



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, June 1, 1992

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Elijah Harper (Rupert's Land): I beg to present the petition of Leonard Fiddler, Zack Harper, Marilyn Wood and others requesting the government show its strong commitment to aboriginal self-government by considering reversing its position on the AJI by supporting the recommendation within its jurisdiction and implementing a separate and parallel justice system.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Carolyn Gregory, Sandy Roy, Dorothy Jones and others requesting the government consider reviewing the funding of the Brandon General Hospital to avoid layoffs and cutbacks to vital services.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans), and it complies with the privileges and practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba, humbly sheweth that:

The Brandon General Hospital is the major health care institution for southwestern Manitoba; and

The citizens of Brandon and southwestern Manitoba are deeply concerned and disturbed about the downsizing of the hospital and view it as a threat to the quality of health care in the region; and

The Manitoba government has chosen not to review the current budget to ensure that cutbacks to vital services do not occur; and

The administration of the hospital has been forced to take drastic measures including the elimination of the Palliative Care Unit and gynecological wards, along with the layoff of over 30 staff, mainly licensed practical nurses, to cope with a funding shortfall of over \$1.3 million; and

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislature of the Province of Manitoba may be pleased to request that the government of Manitoba consider reviewing the funding of the Brandon General Hospital.

* * *

I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), and it complies with the privileges and practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

THAT child abuse is a crime abhorred by all good citizens of our society, but nonetheless it exists in today's world; and

It is the responsibility of the government to recognize and deal with this most vicious of crimes; and

Programs like the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign raise public awareness and necessary funds to deal with crime; and

The decision to terminate the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign will hamper the efforts of all good citizens to help abused children.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislature of the Province of Manitoba may be pleased to request that the government of Manitoba show a strong commitment to deal with Child Abuse by considering restoring the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. James McCrae (Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I have a brief statement for the House.

In line with the undertaking I gave the House at the start of the current round of constitutional discussions, I would like to provide a brief status report on the multilateral meetings which took place in Montreal and Toronto over the last two weeks.

As the news media have already reported, the ministers and aboriginal leaders have agreed to extend the process past the original target date of May 31. We will be meeting again, probably in Ottawa, on Tuesday and Wednesday of next week, June 9 and 10.

When we concluded our Toronto sessions late Saturday afternoon, we all agreed that our discussions should continue, but that we all needed a little time away from the table to reflect on the key issues which are still outstanding.

A great deal of work has been done; but several vital issues remain unresolved. Senate reform is at the top of the list. Support for the Triple-E model is holding firm, but the larger provinces are continuing to resist the principle of equality. We have a tough fight ahead of us, Mr. Speaker, but the more I hear the arguments for the alternatives, the more I am convinced we are right to stand firm for genuine Senate reform; however, Senate reform is not the only critical issue still outstanding.

* (1335)

Another is the strengthened equalization system, and protection for Established Programs Financing for medicare and higher education. The federal government is prepared to concede on a few minor cosmetic changes, but so far it has not offered any meaningful constitutional security for the programs which are so fundamental to holding our country together.

We have made it clear, as our task force did, that these kinds of safeguards must be part of the Canada round. There are other major outstanding issues. Federal proposals for a common market clause were just put back on the table on Friday morning and are only now being analyzed. The amending formula is also far from resolved. As we have emphasized over and over again, no final decisions have been made on any of the elements in an overall package.

How much further we can get next week remains to be seen, but there is a clear willingness by all the participants to keep trying. There are flaws in the process. At times, it has become all too reminiscent of the Meech Lake round two years ago. The time pressures have been intense, but this is the only process we have at the moment, and it is working well enough to be kept going while we try to narrow the options further.

Like most Canadians, we want to get these discussions completed and behind us, but we also want to put together a package that is fair and balanced, that meets Canada's needs and Manitoba's needs. That will take more time, but we do not really have a choice. The job has to be done, and we all want to do it as carefully and as well as we can. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): I thank the minister for his statement. I know that the minister is going through a very, very challenging time on behalf of the government and the people of Manitoba in representing the all-party task force, and we wish him well to achieve the objectives stated in the all-party task force report. The number of days he is putting in and the probable amount of time and days he will put in in the future, I know, are not easy ones. We wish him well, and we wish the government well in achieving the objectives of the Manitoba task force report.

Mr. Speaker, I noted that last week the minister was making some statements about not seeing drafts of various materials and being very concerned. At one point, I think, Manitoba was very optimistic about the process. I remember the Premier (Mr. Filmon) stating that Joe Clark would be a breath of fresh air in the constitutional process compared to Senator Lowell Murray, and it appears the minister is meeting with some of the same tactics that unfortunately confronted Canadians and Manitobans some time ago.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the all-party task force, we are very interested in what we consider to be the No. 1 priority of Manitobans, and that is the need to maintain and enhance a strong federal government. The minister noted the equalization and EPF priorities of Manitoba, and we support him on strengthening those provisions in our Canadian Constitution.

* (1340)

We also note that the issue of division of powers has been reported as having devolution of powers to the provinces. We recall that when the Dobbie-Beaudoin report was made public a couple of weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, ten weeks ago, the Premier stated that division of powers would reduce the federal government to "a post office". We also share those concerns as the Premier stated before, and we are very interested in the division of powers proposals in the rolling draft as we understand it.

In terms of aboriginal people, Mr. Speaker, they are making tremendous progress. We hope it will finally achieve the kind of constitutional reform that aboriginal people have been seeking and, I think, entitled to since the treaties were first agreed to by our forefathers and foremothers. We hope that those talks succeed in this round. Obviously, in terms of the last process, where aboriginal people were not involved, and this process, where they are at the table, we can see a quantum difference, I think, in understanding the views and articulating the vision for aboriginal people, again a very high priority of the Manitoba task force report.

In terms of institutional reform, Mr. Speaker, we await the final proposal that will arrive from the ministers. We have heard a lot of coverage on this issue. I think Canadians do want legitimate reform in terms of our major institutions, but I would caution the government that we are looking at a very costly kind of change in institution, and it must have the real issues before it, not just symbolic issues. We will await to see the results of those deliberations.

In terms of the Canada Clause, I note that Quebec is mentioned as the first peoples of Canada, the characteristics of Canada. I would refer the minister back to the Manitoba task force when we talk about Canada and its characteristics on the basis of settlement in our country—the original people, the aboriginal people, Quebec and English Canada and the multicultural mosaic. We have not seen the legal text of the Canada Clause, Mr. Speaker, but the minister will know, we know and the Minister of Cultural Affairs will know that the multicultural community of Manitoba was very opposed to the Dobbie-Beaudoin report on the way they relegated multicultural people of Canada. I know the minister has taken that issue forward to the table, and he certainly has the support of our members in terms of resolving that issue.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the process, I think that the ministers were wise to take a brief pause in their deliberations. I would also say, at a meeting last week, I stated to the Premier (Mr. Filmon)—an informal meeting we had on the Constitution—I suggested, if there is any proposal that arises from this process, that we, too, take a pause with the people of Manitoba, that we not have a very quick process in this province. I think the kind of time and effort the people are spending on the proposal means we have to take a lot of time and

not have a fast, quick process in this Legislature on something so fundamental as our Constitution.

So I would urge the government to use the same principles of pausing with this Legislature that they are using now with the constitutional talks, if a proposal comes back, that we take the time and we do it right, or we do not do it at all. Thank you very, very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, I, too, on behalf of our party, want to wish this minister and this government well in this very important round of negotiations. We all know that the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) has spent certainly long hours and very trying days, trying weeks, and there are many ahead. We appreciate the efforts that are being made by him personally in that regard, being away so often and so long.

We do, of course, look forward to a successful resolution that meets the tenets of the task force report in this province and that the people of Manitoba can accept.

Mr. Speaker, briefly, of course, we cannot comment on any of the substantive discussions which the minister is having, because we do not have any of the substantive proposals before us. That is one of the problems, as I see it, and gives this the reminiscences of Meech Lake again, that we just do not have the ability, as the ministers discuss in Ottawa, to look at what they are saying and reflect on it as Canadians who are going to have to live with the Constitution at the end of the day.

Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned, our party is very concerned as well, that the federal government is again looking for a deal at any cost. I note that the minister's comments indicate that he is concerned, the government is very concerned to maintain a strong federal government. That was a consistent, overwhelming concern voiced by Manitobans. We all know that. I simply reiterate to the minister our support for that position, which is that Canada, the nation, must remain strong above all else.

* (1345)

Mr. Speaker, as well, the concern we have is that the trappings of Meech are occurring again, this time around the country. I do think that the break at this point is appropriate, and I think that the ministers have been wise in taking this breathing space, but I note, with some concern, the statement from Mr. Clark today which is to the effect: I do not think

anybody in their right mind would want to open this up again.

That is his statement today on what has occurred so far. That is the same attitude, that is the same type of pressure that was put on in Meech Lake. If that is coming from the man from the federal government who is co-ordinating this all, that gives us cause for concern that he is looking to come up with a deal and then say, take it or leave it, and you cannot change a word.

Mr. Speaker, that will not do for Manitobans. I am very concerned about that expression of attitude on his part. He speaks for the federal government in this matter.

The Constitution, as the minister has said himself, and as I think we have agreement in this House, is for Canadians, and in our role, we must provide for Manitobans to have the fullest opportunity to review whatever is being put to them.

Mr. Speaker, we simply reiterate the position that my friend put forward, the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer), that an absolutely essential tenet of any bargain, of any wording which comes out of the meetings that the minister is at, is that Manitobans get a full opportunity to look at it and to discuss it. We will not be put in the same position that we were last time, and I do not think it is good enough, not only for Manitobans, but for anybody in this country. As well, we look forward to the recognition by all parties at the table that in fact Canadians deserve an opportunity to speak on the final arrangement and an opportunity to have it in front of them and to make their voice heard in a referendum.

Mr. Speaker, we again ask the minister to do as he has been doing, which is regularly report to us. We appreciate that. We want some details, and we want them soon. Thank you.

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the 1990-91 Annual Report for the Conservation Districts of Manitoba.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 95—The Tax Appeals Commission Act

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), that Bill 95, The Tax Appeals

Commission Act (Loi sur la Commission d'appel des impôts et des taxes), be introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time. His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, having been advised of the contents of this Bill, recommends it to the House. I would like to table that message.

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have with us this afternoon His Excellency Dr. Kurt Herndl, the Ambassador of Austria to Canada, Mrs. Herndl, and Mr. John Klassen, the Honourary Consul of Austria.

On behalf of all honourable members, I would like to welcome you here this afternoon.

Also this afternoon, I would like to draw the attention of honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery, where I am pleased to announce that in the future, the RCMP will be present in this building and on the Legislative grounds in their traditional red serge uniform. This duty will be performed on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. during the months of June, July and August. This new activity is intended to celebrate Canada's 125th anniversary. The presence of representatives of the force as a symbol of Canada will be a most welcome addition to the stately building and grounds we are all so proud of. Please welcome Constable Kevin Shott of RCMP "D" Division headquarters.

Also with us this afternoon, we have from the H.S. Paul School, thirty-eight Grade 9 students. They are under the direction of Mr. Frank Bojarski. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Seine River (Mrs. Daquay).

Also this afternoon, we have forty-nine students from the Lakehead Separate School Board Band in Thunder Bay, Ontario. They are under the direction of Cliff Ojala.

On behalf of all honourable members, I would like to welcome you here this afternoon.

* (1350)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Constitutional Proposal Public Hearings

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to raise a question to the Deputy Premier dealing with the timing that I think is so important for the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, we on this side, and I think all members have expressed concern—the minister today in his statement, the Premier in his Speech from the Throne in 1990, members have always stated on all sides of the House that the roll-the-dice, last-minute, take-it-or-leave-it kind of process in Constitution making for Canada was inconsistent with the rules, the traditions and the ability to consult that is part of the Manitoba tradition.

In 1987, Mr. Speaker, when there was a proposed constitutional amendment, even though we sat in this House six weeks after the proposal was made, the Legislature did not deal with the issue because it was time for Manitobans to look at it prior to coming back to the Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, we now have a situation where there are all kinds of discussion based on timing, based on the Quebec referendum, but I think it is important in this House that we deal on Manitoba timing for Manitoba people.

I would like to ask the Deputy Premier: Is it part of the contingency plan of the government that a proposal that will be made, if it is made, will not be dealt with by this Legislature until there is enough time so the people of Manitoba can digest its contents, digest its substance, and know what it means for their future and their children's future for the people of this province?

Hon. James Downey (Deputy Premier): As I heard the Attorney General report, Mr. Speaker, progress is being made, and I would think the Leader of the Opposition's question is somewhat hypothetical at this particular time.

However, unlike a government which he sat as part of—whether it was a major change to the Constitution being proposed, which was done behind closed doors in 1983 by a government that really did not care what the people of Manitoba thought, dealing with the language issue, an agreement that was brought out of a back room by him and his former Attorney-General—there is in fact a process in place which will be followed so that the

people of Manitoba have full opportunity to be involved in the process through a provincial hearing process.

Mr. Doer: I guess when the Deputy Premier is in this House, we should not expect any answers to questions, we should not expect any substance to his statements, Mr. Speaker.

