does not want the task force to do a half-baked job. I do not think that is in danger. I think the task force will do a very good job of a half-baked idea, and it was the Minister's. The fact of the matter is that the Minister keeps saying that he wants to deal with the problems that are out there. He references a meeting he had with a group of chiefs who represents some reserves in the Province of Manitoba.

The fact is that we have models that worked. I would be willing to bet that if you would offer them a program to deal with illiteracy, if you said, we have some models, they work, here is \$15,000, some of the \$300,000 this Minister is going to put to use in the task force, said here is the money to go and start working today, they would have said that is much better. The Minister keeps saying that we have programs that work. What we are saying, and I believe I heard the Member for Sturgeon Creek (Mrs. Yeo) say, is let us put the money to the task. Let us not study it any more.

Mr. Chairperson, I would like to move to another issue raised by the Member for Sturgeon Creek.

Mr. Chairman: On a point of order, the Honourable Minister.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chairman, if the Member is going to move to another area of discussion, I think I would like to indicate whether this area passes or not.

Mr. Storie: That is fine. We can pass it. I meant another area, another topic in the same area

Mr. Chairman: We are on Research and Planning: Salaries, \$385,300.00. Shall the item pass?

Mr. Storie: No. Mr. Chairperson, no, I did not mean to mislead the Minister. I was going to change topics from the fact that there were things that the Minister could do today to support people who need training to a second issue which was raised by the Member for Sturgeon Creek (Mrs. Yeo), and I think quite rightly, about the implications of the timing of this task force's report with respect to the federal Government's intentions to provide the provinces with some \$12 million, the Minister indicates, this fiscal year. Is it not somewhat ironic, and perhaps the Minister could explain how he is going to deal with the expectations that he may be raising by establishing a task force to examine all of these new areas that require support and programming?

This task force is going to report in March, some six months after the federal Government and the provincial Government have sat down to discuss what kind of programs they are going to offer in Manitoba. How is the Minister going to develop a strategy for accessing those federal dollars without the task force report? How is the Minister planning to do that? Is he going to use the extremely thorough report prepared by his department along with its recommendations, or is he going to use some other magic elixir to come up with a program mix?

Mr. Derkach: The Honourable Member again illustrates his short-sightedness of this entire area. I would like to indicate that, first of all, the federal funds of \$110 million allocated to fight illiteracy has been allocated for a period of over four years, so we cannot access our entire portion this year whether we like it or not. We could not even devise enough programs to access those kinds of funds in one year, so the Member should be aware and it should be very clear to him that this funding will go on for four years.

The task force will report in March and at that point in time we will have some clear indications of how we can access monies that are going to be made available to us over the next three years. It is not something that we have to have on the table immediately in order to access the money.

* (1700)

The Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) makes a big issue of the fact that we are providing a forum for people across the province to have their views aired on illiteracy and the problems they are having in the area of literacy. Yet on the other hand, he and his Party have criticized our Government for not allowing sufficient funding for the Native Justice Inquiry. I do not know where these people are coming from. On the one hand, they say spend more money for an inquiry. Here when we provide a forum for people to come forth and be heard on a very important issue that is costing this country and this province billions of dollars, the Member opposite says, do not do it, do not touch it.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Chairperson, the Minister could not be more wrong in his assertion that somehow the people

who are interested, involved, need literacy training, have not been asked for their input.

The fact of the matter is that for three years running there have been learners' conferences which, for the Minister's information, is a get-together, a gathering of the people who are most directly affected, the people who are adult learners in this province—three years. The programming that we have developed is as a result of those meetings. In February of 1988, there was a meeting of literacy practitioners, the people who are delivering literacy training in the province, in February of 1988. If those are not the people who are most directly affected by the programming and the limited funding, I do not know who is. So the Minister should not leave on the record some sort of assertion that there had not been consultation or the groups that were affected were not consulted because they were.

The Minister did not answer the second half of the question that I asked. He is leaving open the possibility that Manitoba will get no federal funding this year? He is saying it is a four year program—

Mr. Chairman: I am interrupting the proceedings at this time. The hour is now 5 p.m. The committee will return at 8 p.m. this evening.

SUPPLY—AGRICULTURE

Mr. Chairman, Mark Minenko: I call this section of the Committee of Supply to order, please. We are continuing to consider the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture, presently considering item No. 8, Income Insurance Fund, (a) Beef Stabilization Plan. Is it the will of the committee to pass this item?

Mr. Bill Uruski (Interlake): Mr. Chairman, I wanted to just leave a few comments on the record because I just could not sit here and listen to what I consider the revisionist information, and totally inaccurate information that was presented by the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns). In terms of actions of past Governments of this province in terms of the beef industry, let us understand who has provided the greatest amount of support, albeit to the beef industry.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) from his seat says, in terms of dollars, that is all you are looking for. The fact of the matter is it is something that you can count on. That is what farmers count on. When they are short of income, I can give them all kinds of platitudes. It does not get the bills paid and does not keep them in business. Two successive long-term stabilization programs were put into place, not by a Conservative administration. In fact, it was by a New Democratic Party administration. The information that the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) put on the record about the closure of plants, I want the record to be clear that right across North America there have been successive processing and killing plants closed, whether it be the United States, whether it be in eastern Canada, whether it be here in Manitoba, whether it be in Alberta.

Look at the province of Alberta. They talk about the beef industry and what is happening in Alberta. You had a very major plant in Edmonton close. In fact, the

whole situation here with Canada Packers was that Winnipeg was going to close before Edmonton. In fact, the Winnipeg plant was the one that was going to close in western Canada. It was under the initiative of the former Member for Seven Oaks, the Honourable Eugene Kostyra, and myself who made the initial contact with Canada Packers because we viewed the old plant, the turn of the century plant, basically, in Winnipeg as one that could possibly close because there were no very major renovations made over the last number of years. There were continual modifications being made but not fundamental changes.

We knew what was happening in the packing industry that most multi-storey plants were being phased out. We contacted the Canada Packers executives in Toronto. We set up a series of meetings and, Mr. Chairman, during our discussions that we believe turned the decision around, at least at that time we had hoped for the long term, but the Canada Packers decision of closing Winnipeg was reversed and the Edmonton plant was closed and subsequently phased out of their operations. It was indeed with the greatest of concern to us that the question of an additional plant that was announced without any major consultation with the Government of the Day, and that was the hog processing plant in Neepawa.

Within a few short months that that plant was announced, while we support greater initiatives in terms of processing in our province, let it be very clear that Canada Packers made no bones about the fact that once a new processing plant, especially in the hog area, because essentially it is the hog processing that will keep a packing industry operational—I wish I could say clearly that it is the beef industry that is the backbone of the processing industry, it is not in fact in terms of Manitoba's production, Saskatchewan's production and the like, it is really the hog processing that will make—I guess one could put it, make or break the processing industry. It is not to say that both are not significant to our needs. The Brandon situation, for example, where there are clearly the renovations that have been done by Burns in Brandon, have added to the stability of beef processing.

* (1440)

But, Mr. Chairman, what has occurred here in Manitoba has occurred right across the country. In fact, if you look at Canada Packers, for example, Canada Packers phased out their major plant in Toronto, and what did they do? They basically got out of the packing industry. They ended up buying private small plants and split up their processing industry into a multiplicity of processing plants, not directly owned or begun by Canada Packers, but which were begun by private entrepreneurs and they made their source material by purchasing a vast array of smaller plants, and they got out of the major packing house industry.

In Alberta, Mr. Chairman, Burns shut down their major plant. Canada Packers shut down their major plant. Swifts shut down their major plant, although it was taken over by Peter Pocklington, and I think he is probably wishing from time to time that he had never gone into that industry. But nevertheless, it is only by

virtue of what I see will occur in the packing house industry, and is already occurring in the packing house industry across North America, and what has to occur in this country.

What will occur is, in fact, with the notion of processed products having, as a result of free trade, getting ready for free trade coming across the border, all the packing houses in Canada will have to basically meet the U.S. competition, and the U.S. competition means lower wages. There is just no way around it. Wages will have to be cut or plants will be closed.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Not in all areas.

Mr. Uruski: Pardon me?

Mr. Manness: Not in all sections.

Mr. Uruski: No, no, Mr. Chairman, I am talking about the packing house industry. The Minister of Finance says, "not in all areas."

I am only relating my comments to the one specific area and that is the packing house industry, and it is very evident, it is very clear what has occurred in Alberta, what is now occurring in Alberta with the strike at Fletcher's. Mr. Chairman, what I am sure is going through the minds of the owners of the three small packers here in the City of Winnipeg who have been on strike for some five weeks or more, and likely will be there longer, because whatever settlements occur in one area they are bound to be translated in another.

But, clearly, workers have a right to be concerned with these changes in standards that are occurring and, Mr. Chairman, for the Member for Lakeside to make such ludicrous, to say the least, comments about the packing house industry is dead because of one Party's actions is really revisionist, to say the least, in terms of the comments that he has made. I guess maybe he wanted to extend the debate on agricultural Estimates so he got out and made some wild statements, as he tends to be prone to doing from time to time. So I just wanted the record to be fairly clear, to say that I believe that no matter who was in office the decisions made by many of the companies, whether it was Swift's in the late Seventies or Canada Packers in the Eighties. They were getting ready, they saw the writing on the wall, that—and we attempted to. I guess I should add a little more to the Canada Packers' deal.

We did have initially, before the Neepawa plant was established, I would say as close to an agreement for processing a full state of the art single-storey hog and small beef component, but primarily hog component, processing plant in the Winnipeg area. As soon as the decision was made to build a new plant in Neepawa, that was the end of those discussions with Canada Packers. They began to rethink their whole strategy in terms of marketing and of course they were making their decisions out east, to get out of their multi-storey plants into small single-storey operations. That, in essence, is the history of the packing house industry as it relates to Manitoba, but certainly the rest of the country has not been immune from the decisions made by the packing industry.

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Just a couple of comments I will add to the previous Member's comments. I think he left out one major component in terms of his discussion of what happened in the beef industry here in recent years in the Province of Manitoba, that this has led to the decisions that occurred in the meat packing industry. That is the fact that when the beef plant was brought in, in 1982, the feedlot sector was left out. That has turned out to be an extremely unfortunate decision, because that left the feedlot industry here vulnerable to the circumstances they had to face of many other provinces. In fact, all other major beef producing provinces right now since 1986 have had some level of stabilization, albeit in some cases fairly rich offers that has attracted the industry out of the Province of Manitoba.

When your feeding industry starts to leave the province, then your packers wonder about supply. So the two things are tied in, and the decision not to support the feedlot industry in 1982 had a lot to do, I think, with decisions that the packing industry made.

I also wonder what has happened in recent years with regard to decisions of major companies to build packing plants. I think particularly of what has happened in Alberta, because Cargill has made a decision to build a roughly \$50 million beef slaughter plant. Certainly that decision was not arrived at overnight. It just did not automatically arrive in Alberta. There had to have been some discussions held with other provinces and I wonder why we did not—maybe we did make an effort to attract them here, but if we did not I would be very disappointed.

Certainly Gainers has made a decision to build a roughly \$50 million plant in Alberta. So Alberta has done a very good job over the past few years of attracting that industry to them. But I think the previous Member makes motions that money is involved, and certainly they did put money into it, there is no question, and it is tough to compete with that. But I think the decision not to support the feedlot industry in 1982 also has to bear some of the brunt of the responsibility for the declining feeding sector in this province. At one time, 10 years ago, we were very strong in cow/calf; we were very strong in the finishing market, very strong in the slaughter industry. We have lost a good component of the slaughter industry, and we are trying desperately to recover in the feeding sector. Our cow/calf will remain strong—is strong and will remain strong.

Mr. Uruski: Just for the Minister, I know his Party has never agreed with the concept and, in fact, I think philosophically the feeding industry did not agree in its entirety, some did, with the component of the beef plan, which did provide guarantees for the feeding industry in the Province of Manitoba under the plan where we encouraged farmers to have their cattle fed out. We did not want to encourage farmers who normally did not feed their animals to finish weight. We encouraged them to use the feedlot sector. But clearly, the feeding industry in this province, if the economics over the last number of years were there, it would rebound very quickly. The feeding industry is one that does not really rely very heavily on long-term commitments in terms of staying with the industry.

The feeding industry has historically been an inners and outers. If the market price for calves has been too high, the industry holds back. If the market price for finished animals is high and everything else being equal, the industry is in there buying. So they operate what I would consider the industry as a cyclical, as the market has been cyclical. They have been able to be in and out of the industry. Philosophically they have opposed the concept of, in fact, custom feeding. That is where, I want to say here, that the plan did fail in trying to convince the majority of feeders from joining the plan as custom feeders. A number of them did.

In fact, the Member who is now, I guess, on the Wheat Board, a Member who owned a feedlot and a Member of your Party who sat on the MACC board for a while. He was Chairman of the Board, was one of those who took very seriously the notion of guarantees and wanted to and attempted to participate as fully as he could in custom feeding. The difficulty there, I guess, is that farmers themselves were in fact not attracted to his feedlot, and I will never know why. I really do not. I asked staff to do everything in their power to, along with others, but to make known that his operation was probably one of the best in the province. He was one of the entrepreneurs who was prepared to work in the plant and he saw the benefits there because he would be guaranteed a return and he could provide a good service. Given the nature of the farm community, that is the way it occurs.

* (1450)

But, Mr. Chairman, the Minister made one point, and I am pleased that he did, and that is the point that our cow/calf industry remains one of the strongest anywhere in Canada while the rest of the country, the cow/calf industry has been on a continuous decline. There has been some levelling off in the last couple of years, but where Manitoba has in fact stabilized a number of years back and has been gradually on the increase in terms of cow numbers so that we have had some success for having a base. Clearly, I guess, the Minister has about 30 days or more to get his plans together if there is not going to be a national tripartite plan, that a provincial plan should be in place. He should not wait very long after that deadline to bring in or at least consider a plan that in fact the staff have drawn up. There is a plan in the books. His acknowledgement confirms that and still be well within the guidelines that they are now discussing the 7 to 8 percent guideline as to maximum subsidies under any federal provincial top, bottom or side loading, every description that you can get. We will certainly be very inquisitive a month from now as to what actions he intends to undertake.

Mr. Chairman: Is it the will of the section to pass item 8.(a) Beef Stabilization Plan?

Mr. Uruski: Can the Minister tell me what the deficit in the fund is at the last current period and how does that break down?

Mr. Findlay: We can just give to you as a complete number, rather, we cannot break it down effectively to cow/calf feeder and finish, but the figure has been

declining steadily for the last year, and over the last year it has declined almost \$6 million to the point now where it is at \$18.5 million.

Mr. Uruski: Could the Minister indicate what the current status in terms of support and market price are in the last month? Are we continuing to pay on finished animal? Where is there a continuing deficit or are all sectors currently paying back into the plan?

Mr. Findlay: With regard to payouts under the plan, we will use September as the last month that they have record on. There were no payouts in the feeder sector; no payouts in the calf sector; but there were payouts in all of the high level support for the finished animals and some of the levels are in the low level support. It is referred to as four, five and six as payout in Section 6 and some in Section 5. But the total amount of net payout in that period was \$47,000 in the finish sector and \$37,000 where the premiums were collected.

Mr. Uruski: Are there still many producers who continue to maintain the original level of support where changes were offered? I guess it is probably now three years ago, almost two years ago. Are there many left in that high level support, and was there a second opportunity for those producers to review their original decisions because there were still some that I know were asking that they basically forgot to check when they had to make their decision?

Mr. Findlay: At this point in time there are still approximately 5,000 of the 4,000-plus contract holders who are in the high level. Five percent, yes, 5 percent of the 4,000 contract holders are in the high level support. They have really been given three options to go down: one, initially in July of '86, and secondly in December of '86, and thirdly we gave them another opportunity in July of this year for anyone who wanted to opt down. We are not just sure how many did take the offer but many, possibly 5 percent, are still in the high level.

Mr. Uruski: Can the Minister indicate whether the level of circumventions is increasing especially during this period where calf prices have in fact been up, or has the commission been able to, through their inventory checks and monitoring, keep a handle on marketings, because there were occasions where individuals ceased marketing, as if that was the end of time, and yet you would not be virtually building up your entire inventory, doubling it every year? I would like to know whether the incidence of people holding back and not marketing, or at least that type of incidence, is it increasing or what is the status there?

* (1500)

Mr. Findlay: Yes, the circumvention problem has certainly been a bit of a difficulty when prices are above the support level. At this point in time, over the last 18 months, throughout 1987 and up till June of '88, over that 18-month period there were 350 accounts that showed no marketings.

Now, a number of them terminate their cow herd for one reason or another and, as you may well imagine,

do not get around to telling the commission. They have pursued clarification from those contract holders as to what their status is with regard to their herd. Do they have it? If they market it, where did they market? If they do not have their herd, then naturally they owe their portion of the deficit if a deficit occurred in their account.

There are also a number of people who have surpluses in their accounts, not all of them in deficit positions. Because a person did not show marketings does not mean that he was beating the commission in all cases.

Mr. Chairman: Will the committee pass this item? Item 8.(a)—pass; item 8.(b) Tripartite Hog Income Stabilization Plan.

Mr. Laurie Evans (Fort Garry): We have had a little bit of a history lesson on the Beef Stabilization Program and perhaps the Minister could bring us up to date on exactly what the financial status of the National Tripartite Hog Plan is at the present time?

Mr. Findlay: Yes, with the Hog Tripartite Plan, which the hog producers have been in for some two years, there is a total of \$138 million surplus accumulated in that account, and of that \$138 million approximately 20 percent of that surplus was paid in by Manitoba producers.

Mr. Laurie Evans: Can the Minister indicate which provinces participate in this plan, and is there a significant difference from province to province in the provincial support, or are they all on a uniform basis? In other words, do we have the so-called level playing field in the hog plan, or is there a move in that direction, or just what is the rationale behind the differences between the provinces?

Mr. Findlay: The provinces in the hog plan are Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario. In Manitoba, we have about 85 percent of our total production covered in stabilization or enrolled in stabilization. But in terms of a level playing field precisely, no, we do not have a totally level playing field because Alberta has their Feed Subsidy Program and their Fuel Subsidy Program. Saskatchewan has a tax credit program; Ontario has some hog development grants. So there are other programs going on in other provinces that make the level playing field a little bit rough at times. Certainly Alberta would be above the cap right now and it will have to come down.

So the cap would be implemented in hogs the same as it is in cattle when tripartite is signed under the present discussion basis that is going on. The idea is that all provinces on all three red meats, hog, beef and sheep, would come down to the cap over a phased period of time. In other words, bring down their added-on provincial programs, bring them down to the point where it keeps the total stabilization under the 7.5 percent to 8 percent that is presently being negotiated.

I am really in the process of determining what that additional provincial activity can be within the cap. It is my feeling that stabilization, although the percentage

in red meats, now .8 percent, and in hogs is 2.5 percent premium, that premium can go up to a maximum of 3 percent; 3 percent federal, 3 percent provincial. Three plus three makes six. If the cap is eight, my thinking is the added-on provincial activity should only be allowed to the tune of 2 percent, rather than at present with the beef, which .8 percent plus .8 percent, makes 1.6 percent. Technically, some think they can be in to the tune of 6.4 percent added provincial programs. I say it should only be 2 percent, so that when the stabilization premiums rise up, they will rise up to the total of six. You are not going to push somebody over the cap and get into a dispute then. That is another point that is being worked on.

Mr. Uruski: Just to follow up on those discussions, Mr. Chairman, what is the thinking of the Ministers in the area if there is need to drive the premiums above the 3 percent, even though there is the 3 percent cap? We know what has occurred in grain stabilization where there is a massive deficit in the fund. If there was a tripartite in grain stabilization as the federal Government has suggested, we would be basically pushing up the premiums above the 3, 3 and 3 range. Although the legislation caps it, have there been any discussions and at least foresight to say what happens if we have got to go above the 3 and 3 basically, because that is the cap right now, as I understand it, in the legislation?

* (1510)

Mr. Findlay: The 3 percent federal and provincial contributions are part of the federal Act and any change in that would require a change in the Act. But over the 10-year lifetime of the agreement there is the management committee which consists of federal people, provincial people and producers. It is the job of that management committee to manage the plan so that it does not get into a terrible deficit position, or a terrible surplus position, to manage the level of premium and manage the level of payout. It is their job to manage the program in that context.

Now, the figures I just gave you say in beef at .8 percent, which is 2.2 percent below the maximum it could get to, and a \$35 million surplus that is being managed quite well to this point in time, obviously; hogs at 138 million, is being managed quite well. But the management committee has the right to raise the producer premium above 3 percent. There is no cap on the producer premium, and they can manage the support level, so those two management tools should be able to allow the committee to manage it in the context of keeping it under the legislated level of 3 percent.

Mr. Chairman: Is it the will of the section to pass this item?

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, can the Minister indicate, have calculations been made for the third quarter of '88 in terms of the hog program? Will there be a payout in the third quarter?

Mr. Findlay: For the third quarter for hogs, the management committee is meeting this week and will

be making an announcement on what the payout will be. It is certainly an expectation that a payout will occur, but we are not at liberty to give the range or speculate on what it might be.

Mr. Chairman: Is it the will of the committee to pass this item? Item 8.(b)—pass.

Mr. Uruski: Although we have passed this issue, I would like to ask the Minister, is there an opportunity still for hog producers to enter the plan and have there been any inquiries about joining the hog plan in Manitoba, because although 85 percent of the production is covered, clearly there are still a large number of what could be considered smaller producers not in the plan.

Mr. Findlay: People who are not in it now can opt in and what they will do is receive what is called "graduated support levels" during the first year of participation. But if they are a relatively new person just starting up or if they marketed less than 20 hogs in the previous calendar year they are considered as a new entrant and he can get in with full participation.

Mr. Chairman: 8.(c) Tripartite Sugar Beet Growers Stabilization Plan.

Mr. Laurie Evans: I, of course, have read the discussion that took place regarding the sugar beet issue and it was a long one and certainly I do not anticipate that lengthy a discussion on sugar beets. The question I would have to the Minister is can he explain the mechanism for payout? Is it based on cost of production?

Mr. Findlay: The support levels are calculated using the 75 percent of the current cash cost of production plus 20 percent of the previous 15-year moving average price adjusted for inflation. It is a fairly complicated formula. We have 100 percent of our growers enrolled in the program. The price support that was in place for the '87 crop was \$40.29 per standard tonne. The support level for this year has not been calculated yet.

Mr. Laurie Evans: I gather from that response that the market world price of sugar does not enter into the payout at all in this particular situation. Obviously, if the price of sugar is high, then you would assume that there would be no payout because it could be well above the cost of production. As in the last few years where the price of sugar—the bottom has fallen right out of it and that is not a factor in terms of the payout to the sugar beet producer.

Mr. Findlay: Clearly, if the price of sugar is high, it would be above the stabilization level. The majority of the calculation reflects the cost of production. Remember I said, and 75 percent current cash cost and 20 percent of the previous 15-year moving average price adjusted for inflation. So there is a small component of sugar price. Also the 20 percent is in there. So there is a portion of the sugar price included in the formula that will not affect it to any marginally great extent. Primarily it is the cost of production, as opposed to world price.

Mr. Laurie Evans: I guess the question that I am asking, is the stabilization program sufficiently responsive to world sugar prices to reflect a movement out of sugar production if the long-term world price of sugar remained low over a long period of time? I guess what I am getting at here is that sugar, as the Minister well knows, the cane sugar is the predominant source of sugar in the world and has been for many years. Sugar cane is a major product of many of the Third World countries.

What I am getting at is one has to take into consideration the benefits of the trade with these Third World countries and, surely, if the price of sugar cane drops sufficiently, there must be a point at which one says well, we just cannot further justify the retention of sugar production in western Canada if it is that much out of sync in terms of being competitive with world markets for sugar cane. I get the impression, not that the Minister is not being open with us, I think he is being totally open here, but I get the impression that the stabilization places little emphasis on reacting to world sugar prices. Am I wrong in my interpretation there or not?

* (1520)

Mr. Findlay: Certainly the world sugar price is of concern relative to our ability to compete here. Do not forget that we only produce 10 percent of what we consume in this country, 90 percent of it is brought in from countries like Botswana, Cuba and Australia. I do not know if you would call any of those Third World countries, particularly Australia, Cuba, I would not call a Third World country. There is a desire, I guess you might say, to maintain what we have got in the sugar industry in this country. We would love to see it grow from 10 percent to 15 percent to 20 percent. I think we have got the acreage here in the Province of Manitoba to have more sugar production.