I asked the Deputy Premier a very serious question. In 1987, the Premier of the province who had brought back a proposed constitutional amendment did not continue to bring that proposed constitutional amendment in this House in June and July of 1987 so the people of the province could have a chance to understand it, to study it, so there would be enough time for the public to deal with the constitutional proposal, not on a short-term, quick basis.

I would ask the Deputy Premier today: Will he give us a commitment that this House too will have a pause on any constitutional proposal; a pause that will allow the people of Manitoba to look at the proposal, to understand its ramifications, and not bring it in this session so that we have a quick and a too-expedient kind of process in this province? A very simple question.

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the Leader of the Opposition and the people of Manitoba that we have a process in place to make sure there are full opportunities for this House and for the people of Manitoba to bring forward their concerns and to make comment before final presentation and passage, or proposed passage, for this Legislature.

Mr. Doer: Again, I would ask the Deputy Premier for a guarantee. Manitobans traditionally have holidays where they enjoy the tremendous amenities of our province in the summer months of July and August.

Will the Deputy Premier give us a guarantee that Manitobans will not be forced to look at their constitutional future in July and August of the 1992 year, that we will wait at least until September so that the people of Manitoba will have time to look at the proposal, understand the proposal, and that we can have an intelligent debate in this House on the basis of their information, not a quick process?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition is fully aware, the proposal that is being presented on behalf of the government and the people of Manitoba was developed through a joint task force of the Legislative Assembly. That is

being presented on behalf of the Province of Manitoba.

There are rules which have been established in the handling of constitutional matters, which we have established for this House and for the people of Manitoba. There are all intentions to follow that process and the rules that have been established—no intention of changing. We will follow the rules that have been established on behalf of the people of Manitoba and this Legislative Assembly.

* (1355)

Clearwater Lake, Manitoba Government Nursery Staffing

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources.

In the very first Question Period of this session, last December, I asked the Minister of Natural Resources why the Clearwater Lake nursery was being cut back. The answers we got back then were no more accurate than the answers I got in March from the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) when he rose to make what he called additional information.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Natural Resources tell the House how many people are working at the nursery today, and how does this number relate to the commitments made by the Minister of Northern Affairs in March?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, I would have to take the details of that question as notice and provide the honourable member with that information certainly as early as tomorrow.

The honourable member is aware that due to some of the difficulties in the forestry industry generally, Repap has scaled down its requirements for seedlings. As was announced and as I indicated to the honourable member, we are essentially running only a summer program at the Clearwater nursery this summer, but I will provide the actual numbers of employees currently at work for him tomorrow.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Northern Affairs in this House on March 4 said: Summer production will be carried out at The Pas nursery this summer.

Since I know how many people are working today—four out of 40 people are working out there

today; just four out of the 12 normal seedling crops are occurring right now. How can this minister, Mr. Speaker, claim that summer production is carrying on as usual this year when only four out of 40 people are working?

Mr. Enns: Mr. Speaker, I would just want the official opposition to get their act together. I mean, on the one hand, they do not want any trees cut down at all. They do not really care about 10,000 people who earn their livelihood from them. So get your act together. Talk to your other colleagues.

The forestry industry is in deep trouble, not just in Manitoba, but across Canada. Five or six mills have closed in the last six months. We are doing our best to keep our operations alive in Manitoba with precious little help from all the members opposite.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Natural Resources again: Why is this government cutting funding and support to that nursery in The Pas when today northern Manitoba needs jobs in the worst way and forestry is so vital to the northern economy? Why is he cutting jobs and support to the nursery?

Mr. Enns: Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that my departmental Estimates will be before the members soon. I certainly invite the honourable members to make all those inquiries when the Estimates of my department are placed before them, but the simple and short answer is that we have scaled down our forestry operation in the province. If we are not cutting down trees at the same level, then we are not replanting them at the same level. You do not have to be a rocket scientist to figure that out.

Economic Growth Research and Development Investment

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, last week I asked the Minister of Industry and Trade why Manitoba had been ignored in the recent announcement of a national initiative in telecommunications research. I asked him that question because research and development is critical to the economic growth in this province.

This minister has made much about their strategy for growth in research and development, but I would like to ask him why the investment in research and development in this province has declined every year since this government took office.

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, I look forward to

debating this issue in Estimates, which I imagine are coming up shortly, because this honourable member—all he needs to do is go through the '92-93 Estimates and look at the significant increase in terms of research and development, just look at the funding that is being provided to the Economic and Innovation Technology Council of Manitoba and their function in terms of promoting innovation and research and development in this province, and he will clearly see that there has been a significant increase in research and development expenditures allocated for the upcoming year. I look forward to debating the details in Estimates with the honourable member, Mr. Speaker.

* (1400)

Mr. Alcock: I am fully aware of the money that is being spent promoting research and development in this province and promoting the initiative. What I am talking about is how much money is being actually invested in research and development.

My question to this minister is: Why is that investment in research and development in this province declining?

Mr. Stefanson: First of all, without accepting, as usual, any of the preamble of the honourable member for Osborne, I have already pointed out to him that there are dollars allocated in terms of enhanced research and development opportunities, not being driven by government but funding being made available to the private sector to enhance research and development opportunities in our province and to lead to additional innovation.

I certainly look forward to going through all of the details in Estimates, because this government has increased expenditures in research and development in 1992-93 to a very significant extent. I will gladly go over all of the details with the honourable member if we ever get to Estimates.

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the minister would indulge me and answer one question now.

Total investment in research and development in this province is lower today than it was in 1988, proportionally and in real dollars. I would like to ask the minister: Why?

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I look forward to the honourable member sharing his source of information, which so often seems to be in contradiction and inaccurate with the data being provided by reputable economic indicator organizations. I have already pointed out to the

honourable member, he need look no further than the 1992-1993 Estimates.

Point of Order

Mr. Alcock: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The minister talks about the inaccuracy of my sources; he has yet to disprove a single fact.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member does not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

Tourism Industry Overnight Visitor Statistics

Mr. Jerry Storie (Filn Flon): It is my privilege to give the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism a chance to explain yet another reason why the province of Manitoba is following the pack. Mr. Speaker, the latest statistics from Statistics Canada show that overnight trips from the United States into Canada, March over March, '92 over '91, there has been a 23.5 percent decrease in overnight visitors to Canada.

Can the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism explain why, once again, Manitoba is second last, ahead of only Newfoundland in terms of overnight visitors to Canada, in terms of an industry that is a billion-dollar industry to the province of Manitoba?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): I responded to a similar question from the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) not long ago. It is interesting, coming from a party that likes to look backwards most of the time, that from their term of government from 1982-88, statistics indicate that the decline in terms of American visitors into Manitoba was some 25 percent during that time period.

I also would suggest that when they are doing their research, they look back during their term when their numbers were very poor, to say the least, Mr. Speaker. I have already indicated the things that we are doing in 1992, the kind of campaign focusing in the United States, the additional dollars being spent. I am sure the members have seen some parts of the advertising campaign that is taking place to encourage our American visitors to come to Manitoba. We have created an express lane at the border, but as seems to happen, far too often the members of the opposition attempt to focus on the negative.

I am sure the honourable member would be more than interested that only two provinces had a reduction in the first quarter in terms of what is called cross-border shopping, Canadians going down to the United States, and Manitoba was one of them. That is very good news, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Storle: That is the most bizarre response I have ever heard. Mr. Speaker, every time things get worse in the province of Manitoba, this minister stands up and says, yes, but it is part of a plan. It is part of a plan. It is getting worse.

Mr. Speaker: Question, please.

Government Initiatives

Mr. Jerry Storle (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, the minister's answer is no comfort to the hundreds of Manitoba businesses that rely on the tourist dollars to make a living. My question to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism is: What plan does the minister have in place to support the businesses that are going to go out of business this year, going to go bankrupt this year because this government's tourism plan is failing?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): If the honourable member wants to do justice to looking at tourism stats—and I pointed out to them before—less than 10 percent of our tourism industry comes from American visitors to Canada. Almost 90 percent are Canadians; 87 percent are Canadians, and out of that, about 65 percent are Manitobans. We are faring among the best of the provinces in Canada in terms of retaining that base. If you look at occupancy rates, they are growing in Manitoba. If you look at the dollars being spent, they are growing in Manitoba. Why, Mr. Speaker? Because we are retaining our 90 percent base.

Sure, we are not happy—we have indicated before—with what has happened in the past in terms of our American visitors. We have a campaign that is addressing that. As I indicated to the Leader of the Opposition before, the first quarter of the year is our lowest visitations. Wait until the year is done in terms of seeing what the visitations are into Manitoba in terms of our U.S. visitors, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Storle: Mr. Speaker, the minister again misses the point.

In northern Manitoba, some 80 percent of the visitors to our lodges and our outfitters are American, 80 percent. There was a 40 percent

decline in business last year. This year is the critical turning point for many of them.

Can the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism tell this House and the lodges and outfitters in the province of Manitoba, particularly in the North, what he is going to do, this government is going to do, to make sure that American tourists return to northern Manitoba so that they can continue with their livelihood and continue to employ people in northern Manitoba?

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, as usual, I would be very interested in what the honourable member's source is, because recently I met with the president of the Lodge & Outfitters Association. He indicates to me that their association is very pleased with the campaign that we are a part of in promoting Manitoba down in the United States. We were with them recently at a sports show down in the United States, and as I indicated, they are extremely pleased with what we are doing. I also challenge his statistics in terms of what he indicates the impact is in terms of their industry.

Mr. Speaker, as happens far too often, the honourable member does not get out and talk to Manitobans, talk to people in the industry. We do that, and they are pleased with the job we are doing in that area.

Department of Agriculture Privatization of Laboratories

Mr. John Plohma (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, last year, the Minister of Agriculture followed his true Tory inclination and privatized four services in the Department of Agriculture: the veterinarian drug distribution centre; the Semen Distribution Centre; the soils testing lab; and the feed testing lab.

After a lot of questioning, we established that it would not save any dollars for the taxpayers, but he said it was to create economic activity and jobs in the province of Manitoba. We said at that time that there would be no jobs created, that costs would increase for farmers and services would suffer.

I want to ask the Minister of Agriculture, will he now admit that his privatization inclination and initiative last year simply increased costs to farmers and created not one new job in the province of Manitoba?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I am rather surprised that the member would make those statements in the House today.

He is really misleading the House, because we have gone through Estimates, and we have discussed these figures. I would like to put the figures on the record for the member again since he did not listen to them in Estimates.

In the drug centre, an increase of two jobs under privatization; in terms of the feed lab, there has been a decrease in cost of sample analysis from \$26 to about \$20, roughly a reduction of that nature.

Veterinary Drug Centre Privatization Results

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture accuses me of not bringing all the facts here. He certainly did not list all the facts for all of the labs. He chose just a few that would fit his argument. Let us look at the whole picture.

How can the minister justify the doubling of the markup charged by the Midwest Veterinary Co-operative to 12 percent from 6 percent, a 100 percent increase in the markup charged as a result of his privatization?

* (1410)

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the vet co-operative is charging 12 percent whereas the government charges 6 percent. The government was losing money in that process. There is competition that keeps the costs down in the countryside. The veterinary drug commission does monitor prices in the 31 clinics in this province and negotiates what the markup will be each year. That is totally separate from what the member is putting on the record today.

The actual charge that the veterinarian charges the farmer in the 31 drug clinics in the province is negotiated by the veterinary drug commission each year. That negotiation has not changed, and the markup there has not changed.

Soil Testing Laboratory Privatization Results

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, the 100 percent markup is still a fact, and that will be passed onto the farmers.

Could the minister explain to this House why Norwest Labs, which has taken over the soil testing, has increased the charge for tests by 30 percent over the previous year when this minister said

service and costs would be improved under his system?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, the costs of doing soil analysis have gone up. Norwest Labs offers additional services for that markup, like pickup at bus depots, drying of the samples. They offer more services than we offer in our lab. Norwest does the feed analysis, and they have reduced the costs.

Civil Service Commission Term Position Bulletins

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the minister responsible for the Civil Service.

Opposition has two functions. One is to ensure results, and the other is to ensure that there is a proper process that is in fact being followed. Governments should not operate on the principle that the ends justify the means.

I ask: Can the minister tell us whether it is government policy that permanent and term positions in government departments and Crown corporations should be bulletined and advertised before they are filled?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister responsible for and charged with the administration of The Civil Service Act): Mr. Speaker, the policy has been in place through various administrations over numbers of years. In most cases, those positions are bulletined. From time to time, there are circumstances in which positions are not bulletined.

Manitoba Lotteries Foundation Hiring Process

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): The government should have been forewarned from the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mrs. Mitchelson) that this is one of the things that could be coming.

Can the minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission (Mr. Praznik) tell the House why two new director positions were created and filled at the Manitoba Lotteries Foundation without being bulletined or advertised at a time when many lottery workers were losing their jobs because of a transfer of jobs out to Stettler, Alberta?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Lotteries Foundation Act): Mr. Speaker, the Lotteries Foundation is a Crown agency of the Province of

Manitoba. I think that although we try to explain during committee process to the member for Inkster what does happen, the two positions were not Civil Service positions. They were service contract positions for a year's period of time.

He has no understanding of what are Civil Service jobs and what are service contracts. In fact, they were filled through the contract process without Civil Service benefits.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, call it a contract and avoid the rules, a new policy of this government.

Manitoba Lotteries Foundation Hiring Process - Investigation

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission.