Quebec used to be in the business. They are out. It is really only Alberta and Manitoba that are left. I would like to see us being able to expand that industry rather than contract it or reduce it because maybe it is cheaper offshore. I think there is a future in the sugar industry. We want to keep the producers in it so that they can be here to reap some better days ahead. The sugar market does take some wild fluctuations. I can remember it was not all that many years ago, seven or eight years ago, when you could print money pretty well if you were growing sugar beets because the prices were so high. Right now they are low but, as I say, they have swung around somewhat, about a 20 percent increase from last year to this year.

Mr. Uruski: The sugar debate was certainly one interesting debate in this House. I can tell the Minister, and I will be interested in knowing what exchange he received or at least what was the quid pro quo when he signed the Bean Stabilization Plan. Because I know in the sugar debate and in the discussions we had, we took the position that stabilization in Canada, income stabilization, is a national and has been a national responsibility, especially on commodities which had been historically supported by the federal Government,

that they should continue to be supported by them. Sugar beets were one of those commodities, whereas in the case of beef or hogs or sheep, those areas had not been previously under stabilization nationally and that we negotiated and worked out arrangements.

Beef had not been signed because the producers—neither sheep—but nevertheless on hogs, we took the position that those were new commodities that were coming on. These were the new rules in this country and we would enter into agreements on the advice of producers as we saw fit.

But when it came to the question of sugar beets which had been supported by the federal Government for almost 30 years, 25-28 years, we felt that at a time when it could only be viewed to Manitobans as an offloading of expenditures on this province. So when we finally negotiated an agreement and I am pleased to say that one of the—and it was not, I have to say it was not in writing at the time, but we took the word of the Minister of Health who spearheaded the negotiations on behalf of the federal Government, that there would be as much done as could humanly be done at the ministerial level to provide a health research facility in the Province of Manitoba. That commitment came through. I want to say that the Honourable Jake Epp kept his commitment. He basically said look, I cannot guarantee you that but I do want to see the sugar beet deal settled, and I will do whatever I can vis-a-vis the whole matter of the research laboratory in terms of health diseases, but there was further work to be done. So we did agree. We made an agreement and the deal is there.

Although prices have gone up, I want to say right now that I believe that at least for the next five or so years I am not sure that—and I am looking in the future, I may be proven wrong—world sugar prices will in fact reach the level in which there will be some of the stabilization funds to be paid back. It might. We probably are not very far from a break-even position this year. I do not believe—we probably are fairly close, but unless something really changes, I believe that fund will continue to be in a deficit position.

I certainly have no difficulty in supporting the plan. I would like to have the Minister's views, how he views his rationale of joining the Bean Stabilization Plan. What is the quid pro quo in terms of that plan and how it is going to pan out, and what is its terms of reference when we get into the beans area?

Mr. Findlay: Yes, just a few general comments, the Member for Interlake (Mr. Uruski) knows, and the rules, as he mentioned, have changed. Tripartite was going to be the method of stabilizing the sugar beet industry. Alberta was already committed to it and our producers here in the province had really no choice. They had to have a level of stabilization they felt in order to continue to survive and keep the production of sugar beets at around 350 producers in this province. That was the route they felt they wanted to go and that is why we fought so strongly to support them.

In the bean sector, essentially the same thing, Ontario and Alberta were already into a stabilization plan and

our producers felt it was impossible for them to compete because of the high cost of producing these products. Without stabilization they would be forced out of the business. Really, in southern Manitoba we have the option of diversifying into these kinds of crops.

It is our desire to do what we can to keep the production of those crops here now that we are presently producing and continue to expand into producing other more diversified crops for which we have the comparative advantage in this country, because we have the soil, the climate, we have the nature of producers. In the sugar beet industry and in the bean industry, we have had the equipment and technology, and certainly in beans we have the opportunity to expand that industry in the future. I think we are in the process of working with the producers to keep them producing the kind of products we want to see produced in this province. You do not go back to just wheat, barley and oats and that sort of thing. We have produced a large variety of crops and if it is going to require commitment on the part of Government, provincial Government in this case, to have the stabilization in place that allows them to be competitive, then I think that is the way we have to go.

In the future we look for better days, certainly in terms of the price so that the plan is actuarially sound—to use a couple of words that ring some bells, I am sure—and if management committees are there, the management committees have a job to do in terms of controlling the stabilization price and the premiums to make it reasonably sound over a period of time. I hope that the price recovery in those commodities is sufficient to keep the plan sound in the future.

Mr. Uruski: The Minister did not deal with the fundamental question of previous federal-provincial programming, which the federal Government took responsibility for. I guess I will ask him point blank: does he consider the question of asking provinces, who previously were not involved in stabilization plans, to now begin funding them? Does he consider that method a method of offloading expenditures?

* (1530)

Mr. Findlay: I guess the Member would like me to say yes, there is offloading. I guess it is a matter of a shared responsibility between the federal-provincial levels of Government and the producers, and we in this province through the provincial economy benefit from the presence of production of any commodity, particularly in this case sugar beets or beans. We believe it is somewhat of our responsibility to be able to stimulate the development of industries in our province, unless there is one way we can help stimulate the production by participating in a stabilization plan of this nature. Just like he said before, the rules have changed, and those are the rules. Other provinces are playing them and, if we are going to fight them, we are going to end up being the loser in terms of our producers not being able to produce.

So we are in plans. The producers are very pleased with the plans, and a 100 percent enrolment in sugar

beets is a pretty good indication. In terms of beans, it is right up in the 95 percent enrolment. In the bean area, we have an initial 2,000 acres seeded this year so we are certainly going in the right direction.

Mr. Uruski: I guess the whole area of stabilization will be one that will come under increasing scrutiny as the months go by because that whole question of governmental support in the rounds of GATT negotiations are on the table and does the province, does the Minister and this Government view that those plans in fact are here to stay? If they are, are we prepared to go into stabilization in other commodities because clearly I believe, for example, that the honey producers are a group that have wanted stabilization to be brought in. Clearly, if that is the Minister's position, then we should be readily indicating that we are going to take part in every program, or at least every area of production or innovation that we have in this province should be able to be enhanced by providing the stability. I mean, we could do the honey and there are other special crops that are there. I am assuming now, under the bean stabilization, that any farmer in the Province of Manitoba where beans can readily be grown could join the stabilization plan. I am assuming that there should be no exclusions.

The beet one, clearly there are exclusions. It is basically a closed shop unless the company designates. That is going to be a bit of a difficulty because the stabilization program or the participants in that program will be controlled by the company. It will not be a producer choice whether one goes into beet production or not, because before you can get stabilization you have to have a contract from the company.

That is going to be an increasing difficulty as time goes on. Should there be a continued squeeze on agricultural incomes, it will then be viewed as being somewhat of an anomaly, or at least those in plans will have a greater protection per commodity, at least it will be viewed as such, than other producers.

I would like to know what the Minister thinks about the future, and what is actually happening on the international scene, because these programs, obviously, will be viewed as, for example, was the two-price system for wheat, and now the acknowledgement on canola exports to the United States that the Crow rate on canola transportation is viewed as a subsidy and was discontinued just recently. That is basically acknowledging that all other commodities will be viewed as countervailable because of that move.

* (1540)

Mr. Findlay: The Member mentions honey, and certainly the honey producers have been looking at and requesting consideration for a tripartite plan and there have been discussions going on involving producers, federal and provincial officials. As Ministers, we are expecting some proposal to come to us very shortly. Certainly the honey industry is very important to this province and has been under considerable price pressure for the last three to four years. Other provinces—Saskatchewan, Alberta—have paid some

\$10 a hive, two years anyway certainly in Alberta, which is a further stimulus to their industry of approximately 6 cents a pound for honey.

Our producers here in Manitoba are under a fair bit of stress. We had a reduction in colonies this year from a little over 100,000 down to 85,000 which is, I guess, in one sense addressing their overproduction problem. Certainly the financial viability of our producers is being challenged right now. Since we are in these other plans and believe in voluntary risk protection, we are very supportive of getting a plan in place that is workable, viable and accountable over the long term, because I think I have said it many times that I do believe in supplying our producers with voluntary risk protection with as many commodities as we possibly can.

With regard to the GATT and the canola meal situation through the West Coast, in the 1948 round of GATT, we received a waiver on our Crow subsidy with the crops that were named at that time. But since then, canola has been added as a crop under the Crow rate. So it does not qualify for the waiver that was grandfathered in through the GATT discussions of past years. As you look at the canola subsidy issue, the freight rate subsidy issue through the West Coast, and it only applies to the West Coast, it will be offset somewhat by reduction in tariff of canola going into the United States. It is a tariff of approximately 7.5 percent—I believe it is—right now in place. Those tariffs will be removed over the next 10 years. So the loss of the freight rate subsidy through the West Coast position will be offset by the reduction in tariff.

Certainly, our sales of canola to the United States have improved dramatically. There were about 4,000 tonnes in 1984 and they were up around 80,000 last year in '87, and I expect it to go over 100,000 tonnes this year. So the product has desirable characteristics in that market. We have, through research, produced the kind of product that they want. And our grading standards will guarantee that quality. We have a market down there which we can serve and certainly will always have ongoing disputes with any trading partner we have. There is no question, because there is competing sources of vegetable oil down there, and they want to protect their market. That is only human nature.

But we have shown our ability to compete in terms of producing the product and delivering it on a price competitive basis. We have done well in that over the years and I think there is nothing to stop us, in my mind, from being able to continue to remain very competitive. I know the canola industry right from growers right through processors are very excited about the opportunities in the American market for that product. The loss of that subsidy through the West Coast, on one hand you may view it as negative, but the reduction of that 7.5 percent tariff in the long term will be very positive for us.

Mr. Uruski: Is the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) indicating to me that whichever group comes and can make a case in terms of the need for stabilization, that they will be able to convince the province that there should be a stabilization plan and the province will in fact be ready and willing to contribute?

Mr. Findlay: I think it is safe to say we will be prepared to enter into discussions with that commodity group, with the desirability and the feasibility of us being able to supply or participate in voluntary risk protection.

The ones that we are involved in, we have been talking about right now are tripartite, involves a producer paying out a premium, the provincial Government paying a premium and the federal Government paying a premium. We are doing that in commodities where that opportunity is also available in other provinces. If you consider all the factors of what other provinces are doing and what is available and what our producers want, because in that light we will give everybody that comes forward consideration and get involved in discussions with regard to the financial feasibility of getting into those kind of programs that are in the long-term best interest of our producing farmers.

Mr. Uruski: When can the honey producers of this province be assured that there will be a stabilization plan in place for them?

Mr. Findlay: As I said already, a proposal has been prepared, or is in the process of final preparation, that has been drafted by the producers along with federal-provincial officials, and when that proposal comes forward we will be analyzing it and proceeding toward trying to have that kind of an opportunity available to them.

Mr. Uruski: Is the Minister indicating that the proposal is still in the working stages, or has there been already a presentation by producers to the Government?

Mr. Findlay: No, a proposal has not been made to Government yet, but federal-provincial officials have been working with producers in developing this proposal which will be appearing on our desks shortly.

Mr. Laurie Evans: Certainly I support the concept of tripartite and I think the Minister is to be congratulated for moving into the Bean Tripartite Stabilization Program as quickly as he did. But I think the Minister is well aware that beans tend to be one of the more volatile commodities as far as prices are concerned, and obviously it brings in some complexity in terms of the support system, because I think one has to realize that some years farmers do extremely well on beans because the world price is very high, and then the bottom falls out. So I think one has to wonder at times as to whether looking at it on an annual basis is the appropriate way for a commodity that is as volatile as beans are.

Getting into a more general situation on this, Mr. Chairperson, and that is while one can argue the merits of stabilization on an individual commodity basis as we go on and on. We were talking about honey, and obviously there are other commodities that one could consider when we are looking at the whole question of attempting to support diversification within a province such as Manitoba which has the opportunity to grow such a wide range of crops. My question then is to the Minister, is he sympathetic or supportive of the concept of stabilization of income, as opposed to stabilization of individual commodities?

We know that there are several groups who have come forth recently with proposals as to how agricultural income stabilization might be approached, as opposed to attempting to stabilize individual commodities which has obviously the possibility there of producers who are producing several crops doing extremely well on one crop but suffering poor prices on another one, but in actual fact their income still may be very good based on one or more of the commodities that have been on an upturn. Perhaps the idea of stabilizing all of these commodities individually is not really the perfect system if what you are attempting to do is to stabilize the long-term income of farmers. I would just like the Minister's view as to the feasibility and where he stands in terms of looking at income stabilization, as opposed to individual commodities over a long term?