Will he launch an investigation into the process surrounding the hiring of these two directors?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister responsible for and charged with the administration of The Civil Service Act): Mr. Speaker, again the member for Inkster comes to this House with improper information, not sure of the process. I would advise him to go do a little bit more homework before he brings an issue to this House.

Endangered Spaces Tall Grass Prairie Site

Ms. Marianne Cerlill (Radisson): When I last raised the issue of the tall grass prairie site off Regent and it being designated as part of the Endangered Spaces Program, the Minister of Natural Resources said that it was being considered under the program and that he was hoping there would be some agreement made.

I would like to ask the minister if he is aware that he is running out of time, that this site and the proposed road that is going to be constructed through it is going to be presented before the works and operations committee tomorrow, and if there has been a decision with respect to the Endangered Spaces Program.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, I am very much aware of the jurisdiction within which I have some influence.

The land in question, the area in question, is very much under the jurisdiction of the City of Winnipeg. I have made it publicly known, both through the

questioning by the honourable member and through correspondence, that the province would be more than prepared to participate in a program to set aside that small piece of tall grass prairie land, but there needs to be a willingness on the part of the owners of the property and the City of Winnipeg to take us up on that offer.

Ms. Cerlill: Mr. Speaker, the minister has responsibility for the Endangered Spaces Program. Why has this site not been designated since he has that responsibility? What is the delay, and what correspondence can he table to show that he is indeed corresponding with the City of Winnipeg?

Mr. Enns: Mr. Speaker, I just want to correct the last bit of information. I did not indicate that I was corresponding with the City of Winnipeg. I simply indicated that I would be more than happy, if requested by the City of Winnipeg, to discuss the program with them.

Mr. Speaker, that land is not under the jurisdiction of the province. That land is not my land to order what should or should not be done with it. It is a very fundamental, different style of doing things with respect to my conception of my authority and that of the honourable member's.

There is a duly elected government, local government, a duly elected councillor who is responsible for that particular area. If they wish to bring that forward to work with a provincial program that is there for them, then they have to initiate it.

Ms. Cerlill: Mr. Speaker, I question where the leadership is of this government in maintaining its commitment to the Endangered Spaces Program.

Site Selection Criteria

Ms. Marianne Cerlill (Radisson): I am concerned about the criteria that this government is using to identify sites.

Can the minister inform the House of the criteria used to prioritize or identify which sites are going to be designated, and can he table that criteria for us in the House today?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, I can table or undertake to table the information we have that she requests.

I would, quite frankly, sooner invite her to examine the department and myself when I have my officials available to fully explain the procedure by which designation under the Endangered Spaces Program is undertaken.

Employment Standards Act Amendments

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Traditionally, the disabled face high rates of unemployment, systemic discrimination and many barriers to employment, but there is some encouraging news in a survey that was recently conducted by the MLPH on the employment of disabled persons in Manitoba which showed the good experience of many employers when they employ disabled people.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Labour is currently conducting a review of employment standards. I would like to ask the Minister of Labour: Will he listen to the concerns expressed by the MLPH and the disabled, and will he now commit to passing amendments to The Employment Standards Act, which will remove any form of discrimination against the disabled in the employment standards legislation of Manitoba?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I certainly can tell the member for Thompson that I am more than pleased to work with all the various groups.

I share the goal, I think, of all members of this Legislative Assembly in ensuring that people have access to employment, and I continue to do that and will continue to work with those organizations.

Disabled Employees Rehabilitation/Vocational Services

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, will the minister, in addition to reviewing recommendations in terms of employment standards, also have responses to the other clear summary in the report which pointed to inadequate levels of government funding for rehabilitation and vocational services?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, as I am sure the member is aware, training and dollars for training fall within a variety of our departments within government.

We certainly know that the province's ability to throw or to provide a great deal of new money to anything is somewhat limited, but I think we are all committed to ensuring that dollars that are available are being used in the most productive way possible. I know there are a number of areas where improvements obviously can be made, and we are always prepared to look at them.

Disabled Employees Employment Standards

* (1420)

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Finally, Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Family Services perhaps then respond to one of the other major conclusions in the report which is based on a survey of both employers in the public and private sectors and deal with the lack of clear, consistent public policy—and these are their words—especially in relation to the needs of persons with developmental disabilities?

Will the government deal with that lack of policy in this very important area?

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services): I might just say to the member that I had the pleasure of attending an international conference called Independence '92 recently, and Manitoba was very prominently featured at that conference in the work that is being done with the disabled community. Mr. Henry Enns, who was at that conference, has just been recognized for the tremendous work that he has done, not only nationally and provincially, but internationally.

Having said and established that, I think, it is well known that Manitoba is a leader in many areas to do with the disabled. There is more to be done, and we will continue to work with the disabled community and the people who advocate on their behalf to try and provide the best training and resources that we can for them.

Pharmaceutical Costs Impact on Seniors

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): Mr. Speaker, since the recent changes in the drug patent laws, the pattern of drug prices has outrageously and dramatically escalated to almost four times the rate of inflation in this country.

In light of this development, I ask the honourable minister responsible for senior citizens what action he is going to take to protect the interests of senior citizens in this country against drug prices.

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister responsible for Seniors): Mr. Speaker, first of all, that is a little repeat of a question brought forward by the member earlier, a couple of weeks ago. However, our government will continue to implement our Pharmacare program and to look after our seniors as well as the rest of the residents of Manitoba.

Mr. Santos: Mr. Speaker, since action speaks louder than words, can this honourable minister tell us whether he will talk to his colleagues to reconsider their decision in increasing Pharmacare rates at greater than the rate of the current consumer price index?

Mr. Ducharme: Mr. Speaker, true action we speak about in regard to the member across the way, I hope he speaks to his socialist counterparts in Saskatchewan on the recent elimination of their seniors heritage program and their pension program in that particular province. I talk to my colleagues in this Legislature and to the federal minister continually.

55 Plus Program Deindexing

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): Can I ask the honourable minister whether he will still continue to talk with his colleagues with respect to the decision to deindex the benefits of the 55 Plus program, and that they might consider modifying and reversing such kinds of decisions?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister responsible for Seniors): Mr. Speaker, if you will give me a moment, just to maintain that even under difficult times, our government here will continue our program without any decrease in this year '92-93, maintaining the funding of the 20,000 seniors in our 55 Plus program, unlike Saskatchewan counterparts who eliminated their heritage senior program and unlike the members in Ontario who will eliminate 400 senior citizens' households from the sales tax credits reduced and eliminated this year in Ontario.

Suche Report Government Response

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, on April 30, the government issued its response to the Suche report. Last Friday, I asked the Minister responsible for Family Services when he would implement one of the immediate recommendations which was that there be established a residential care curriculum committee to develop standards for workers in residential care and design training courses to meet their needs.

I would like to ask the Minister of Family Services, yet again today, when he is prepared to implement that immediate establishment that his government

said would be an immediate response to the Suche report.

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, we did not have enough time to get into this in any detail last week or in Estimates, but I want to tell you that we could take that time today. We have struck a working committee that is a committee involving officials from the Department of Education, the Department of Justice, the Department of Health, as well as people from the community. It is going to be meeting on June 4 for its first meeting later this week, I might add. This working group, as they get into their first meeting, will examine all of the issues that have come out of the Suche report. Once they have a chance to review the report and set the parameters for the committee, then they will get into dealing with some of the more specific issues that are raised in the Suche—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, am I to understand, from the minister's response to my question, that the working committee that was established on April 30 will be looking at and reviewing and discussing all of the "immediate resolutions" that were to be undertaken by this government, that nothing else—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Your question, please.

Ms. Barrett: —has been undertaken?

Mr. Gillehammer: Mr. Speaker, under the umbrella of the working group that we struck as our response to the Suche committee, a working committee which will implement the standardized reporting procedures and address the other system-wide issues raised in the report, I have indicated that that committee is being drawn together for the first time on the 4th of June. They will have a chance to review the parameters of the report, and other subcommittees will be struck from that to proceed with implementation.

Ms. Barrett: So we will have to wait yet longer—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Wellington, with your question, please.

Ms. Barrett: To the Minister of Family Services, am I to understand then, from the minister's response, that the children of Manitoba will have to wait yet more time for the immediate implementation of the recommendations of the Suche report?

Mr. Gillehammer: Mr. Speaker, I thought the member understood that there were a number of the

recommendations that we accepted immediately, some that we can do in the short term, and certainly there are some long-term objectives. One of the short-term objectives was to bring forward the Office of the Child Advocate. Some members have shown some reluctance to speak on that issue and debate the issue and put their thoughts forward. We look to the member for support on that initiative and hope that we can proceed it through to the committee stage.

Panel on Education Reform Report Release

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education.

According to the minister's own schedule, her panel on education reform was to report to her on April 10 with a report.

My question to the minister is: Since it took four years, and the report on education funding was never made public, when will the panel of education reform make its report public?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, as I have explained, the panel on educational reform met with a great deal of public interest in this province. There have then been an expanded number of public hearings. There have been an extremely large number of presentations also made by mail. The panel on educational reform is in fact looking at all of those issues right now, and I expect them to report to me by later this spring.

Mr. Chomiak: Since this panel will determine the future of education in the province in the next 20 years—I noted the minister said the panel would report to her. Will the panel be providing a public report so the public can discuss all of these education reforms prior to the government providing some form of legislation?

Mrs. Vodrey: We were speaking about the process of reporting, and as I have said to the member, the first step in the process is to report to me as minister. Then we will look at how the public may be further involved in examining what has been put forward.

* (1430)

Mr. Chomiak: So I can conclude from the minister's statements that the public will not be receiving copies of this report after extensive public hearings, et cetera?

Mrs. Vodrey: I have not yet explained to the member the form in which the public will be involved.

There will be, first of all, a report to myself, and then we will determine the best way for the people of Manitoba to become involved. This government has been very committed to the process of consultation, and we look for the most appropriate method for Manitobans then to express their opinions.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, I would ask for the indulgence of the House and ask whether they might consider reverting back to Presenting Petitions. [Agreed]

I beg to present the petition of the Providence College and Theological Seminary praying for the passing of An Act to amend The Winnipeg Bible College and Theological Seminary Incorporation Act.

Nonpolitical Statements

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): I wonder if I might have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [Agreed]

Mr. Speaker, today marks the first day of National Access Awareness Week which was kicked off nationally today in Winnipeg, and the federal minister responsible made some comments, as did the provincial Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer).

A very nice local Manitoba component of National Access Awareness Week and something that I think we should all be proud of is that Mr. Henry Enns, who is the Executive Director of the Disabled Peoples' International, whose international headquarters is located in Winnipeg, has recently been honoured twice for his long-standing work on behalf of disabled people.

First, he was provided with an honorary doctor of law degree from Queen's University, and second, a double first, if you will, in the earlier activities in Vancouver, Mr. Enns was awarded the President's Medal for Human Service at Independence '92. This is the President's Medal from the United States. The reason it is a double first is this medal has never before been presented to a non-American, and secondly, it has never before been presented to anyone outside the continental United States.

So on behalf of all of us here, I would like to congratulate Mr. Enns for not only his years of achievement, but for recognition of his work on behalf of the disabled in Manitoba.

Hon. Harold Gillieshammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, may I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [Agreed]

I, too, would like to add my comments on behalf of the government for the recognition that has been extended to Henry Enns who did attend a luncheon today with the federal minister, the Honourable Robert de Cotret, myself and some city dignitaries to start National Access Awareness Week, not only in Manitoba but across the country.

In attending that conference today and attending the Independence '92 in Vancouver recently, Mr. Henry Enns was prominently recognized there, as well as by the President of the United States and by the United Nations for the tremendous work that he has done on behalf of the disabled community, not only in Winnipeg in Manitoba, but in fact throughout the length and breadth of this country, and he has made a tremendous impact on the world stage as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for Broadway (Mr. Santos) have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [Agreed]

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): Mr. Speaker, the month of June is now here, and it has been designated as Seniors Month in Manitoba. I just received in the mail a schedule of activities for Seniors Day from the honourable Minister responsible for Seniors (Mr. Ducharme).

Members will recall that Seniors Day was initiated by the NDP government in the early 1980s.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would like to caution the honourable member for Broadway. You have been recognized for a nonpolitical statement. Pick and choose your words very carefully.

Mr. Santos: I pay tribute to this government in continuing that tradition. [interjection] Is that political? When we reflect on the contribution of our senior citizens in building this province, for their unselfish devotion to building up this province, we cannot help but be inspired by the sacrifices and past activities of our senior citizens. This is a tribute to our senior citizens. I ask all members of the

House to actively participate in commemoration of our tribute to our senior citizens. Thank you.

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister responsible for Seniors): I would like to rise on a nonpolitical statement? [Agreed]

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers throughout Manitoba who will participate in Seniors Month of June.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I would ask for leave to make a nonpolitical statement. [Agreed]

Yes, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of our caucus, I too would like to echo the remarks made by the Minister responsible for Seniors (Mr. Ducharme) and the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos) in terms of the importance and the significance of the month of June and the invaluable work that has been done in the past from our seniors and no doubt will be continued in the future. Thank you very much.

Committee Change

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) for the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose). [Agreed]

House Business

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, before I move the Supply motion, I would like to indicate the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources will meet on Thursday, June 11, at 10 a.m. to consider the 1991 Annual Report of the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission.

I understand the Estimates sequence is that Education is to be followed by Urban Affairs.

I also understand that I made a mistake with respect to a motion passed last week, and I would ask for the unanimous consent of the House to allow for the Department of Northern Affairs and Native Affairs, the motion combining those two activities, to follow the Department of Education whenever the Estimates of that department are concluded.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable government House leader have leave to alter the sequence?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: He does? In that order?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave. It is agreed.

Mr. Manness: I meant after Agriculture.

Mr. Speaker: After Agriculture.

Mr. Manness: Education to be followed by Urban Affairs.

Mr. Speaker: Okay.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House—

Mr. Speaker, before I move that, I would ask the members opposite if they would consider waiving private members' hour?

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to waive private members' hour?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: No, there is no leave.

* (1440)

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Mr. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a committee to consider of the Supply that is to be granted to her Majesty.

Motion agreed to, and the House resolved itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty with the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) in the Chair for the Department of Agriculture, and the honourable member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) in the Chair for the Department of Education and Training.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This afternoon, this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255 will resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture.

When the committee last sat, it had been considering item 5.(a) Northwest Region: (1) Salaries, on page 16 of the Estimates book. Shall the item pass?

An Honourable Member: Which one?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 5.(a)(1) Salaries \$1,844,200—pass.

(2) Other Expenditures \$395,900.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Can the minister just indicate how the 4-H program is being carried out now since the changes that were made last year, the reductions in the staffing in all of the regions?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we have with us now, Andrew Dickson, the Director of Eastern/Interlake Region.

With regard to the 4-H activities, effectively the activities are carrying on the same this year as in the past. The duties that were previously carried out by the 4-H assistants have now been taken over by a variety of personnel in the department, primarily the extension staff, and probably it is fair to say a little more involvement of the volunteers in the 4-H program also.

Mr. Plohman: Of all of the groups that were registering complaints last year, is it the minister's interpretation that they are well satisfied with the new structure?

There was a lot of concern that leaders, volunteers, were going to have to put in a lot more time, the very limited time that they have, to ensure that the program would continue to function in various regions of the province.

Do they feel that this has indeed happened, or has there been any reduction in the overall interest in 4-H, anything like that which the minister could use a yardstick to determine that things are moving along smoothly with regard to the department's interaction with 4-H?

Mr. Findlay: Certainly I have met with groups that were concerned. We talked about the issue and explained the realities of budgeting in government and the fact that 4-H has been successful for a long period of time in this province because of volunteers and extra effort put in by department staff. Clearly, people have picked up the ball, both in terms of within the department and putting out the extra effort to make the program successful and the volunteers also.

The numbers involved, basically the same number, a little over 5,000 people in the 4-H program, and the other expenditures, the department's, involved with 4-H have not changed. Only the program assistant expenditure was

removed, and all the other expenditures associated with 4-H have remained.

Mr. Plohman: So the minister has no current complaints that he is dealing with at the present time.

Mr. Findlay: No.

Mr. Nell Gaudry (St. Boniface): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, in regard to the staff, there is 42.26. Are they all located in the regions or are they located in the Winnipeg area? Has there been any decentralization?

Mr. Findlay: Yes, in the Supplementary Estimates book, the member is probably on page 65. Is that right?

Mr. Gaudry: Yes.

Mr. Findlay: Yes. The number of staff there, 42, are all in the Northwest Region; on the next page, 43 staff, all in the Southwest Region; 46, all in the Central Region; and Eastern/Interlake 53 staff, and they are all outside the city in all those regions.

Mr. Gaudry: In the decentralization program, there were none of those staff who were decentralized in the past year or two years?

Mr. Findlay: They were all already decentralized.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 5.(2) Other Expenditures \$395,900—pass.

5.(b) Southwest Region: (1) Salaries \$1,784,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$328,000—pass.

5.(c) Central Region: (1) Salaries \$1,939,300.

* (1450)

Mr. Plohman: Just a general question dealing with all of these in terms of the amount of extension work that can be done, I guess the minister stated a lot of the time has been spent with GRIP over the last year and this year as well, so that this massive additional manpower, people power, has obviously required staff to leave other matters that they should be assisting farmers with in general extension work in areas of their specialization.

Is that normalizing itself at the present time, people being able to get back to it? It would seem to me that during the difficult time in agriculture with the low prices and the need to diversify and to look for other ways to be more efficient, to earn more income from other sources, that there would tend to be a greater need for extension services. It seems that the minister would have seen less there since

he has not increased staff in those areas and he has used those staff for other things such as GRIP.

How is that need being met? Does the minister not agree that there perhaps is a bit of a gap there over the last while?

Mr. Findlay: Certainly when we were talking about crop insurance, we gave the member an idea of the amount of time that was involved in '91 and again in '92. I think it was some 7,000 days, I believe, of '91 and '92 and approximately half so far in this particular fiscal year. As I said then, too, a number of staff had indicated that they had a greater, broader understanding of agriculture with the one-on-one client contact they had through their work for GRIP. It broadened their horizons and it also gave department staff more contact with our clients, which is important à la our Visions for the 1990s document.

Certainly, the staff, in terms of their ongoing activities, have had to reprioritize some of the things they do and try to maximize their ability to work with clients more in groups and associations as opposed to one on one. It is our hope that in the coming months and years that particularly the specialists can spend more and more of their time working in those areas. There is no question that the ag reps and the ag rep offices will continue to be a contact point for our clients, any and all things associated with agriculture and certainly continuing to include work on crop insurance and revenue insurance. Right now we estimate the time involved by the ag reps on crop insurance and revenue insurance is approximately 20 percent, but it does create client contacts, and in terms of the department extending its activities to those clients in broader and broader areas, is seen to be important both by the client and by the staff member.

Mr. Plohman: Finally, does the minister feel that they have been able to absorb this additional function? It is now 20 percent of an ag rep's time, according to what you just said, that they were able to absorb that without it impacting on other services that they have traditionally provided to farmers.

Mr. Findlay: It is difficult to definitively answer yes or no, but as I said earlier, I think the fact that more clients came through the ag rep's door has to be seen as a positive, both for the department and for the client. It created greater contact and a greater understanding of the roles we can play, and maybe more likely to rely on that ag rep and that office in

the future, not only for revenue insurance and crop insurance but for other services they may want.

It is a constant ongoing battle to try to convince the client that we have services that they should use. I thought this process caused an interface between the client and the extension people that will seem to be—have a positive spinoff, but to definitively answer yes or no to the basic question is tough. I think there are obviously a few negatives; I think there are also some positives in additional contact that was created in this fashion.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 5.(c) Central Region: (1) Salaries \$1,939,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$342,000—pass.

5.(d) Eastern/Interlake Region: Salaries \$2,140,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$491,800—pass.

5.(e) Agricultural Crown Lands Branch: (1) Salaries \$1,225,600.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, perhaps the minister could provide us with a list of the current members of the Crown lands appeal board.

Mr. Findlay: The members of the Crown Lands Advisory Committee who also serve as an appeal committee are: Chairperson Jim Pollock; Vice-Chairman Lavern Elliott; members, Margaret Brincheski, Bill Skogan and Albert Strick.

Mr. Plohman: Sorry, I meant to ask also where they are from in the province?

Mr. Findlay: Chairman Jim Pollock from Neepawa. Lavern Elliott is from Grandview. Margaret Brincheski is from Lac du Bonnet. Bill Skogan is from Teulon, and Albert Strick is from Inwood.

Mr. Plohman: Is there anyone from the Parkland region of the province? I missed it.

Mr. Findlay: Grandview.

Mr. Plohman: That is who?

Mr. Findlay: Lavern Elliott is from Grandview.

Mr. Plohman: Okay. Is there any change to the point system that is used for awarding Crown lands contemplated or that has taken place?

Mr. Findlay: Maybe ask the member over what time frame is he talking?

Mr. Plohman: During this past year.

* (1500)

Mr. Findlay: The basic policy of awarding Crown land on the basis of points has not changed. But basically there are always some refinements that

are seen appropriate year in, year out, including the opportunity in certain particular unique situations for directors to use their own discretion as to whether the basic policy is the best for that situation or something else is needed. But the basic policy for awarding of points has not changed.

Mr. Plohman: What system was used in The Pas for the new Polder III lands that were designated?

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I neglected to introduce John Neabel, our director of Agriculture Crown Lands, who now lives in Minnedosa in a nice, new building.

The member is referring to Polder III, it was a whole new track of land which was to be allocated for the first time, and directors used the point system, but had a proviso in there that the maximum that any one individual could get would be three quarters of land. Other than that the point system functioned, but a maximum of three quarters for any one applicant.

Mr. Plohman: Well, when was that stipulation put in, that the maximum would be three quarters?—because I understand in January there was a meeting up at The Pas, the Local Government District of Consol, at the LGD office there. There were Crown land reps and farmers there, and they talked about whether they wanted to change the system.

They had a vote even on it and decided not to, but at that time, after that, there was an award made based on the point system. As a matter of fact, I have been informed that according to the point system one person had been approved of 14 quarters on that basis alone.

Bert Fleming, the supervisor for Northwest region was involved and had informed this person, Morris Smigelsky, about this fact, but he also asked him to maybe release some of the land.

The whole idea of the meeting in January, I understand, was to enable younger farmers to get started who could not meet the points because they were not established yet. It is kind of like a vicious circle, as the minister will understand, that, you know, if you do not have a herd of cattle, it is very difficult for you to be granted a piece of Crown land, yet you need that piece of Crown land in order to have a viable operation.

So here we had some individuals, established farmers, who wanted to help younger farmers get established, and yet the majority said, look, you

cannot change the system in mainstream. You have to leave it alone. So they went ahead and they left it alone, according to the farmers. Of course, they did not establish the final criteria obviously, because the government changed the system after that.

When did they put in this limit of three quarters, because I understand that some farmers were, according to the point system, given much more than that, initially.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, both the LGD of Consol and the farmers association of The Pas had contacted Crown Lands and thought that it would be best in the process of allocating the 18 parcels in question that the maximum number of producers be given an opportunity to access some of the land.

As the member has indicated, one farmer would have under the old system, if nothing was changed, received the vast majority of the parcels. The member says 14. The actual number was 13, but Crown Lands staff and the advisory committee both believed it would be inappropriate for one individual on a new track of land to get 13 out of the 18 parcels.

After representation from the LGD of Consol's council and the farmers association, they deemed it appropriate to limit the access to a maximum of three quarters. The basic proviso that was wanted up there was that the majority of land would not go to one person but be spread amongst as many producers as possible. That was arrived at after the meeting in January, up in the area, to discuss whether the policy of letting 13 of the 18 go to one individual or spreading it around to as many people as possible should be the way to go.

Mr. Plohn: Well, on the surface, that seems to make sense if it was done from the outset. I understand that this meeting in January was attended by Bert Fleming and Brent Erlenson from Swan River, and that three days after that meeting, Bert Fleming phoned Morris Smigelsky and told him that he had 14 quarters according to Morris—his letter—on the allocation.

He then asked me, this is Bert Fleming, if I was willing to give up some of this land to help out some of these farmers starting out. The impression was left with him that he had the authority, because these were granted to him, to make that kind of a decision, and he was one of those at the meeting speaking up for that, so it certainly was consistent in what he

did at that time. He actually did sign some papers saying that he was willing to give up these seven pieces of land.

He said, seeing this was my objective at the meeting, I said I would only if it was given to people who needed it. The land rep from Swan River was then sent up to The Pas the next day to get me to sign a document to release this land.

In fact, he did sign on February 24 a document with Brent Erlenson's name on it, plus Morris Smigelsky's name. He signed it subject to another person also giving up their rights and waiving their rights to it, so that it would go to a new farmer, a young farmer who would get established, Gary Lajambe was his name here. I do not know if I am pronouncing it right, but it is L-a-j-a-m-b-e.

Here we have a situation where there is a meeting held. There is an award made based on the point system, then an effort to have on a voluntary basis people deviate from that system, which I think is the sensible way to go, since we have a point system in place and then, after that, notwithstanding that, a total deviation from that.

To think that would not cause a great deal of hard feelings is, I think, completely naive. What are the minister's comments on that?

Mr. Findlay: The land and the 18 parcels in question were never allocated at the point the member is talking about, in February. There were preliminary considerations given, and Morris was asked if he would give certain lands up, but the request for him to give it up was not giving him the opportunity then to put a condition on it.

The kind of conditions he wanted to put on it then made him the allocator of the land which the advisory committee did not see as appropriate. They felt that the most appropriate way was to put a ceiling of three parcels for any individual, and then use the point system for any and all other individuals to have equal access to it.

Morris's approach was that he would then be the allocator of the land. I do not think the member would have been happy with that, if we had allowed that to happen. I think the advisory committee and the staff were under some difficult circumstances to try to resolve that in the majority interest of the farmers in the area, as opposed to one individual, who, if the rule of thumb was followed, would have gotten 13 or 14 out of the 18 parcels, which I do not think would have been very constructive for allowing

more people to develop in the cattle business in the Polder area.

Neither the committee nor myself saw it as appropriate that Morris should have the right to allocate the land.