* (1550)

Mr. Findlay: Certainly what the Member has opened up is an area that is going to receive a lot of discussion in the coming years. There is no question. Everybody wants some degree of protection from the vagrancies (sic) of the marketplace. Time and again, when we are in crop insurance discussions, people bring forward the idea, well, I want individual coverage, I want individual protection, rather than being averaged with my peers around me, because I think on an individualized basis I can, as a good manager, have lower premiums and less payouts and therefore I will be a low risk.

Certainly the proposal that came forward—I guess you would have to say it was leaked to the press here a couple of months ago—it was the Grains 2000 Proposal that was in the process of development is proceeding in this direction of being able to stabilize farm incomes. I think the Member for Interlake (Mr. Uruski), the former Minister, supports that principle in general context of being able to stabilize incomes. I think the gist of the present proposal, by and large, has received fairly favourable reaction.

The mechanics of putting it into place will take considerable time. There is no question. I can see all kinds of problems of phasing out of what we are in, getting into that and even making it work, because administratively you have to believe that it can be fairly complex. Whether you are going through the income tax system or how we are going to do it, time will tell.

It really involved about a 5 percent producer contribution, 5 percent Government contribution to a fund that you, as a good producer, would build up over time and at retirement would withdraw it. A poor producer would have very little fund to withdraw from because he would never be able to withdraw it into a deficit. I guess from a Government point of view, not having to worry about a deficit is positive.

I believe it has a high level of merit, and if it can be developed so that it does meet the needs of supplying that sort of individual ability to stabilize a farmer's income in regard to what commodities he is producing, it has a lot of attractive features about it.

Even being optimistic, I would have to say it is three, four years away from reality. It is going to take time,

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because there are a lot of features and ways and means for producers to beat it by selling one year and not the next and withdrawing. I think it is going to probably be tabled officially after the election, I would have to assume now, and then it will be involved in a large number of farm meetings and discussions between producers and the federal Government, and we will be involved in there in some process too.

I look upon it as being a favourable development and hope that it will evolve over time and we will be able to have individualized income that stimulates good farm management and rewards efficiency and basically does the opposite to the opposite kind of practices.

(The Acting Chairman, Mr. Gulzar Cheema, in the Chair.)

Mr. Uruski: I am pleased to hear this discussion because the debate that we have been having this afternoon on individual commodities points out very clearly the difficulties that some producers have. Unless you have a very strong lobby group and are continually at the doorstep of Government, you may, some time in the future, be successful enough to get through that door of Government and have a stabilization plan put into place. If you are not that strong in terms of your lobbying efforts and are putting your case, maybe succinctly but yet not have the clout that other groups have, you are sitting on the sidelines and may not get into place. Clearly the topic that the Member for Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans) raises is one that we have raised a few years ago at federal-provincial meetings to say it is time to rethink the whole myriad of programs that we have and look at attempting to simplify the system to some degree. It may not be so simple in terms of the process, but ultimately it certainly would be bureaucratically less cumbersome in terms of administration than the whole host of programs that we now have in place. Maybe the working towards it may take a long time, as the Minister suggests, but clearly that is a goal.

I am certainly very pleased that the Minister is open to it because it is one that I have given and our Party has given considerable thought to over the years. I have raised this issue provincially and, in fact, our national leader during this campaign has basically come out indicating that using the grain model that there should be an income stabilization plan right across the board for all farmers in this country regardless of the commodity they produce. You work back from that concept.

It might take a bit of time to put it together but I think there is a willingness across this country now that this concept is one I think the majority of producer groups, especially I would think even the grains group, would embrace. There would have to be a lot of discussion and a lot of work put into the plan, but it is one that I think is accepted.

* (1600)

Where I think there will probably be some difficulty is in the area of where producer groups have what is now viewed as a fairly generous stabilization plan and

might be concerned about what impact a change might have for them. That is where there may be some difficulties of producers saying well, gee, I have got it good now, I really do not want to change and I want to protect what I have got. Those discussions will undoubtedly take place and I am fairly pleased that there is such a move.

I worry about, when you are looking at incomes, as to how that can be funded, especially for very small producers. I think they should not be, whatever plan there is, stabilized I guess basically into poverty if it is at such a low level of stability. There has to be some measure of minimum support that is provided and then if there is greater support required or desired on behalf of producers, then the premium structure takes place or kicks in and producers contribute. That is one that will have to be worked on.

I am pleased that Members of all three Parties here are generally supportive of that concept and that the work should go on. I am hoping that the Minister's department and the whole area of research—because they did begin trying to put together a format as to how this whole area can be tackled—and I am hopeful that the Minister is continuing that approach or putting some of the ideas together from a Manitoba perspective so that when this concept comes to the table at national conferences that we are well prepared to discuss the pros and cons from our perspective and of course viewing, since we do have, in Manitoba I believe, a fair number of smaller producers as compared to our western counterparts. Our average farm size is quite a bit lower and there would be some fairly intensive production in the province that we have to look at any income support plan from that point of view. I am sure there are even others that I have not even touched on.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Acting Chairman, basically we have no disagreements in this area. Certainly I would have to anticipate that it will appear officially in the coming months. I would hope that if it does appear that we have it on the national agenda for the Ministers of Agriculture next summer in Saskatchewan, which would be a good setting to get into that sort of discussion with a province that has suffered a fair bit because of low incomes in the past three or four years.

I can assure him that we will do the kind of background work within our department to have us well prepared so we represent all producers of this province, whether they are in intensive livestock or grain farmers, whether they are large or small, or they have diversified into a number of crops. There are so many different directions of interest that will come to the table on these discussions. As he said, some programs—farmers will believe they are fairly well off now and they do not want to lose the good position they are in, but on the other hand there are a number of producers that are in a very difficult position that need to be brought up to the norm. So all those factors will be included and I am sure we will be back into this discussion in the coming Estimate periods.

Mr. Uruski: Have there been documents now shared between the federal bureaucracy and provincial bureaucracies in this whole area and is there some analysis presently going on, on this concept provincially?

Mr. Findlay: The proposal that we are more or less discussing is individualized income support in terms of the Grains 2000 proposal that the federal Government has appointed a group to do a study on and then bring forth recommendations. That has not been shared between the federal and provincial bureaucracies and we expect that it will be as soon as they announce their basic proposal that they are going to present to the federal Government.

We all read the papers a couple of months ago and some of the elements of the program that came out at that time. I certainly can anticipate that we will have a fair level of involvement in terms of looking at the impact of it on our province. Once we get it, we will be in a position to start analyzing the pros and cons, relative to what it will do for our producers in the circumstances that we see here in the province.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Cheema): Item 8.(c) and (d) pass?

Mr. Uruski: Can the Minister tell me what the premium structure is in sugar beet and has that changed at all? We are into the second year, whether there has been a change in the premium structure and what actually is it now?

Mr. Findlay: The premium for '87 was 3 percent for all three participants, federal, provincial and producer, and it is still 3 percent for 1988.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Cheema): Item 8.(c)—pass. Proceed to item 8.(d).

* (1610)

Mr. Uruski: The plan that the Minister tabled or passed through Order-in-Council had certain provisions as to sharing of the premium structure, under the bean plan. Can he indicate what the actual sharing is, because there are some hand-written notes in the plan that were signed through Order-in-Council 534? Can he indicate what the actual terms, in terms of premium sharing are, and what are the level of premiums presently? Are they at three, three and three or what is the—

Mr. Findlay: Yes, on the beans, the Government premiums are 3 percent, federal 3 percent and the producer premium for '87 was 10.8 percent.

Mr. Uruski: Is the province now contributing in the premium structure of beans?

Mr. Findlay: For '87 and for '88. There was a retroactive portion for the '87 crop.

Mr. Uruski: There is a change from the original agreement that was proposed and agreed to when we were in office, where we reviewed this as another area of offloading of expenditures. We were prepared to allow producers to join the plan because the federal Government was discontinuing its full participation in stabilization. The Conservative Government now has gone ahead rather than what was written into the plan.

I would like some clarification as well on the deficit, whether the deficit is equally shared as per the one-third, one-third, one-third—half and half?

Mr. Findlay: Yes.

Mr. Uruski: Okay, so that is also a change then from before. As I understand previously, the premiums were to be shared one-third by Canada and two-thirds by the producers. All the province would contribute was administration. Now it is a maximum of 3 percent Ottawa, maximum of 3 percent Manitoba and, as well, a 50-50 sharing in the deficit between Ottawa and Manitoba. Is that correct?

Mr. Findlay: Yes, that is essentially right. The premiums will be shared between the two levels of Government and the producer, and the deficit at the end, if one exists, is shared 50-50 by the two levels of Government. It is consistent with all tripartite programs.

Mr. Uruski: In the last number of years, there have been certain discussions as well on other pulse crops, such as beans in terms of stabilization. Have there been approaches made to the Government on other pulse crops and where are those discussions there? What is being considered at the present time?

Mr. Findlay: With the beans, just for your information, if we are talking about the white pea bean, the kidney and the cranberry, and other colours in the beans category.

Other pulse crops, no, they have not approached either me or our officials about stabilization programs, but peas and lentils were added to Western Grain Stabilization so they are covered in that direction now and, obviously, if they are covered there they will not be coming forward for any other kind of stabilization. The basic answer is no, no other pulse crops have come forward.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Cheema): Shall item 8.(d) pass?

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Acting Chairman, how many producers have joined the bean plan, and how many and what acreage is in fact involved at the present time, and is there opportunity for producers who may start up into production in the coming year? Is there any phase-in period in terms of support, or if a new producer begins, what are the terms under that program?

Mr. Findlay: Yes, in terms of the acres of production, for 1987 there were 19,900 acres, and this year it is 21,900 acres, so there is 2,000 acre increase that I mentioned previously. The breakdown in the different categories of white pea bean, 15,700; the kidney and the cranberry, 1,200; and the other colours, almost 5,000 acres.

For new entrants, if a person is a new producer, period, he opts in with full benefits in his first year of production. If he is a previous producer, there is some scaling down of the benefits in the first year that he is entered, the same as I mentioned previously for the sugar beets.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Acting Chairman, the acreage that the Minister provided us, is that the acreage that is now covered by stabilization? It may not be the acreage that is the actual production. There could be more acres produced—just so I would be clear on that.

(Mr. Chairman in the Chair.)

Mr. Findlay: Last year we had 138 out of 140 producers signed up—so virtually 100 percent, and of the producers we had in last year, I think some 19 did not grow beans this year.

Mr. Chairman: Is it the will of the committee to pass this item? Item 8.(d)—pass.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, before you put the main motion I have some questions. Before we leave the Income Insurance Fund, I want to know whether the Minister has made representations to Ottawa vis-a-vis the recent changes in the Western Grain Stabilization Fund and, if he has, can he indicate what kind of representations he has made?

Mr. Findlay: The changes to Western Grain—I assume you are talking about the \$750 million write-off and the allowing producers to opt in retroactive to August 1 of '87. I cannot say that we had official representation to the federal Government. Certainly in the process of the discussion that was going on over the last number of months, going back some seven or eight months, especially after the announcement of the \$750 million write-off, I had discussions with producers and producer groups with regard to what the \$750 million really represented. Certainly as time went on I think the opportunity for retroactive entry became somewhat sweeter. Now it is 70 percent in the first year and 85 percent the second year of full benefit. I think that pot became somewhat sweeter because I would say that initially the thought was maybe 50 percent retroactive benefit.

* (1620)

I do not know what the sign up ended up being but I have heard that over 90 percent are now enrolled so there has been a number of producers who opted to get into it. I think as the pot became sweetened for the retroactive entry, it was probably fairly attractive for many producers because there was pretty much an instant benefit, a fairly positive cash instant benefit to enroll.

I think the Western Grain Stabilization Program, although it was criticized for many years because it never triggered, never paid out, an adjustment some time ago to a three-year moving average to trigger a payout, I believe it was '85, started a series of payouts that has pumped a lot of money into the farmers' pockets in western Canada. It has unfortunately driven it into a deficit position. I would have to anticipate that given the gross sales and the cost of production that we can see that we can expect to pay out this fall of some significant magnitude also.

If you look ahead at western grain, and the producer who phoned me and asked me whether he should or

should not opt in, I said if you look ahead it is calculated at basis total sales versus cost. Although the grain price is up now, the volume that we are going to have for sale is down, so the triggering in the formula may still be fairly attractive for payouts in 1989 at least. Beyond that you just cannot speculate.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, did the Minister raise any question about premiums?

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Chairman, the premium went from 1 percent. It had been 2 percent and it went down to 1 percent over the past number of years. It has now moved up to 4 percent. The federal Government's contribution went from 3 percent to 6 percent, so the federal participation is still 2 percent more than the producer. If you look back in terms of the financial viability of the plan, the premiums did not trigger soon enough. In reality the formula did not kick in soon enough. That has led to a low level of input from producer premiums.