* (1510)

Mr. Plohman: I do not think anyone is advocating that any one individual should allocate the land. So let the minister not leave that impression or even attempt to leave it here, if he thinks that this is what I am advocating. What I am advocating is that the minister—[interjection] Well, no, the minister is a very poor listener, quite frankly. In the House today, you were a poor listener. You were a poor listener today. The Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) has nothing to say here. This does not involve him.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I said very specifically to the minister that he changed the rules in midstream. That is the problem here, and I said there were hard feelings created. Does the minister remember that? I did say that just now. That is what I was saying.

I did not say that I was advocating that one individual should be allowed to allocate the lands. I said to the minister he created hard feelings by not having his act together in the first place. Surely he knew that Polder III was coming up, and if there were 18 quarters of land that had to be allocated, there would have to be a system put in place before anything happened.

I think he got off on the right foot by having the meeting. He got off on the wrong foot a few days after through his department sending up, first a phone call to say, would you mind, and then sending up a land representative to get his signature on these sheets. What kind of a message does that give to an individual farmer, when a land representative comes up and gets him to sign the sheet and he signs his name as a witness? Does that not seem to leave the impression with the minister that the farmer expects that this carries some weight? This is a representative from his department.

So I am saying to the minister that he has messed this up. I wish that he would have started all over again, rather than causing this kind of a problem in the first place—that he would just have started and gone back and consulted again with the farmers to develop a system they could live with before

allocating the land, rather than going ahead half on the old system, half on the new.

No one knew what the rules were, and he has really got a mess on his hands now. As a matter of fact, they used the point system in some instances and then rejected it in the appeal. So people did not know what the rules were at all. How can you deal with a system like that? How can any farmer, having it just at a political whim or the discretion of somebody? On what basis? There are no rules anymore.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member gets carried away in his rhetoric at times. I would like to bring him back to the reality. The committee had a difficult process to allocate the land. I have to feel the member agrees that it should go to as many people as possible rather than the majority going to one individual. I have to assume he would agree with that.

The committee used the point system to allocate to everybody in the first go-around, up to the maximum of three parcels. Once somebody had reached the maximum of three parcels, they were then taken out of the system. Their application for any further parcels was removed, and the point system was used for additional applicants who now were on the table for allocation.

So the point system was used continuously throughout with the one extra proviso, the maximum of three parcels per individual. That responds to the LGD of Consol and the farmer's association which wanted the land to be allocated to as many producers as possible in the area.

Mr. Plohman: Why would not the advisory board and the minister, obviously in consultation, because this was a major initiative—the minister had to be involved in the criteria that were being established. Is that not correct?

Mr. Findlay: I became aware late in the process, but I did agree, as I just indicated, that one individual should not get 13 or 14 parcels out of the 18, that the use of a three parcel maximum would be appropriate, but that the point system be used thereafter, and that is what was done.

Mr. Plohman: Can the minister indicate when the advisory committee put the limit of three on? What was the date?

Mr. Findlay: We do not have the exact date, but it would be approximately March 1 that the committee decided that this would be the most appropriate way

to allocate that land, and then the allocations are made at about the same time.

Mr. Plohman: Why did the advisory committee not at least allow the people with the highest points to have the choice of the land that they would be getting? Since they had the highest points and they were not going to be getting all of those entitled to them under the point system, at least allow them to choose those three that they wanted of the ones they were eligible for under the point system.

Mr. Findlay: In the allocation, the three parcels that Morris Smigelsky received were the three parcels deemed to be the three with highest productivity of the 18 parcels in question.

Mr. Plohman: Not the three that he wanted, is that correct?

* (1520)

Mr. Findlay: It is our understanding that in discussion between Mr. Smigelsky and the agents, he agreed that those three quarters that were allocated to him were the three best quarters.

Mr. Plohman: How can the minister justify people getting land under this discretionary system—what is it called, the director's choice or whatever—people who would not qualify under the point system at all, even though they were not young or new farmers starting out?

It would seem to me the objective would be to ensure that all new farmers who want to start out would have been given some land out of this new discretionary system that was used so that it would assist and promote the development of new farmers.

Was that the major objective of the minister in deviating from the point system for this?

Mr. Findlay: The member talks about director's discretion, and the only discretion used in the process was a decision to maximize the number of people who got access to that Crown land. That was putting the three parcel cap on.

In the process of awarding the 18 parcels, there were 11 applicants. Seven received allocations in Polder III, and three of the remaining four received allocations elsewhere from Crown Lands outside the Polder area, so 10 of the 11 received allocations, and one person did not receive an allocation, and the points awarded were very low in that particular instance.

The only discretionary move was to limit the amount of land that one individual could acquire in this new allocation.

Mr. Plohman: If that is the case, why would the second-place person on the point system then not get the land after the first-place person was disqualified because he already had three?

For example, I cannot understand how a person dealing with NE 17-54-27 WPM drain, whatever that means—Morris Smigelsky had—[interjection] NE 17-54-27 WPM, EXC—maybe the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) knows what that means, drain—[interjection]. Okay. No, but the exact drain, what is the EXC drain mean?

An Honourable Member: We will have to ask.

Mr. Plohman: Well, that is what I was wondering. In any event, the person there, Morris Smigelsky, had 69 points. Armand LeSann had 16, and he was given that piece of land. Under any other circumstances, I cannot understand how a person with 16 points—unless there was some other criteria employed at that point in the process, in other words, director's discretion used, that could not have happened.

Mr. Findlay: In terms of the three parcel cap being applied, this parcel fell into the category of being over the three parcel cap, and Armand LeSann with 16 points was in second place, so it went to him.

Mr. Plohman: Well, again, I have to go back to the criteria that the minister had used insofar as new farmers getting land. How many of these seven people were new farmers, young farmers who would otherwise not have been eligible for land?

Mr. Findlay: The discretionary decision that was made, as I will tell the member for about the fifth time, was to allocate to the maximum number of producers. We all know it is difficult for a new producer to get started, the chicken and egg situation, but if you are going to follow the allocation rules and the point system, and I think that is the appropriate thing to do, then you end up allocating it to the people with the most points. There are a number of factors that go into the point system.

We do not know from the information we have how many of the seven applicants who were successful were new farmers.

Mr. Plohman: Well, the minister just changed the process. He said he told me for the fifth time. First he told me that the only director's discretion that was

used was to limit the maximum to any individual to three quarters.

Now he says—for the fifth time, he says—that the director's discretion was to allocate the land to the maximum number of producers. Which is it?

If it was the maximum number of producers, particularly young farmers, then that should have been the overriding criterion above and beyond the three. I would say, and it is my position here, that director's discretion was used more than just for the capping at three quarters. The minister has even acknowledged that. Now he says it was to ensure that the land went to the maximum number of producers.

Mr. Findlay: Using the point system with three partial cap in place.

Mr. Plohman: Was there—and if there was not, why was there not—some special criteria in terms of awarding points to a young farmer who wanted to get established?

Mr. Findlay: Well, in the situation that the member is talking about, trying to be sure that new producers have opportunities to access the land, the existing point system does not really allow for that. It does not award a large number of points either for age or for a new producer. It awards points on the basis of having cattle or having the capacity to expand your herd and therefore need more land. So if the member is suggesting that the point system should be changed to make it more accessible for young producers, I would not dispute that as something that should be done in the future.

Mr. Plohman: Well, was that not the point of deviating from this in the first place, to try to give these new farmers an opportunity to get some additional land, not to just allow some big operators to get additional land and not give it to one operator who really qualified by the point system so you would spread it out to the others who were already owning or leasing large amounts of land, but to try to get some of these new producers, a maximum number?

If the minister had thought that through, it would seem to me that in that case, he should have awarded some points, because he is deviating from the point system anyway, so at that point, set up new criteria and go back to the farmers before awarding the land and say, look, under these circumstances, we know that you appreciate that younger farmers have a difficult time to get started. We would like to

assist in this case. There is new land coming on stream. We would like to put in place a point system that would award a new farmer, for example, say, 20 points just right off the bat. That way you would not see cases where a person like Armand LaSann, for 27 points and 16 points, he would get two quarter sections of land as the second highest in terms of points.

* (1530)

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the decision of the committee was that the point system would be used with a cap of three parcels in place. You raise one particular producer. We do know that he has a son involved, so at least one could assume that by allocating to him, there was an opportunity for another young person to get involved in agriculture in a larger way. To add another criterion that it should go just to young producers would require some consideration by the committee as to the overall impact it would have on existing producers who have cattle and need access to this kind of land.

It is always an ongoing problem to get young producers involved. You make an allocation to a young producer who has no cattle. He is given, say, a year to get that land stocked, and then what do you do? He has maybe one-quarter of the cattle that he committed to get because he could not raise the financing for any more. What do you do then? Do you say, well, the guy next door has a bunch of cattle; he has reason to use the land; the land is there, and you are not able to meet your commitment. You have to cut him back.

It is between a rock and hard spot for the committee in terms of trying to be sure that they do the allocation, that the land is properly used, and it serves the best needs of the cattle industry in terms of producers being allowed to grow whether they are existing or whether they are young. I acknowledge there is a problem there, and I am sure the committee has thought long and hard about how they can properly allocate and consider the interests of the new incoming producer who does not really have any cattle yet.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, was this three cap used in previous situations, this three quarter section cap used in any other situations in the province that the minister is aware of?

Mr. Findlay: No, the Crown Lands Branch has not used the three cap limit formally in the past, but in the instances where an individual has a fair bit of

Crown land in his name and qualifies for more, discussions have been held to ask him to back off, to ask him the basic question, does he really need it, or whether there may be other people who need it, and in those negotiated instances, many people have backed off to allow somebody who maybe has greater need to be allowed access to it.

Mr. Plohman: Yes, I think there could have been some threshold used, some other criteria established in a little more sophisticated way than just saying a three cap maximum for an individual if he is way ahead in terms of points. I do not know whether there was any cutoff, but then to allocate on the basis of points after that when people are getting the land on a very low point value when there are new farmers there who want to get started, who could be given an opportunity, and that land can be reallocated again if they run out of money. The minister says that maybe their loan does not come through or whatever happens. They should have been given that opportunity.

I think the minister did not consider with his committee and staff that this should be the highest priority, and they should have followed through with some additional discussions after that meeting, rather than having that one meeting, proceeding in one way with the point system and then switching in the middle after people were under the impression that this was going to be discussed more before decisions were made.

Mr. Findlay: I think I told the member earlier that there were 11 applications for these 18 parcels. Seven people received allocations in Polder. Three more received allocations elsewhere, of Crown lands. That means only one of the 11 did not receive an allocation. Is this the one we are talking about?

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, they did not get a reasonable amount of land that they would have liked to have gotten.

I have a letter here, for example, that Allan Anderson has sent in where he states that he had actually more points than Tony Markus, yet was not given the parcel of land. That was Lot 2-54-27 W. He says he has to travel 15 miles for hay which costs over \$4,000 a year to buy, not counting transportation. It costs him over \$2,000 for pasture fees a year. He has a 14-year-old son who is interested in farming.

Mr. Findlay: Yes, Mr. Anderson appealed his allocation and the consideration at the time was that

the parcels he received were drier and more usable than other parcels that maybe he might have been looking at. He went through the appeal process so his opportunity to be allocated on the basis of justifiable points was done the first time, and then done again through the appeal process.

Mr. Plohman: It seems that there was very little confidence in what criteria was being used at that point by the board after deviating from the system and people getting land with such few points, that they would perhaps never be granted land under those circumstances, they would not be eligible under most circumstances.

I have a letter here dated May 21 that went to the Ombudsman, and the minister's department will probably be getting questions there. This is from Morris Smigelsky in which he asks a number of questions about the way this process was handled. I am not going to read it into the record, but I think it is sufficient to say in the interest of time here that this was handled very badly as far as I can see.

I think it was begun right and it was a very positive thing to have the meeting and to talk about it, but then it was just abandoned. Whatever was said there and the decision by the farmer's initial meeting, it was just abandoned by the staff. They just ignored what happened and went ahead with a whole new system that no one could figure out in the middle of it. I think it was wrong, and I think the minister should have used a more objective criteria and more consultation before establishing it.

Mr. Findlay: I would like to remind the member that, I do not know what report he got from the meeting that was held, but the meeting got a little carried away and some of the comments producers were making were the kind of comments that would not be made in a normal meeting. Basically, they say the meeting broke down and there were shouts above the furor saying, if we cannot agree on anything then we use the point system. So, technically, they did use the point system but put the cap in place so that one producer did not get 13 or 14 out of the 18 parcels. I am surprised the member is now arguing in favour of one person getting 13 or 14 parcels out of the 18 to be allocated.

Mr. Plohman: I think the minister should not argue that three parcels is fair when that person was eligible for 13 or 14. Perhaps, he should have been eligible for four, five, six. Who knows where the cutoff should have been? It could have been done on some type of point system basis, whereas if he

had 70 points and the next had 16 that it would not be given on the basis of points to the second one. It would be based on some other criteria that would be established. I think that the minister's arbitrary cutoff at three was unfair, was very arbitrary in this case, for an individual under those circumstances. That is what I am saying.

Mr. Findlay: I think the member also needs to have some information that has not been given out yet and that this individual, at this point in time, has 4,827 acres allocated to him, a rather substantial tract of Crown land, and that is what the committee had to take into consideration.

Mr. Plohman: Right, and there are other large operators up there who also received land on this who did not qualify with the points, but yet they were given land with very low points, very large operators. The Markuses are certainly large operators there I believe. The LeSanns are large operators, many more who are listed on this, not just Morris Smigelsky. So the minister can use that and say, well, you cannot be too big now. I am rather shocked that the minister would be arguing that he is against big farmers.