Whether the premium is too high at 4 percent, it is hard to say when you look at the feed security program where the premium is 6 percent. The premiums for stabilization programs are up in that area. I would hope that as we get into a reasonable level of payback to that, that premium will come down in the future years. I think the plan has certainly done what it was intended to do. It has paid out in times of low price and will recover its money in times of better farm incomes. Surely we are getting to that in the coming two or three years.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, I, for one, want to indicate to the Minister that probably foresight should have a little legislation dictated, otherwise to leave the premiums where they had been in the past and then increase them. The point that I want to get to the Minister is that here he has basically justified the premium increase, the doubling of premiums for the federal Government, and the quadrupling of premiums for the farmer retroactively. Quite frankly I have no difficulty with that. The plan requires that premiums be increased and they be done, but he has just indicated to me that he has virtually said nothing about a 400 percent increase in premiums for farmers where premiums have gone from \$600 a year to \$2,400 a year on maximum contributions. We had demonstrations that his Party organized here on a 25 percent increase. Not only that—the premiums are retroactive to last year. You may be getting a deficiency payment or assistance from the federal Government. What you will have to do is take off, if you are a maximum contributor, the \$1,800 off whatever payment you are going to receive for last year plus the increase in premiums this year.

So, Mr. Chairman, I find this Minister's actions on behalf of his Government really showing up the hypocrisy of the nonsense that was created on premium increases. If, in fact, it was a horrendous move on behalf of rural Manitoba, Manitobans in general, the increase in insurance premiums, and which I gather are going to rise again in auto insurance, it would have been 10 times as horrendous for the federal Government to

raise premiums 400 percent and then make them retroactive to the previous year. This Minister says, I really did not say anything about it; I think it is good.

Mr. Chairman, I have to agree with him, that the support that the farm community has received from this plan is what was necessary and required, and the premium increase is required, but it is the hypocrisy of the situation of them sitting silent when farm premiums have gone up 400 percent.

They had massive demonstrations here on the Legislature for a 25 percent increase and for some it was not even that high. Those who had bigger cars, maybe the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) who drives a Thunderbird or whatever—I think it is a Thunderbird he drives. He probably had a little bit higher, but it being a farm car it probably is not. It is maybe a 10 percent increase for him. It just points out to the hypocrisy of the Conservative Party when it comes to premiums. For farmers, it is okay, you pay 400 percent more, we will sit quiet and then pay it retroactively; but if it comes to auto insurance premiums, we will create a big fuss for a 25 percent increase, and that is the hypocrisy of the situation.

Mr. Findlay: I think if the Member wants to get into sour grapes about Autopac, he should go to the public hearings tomorrow morning. That is the place to air those griefs.

The farm community, I can honestly say that I have had not one phone call or one letter from a producer objecting to the level of increase. Producers know that they got the benefit ahead of time and now they realize that they must pay the premiums because they have had the benefits. The payment is not going to come out of their pocket in terms of the retroactive portion. It is going to come off that cheque that is coming out presumably in November of '88. So they will not feel the pain; it is money they never had.

An Honourable Member: But there will be a payment.

Mr. Findlay: We hope there is a payment, that is right.

In terms of the premium they are paying this year, again, I have heard no repercussions from the farm community. I think they realize, especially have the harangue that was raised by the group of non-participants, I think most producers who are in the plan steadily realized that we have had a pretty good benefit and now when the premium increasees, they are not likely to raise a concern that they have not been adequately looked after. The plan is paid out in advance and they realize their level of responsibility to pay it back in the better income periods of time which we hope are coming.

Mr. Uruski: Can the Minister indicate whether his department has done some calculations based on their knowledge of the formula that in fact there will be a payment in '88? Can farmers expect a payout from Western Grain in '88 for the 1987 crop year? That is essentially what we are looking at.

Mr. Findlay: Staff have done some projections on the probability of the payment and they have an idea what size it might be, but the best we can say is that their projection is that there will be a payout for the final payment for the '87 crop which normally comes in November of the year following, which is next month.

Mr. Uruski: Does the Minister expect that payment to be in excess of \$200 million for western Canada?

Mr. Findlay: It is not fair to start speculating on figures because somebody's hopes will get up and it is not our plan to administer. So I think it would be unfair to start saying yes or no to that sort of figure.

Mr. Chairman: Resolution No. 14: Resolved that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$11,031,200 for Agriculture, Income Insurance Fund, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1989—pass.

I draw the Members' attention to Appropriation No. 10, Resolution No. 16, Education Tax Reduction Program for Farmers—the Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

Mr. Laurie Evans: I do not think there there is any argument here as to the merit of the program. Our Party has been on record for quite some time as wanting to see the cost of education separated away from the farm land and, for that matter, from realty taxes, looking at it from an urban standpoint. I am pleased to hear that the Minister anticipates that the full \$12 million will be utilized this year for this purpose.

I know my colleague from Interlake (Mr. Uruski) has already had some concerns regarding the payout and here again, I think you are always faced with this question as to what is the best way of getting the money into the hands of the right people. While I certainly feel that the right decision was made in terms of it not being paid out to MACC, FCC and financial institutions, I am not sure that one can ever come up with a system that is going to be totally positive in terms of not paying it out to those who are speculators and so on, because I suspect there are many people who currently hold farm land that regard themselves as farmers who at the same time are speculators in that they are waiting for the economy to turn around and that the farm land values will increase. So from that standpoint, they, too, are speculators.

While I think I can see that there is still probably some need for fine tuning, I am satisfied that the project is a good one and certainly will not get into the discussion as to whether or not it is being handled in a perfect fashion at the present time. I think there have been some steps made to improve the way it is handled, but I have no further comment on this particular item.

Mr. Uruski: I see both the Liberals and the Conservatives on line on this one and that is fine.

I want to ask the Minister who now qualifies for the program? Who is eligible for the program?

Mr. Findlay: Who qualifies? I thought the Member would know. He made quite a bit of harangue over

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knowing what was going on. It is owners of farm land with the exception of financial institutions, and Crown land lessees qualify for the payment, too.

Mr. Uruski: Do lessees of private land qualify?

Mr. Findlay: No, they do not qualify directly. The reduction in taxes goes to the person who is paying it, the landowner, and then the lessee has the option to negotiate with the landowner or vice versa where the eventual credit shall end up in the hands of the landowner or negotiated in the lease agreement between the two of them. It is our belief that the taxes are paid by the owner; therefore, the rebate should go to the person who is paying the taxes.

Mr. Uruski: The Minister made comments in this House some time ago, when I raised this matter with him, that husbands and wives previously did not qualify. Can he tell me what changes they have made in the program now to allow husbands and/or wives to qualify under the program?

Mr. Findlay: As I previously said, the owner of the land. Whether it is a husband or a wife or a son, or whoever it is, they qualify equally on every acre that they own for the same rebate of 25 percent of the education tax on that portion of the land.

Mr. Uruski: If, as in my case, my wife and I have our farm land in joint tenancy, how do the present regulations differ from last year's regulations in terms of either one of us qualifying for the rebate, other than the difference in the dollar amount, one of the maximum of 500, the previous one, and this one at 25 percent? What is the difference this year from last? Because the Minister in this House, in response to my questioning last week, I guess, when I raised this issue, indicated that there were two major differences in the programs. He said that the previous program did not treat husbands and wives alike; and, secondly, the other issue was that widows who owned farm land previously did not qualify.

I have acknowledged in the past, when the previous program was in, that owners of farm land, unless they were operators of farm land, all owners of farm land were treated alike. Whether they were widows, whether they were business people living in town and having farm land, whether they were lawyers or doctors who bought farm land and leased it out, they were all treated alike. The Minister, in response to questions I raised, told us that somehow we treated farmers and their wives differently under our previous agreement. I would like him to explain that to me.

Mr. Findlay: We have always been in favour of removing education tax from bare farm land as quickly as we can because we believe it is an unfair tax.

His Government last year initiated a program that had a \$500 maximum per farm family, and the criticisms that we heard repeatedly were from wives in the situations where the wife owned land solely in her name. She is not qualified for any rebate under your program because the husband used up the entire \$500

qualification. So that is why they were complaining. Widows were complaining for the reasons that you know about; and retired farmers were saying I am paying a tax and my tenant is getting the benefit and I have to live off my income from that land.

* (1640)

So those are the criticisms that came forward and we attempted to address it by paying it to the person who owns the land and everybody gets the same treatment, equal treatment, and if you are a responsible landlord, I am sure you will be considering your responsibility in terms of passing that on to your tenants. The tenants can negotiate it in their lease that some of that benefit or all of that benefit shall pass through them.

We received a large number of critical comments, particularly from wives, who felt, "Are we not equal?" One of the reasons they really got upset was when they found out that if a man and a woman are living in a common-law relationship, they both qualify; but if they are married, the wife did not qualify for her rebate. That really irritated the women to no end.

I will have to tell the former Minister that although it was positive to be contributing in the Budget \$12 million against education tax on farm land and you only paid out \$9 million—but that is not the issue I want to get to—the issue is that no matter whether it was a positive program but because of the limitations and those irritants that were in it for those groups of people that I just mentioned, really, you got more criticism and very little credit for the program. We have changed the program in this fashion and really the municipalities that have talked to me and the farm organizations that have talked to me indicated general agreement that we are directing it to the person who is paying the tax and there is a much higher level of satisfaction this year.

Mr. Uruski: Can the Minister indicate whether it would have been—I may have missed some of the comments that were made from individuals—that it was the wives that were being discriminated against? I thought that the criteria under the previous program was that it did not matter who applied. If it was the wife who applied on behalf of the farm, she would have got it; or if it was the husband of the family, it was per farm family. We treated families as units; we did not separate them. I imagine the change in that criteria, if the Government would have wanted to, would have been rather simple if you wanted to give two benefits per family. Essentially, that it is really the issue—is it not?—that if you wanted to extend the benefits to both spouses of a family, there would have been a rather easy way of doing it.

The other area, because we did allow, and the Minister did not comment on the question about corporations, we did allow two benefits per family farm corporation. I know there are pressures and discussions on whether there should be three multiples of benefits for family farm corporations.

How are corporations treated? Is there a differential between family farm corporations and other

corporations? Because I think we did have a criteria under the legislation that separated non-farming corporations from farming corporations. Has that exclusion, or that differential, been maintained in this program?

Mr. Findlay: All owners of farm land, if you are are talking corporation-owned land, there is no distinction between a family farm corporation and a non-family farm corporation.

Mr. Uruski: Then my arguments that I placed before, the Minister has in fact opened a major loophole in the program. He has basically allowed at least \$2 million of tax benefits that are paid by all Manitobans to in fact flow to what I would consider, and I think most Manitobans would consider, non-farming interests. I am surprised that my Liberal colleagues would consider that program a fair way of distributing the school tax. There is no doubt that everyone of us agrees that one of the issues in the farm community and one of the pressures that have been put on by farm organizations was to lessen the impact and the burden of school taxes on farm land and all Parties agreed with that proposition.

But what has occurred, Mr. Chairman, is, and I am surprised—I have to say I am surprised at Keystone Agricultural Producers for saying that this program is what they wanted because I do not believe that the majority of farmers in Keystone, unless they are very large farmers, because what I have found that unless you farm at least 6 quarters of land, which is above the Manitoba average farm size, you end up a net loser under the new Conservative scheme.

I have had a number of farmers who have called me. In fact, the Minister has a letter from a constituent of mine in the LGD of Fisher, who, in 1987—he operates a family farm corporation, 9.5 quarter sections of land—was really unhappy that all we provided in terms of school tax relief was a \$1,000 benefit to his family farm corporation, two shareholders. He had a reduction of \$1,000 in school tax and this year he pays \$2,877.54 in school taxes, and under this program—in fact, he wrote the Leader of the Opposition in 1987, now the Premier, who gave his letter to the critic, who said, look, we have now convinced this Government to do something; we know it is not enough; we will get them to do more. I think that letter may have even convinced him to vote otherwise for his Party in the last provincial election; I do not know.

Nevertheless, he now comes back to me and says, you know, I pulled this old letter out and I look at this new program. Last year, I got \$1,000 and this year, under this new scheme from the group that said we were going to remove all of it—in fact, in his letter to the Premier, he said that your candidate said that all school tax should be removed from farm land. Well, lo and behold, under the new scheme, he gets \$719.39—\$280 less this year than he got last year.