My angle is fairness and establishing the criteria beforehand, so they play by the same rules. I think that this got to be a real mess and has created a lot of hard feelings and it did not have to.

* (1540)

Mr. Findlay: I think it is fair to say that the staff held the meeting with the hope that there could be some agreement by all involved and that the meeting just did not evolve that way. It broke down and there was no consensus amongst the people there that there be something they could accept. So the staff had to do one of two things, just go with the basic criteria and let one individual get the majority of the land. They thought that was inappropriate, and I agree with them. They used a cap criteria. We knew at the end it was not going to be seen as being fair by somebody. Certainly, that is the case. I think in the overall interest to fairness to the majority of the 11 applicants, when 10 out of the 11 get an allocation either in or out of Polder, a reasonable degree of fairness did occur. The point system is never going to be perfect, because there are always extenuating circumstances and somebody always sees things a little differently than what the truth is. There is always conflict in the point system.

The only other system one can go to is a tender system. I wonder if the member is advocating that would be the appropriate way to go in the future.

Mr. Plohman: I think we used the point system for a number of years, and I think the minister knows that under these circumstances he deviated from it and he perhaps should have devised a better, fairer system for this situation, which he did not do. They took a very simplistic view, put a cap of three and then used the point system below that, where people got on the basis of points, that would not normally have been awarded. Therefore, they might as well have thrown it all out at that point and tried to appropriate this land to all of the young farmers in a very equitable way. It could have been done, I believe, in a better way than it was handled.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 5.(e) Agricultural Crown Lands Branch: (1) Salaries \$1,225,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$507,700—pass.

5.(f) Less: Recoverable from Other Appropriations \$546,800—pass.

Resolution 10: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$10,453,500 for Agriculture, Regional Agricultural Services Division, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1993—pass.

Item 6. Policy and Economics Division, (a) Administration: (1) Salaries \$101,300.

Mr. Plohman: Is this the section we can discuss the minister's policy on transportation?

Mr. Findlay: Any time.

Mr. Plohman: The minister last December, when we opened the Legislature, proudly stated that he was one of the sponsoring jurisdictions of the transportation talks process that the federal government had initiated in consultation with a number of provinces. The Manitoba logo is on the back of the transportation talks document that came out, the Manitoba logo, which demonstrates the support of the Minister of Agriculture, for the initiative that the federal government was undertaking.

(Mr. Bob Rose, Acting Deputy Chairperson, in the Chair)

This initiative, if we can call it that, cost \$1.1 million, involved some 130 meetings in western Canada, to get the views of farmers particularly, I guess, of the public in general on the Crow method of payment, and on pooling and a couple of other issues, I guess, that arose at that time. At the time

that these meetings were going to be held, we had raised concerns with the content of the workshops and the structure of the workshops, the process itself, that it would not be meaningful, that it was skewed in favour of change to the system rather than providing objective information.

We had raised a number of concerns. For example, one of the lines that was included in the presentations was the rail line to, and the facilities at Churchill should be eliminated. That kind of statement was in the document that Peat Marwick was distributing at that time. It was later removed and worded in a more positive way.

I have to ask the minister how he could allow that kind of negative statement about Churchill, which his government claims—and his Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) is sitting here—and he says he is banging his head against the wall trying to do his best to maintain and expand Churchill, I guess much to the chagrin of his colleague sitting next to him there. I have to say, when that is government policy, how can this minister not first screen what is going out, if he is endorsing the process and endorsing the meetings, and ensure that those kinds of workshops do not have statements and leanings in them that are detrimental to Manitoba's best interests and the interests of Manitoba farmers.

Mr. Findlay: The member is talking about Churchill. There were three preliminary pilot meetings that were held, two in Saskatchewan and one in Alberta. Subsequent to that, there were certainly no negative statements on Churchill that I am aware of.

Let me just read the statement out of "Let's Talk System Efficiency on Churchill." The issue is whether the rail line to and the facilities at the Port of Churchill should be upgraded and if so, who should pay the costs? Shipments through Churchill have been down in recent years, and most estimates show it would cost a significant amount of money to upgrade the rail line and facilities at the port and purchase new cars. Some believe the cost of these improvements is too high, and in many cases farmers should not have to bear these costs. Others believe Churchill is important to national defence, Canada's sovereignty in the North and regional development. The Minister of Transport is currently reviewing policy regarding Churchill.

I do not see anything negative about Churchill in that. It is just stating the facts. I think it is fair to say

that producers should not have to bear all the cost of maintaining that line. It is used for many other things. You know, that is one of the reasons why these talks were held, to try to make producers aware that more and more costs through the WGT Act in 1983—which was put in place when I believe maybe the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohnman) was the Minister of Transport in the Province of Manitoba. He allowed that document to get into place which would force producers to pay more and more for transporting grain in the future, locked into a WGT Act in 1983, meaning that producers paid the first 6 percent of inflation and all the costs over 31.5 million tonnes. Those are the basic problems that the farm community faces.

Costs may go down in the system, but the costs to the producer go up. There was a headline in the Co-operator here two or three months ago when the NTA announced their rail line charges for 1992-93 crop year, which said rail costs go down but farmers costs go up, and that I thought was a very classical statement. That is just exactly what has been going on.

The whole process that we went through here was to try to give producers a better handle on what they have been committed to for the WGT Act of 1983, and in the process of the costs going up and all the costs being passed back to the farm gate makes it more and more difficult for the farmer to compete in the export market.

When you look at the costs that the farmer has to pay now, he is paying roughly \$20 a tonne for elevation. He is paying about \$11 for freight out of his own pocket. The government is paying \$21 freight on his behalf. If it is going out through the eastern ports, you have \$20 of lake freight tagged on top of that. Everybody from the farm gate on is making a pretty good living on handling and transporting this grain, and they only have to handle it for a few days, and they pocket their money.

* (1550)

The farmer—a whole year and he is not getting enough to survive on in the present system. We are not going to be able to compete in the world market unless we can get our costs down from the farm gate to the consumer wherever in the world. That is the purpose, to make people—I should not say make—give them an opportunity to understand better what they face in the future in terms of increased costs.

Our elevation costs have gone up substantively since 1984. Our freight costs have gone up, and the value of the commodity being exported is going down and down and down. I think the general public has to understand the farmer cannot afford to bear these costs on a continuous basis, the way the old WGT Act had spelled them out.

Mr. Plohman: We protested the Western Grain Transportation Act. Let the minister not leave the impression we did not—every step of the way.

I want to ask the minister if his staff had input into the materials that were presented at the workshops and any of the research material that was presented.

Mr. Findlay: Our staff, along with staff in Saskatchewan and Alberta, were involved in putting information together for transportation talks, but the final document as it came out, we were not quite as happy as we would like to have been with what came out, with the information as presented at the meetings by Peat Marwick. It was Peat Marwick with the federal government that was involved in deciding what information would be presented at that time.

Mr. Plohman: Why would you not have included a section that would show the use of Churchill as an efficiency measure, rather than a cost to the system? What I am getting at is that we all know that the transportation costs to Churchill are lower than they are for transporting to other ports.

When you consider the other costs associated with those ports, the overall costs to the farmer can be some \$20 to \$24 a tonne less, yet maximizing the use of Churchill was not one of the issues discussed. Peat Marwick had no information on that. When we went to the meetings, myself and my colleagues, there was no information that they could present to demonstrate or to refute a statement that Churchill is more efficient. They had nothing on it.

That is one of my greatest criticisms, that they did not have this information that would show the impact of Churchill under various scenarios, for example, at 500,000 tonnes, at a million tonnes, at two million tonnes, and how much money that could put in the pockets of farmers by maximizing the use of the port. That is efficient use of the system.

It was not discussed in that way. It was discussed in a negative way initially by saying the only way under efficiency—the rail line to, and this is a quote, and facilities at Churchill should be eliminated.

After that was disputed and people were upset with it, after it was raised publicly, and we raised it in provincial affairs, we raised it in as many forums as we could, it was changed to the rail line facilities should be upgraded.

So it was a more positive statement in the final version, but it talked only about upgrading as if there is going to be a lot of costs associated. Whenever you say that to farmers, naturally, they are going to say, oh, how much is that going to cost us? So if there was any way to slant this negatively for the farmers, I think it was done, because Peat Marwick could not and did not provide any information as to who should pay for that or what the savings would be for the farmers if Churchill was maximized, like to two million tonnes per year, for example.

I thought this was a golden opportunity when going before the farmers of Manitoba to educate them about Churchill, rather than allowing them to simply use the information that the detractors of Churchill constantly use about draining all these dollars and sucking money from the farmers, a high-cost port, when it is not a high-cost port.

That was not balanced in those meetings. There was no information presented. I think the minister, what I am saying is, he had an opportunity to present that information, and I ask him why he did not ensure that they had included that kind of information in Manitoba at least.

Mr. Findlay: Certainly, the question at Churchill has always been a very difficult question. I think the member also knows that the largest amount of grain that should come in through Churchill, the catchment basin is really into northern Saskatchewan, more so than into Manitoba.

The Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) is here, and we have certainly met with the Wheat Board on more than one occasion. They are the major sales agency, and we constantly ask them why the Port of Churchill is not used more. They say that they are constantly advocating the use of the port whenever they are talking a sales agreement with a country that could use the port.

They try to advocate that it would be the best port to use; it has some cost efficiencies as the member indicates. But the reality that they face is that the buyer of the grain determines where he will pick it up. Either that or the shipper of the grain determines where they will pick it up. It is very difficult for the Wheat Board to advocate the use of

Churchill because the majority of people want to pick up the grain on short notice—what is the right term?—just-in-time kind of buying.

They prefer 12-month ports which makes the west coast very attractive. Churchill, and the cost they save, is only open at most three months of the year, and I know as the member is indicating, it probably could be kept open longer if there was a will to do that. They seem to be prepared to use the Thunder Bay route more than Churchill, at least that is the comment the Wheat Board hears from both the buyer of the grain and the shippers.

The Wheat Board feels that they would disadvantage the farmers if they were to put a lot of grain in Churchill and then go out and try to sell it because they know the buyer would bid them down saying, well, we prefer to pick it up somewhere else. It disadvantages the farmer, although in certain theoretical terms, it may be cheaper to put grain through Churchill. There are a lot of practical limitations that prevent us from being able to achieve it to the extent we would like for both the economy of the Port of Churchill, the economy of the province, and certainly the economy of the producers who are exporting the grain.

There was no limitation on somebody wanting to make presentation to bring information to the meetings, the transportation talks meetings, and certainly we did not advocate anything other than positives. We advocated nothing but positives for the Port of Churchill. As I said, the federal government and Peat Marwick put the final information together and the Port of Churchill discussion still continues.

Mr. Plozman: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, just to switch gears a little bit here—the minister has always indicated that he has not made up his mind about the method of payment, that he is not for paying the producer necessarily. That is the way I would characterize his position or his public position at least in the House. Yet, on January 26, he was interviewed by Harry Siemens on the MTN Manitoba Farm Report on Sunday, and I have a copy of the transcript. On two occasions he says that we will have to, quote, alter the method by which that process, that payment is made. That was one quote, and another, clearly we have to do some program changes that were consistent with the framework of the GATT agreement, and this was also in reference to GATT, the first statement.

It seems that the minister has prejudged GATT—and he is using GATT, I call it an excuse, he can call it something else—to perhaps muse now about his true feelings about the method of payment. Does the minister dispute that in fact it is not just the fact that there is a potential GATT agreement? I do not even know where that is at now. We can discuss that a bit here too, I guess. I think that just points to the fact that the minister, if he was just going to attribute this to GATT, was very premature on January 26 to be making that kind of statement. One of the reasons why our bargaining positions in Canada is not as strong as it should be is because people are going around making concessions before we even get any kind of a deal made.

I wonder why would we be musing about having to change the method of payment to make it GATTable when it was not even close to a deal, and there still is no deal as I understand it. Is it not a fact that the minister is just showing his inclination to wanting to change the method of payment?

* (1600)

Mr. Findlay: The inclination I had in making those comments and the same inclination I have today is to maximize the ability of western Canadian grain farmers to be competitive in the world market, also to maximize their ability to use that \$720 million every year.

The GATT process December 20, the Dunkel text came down in which he laid out internal supports, external supports and rates of reduction, and he identified WGTA west as being an export subsidy which would be subject to 36 percent reduction over six years, and the WGTA east is identified as an internal subsidy subject to 20 percent reduction.

Now, in January, after Dunkel text came down on January 13 and all countries to report and most of the countries were in the process of reporting, the process of GATT resolution was looking relatively optimistic, as optimistic as it had for two years. The member well knows how critical it is that we have a resolution in the GATT process. Now, if he is trying to link those comments about GATT with today's understanding of GATT or the WGTA, I mean, that is a very long bow for him to draw.

The context in which they were discussed is the fact that if the Dunkel text is followed—and we do have to have a reduction in export subsidies. Canada desperately needs that, and if we are going

to be identified, we had better do some changes in the process of how we identify it or pay it so that we can protect it and use it in the fashion it was intended.

Now, if the member wants to just go along, okay, just leave it there. Let it be subject to whatever happens, and the Dunkel text does kick in somewhere in the future, and we are subject to those kinds of reductions, he is taking money right out of the pockets of farmers. I am saying I want to keep the money in the pockets of farmers to help them in exporting grain.