Now, Mr. Chairman, he did not even consider that there was an election commitment made by the NDP to double that benefit from \$500 to \$1,000, which, for his corporation, would have meant that he would have had a \$2,000 benefit.

How can this Minister—and he may not have heard many complaints as yet. And I will tell you what the difficulty has been, that there has been from the municipal officials because they had to fill out some forms and do some extra work. There was some unhappiness because they had some forms to fill out and people had to come in to fill out those forms. But, Mr. Chairman, I want to know from the Minister how he can justify for this farmer, in the LGD of Fisher, a reduction of almost \$300, almost a 30 percent decrease in benefits, on 9.5 quarter sections of land. Who are the gainers under this program that he says the farmers are much happier? Who actually is he supporting by this move because obviously this farmer is not, by any stretch of the imagination, a small farmer in Manitoba's average size, because I think the average size in Manitoba, by statistics, is what? Something like 600-some acres.

An Honourable Member: Closer to 800.

Mr. Uruski: 800? I thought Alberta was around 800 and Saskatchewan at 1,000 and we were between the 600 and 700 acre mark.

An Honourable Member: Between 700 and 800.

Mr. Uruski: So, Mr. Chairman, how can he stand here and indicate who is the beneficiary? Can he give me some statistics that show here are the gainers? Who are the gainers under this program?

* (1650)

Mr. Findlay: He asked who are the benefactors. They are the wives that we talked about, the widows that we talked about, and the retired farmers.

You have used the figure of \$2 million going to these big landlords somewhere up in the clouds. I do not know where you get that figure from. We have inquired as to whether that figure is available anywhere as to the amount of land that is owned by non-farming individuals and that figure has not been recorded. Prior to 1984, since The Farmlands Ownership Act went into being, there has been some record kept of who is purchasing farm land, but prior to that, that figure is not available.

Many of those people who are non-farming are retired farmers and the widows that we spoke about, who live on the income that they get from that land. Anytime, with any kind of landlord, you have certain set costs and you have to pass those costs on. In this case, if you have less costs, you have less to pass on. The man who is operating land clearly should get some benefit from the fact that the landlord is paying less costs.

In terms of your specific individual, I think it has been well-stated by the president of Keystone Agricultural Producers who said that if I am not paying the tax, why should I get the rebate? If I am paying less tax than somebody, naturally, I should get less rebate in a fair and equitable system. The people who are going to gain from this are those who qualified for less than \$500 last year because of the mechanics they make

in the calculations and those who are paying over \$2,000 in school tax—under \$500 in school tax and over \$2,000.00.

As I said, the general reaction from people is that those who are paying it are those who should have received the benefit. Another point to make is that the Crown land lessees will get the 25 percent rebate on every parcel of land that they operate.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Chairman, can the Minister tell me—he indicates that he does not know where my figures came from. I will tell him where my figures came from. From the actual figures of farm land that was purchased between '78 and '81 by non-farming interests, which total close—(Interjection)—Oh, Mr. Chairman, there is no doubt in my mind that they would not have wanted to—and I have made some adjustments in that figure as well. There is about half-a million acres there that were purchased between '78 and '82, before the change in The Farmlands Ownership Act, which allowed all Canadian corporations to buy farm land. There was a study done by the University of Manitoba under the direction of Daryl Kraft—I think the graduate student was Magnusson—who indicated that in terms of the study that she had undertaken between '71 and '78, that absentee ownership in Manitoba farm land increased from 1.1 million acres to 1.8 million acres.

Mr. Chairman, if you total those two, you are looking at a figure of approximately 2.3 million acres. I have reduced that figure by 300,000 for margin of error and for the possibility that there would have been some of those who in fact would have sold out, would have left.

When you look at that acreage, I do not know where the Minister, and maybe he will tell us, in actual numbers, who is getting the benefits and where the cut-off point is in terms of his new program, because while he says yes, it is those who have got more than \$500, I have shown him one farmer who has nine-and-a-half quarters that lost almost 300 under his program. That is by no stretch of the imagination, in anybody's standards, a small farm.

I do not know. Maybe some of the larger farms who pay more school tax will in fact be the beneficiaries and maybe he will tell us. But clearly, just on an average school tax, when you take this—let us see how outlandish my figures are. Where an eastern Canadian land dealer bought 7,031 acres for \$7.3 million—that is a \$1,000 an acre land—that is not cheap land in terms of agricultural land—\$1,000 an acre, \$44 million of school tax roughly paid on cultivated land in Manitoba, you are looking at an average of about \$4.40. I am sure this land, in terms of school tax, would be higher than that.

Mr. Findlay: Not necessarily. That is ridiculous.

Mr. Uruski: If you are looking at \$1,000 an acre land—(Interjection)—Mr. Chairman, the Minister says the \$1,000 an acre land does not have anything to do with school tax. I venture to say that farm land in a municipality that generally sold for \$1,000 an acre, their assessment would be not at \$3,000 or \$4,000 a quarter section; it would be at \$6,000, \$7,000 or \$8,000 a

quarter. When you have an assessment at \$6,000 or \$8,000 a quarter, there is no \$4 an acre school tax. I can assure you it will be far higher than that.

Even using those figures, your program is providing this so-called farmer, this owner of farm land who is not farming it, a benefit of over \$30,000.00. How much money could you have given those widows if you had just changed your criteria for those widows that you wanted to provide benefits, or for those farm wives, if you wanted to change that criteria rather than giving this individual \$30,000.00?

How can this Minister say—does he really expect anyone to believe that this land dealer will in fact come to the farmer who is leasing it and say you are such a nice person and you are leasing my land, I am going to give you a rebate; I am going pass this \$30,000 on to you. Can you imagine anyone doing that? I could see someone who is in the neighbourhood in Manitoba possibly doing that, but for the Minister to stand up in this House and say that this land dealer from eastern Canada is going to be so generous now that land prices in Manitoba have dropped over the years that now he is going to turn over a \$30,000 benefit? He has got to be kidding. Does he expect even the president of Keystone Agricultural Producers to buy that line? Do you expect Keystone to buy this line?

This Minister, I believe, should rethink those criteria. Because I can tell you, I am asking the farm community to come back and say, did I gain or did I lose under this program; and how can this Government justify a \$2 million gift to non-farming interests?

Here is the former president of Keystone Agricultural Producers coming into this House, Mr. Chairman, how could he advise his colleagues in Keystone to say this is a good program? How many of their farmers are going to be net beneficiaries? And if they are under this program, either they have very large tracts of land or they really have not seen through it.

* (1700)

Mr. Chairman: Order, please. I hesitate to interrupt the Member. The hour is now 5 p.m. I am interrupting the proceedings for Private Members' Hour. The committee will return at 8 p.m. this evening.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 5 p.m., it is time for Private Members' Business.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

RES. NO. 21—VACCINE DAMAGED CHILDREN

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed resolution of the Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek (Mrs. Yeo), Resolution No. 21, Vaccine Damaged Children, the Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek.

Mrs. Iva Yeo (Sturgeon Creek): I move, seconded by the Member for Transcona (Mr. Kozak), that:

WHEREAS thousands of Canadian children are vaccinated each year against a variety of illnesses; and

WHEREAS many of those children are considered high-risk children and should not receive certain vaccines due to harmful vaccine-related side effects which may cause death; and

WHEREAS such children are at risk because of lack of identification of predispositions to such side effects and because of an inadequate side effect monitoring system; and

WHEREAS careful monitoring of vaccinations is necessary to establish the prevalence and nature of vaccine-related side effects; and

WHEREAS a monitoring system would serve as a basis for ensuring our children are not placed unnecessarily at risk and could help ensure appropriate follow-up care; and

WHEREAS such a monitoring system requires the reporting of any vaccine-related side effects in a careful, consistent and thorough manner to form part of a central provincial and national data base; and

WHEREAS such a system would entail the education of professionals, and especially health professionals, in the identification of vaccine-related side effects.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba call upon the Department of Health to consider developing and distributing educational materials to parents and health professionals regarding the side effects of vaccination; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly call upon the Department of Health to consider monitoring such vaccine-related side effects; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly direct the Clerk to forward a copy of this Resolution to the Federal Minister of Health, to the Ministers of Health in each province and territory, and to the Association for Vaccine Damaged Children in the Province of Manitoba.

MOTION presented.

Mrs. Yeo: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise and speak to this particular resolution.

Everyday, every year, many thousands of young citizens are vaccinated against a variety of diseases; diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus and polio. Routinely, these children develop minor problems. I know, as a mother of four children, having witnessed the usual sequence of symptoms that the newly vaccinated child presents—slight fever, lethargy, perhaps some local inflammation, a touch of anorexia, etc.—this is normal for children who have been vaccinated.

Occasionally, more serious symptoms occur. It is my concern that the mothers of these children are not

always aware of these more serious symptoms. How many of us as mothers were told that if the child had shrill cries following a vaccination that this was an unusual symptom? Certainly, I think the majority of mothers anticipated that a child might not be terribly exuberant with having needles injected into them, but how many of us were aware of some of the other side effects? How many of us were aware that if a child did not move its arm following vaccinations that this should be reported fairly soon to the physician?

Some physicians may attribute these more serious signs directly to the administration of the vaccination, others may attribute the signs to other concerns. Certainly, if the reactions occur within 24 to 48 hours of administration, it might be fairly obvious. I know for a fact that when I took my children to the pediatrician, I anticipated, certainly after having had No. 1 child, certainly with Nos. 2, 3, and 4, that evening might be a little rough as far as caring for that particular child was concerned; but I did not anticipate—no one informed me—that three days, a week afterwards, there might be some problem occurring that I should be watching for. If three days-plus elapses and symptoms occur, the waters may be muddy, so to speak. The mother may not have any thought of connecting this with receipt of the vaccination.

* (1710)

When I was first presented with the concern, the beginning of May, my intent at that time was to look towards the establishment of a Bill, a similar Bill as Ontario passed in April of 1987, Bill 52, with regard to vaccine-damaged children. However, after attempting to create a Bill and having in fact a draft Bill prepared, all of a sudden, the Department of Health came forward, the Manitoba Medical Association had calls in to us to say: why are you interfering with what we are already doing? You are interfering with our particular mandate and we are aware of the concerns of the Association for Vaccine-Damaged Children and we do not think that it is necessary to legislate such a Bill.

We still were not totally convinced and we did follow-up research. We found out from Ontario that the Bill does have some problems; however, the Bill also has some merit, that the problems are more with the policing aspect of this particular Bill. The problems are more with who was in the room with the physician when the physician administered the vaccination, when the physician administered the directive to the mother or to the parents or to the guardian or whoever in fact might take that child into the physician's office. How are we going to determine whether, in fact, the physician, the pediatrician, the family practitioner, did give sufficient directive to the parent? Was the parent advised of the adverse affects of vaccination adequately? And I can appreciate that.

I can appreciate that in Ontario, after the Bill was passed, there was a little kaffuffle and there was a little stir-up of concern and I think perhaps some areas are now settling down to complacency and like several Bills, I think Bill 52 is sort of shoved into the background and in some cases it is overlooked.

I phoned—I believe he is the Director of the Infectious Diseases for Pediatricians in Ontario—a Dr. Ronald Gold

in Toronto. He works out of the Toronto Sick Children's Hospital. He is an outstanding and internationally recognized pediatrician. I asked him—being familiar with Bill 52—what his reactions were to it. He said that as far as the pediatricians in Ontario were concerned, and the family practitioners in Ontario were concerned, that there were mixed messages, that the mandatory reporting was a good thing that had come out of Bill 52 and that in fact the physicians were becoming more and more conscious of the reactions of children to vaccinations and that the reporting system was becoming better, but he said it is very, very slow.

Mr. Speaker, he said that the collecting of the information with regard to side effects and the reporting of these side effects was a good thing and that the physicians were becoming more and more cognizant and careful of the reporting of side effects.

As far as the preparing of families was concerned, as far as directing the parents of the children to watch for these side effects was concerned, he hoped that this was better, but it was the feeling of the pediatrician, the feeling of the family practitioners, that it was never too great a problem. I argued somewhat with him in a rather humble fashion, I would hope, and said that I, as a mother, had never been told, had never once been informed that there would be anything other than the usual fever, etc., for a child, that if my child had been shrieking violently, I would have said, as a new mother, I suppose that is to be expected after having had a vaccination.