So that is what the comments were made around, the fact that identifying it as an export subsidy west, internal support east, is going to cause reductions. I am sure the federal Minister of Finance is very happy to see that happen. It saves him money, but who picks up the tab—it is the farmer. The member cannot understand, the farmer picks up the difference. He has to now pay the extra cost of any reduction forced in terms of the use of WGTA money in western Canada.

I am surprised that he would say, oh, that is okay, let the farmer pay. I am totally opposed to that principle to always let the farmer pay.

Mr. Plohman: I am surprised the minister is emphasizing that so much, a parenthoods statement like that. The fact that he is totally opposed to letting the farmer pay is something that we would disagree with on this side of the House.

It seems to me though—and the minister makes a statement that he says he wants to help farmers in exporting grain, that he should not be looking at a change in the method of payment that would go to farmers, rather than to the railways as it has been done because what that does is dilutes it to the point that it is not for export of grain at all.

In many cases, it will be paying farmers for producing grain for domestic use, for feed or whatever the case might be, at least under all the scenarios I know, unless the minister has a certain scenario that only exporters of grain will get those dollars under any of the scenarios. That does dilute it. It is not for the export of grain any longer, yet the minister knows that this was the whole purpose of the Crow benefit from the beginning, was for export of grain, not as a subsidy where it can be argued that if it is going to the farmers, it is an unfair trade practice, that it could be argued from other parts of the country that it is an unfair subsidy for our western

Canadian farmers, and it is doomed I think to termination very quickly if we start to change.

I think the best way to maintain that subsidy is to ensure that it is paid to the railway and argue these issues at the GATT talks, and let us wait and see if there is an agreement before we start to find other ways to pay it in an equitable fashion, rather than coming up before we get to that point and saying we are going to pay in a different way here so that we appease those at the other side of the table.

I think that is the wrong way to do it. I think it weakens our position, and I think that the minister's statements here on January 26 were designed to influence the hearing process that was taking place with regard to the Crow payment transportation talks, designed to influence farmers to be negative toward the present method of payment, to feel like the writing was on the wall because of GATT and so they had no choice.

That was my feeling, that the minister was attempting to change public opinion. I guess he is probably disappointed that it came out, in his eyes or at least in his statements, as 50-50 now even though there were about 11 meetings, according to the reports that I saw, in Manitoba that were in favour of keeping the payment to the railways and only six in favour of paying it to farmers—the consensus at those meetings. The minister still said it is 50-50 in Manitoba, but I think that must have been a disappointing result for the minister because I believe that he has already made up his mind that he does not want it to be paid to the railways regardless of what happens at GATT.

Mr. Findlay: Well, the member always likes to create a little bit of innuendo and try to put words in people's mouths. We are involved in a process, have been involved in a process, of allowing as many people as possible to have their input, and a question that has been in front of agriculture industry in western Canada for a long, long period of time.

What I see happening, as I look back—I can talk partly as a producer now and partly as a minister, I guess—the WGT Act as it was changed in 1983, dramatically altered the ability of farmers to get the kind of compensation for exporting grain that they had had since 1897, dramatically altered it. That member really did not do anything to stop that, as far as I am concerned. That thing came and went, and it was, oh, yeah, it is okay; everything is great; inflation is going to carry on forever, no problem; the farmer can pay the first 6 percent because inflation

will always be double that, no problem; over 31.5 million tonnes, no problem because grains is going to be worth \$6 and \$8 a bushel, no problem.

That is the kind of scenario that was happening at that time, and as things have unfolded and as the price of grain has continued to come down and the cost of elevation and transportation have continued to go up, all the farmer sees is that all the efficiency gains he has created on the farm are taken away by somebody else at the farm gate. He sees the kind of headline that I talked about in the Co-operator. Costs go down, but farmers' costs go up. We just cannot tolerate that forever and a day.

Whether the GATT process unfolds in a positive sense, it is almost anybody's guess at this time. Maybe a little bit of movement by the European community in the last couple of weeks would indicate that there is a small, small light at the end of the tunnel. I have never been satisfied with the present process where the railways negotiate through a regulator what they are going to get from the government on behalf of farmers. I do not know of any farmer who really knows what is going on. The process seems to keep the railways very happy. They do not say anything. Obviously, they are satisfied. I think the farmer is getting the short end of the stick in this deal, has been for a long time, and I am not disappointed with the results of those hearings at all.

The opportunity was created for people to give their input, give some further direction to governments and their leaders as to what we should do in the future with all the issues on the table, whether it is fairness to the producers, who is getting the money out of the system, what the GATT process might mean in the future. The fact that we are 50-50 or split, or however you want to say, is of some concern because there is not a clear message in Manitoba.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

I would not want to predict at this point how this will unfold in the next few months or few years. It may just stay in the process it is in for some period of time, but I will agree with the member that the Western Grain Transportation Act, the money that is paid out there, is for export of grain, but I am not convinced that the whole system is as efficient as it should be for the best interests of the producer.

* (1610)

Mr. Plohan: It depends on whether you define efficiency as the smallest system or whether in fact an efficient system that serves the vast majority of Manitoba farmers is a major goal. I hear always the term "efficiency" used, but it always seems to be used in terms of the smallest system. That is not the way it was built. That is why we have a branch line network in this province, in this country. That is why we had railways in the first place, to assist those disadvantaged areas of the province, of the country, open up areas. I do not think we should turn our backs on all of that.

I want to just ask the minister why he put forward this proposal that would see potentially—and I have to say it looks like it is not well received—payments of the Crow benefit paid differently in different provinces and even from producer to producer.

How could that possibly work? What kind of future for this benefit would there be, when it is being paid differently to different farmers and to different provinces? How would he apportion it, work it out, and what kind of future would that have? Would farmers who get the benefit personally subsidize their own transportation? Would the railways charge a different rate for those farmers who are not getting the Crow benefit that they are getting the money for?

It is such a nonstarter, and it seems that is what the farm organizations are saying. I only read into that again that the minister is attempting to simply throw chaos into the situation, because he does not want it to continue. He does not want the method of payment to stay the way it is. He says, let us look at this kind of thing. I mean it is doomed to destruction of the Crow benefit. That is what that kind of proposal does. It has got all the bureaucrats going down the wrong path, and they are all studying this for the July meeting in Nova Scotia, I understand.

Mr. Findlay: The member talks about the best system as being the smallest system. That is not true at all. Natural evolution does occur. We obviously have fewer branch lines today than we had 50 years ago because trucks are bigger, roads are better, you can haul further. The number of elevators in the system, whether you are talking Manitoba, western Canada, whether you are talking Pool, UGG, Sask Pool, or wherever you are talking, they are less than half what they were 20 years ago.

The companies in the system know that with greater capacity, larger farms, you do not need the

system that was put in place 50 years ago. I would say that process led to a certain degree of efficiency.

The system in terms of total grain bushel capacity has not decreased very much, just that the older elevators are closed. You may close two older ones, you build one new one—there is a larger capacity. The turnaround time in the elevators has gone up rather dramatically. I just do not know the figures off the top of my head, but last time I talked to Pool, they were boasting about the turnover per elevator, how they have improved it over the last two years, the rate at which they can move grain through their system. It is larger; it is more efficient; it is computerized. They just feel they are doing a better job of being able to move grain through their elevators.

The railroads are doing a better job in terms of turnaround times in their cars. I do not believe that you have to have the same large locomotive running up and down every track in this province. I think there is certainly a role for Roadrailer or small units that can move cars down a line to a mainline, then put them on the big expensive locomotive. I think there is a lot of cost efficiencies to be gained in that process.

If you do not open your mind and discuss these issues on an ongoing basis, you allow the people that want to hang on to the way it was, no matter how inefficient it is, to win the case. The only reason I am involved in this is to try to promote a more efficient system and better use of existing dollars.

In fact, I do not know why we are hamstrung—maybe the member can answer for what happened in 1983—in terms of we are capped in terms of the number of dollars that can be used to export grain for producers, even though the costs are going up. Why have we got capped? I think farmers need to know the answers to that—[interjection] Yes, when the NDP government was in Manitoba, part and parcel.

I just want the member to know that this is the direction we are going in terms of what I put forward. It is an angle that needs to be looked at, the feasibility of it. That is what we are doing. We are looking at the feasibility. Is it feasible, is it not? I do not know the answer to that. The member posed a number of questions, yes, good questions. I pose the same ones. Can it, will it?

Since we have producers half and half, more or less, or whether you call it 60-40, or 55-45, it does

not matter, you have two camps of thought in this province. If there is a plan that does satisfy both of them, I think that is in the best interest. I do not want to see one group impose their will on the other group. If there is a medium ground that allows both to have essentially what they want, that does not destroy the intent of the WGT Act and the use of the money, that is good, but that does not mean it is going to happen.

We are looking at the feasibility of it. It may or may not warrant any further discussion, but to think that this discussion is over in a month or two is believing in the tooth fairy, because this has been going on for a long period of time and it will carry on for a long period of time. The outcome of the GATT process, I think, is rather critical as to what is done here. I do not accept the premise that, oh, let the GATT happen, and we will just accept their reductions and let the farmer pay. I do not accept that at all.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, nobody is saying, let the farmers pay. The fact is, there are other ways that these programs can be delivered. They must be delivered. If it happens that international trade laws say that we are violating those trade laws, then we have to change, but I do not think that we should prejudge those and put these things on the table before we get to a solution.

It was the same thing that was done in free trade with this government. When they were negotiating, the federal government with Mulroney and the U.S., it was the same type of thing that was done, concessions made before we got to the final text and the final agreement. What we are saying is that if there has to be changes made, then we have to make them, but let us not put them on the table as burnt offerings before we get to a solution. We have nothing to negotiate when we are finished.

Mr. Findlay: I find the comments of the member rather interesting and really humorous at times, because you know, he just talked about the Free Trade Agreement. I think we have been criticized because we were not prepared for it. Here we are trying to get prepared for a certain agreement that might come down. Had that agreement under GATT come down a month ago, I know what he would be saying—why did we not do some work to prepare ourselves? We would know how to make a decision—because he does acknowledge we might have to do some changing.

You have to prepare your groundwork, and that groundwork will continue until the GATT resolution comes down, whatever it may be. It may never come down. Who knows? We have done some preliminary groundwork in this process to condition producers, to let them know some of the questions that are before us and let them bring forth their comments on those questions. That is an ongoing process. It will not end next month, and it will not end this year.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we can go on for a long time—limited time at this point. I am going to pass it over if the Liberal member has any questions, and then we can move on to the other points, because we are attempting, I understand, to wind this up within 40 minutes. So I will leave it for a future time to discuss.

Mr. Gaudry: The only comment I wanted to make here is that in the Activity Identification: provides financial support to the University of Manitoba for conducting agricultural research projects, how can the minister justify the \$75,000 decrease in the funding for the University of Manitoba?

Mr. Findlay: We would like to spend more money on every line. I have 10 new programs, I would tell the member. When we have been forced to put the kind of expenditure we have had to put into safety nets because of the international trade situation that none of us had any control over, we absolutely had to respond with the safety net programs.

We have increased our expenditure in the department rather dramatically over the last four years and again this year, from \$102 million to \$135 million, but you have to pull back on some expenditures somewhere. This is a very marginal pullback. I hope that in the future, if we expend less on safety nets, we can start to spend more on research.

* (1620)

I know the value of research; I have been involved in that industry, but I also know there is a lot of value in the research that is done outside of the university and outside of government labs. Farmers themselves are very entrepreneurial, very inventive, do a lot of research. The private sector, the grain companies like Manitoba Pool, UGG, are doing a fair bit of research, too. So the overall amount of research done in the province continues to go up, but it is coming from different sources rather than always from the public purse.

Although I hate to reduce it by \$75,000, we discussed it with the university. I will not say they are totally satisfied, but they did not disagree that this time we could do this and overall balance our books a little bit as a department.

Mr. Gaudry: Is there a special program that can be identified in the reduction of a grant?

Mr. Findlay: No, any reductions in expenditure that will happen in university will be done by the dean and his faculty where they deem it being less appropriate to make expenditures for this year. Plus, they are also trying to conduct their research activities in a more cost-efficient manner in whatever way possible, and, hopefully, in the process of gaining some efficiencies, they can actually get the same amount done with less dollars.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 6.(a)(1) Salaries \$101,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$15,700—pass.

6.(b) Economics Branch: (1) Salaries, \$521,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$95,600—pass.

6.(c) Boards and Commissions Support Services: (1) Salaries \$340,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$158,700—pass.

6.(d) Agricultural Research: (1) University of Manitoba - Grant \$800,000.

Mr. Plohman: I just wanted to register our concern with the government's reduction in support for research. I think this flies in the face of what we were discussing the other day about new processes and new methods of developing new plant strains, and so on. It is important to be at the forefront in public research in that area, I believe, and I think that we risk falling behind in Manitoba if we do not have that kind of input. I do not know how the minister can justify a reduction there. He says they can do more with less. I find it hard to believe.

Research is becoming increasingly expensive as well, and I do not understand how he can say they feel that they can do just as much with a smaller grant. Inflation is eating away at this grant every year. I think the minister, I would think from his background, would be one that would want to put greater resources in this area rather than less in terms of the minister's involvement with the university, and so he knows what is going on there, I think, from his experience.