Dr. Gold told me that in Ontario one of the biggest problems they had was with the public health nurse aspect and that they were looking into that very carefully because one of the parts of Bill No. 52 states that there must be a very thorough history taken of the child prior to the administration of the vaccination. That is fine for the pediatrician because the family practitioner or pediatrician does take a very thorough history, but the public health nurse does not. The public health nurse may take a very superficial, and I am certainly not knocking the public health nurses because I think they are doing a tremendous job. I think they have the opportunity, and this is perhaps not the time to discuss the pros and cons of what the public health nurses are doing, but I think they do have an opportunity and they can be utilized better and that they could be given the mandate to do more thorough histories and physical examinations of children prior to doing vaccinations or giving vaccinations. However, the reality of the situation is that children are often lined up and certainly on some of the reserves and some of the northern parts, I think you will find that there is a lineup of moms and babes and that they are inoculated and sent on their way and I wish you luck.

Dr. Gold told me that there was some difficulty with the legal implications, that there was a real concern with the legal implications and that they had to look at that as far as the public health nursing aspect was concerned.

After having presented this particular resolution to the Manitoba Medical Association, we, as a caucus, met with them some weeks ago and we shared our discussion with them and we shared our concerns. They

assured us that they were looking into all of these things, they were looking into our concerns about the reporting of side effects and that they were looking into the side effects monitoring system. They promised us that this was going to be in the forefront. They promised us that they would take a more careful, cautious look at the identification of high-risk children, that following a more in-depth history taking, they would be looking at children with respect to those infants who have a family history of seizure disorders.

We are wondering whether children, or they were wondering—they are concerned too with whether children who do come from families who have a history of seizure disorders, whether these children should (a) receive the vaccination; or (b) receive a milder administration of the vaccination to test their sensitivity and then perhaps move into a more thorough amount or a usual amount.

MMA talked about appropriate and ongoing information to parents so that they can make informed decisions because we said that we felt that—and there were, as you know, we on this side of the House have the greatest number of women in our caucus. So the women present said that they had not been informed. Not one of us had been informed of strange side effects, that we knew the possibility of the usual but none of us had been informed, so that we felt that although we have been indoctrinated—is that too strong a term. We have been raised with the idea that a vaccination is the only way. I certainly would not have questioned any of my children having vaccinations.

Wow, only two minutes left. I would not have questioned that. I do believe that the cornerstone of preventive medicine is vaccination. I have seen death from a young nine-year-old who did not receive any form of vaccination. This was a sister of a student of mine who died of diphtheria. And you say, how can you in this day in age? I can imagine the devastation. I witnessed the devastation of that child's family because she had not been vaccinated. So in no way would I advocate down with vaccination, but I do advocate informed decisions. I do advocate that parents should be able to make the decision, yes, I want my child vaccinated and I am aware of the risk that might be there. I do not want to wave a flag and say, cautious, cautious to every soul. I think they should be informed.

The education of our med students is key. I think the education of our med students and the ongoing education of our physicians in Manitoba is very, very important. I think the med students are given a cursory lecture and they are told about the need for vaccination and the possible side effects and the possible risks. If this information is not consistently reinforced, I think we are risking the young children in our province. I think there could be research. I would hope that we could encourage the Winnipeg Foundation, the St. Boniface Research Foundation, the Winnipeg Clinic Research Foundation. There are all kinds of areas where there could be additional research perhaps going into studying the side effects. I was told just today of a young baby who had a vaccination, a first vaccination, had a violent reaction, had the second vaccination and was found dead in his crib four days later. That was

in September of 1988. And I have lots more to say, but I will save it for next time.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): I am pleased with the Member for Sturgeon Creek's (Mrs. Yeo) comments, particularly a couple of minutes back where she indicated a personal experience of a friend of hers whose nine-year-old sibling had not been vaccinated and died of diphtheria. I mean, that would be very devastating to all involved, and indicated in using that example that by no means did she intend, with this resolution, to speak against the immunization programs. I appreciate that and that certainly was not read into the resolution.

* (1720)

The area of immunization is a growing one where research is of course bringing new capabilities to the immunization program as one of probably the most key preventive health programs that we have in the modern medical world, if you will. I would like to share with my honourable friends just some idea, some concept of what we do in the Province of Manitoba.

I think it is fair to say that without exception that Governments represented by political parties of all political stripes have supported the immunization program over the past number of years. I think it is also fair to say that, particularly with certain immunization programs, that there have been some reactive difficulties with some of the recipients and that has caused, I think it is also fair to say, a growing amount of concern and alarm among parents. There are a very sincere group of parents who are greatly concerned about the potential side effects of immunization and their concerns ought not to be taken lightly, but the area of concern I want to elaborate on and I want to give you some information in terms of what the Province of Manitoba currently does.

In terms of immunization, we spend \$2 million a year. The immunization program in Manitoba only uses those vaccines which are federally licensed and tested, and those are the only vaccines that we use in Manitoba. In current discussion with the MMA, for instance, they are requesting the use of a vaccine for a younger group of children. Still the research has not proven its total effectiveness. The department's decision made by expert overview is to say that we do not proceed with that further immunization at this time because we are not certain it will contribute positively to the immunization program.

With the immunization program in the province, the physicians and other administrators of vaccines are given full information in terms of the potential adverse reaction. It is the expectation of the Department of Health—and I think this is where we have some fall short of actual performance versus expectation, but it is the expectation that information will be passed on to parents. I think it is probably fair to say that maybe it is not done as completely as we would like to see. That would be what I would consider to be a flaw in the system. However, I think that all the participants in the system are attempting, with as much informed information as possible, to make parents aware of potential difficulties.

There are a couple of areas specific to the resolution that I want to indicate to my honourable friends. First of all, in terms of the first RESOLVED, that we ought to be distributing educational material. Those are available and are distributed, as I have indicated earlier, to those physicians and public health nurses who administer the vaccines. That information is also available upon request to parents who may wish to avail themselves of all of the current and relevant information in terms of vaccination and potential side affects.

With pertussis there is a particular strong precautionary note. That has been the one vaccine I think that has probably caused more controversy over the last several years than any other. Basically, what I am saying is that the department currently is complying with the intent of the first RESOLVED in this resolution, in that we are providing substantial amounts of information to both those administering vaccination and parents. It is not an automatic compulsory mailing to parents with children of vaccination age, but the information is available on request.

Secondly, in terms of the monitoring, I want to indicate that the department does have the required reporting system whereby any child experiencing an adverse reaction to vaccination, the physician or the public health official must report that to the department. We, in turn, in the department are under an obligation of course to report that to Ottawa, so it becomes part of the national data bank on adverse reaction to vaccines. That is an expected reporting system that is in place. I cannot sincerely and honestly say whether it is always complied with and whether parents always come forward with reactions from their children, and whether the reactions are severe enough, etc., etc. It is part of the system and the reactions are, of course, reported to Ottawa and become part of, as I say, the national data base.

We are also participating right now in a federal-provincial task force, the Department of Health is, on a vaccine injury compensation plan and that of course stems from some of the unique cases which require some form of compensation because of an adverse reaction to vaccination. Hopefully, when implemented, if we can come to an agreement provincially with the federal Government, the intent of the plan is to ensure speedy assessment in compensation for vaccine related injuries.

In terms of the move made in Ontario, where they have legislated certain requirements in terms of immunization and vaccine reaction, that the only province that has attempted legislation and, to date, I think it is fair to say that the jury is very much out on whether that is the most effective way to go. I think there are opinions on both sides of the fence and certainly it has not to date delivered the kind of result that was expected when the legislation was passed. So other provinces, and Manitoba included, are holding back on that pending a more full analysis of the Ontario experience.

One of the problems that has apparently come out of the Ontario legislation, which I want to share with my honourable friends, according to conversations,

discussions and information passed on to staff in Manitoba Health, one of the difficulties with the Ontario legislation is in terms of informed consent. The example given is difficult, that you have senior citizens in personal care homes who are unable to give informed consent for rather routine vaccinations for influenza, for instance. A lack of that ability to give informed consent has caused some problems, I am informed by the Department of Health.

So that the legislation is not by any means the complete answer. Currently, Alberta has probably the best information system in terms of reporting adverse vaccine reaction. Their system is done entirely voluntarily, as is our system. We are in the process in the Department of Health right now of developing an immunization monitoring system which will be in place in January 1989. With that monitoring system in place in January of 1989, it is expected that we will have the most comprehensive system in Canada for both identifying high-risk children which is an area that my honourable friend mentioned in introducing the resolution; and secondly, in tracking all the adverse reactions in the Province of Manitoba.

So I think the department is well on the way to addressing some of the concerns voiced by my honourable friend from Sturgeon Creek in introducing this resolution, i.e., that the monitoring system should be up and running by January '89, identification of high-risk children will be part of that, and also of course the monitoring and recording, tracing and tracking of adverse reaction will be much more mature in the province than we expected. This system will give us even a better system of monitoring than what Alberta currently has, which is reputed to be the best provincial system in Canada.

I want to deal briefly because I think that, in terms of what the department is already undertaking, that we have addressed the two RESOLVEDs in the resolution. I want to deal in a more general terms with immunization as a preventative program that has grown over the years and how its value goes unnoticed until we have a difficult circumstance caused by either, as my honourable friend from Sturgeon Creek indicated, the incidents of a friend of hers whose sibling was not vaccinated for diphtheria and then of course the other side of the coin where there has been a very serious reaction to vaccination by a high-risk child.

Those are the extreme cases which both prove and disprove the value of the immunization program and hence make decision-making maybe a little more challenging now. But I think it is fair to say that probably one of the great savers of life, limb and health in Canada and North America and in the modern free world has been the development of an immunization program. All one has to do is do as I did on Thursday and tour municipal hospitals to see municipal hospitals and see some of the old iron lungs that they still have there, and how thankful we all have to be that the poliomyelitis vaccine was developed because that was an incredibly devastating disease. I know I have friends that still are suffering from effects of that and, by and large, vaccination has eliminated that and eliminated the need for the iron lung. That is only but one example. There are many others.

* (1730)

The pertussis vaccine has caused problems. There is no question about that. There have been a number of lawsuits and some of them are still pending in terms of the use of pertussis vaccine. But I want to share with my friend some information. I am not denigrating the adverse reaction of certain individuals and that is the importance of our monitoring system, to identify high-risk children, because we have to do that so they will not be inadvertently administered pertussis vaccine if perchance they would be amongst the high-risk category.

But basically, in England—I will give you some figures—due to promotion, 79 percent of eligible individuals were vaccinated in England in 1973. The unfavourable publicity that ensued post-1973 resulted in only 31 percent of eligible individuals being vaccinated by 1978. What the result was, was rather unfortunate because from 1977 through to 1980, a major pertussis or whooping cough epidemic broke out. In England, 102,500 individuals contracted whooping cough because of a drop in vaccination. The rate skyrocketed and of those 102,500, 5,000 were hospitalized with the disease at rather substantial cost. Two hundred of those people developed secondary pneumonia, 83 percent experienced seizures and 28 died in England.

Similarly, in Japan, from 1971 to 1975, 85 percent of the children were immunized against pertussis, and at that time, from '71 to '75, approximately 206 cases of whooping cough per year were identified. But in 1976 in Japan, the immunization rate fell to 14 percent from 85 percent, and as a result over 13,000 cases per year were reported when the immunization dropped and there were 41 deaths per year from whooping cough. So that, although I recognize that in the case of pertussis, there can be substantial and serious adverse reaction where public opinion has caused people to move away from vaccination for whooping cough. In England and Japan the results have been rather devastating with substantial incidents of whooping cough, substantial hospitalization and, indeed, some deaths.

So, in closing, I simply want to say to my honourable friend from Sturgeon Creek (Mrs. Yeo), that I appreciate her bringing this resolution forward because I think it is important that we all know that within Government it is recognized, the difficulties that can accompany an immunization program. I simply want to indicate that within the department and within the medical profession and the health profession in general we are addressing some of those concerns in terms of information monitoring, so that we can assure the greatest degree of safety for those children who are being immunized in the province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): The New Democratic Party caucus welcomes the debate and the discussion on this resolution concerning the potential adverse reactions resulting from immunization with certain vaccinations on children who receive them.

However, we believe the resolution itself to be seriously flawed, primarily because it does not go far

enough. I note that while there is very little difference between what the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) has said on the record on behalf of the Government and what is being recommended by the resolution by the Liberal critic, it is also possible to say, and I think you will agree at the end of my remarks, that even though we think this resolution is seriously flawed, we are not all that far apart with respect to what could be some improvements in this area. I will be addressing our specific concerns later during my comments, but before doing so I want to, as did the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), make some general comments on the more global issues.

Vaccinations, like all medical procedures without exception, are not without some medical risk. In the case of the diphtheria pertussis, tetanus and polio vaccines, or as it is referred to, the DPTP vaccine as well as others, serious adverse reactions, while relatively rare—as has been noted by all Members here—can be quite dangerous and can include serious and permanent brain damage, including blindness, seizures and mental retardation. In some instances, we are aware that the adverse reactions can also result in death.

These immunizations, while relatively rare, in some instances have been linked to the death of immunized children and to the Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. These potential—and I underscore the word “potential,” as I think all speakers have—adverse reactions in individuals, although occurring only in a relatively small number of cases and for that reason are considered to be statistically rare, are for those individuals who suffer them, and their families, major occurrences in their life and can have serious and severe long-lasting consequences including, as was indicated by all Members of the House—I do not think there was any disagreement—including permanent damage and death.

So, on the other hand, these vaccines have all but eliminated a number of very serious diseases that were epidemic and could in fact become epidemic again and were devastating and could become devastating again and have eliminated those diseases for hundreds of thousands, and indeed millions, and tens of millions, and hundreds of millions of individuals and families. In the past, far too many individuals suffered the serious and the severe consequences of those diseases. We can all be thankful for the major advances and the major improvements over the years which have come about as a result of progressive immunization programs. But there is a dilemma here. The dilemma is a matter of balancing the common good or the collective good against the need to protect the individual.

There is no doubt in anyone's mind that these vaccines in general do more good than harm. But where they do harm, in many instances, they do serious harm and the consequences have been severe and devastating. I think when we talk about the need for a comprehensive immunization program and the need for these vaccines, and at the same time you talk about protecting the individual from the adverse effects to the extent possible from these vaccines, you are not talking about two mutually exclusive objectives.

I do not consider the resolution by the Liberal critic to be an anti-immunization resolution. It is far from

that. As a matter of fact I interpret it as being a resolution that says immunizations do provide a great deal of benefit and vaccinations, including some of the vaccinations which were noted specifically, do provide a great deal of benefit, but we must be also concerned about the protection of the individual.

* (1740)

Brain damage or death, whether it is caused by the disease in the first instance, as was referenced by the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), or was caused by the vaccination that has been created to rid the earth of this disease or any particular disease is still in the end brain damage or death.

The individual who suffers brain damage or death really does not care as to how that happened—the individual, not society, but the individual. The impact on that person in these instances, usually an infant, and their family, is just as cruel whether it was created by a disease or a vaccination intended to eliminate that disease.

We, as legislators, by our position do have some ability to address these issues, and for that reason alone we also have some responsibility to do so. So we must see through the dilemma, look past the problem to find the answers and to find the solutions if they indeed do exist.

In this case, the NDP caucus believes that there are some answers, even if there are no full solutions or no complete solutions. That complete solution, of course, would be to develop an entirely safe vaccine with absolutely no contra indications, with absolutely no chance of adverse impacts, with absolutely no adverse effects or side effects. That of course is not possible given today's technology and our level of knowledge.

It may be possible in the future, but we have to deal with the reality of the day. The sad truth is that there are going to be certain individuals who are at risk to adverse effects from vaccinations and who can suffer serious and adverse reactions if they receive certain immunizations. Our task, I believe, in looking past the dilemma to at least some of the answers is to reduce that risk as much as is possible.

That is why we find some fault with the resolution as presented today. We do not believe it does as much as is possible, nor do we believe it does as much as is needed. That is no reflection on the author, because I think there are different philosophical approaches and even different practical approaches that we bring to our task as legislators, but our assessment of it is that it does not go far enough. The resolution itself identifies the problems, but I believe it understates some of them and ignores one in particular.

There are high-risk children who should not receive certain vaccines because they have a predisposition to harmful, even fatal side effects. We know that to be the case. They should not be vaccinated for that reason, but in order to prevent their vaccination, in order to ensure they are protected, in other words, they must be identified as high risk. They are not always identified at present, I think in large part because parents,

educators and the medical profession do not always know enough about either the potential side effects of the vaccine, from a non-professional perspective, or the predisposition of the individual child to the possible side effects from a professional perspective, so there should be education.

That is called for in the resolution and we support that, but that is only the first step. As important as it may be, it is indeed only the first step. The New Democratic Party caucus believes that one of the most important aspects of any educational program must be directed at the parents, in order to make them able to identify any potential problems.

The Minister in his comments indicated that the present efforts to do this by the Government fall short, or he says this is an area where they could fall short and they need improvement. I believe the education is one short step towards that improvement, but there has to be more action taken in that.

For them to be able to fulfill their role as parents, they must know that there could be problems. The Liberal critic, when introducing the resolution, indeed herself said that as a mother in the first instance, she was not aware of all the adverse reactions that could happen. So parents must be notified or educated as to what a predisposition could be and how to review family histories so that they can identify where there might be a higher risk for their own children to experience adverse reactions from specific vaccines. With that information they can become active participants, along with their physician and other medical personnel, in protecting their children's health.

The Minister says that there are now sheets available to parents upon request that provide substantial information, but that there is not a comprehensive automatic mailing to ensure that all parents or all residents are aware of the possible adverse effects. You do not need that comprehensive mailing. What you need is a system that provides for information to be provided to parents upon the birth of their children, and also information to be provided directly to parents when their children are taken in for immunizations.

Therefore, we believe there should be a mandatory requirement for physicians to notify parents of both the benefits and the potential side effects of the vaccines they administer. As well, there should be a similar mandatory requirement for medical professionals to provide such information to parents at the time of birth of their children.

That mandatory information should clearly outline the benefits of immunization programs and the positive benefits that are experienced by society in general and individuals in specific, as a result of immunization programs and the vaccination of their children.

At the same time, it should clearly detail potential adverse effects and possible predispositions which could act as warning signs to possible side effects.

The Liberal critic in her remarks referenced a case which just happened in September, one of which I have been informed as well, about a mother who brought her child in for vaccination and after the second shot

the child died. I understand as well that there were some adverse side effects in the first instance. Mr. Speaker, if there was a mandatory requirement that the mother or the parent be notified of that adverse side effect, perhaps in this instance that individual could have gone back to the doctor and said, I believe my child is at risk because this has happened. And the doctor would have to take note because there was a mandatory requirement to report it, although one would hope that they would do so without a mandatory requirement. The fact is, if they do it without the mandatory requirement, there is no problem with making it mandatory because they are already doing it in any event. It is just making certain that not only all the good physicians are doing it but those who might not be doing it do it as well. And that is one of our responsibilities as legislators.

* (1750)

That child might have been saved in that instance. And if that child was saved and the other children that we have heard about were saved because of their better knowledge that came about because of informed consent to the vaccination process, then we have done some very good work as legislators. We have accomplished something. And that is why I believe that the resolution, as it stands, does not go far enough. I think that there must be that mandatory requirement so that there is a requirement for informed consent. If the consent is indeed informed, it will mean that, if it is balanced information that is being provided, that people will not move away from vaccinations but they will be better able to cope with the adverse effects of vaccinations if any should happen. The cases that I have read about, in large part, happened after the second set of vaccinations and therefore could have been prevented in some instances.

There is also a need of mandatory reporting by physicians and, where appropriate, hospitals and other medical facilities and medical personnel, where adverse reactions are suspected to be as a result of vaccinations. This will enable better research. The research is crucial to identifying the extent of this problem and also to identifying ways to deal with it. There is also the matter of compensation which is being considered now in a number of provinces as well as a number of states.

Mr. Speaker, my time today is not going to allow me to get into any detail on that particular subject but other speakers will be speaking to it. We believe that there should be a no-fault compensation program available to parents, although that is not the primary goal of the resolution or the primary goal of our talk here today. Our debate here today is to prevent the need for compensation. But where those efforts fail then, there should be just compensation available to the parents.

So those are a number of the issues which we feel are important to this debate. We believe that more forceful action is required. I think that over the next little while, as we debate this, and I can tell you that the New Democratic Party Caucus will be consulting with others with respect to how that forceful action can be brought about, we may come to a consensus that

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there is nothing wrong with making the reporting mandatory, given that it is already in place. There is nothing wrong with making informed consent mandatory, given that it is already an objective that we all share.

All the mandatory provisions do is ensure that all people are being treated equally, no matter who they have as a doctor or who they have as a public health nurse or which hospital they go to, they will be treated in an equitable, fair way and receive the information necessary to them to provide informed consent. We believe that will result in a better immunization program. That is our goal here. We believe that will result in better protection for individuals. That is our goal here. We believe the dilemma that I referenced earlier is not so difficult that we cannot overcome it to a great extent by some more forceful action.

Mr. John Angus (St. Norbert): I rise to speak on this important resolution with some encouragement and some hope.

The Honourable Member of the Government is encouraged by the resolution, acknowledges the problem and wants to do things to help bring about an awareness, an understanding. He wants to encourage the ideas that are being put forward by my colleague.

While the Members from the New Democratic Party are proposing changes, and while they are concerned about the depth of the resolution, I think that fundamentally they are supporting the resolution. I am encouraged by that as well because so often we find good ideas, good resolutions and instruments that we can all agree upon. We can attempt to make them better, but too frequently ideas of this nature will die on the Order Paper, they go to the bottom of the list. They do not get referred to specific committees; they do not have the appropriate actions that follows through.

While I appreciate and applaud the efforts of the former Government in their belated recognition of this problem and their indications of supporting a liberal vision of addressing this particular problem, I am concerned that we may get dragged down to discussions and to proposed changes and to political arguments, instead of positively trying to address, to the best of our abilities, because I am sure that they will, when it comes time to appropriately do it. But I am very fearful that this idea, which is basically, fundamentally, good common-sense legislation is going to not have the appropriate follow-through, it is not going to have the will of a collective Government, collective elected representatives, in order to make it happen.

Mr. Speaker, if it was, if the collective will was there, we could very quickly and very easily ask that the Department of Health provide the mothers of newborn babies with information such as this. Make them aware of it and educate the parents that these particular potential problems and these concerns should be recognized and should be dealt with.

So I look at this resolution, and while I am respectful of the indicated changes that are going to be coming

from my colleague to the left, I say to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) that it is within your privy to enact the requests that are being made, the sensible requests that are being made by my colleague, the Member for Sturgeon Creek (Mrs. Yeo), and that is to call upon the Department of Health to consider developing and dispersing educational material to parents. That is not a difficult thing to do. And I notice, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister of Health shakes his head in a negative fashion, obviously disagreeing.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Health, on a point of order.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I realize my honourable friend from St. Norbert wants to be cute with this resolution and, if he had listened to what I said, I pointed out that in the first WHEREAS that is exactly what the department is doing, is providing information. In the second point, the monitoring system is being developed and will be in place in January 1989. I was shaking my head because of his apparent inability to listen to what I had said during this debate.

Mr. Speaker: What is the Minister's point? A dispute over the facts is not a point of order.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Speaker, through you, thank you very much to the Minister of Health for the information that he is supportive of this resolution and that he is going to be doing the things that are required.

It is a rare coincidence, Mr. Speaker, when Members of the Opposition and Members of the Government can work together to try and accomplish something that is required. And while I appreciate what the Minister is saying, clearly there is something not working as well as it could be within his department. So I appreciate the initiative that he is taking and I appreciate him identifying that he is going to be addressing the resolution because, on the surface of it, it does not seem anything less than humane and common sense.

For this Government to enact something of this nature, in depth, in detail, with an action program that is going to bring some solace and some comfort to members of the public, that is going to inform the Manitoba Medical Association of the requirements and the expectations that we, as parents and as legislators, have established and are prepared to establish. And if the resolution spurs a little bit of review and a little bit of further education, cooperation and assistance through the department and raises the desire within the departments for identification and addressing of this particular problem, then I am indeed encouraged. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that like so many programs and so many suggestions that are made, that it is not considered as something entirely wrong or out of place simply because it has come from a Member of the Opposition.

I think that this particular piece of legislation, this resolution, has got and can very easily have all-Party support. The Minister has indicated that it already has considerable support from his department. The Member from the Opposition of the NDP has suggested that

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they are very supportive and would like to see just a few minor changes to it.

I am looking forward to the Estimate process, to the opportunity to discuss with the Minister, to see what dollars and cents and what action plans he is prepared to put forward on the Order Paper to support this very, very worthwhile resolution. I would encourage and urge

all Members of the Legislature to support this common-sense approach to solving problems.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock? The hour being 6 p.m., I am leaving the Chair with the understanding the House will reconvene at 8 p.m. in Committee of Supply.