Unless he feels that the private sector is picking up this whole area, and legitimately so, then I guess

he can make that kind of statement. I do not feel that reducing the public role here is very constructive at this time in terms of the best interests of Manitoba farmers.

* (1630)

Mr. Findlay: I would not think that a reduction of \$75,000 in terms of their overall research budget from all sources is any more than a pittance of 1 percent. They are getting funding from Ag Canada, insert grants from the private sector with plant breeders' rights. There are further monies coming in from those directions. Yet one must not forget that also for the university and the Faculty of Agriculture we put in \$1.8 million into the metabolism unit, which is just being built this spring, that will certainly improve the ability of particularly the Department of Animal Science to do work on various livestock animals and commodities, certainly in the area of diversification.

You take into context \$1.8 million put in there by this government as opposed to a \$75,000 reduction in the grant, they come out significantly on the positive side of the ledger. The opening of that facility is going to be about a month from now, I think, the 3rd of July, if I am not mistaken, whatever the Friday of that week is. I know the university and the Faculty of Agriculture feel very good about having that facility there, in terms of what it will mean for them in terms of additional research and being able to attract funding from a variety of sources. Had they not had that building, the national animal care committee was going to shut down their facilities. It was that desperate. So the money we are putting in there seemed to be very positive as part of the overall commitment we are making to that faculty in the University of Manitoba.

Mr. Plohman: Under this area I see listed environmental sustainability and land management under Soil Science, and it seems to me that might be an area that, from what I read, has been explored at Rio de Janeiro in the conference. Did the department or the university have any contribution to make in terms of papers for that conference?

Mr. Findlay: No, the department has not, and we are not aware of whether the university has or has not. It is just part of an overall thrust as people in the industry of agriculture realize that we have to be seen to be responsible in terms of our use of soil and water by the public at large—not only seen to be but actually through our actions prove ourselves. I think the money we put into farming for tomorrow for

conservation initiatives has been seen to be very positive in moving in that direction.

(Mr. Jack Reimer, Acting Deputy Chairperson, in the Chair)

I think it is fair to say that the attitude of farmers has changed a lot in the last five years in terms of understanding. I think particularly because of the wind storms we had in 1988 it caused a lot of people to think differently about leaving land bare and how they cultivate it and whether they left trash on it. It was not that long ago we had 20 percent of our land in summer fallow. This year, you know, projections indicate we will be down around 7 percent, and that is very positive. If at cropping you decrease the vulnerability to the wind and water erosion, you decrease the buildup of salinity that had been happening and you slow down the rate of organic matter loss. Those are all positive

I think that is kind of the gist of the thinking that is going to come out of Rio de Janeiro that we more responsibly utilize our land base for agriculture in a more sustainable way, maximize ability to get productivity out of it today but still not harm the productivity capacity of that soil in the future. Through research we get to understand more and more about how we are using our land and what we should do in the practical way to minimize potential degradation. We all know there has been degradation over the last 100 years in western Canada, particularly from the summer fallowing activity and wind and water erosion, decrease in organic matter and increase in the salinity. Those all have to be arrested, and I think there is an understanding of that now much better than it was five or ten years ago.

Mr. Plohman: It is interesting that The Farm Practices Protection Act is going to define what the normal practice is, and I would be interested to know whether the minister would consider summer fallow and dust storms consequential of what would be considered normal practice in today's situation when a person might bring a nuisance complaint because of that. I wonder whether the minister would call summer fallow normal anymore.

Mr. Findlay: Well, it is like burning. It is one of those practices that I would not want to say is totally wrong. At certain times and under certain instances it is reasonable to do either of those two actions, but at the same time in the way you carry out those practices you have to do it in the fashion that you minimize the potential of wind erosion or water

erosion. There are ways in which you can summer fallow, especially chem fallow today is a way in which you can control the weeds, allow nutrient buildup without exposing the land to the wind and water erosion.

Same thing with burning, there are ways and means in which you can burn that minimizes or almost eliminates any hazard to somebody else on the road or in a house or down wind from where the fire is occurring. If you follow the practices that we will lay out as guidelines you will minimize or eliminate the downside while still allowing the producer to carry on that practice if he deems it is appropriate in his management process.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Reimer): Item 6.(d)(1) University of Manitoba - Grant \$800,000—pass.

6.(e) Manitoba Farm Mediation Board: (1) Salaries \$166,300.

Mr. Gaudry: There has been a reduction of staff and it explains—were they laid off or were they sent to another department?

Mr. Findlay: Of the two staff members affected here, one was reassigned in the Department of Agriculture, one has a job in another government department.

Mr. Gaudry: In this Section 6 here, of all these staff, were there any that there were decentralized in the program of decentralization?

Mr. Findlay: No.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Reimer): Item 6.(e)(1) Salaries—

Mr. Plohman: Is the minister indicating in the statement that is made—that explanation of two SYs being reduced here—that this is partly because there were fewer applicants but largely because the administration is being done by the Farm Debt Review administration, some of the things that would have had to have been done by the provincial Mediation Board staff—in other words, integration of the administration of the two?

Mr. Findlay: The basic reason for the reduction was, as I said earlier, and I think the member indicated, that there was less work load, less applications. The whole process of handling, particularly the administrative side, has been streamlined and improved. The remaining staff member plus some of the secretarial staff doing some of the entry work makes it more efficient to do it this way, and if it is deemed appropriate that

it—there are those extra hours of work—per diems can and will be used along the way.

The member talked about the two boards, the federal board and the provincial board. Where joint panels can be held, there is administrative cost savings both for them and for us. In terms of handling our own cases, we handle still our own cases. They are not handling our cases for us.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Reimer): Item 6.(e)(1) Salaries \$166,300—pass; 6.(e)(2), Other Expenditures \$448,600—pass; 6.(f) Less: Recoverable from Other Appropriations \$20,600—pass.

Resolution 11: RESOLVED that it be granted to her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,627,800 for Agriculture for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1993—pass.

Item 7. Federal-Provincial Agreement (b) Soil Conservation Agreement \$1,040,000. Shall the item pass?

Mr. Plohman: Just a question: The minister mentions 44 locally based organizations that are active, and he has talked about this perhaps being integrated with weed control districts and other functions in the province. Has he determined whether they will be eligible for funding under this agreement with the new mandate?

Is there any funding going to these organizations from this agreement or is it only the projects that they look after or are there some administrative funds going to them as well?

* (1640)

Mr. Findlay: We talked about this earlier, about the fact that there is a study going on to determine the feasibility of being able to deliver weed program initiatives under the 44 soil and water associations in some fashion.

The 44 associations do have some money for their administrative costs on an ongoing basis. As we look forward, I think I also mentioned this previously, with the Green Plan announcement of, I think, 170 million federal dollars across the country to be cost-shared, we will be looking at soil and water associations and maybe pest management and that sort of thing as being part and parcel.

So, in one sense we are looking at trying to streamline the delivery of the weed district activity so it covers the entire province; another way we are looking at it is to be as cost efficient as possible; and

thirdly, we are looking at how we can dovetail the soil and water conservation activities, weed district activities and the other activities that we might deem appropriate that will attract federal funding under the Green Plan. That whole process has just barely got started in terms of what we can do and how we can extend the activity of these associations in a positive sense.

I think their success or their track record for the last two years has been very positive in terms of small amounts of money really being put in place to stimulate a lot more conservation-conscious thinking by people, and when local people have the money in their hands to make decisions, what is best for their area, their soils, with a lot of, sort of, nongovernment staff decision making and it is local decision making.

I think it has been very positive. I have heard nothing but positives come back, and they are building on it. I would say, we are building into using more and more money in that line in the future, under what we will call sustainable agriculture or conservation-conscious agriculture. So that whole process is evolving, and it will involve all the stakeholders along the way. We do have a good network there to bring forward constructive opinions and observations from the general farm public.

Mr. Plohman: Just two brief questions here. Are these 44 locally based organizations located throughout the province or are there some areas where there are major gaps? Also, can he tell me whether there is any money available under the Soil Conservation Agreement for the Dauphin Lake Advisory Committee that is working under the Minister of Natural Resources' (Mr. Enns) jurisdiction, but certainly they would assume to qualify for this?

Mr. Findlay: The 44 associations cover all of agri-Manitoba. All of the agricultural area of Manitoba is covered. We are not aware that there is any money for the Dauphin Lake situation. As the member mentions, it is certainly under Natural Resources.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

I am not saying they could not be in the future, but at this point in time we are not aware that there is.

Mr. Plohman: There is no money of a substantive nature, if the minister will recall the question I had to the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), for that committee other than administrative, but they

do have a lot of projects where they deal with soil conservation, because it is the management of soils that has created a lot of the problems with the lake over the years, so they would seem to fit into this soil conservation agreement criteria very well. I just wondered if there are some applications that are made.

Mr. Findlay: The Dauphin Lake Advisory Board received some \$27,000 last year from the federal environmental sustainable initiatives fund in '91-92.

Mr. Plohman: So the minister is not saying there is any more under this agreement. What he said is federal, is that all administered by the federal government then? How do they determine when it is federal and when it is provincial? I thought it was all shared dollars, or are there certain projects designated federal, and they get 100 percent federal dollars, then there are others that are provincially designated and they get 100 percent provincial dollars, all under the agreement?

Mr. Findlay: The environmental sustainable initiatives that I am talking about is quite separate from the Soil Accord, the soil agreement under which Farming for Tomorrow activities occur. The \$27,000 that I mentioned is 100 percent federal money, but we see it as a pilot project or kick-starting the thought process towards the use of the Green Plan money in the future.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 7.(a) Agri-Food Agreement, (b) Soil Conservation Agreement \$1,040,000—pass.

Resolution 12: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty, a sum not exceeding \$1,040,000 for Agriculture Federal-Provincial Agreement for the fiscal year ending 31st day of March, 1993—pass.

Item 8. Income Insurance and Support Program (a) Administration \$577,000. Shall the item pass?

Mr. Plohman: I do not believe we have a statement of the financial status of these various tripartite programs. I know, for example, the bean stabilization plan, I believe, was the one which involves the pulse growers who were very concerned about what is happening with the payouts there and the current status of that program in terms of its deficit.

There is rather substantial liability that has been created, and I wonder if the minister could shed some light on the current status of that one and any others. That could be provided in writing, but I would need a commitment from the minister that this

would not just get swept under the rug somewhere, and we would not hear about it till next year again as to the current status of these various tripartite programs in terms of deficits and potential increase in premiums and the provincial and farmers' share of premiums as well.

Because it would seem to me that if there are large deficits, there are obviously going to be implications for the premiums for the farmers and the province to settle that deficit. What liability does the province have on each of those, the producer, and what is the deficit level?

I would ask specifically at this time about the pulse bean stabilization plan.

Mr. Findlay: In terms of the seven tripartite plans, we will supply the information the member wants in terms of deficits. Just before we are done, I will table some information he requested earlier. With all the plans, the producer is at his maximum premium payment right now of 3 percent, with the exception of cattle which is a little bit below that at this time.

With the bean plan, the national management committee, on which there is representation from the federal government, the provincial governments involved—Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta—and the producers, there has been ongoing negotiations now for many months with regard to what to do with the plan. After the 1991 payment is made, it looks like the total deficit will be, in the bean plan nationwide, about \$20 million. Manitoba's liability in that plan will be about \$2.3 million.

For 1992, what they have negotiated is that the white pea bean will no longer be in tripartite, but will be in what we call Ontario-style GRIP for '92, but the coloured beans for which there has been very little payouts will stay in tripartite for 1992.

Mr. Plohman: That was going to be my next question whether we see some of these moving over to GRIP. You are saying the white bean is going into GRIP for Manitoba—white pea bean, you call it—but the coloured beans are staying in the tripartite program. Is there any other move in any of these others to include them in a GRIP-style program as opposed to a tripartite?

Mr. Findlay: With regard to the beans that the member just mentioned from Manitoba, what I said is for all provinces involved. The only other crop that is in tripartite that there has been a fair bit of consideration about the potential deficit that exists

right now and what to do in the future has been sugar beets. Whether they are talking or thinking of GRIP, who knows at this point? They will be in tripartite for 1992, but beyond 1992 that is a question that is in front of what has been called the special measures committee that has been set up, involving producers, federal and provincial officials, to try to determine what to do about stabilization in the sugar beet industry beyond 1992.

My understanding is they are expected to report by the end of 1992 with recommendations for the stabilization of that industry beyond 1992.

Mr. Plohman: How many acres of beans are seeded in Manitoba? The reason I ask that is this seems like a tremendous liability for a rather minor crop.

* (1650)

Mr. Findlay: The vast majority of the acres in white pea beans are really in Ontario. In Manitoba, and I am just sort of speaking from memory a little bit here, I would suggest probably around 90 percent of our acres in Manitoba are white pea beans; then there are colours and kidneys and cranberry beans making up the rest. In Alberta, the vast majority of them are the coloured beans, the nonwhite pea beans. That is the make-up across the country.

There has been some fairly sizable payouts going back to the '87 retroactive payment and '88. It seems that at that point in time, and one should not point fingers, but it seemed that the people who were marketing the beans in Ontario just more or less dumped them one year and really destroyed the market price. That triggered a big payout. We did not think from a Manitoba perspective that they were responsible enough in the way they marketed their beans. It did hurt the program right from the beginning, and they are the large player in terms of acres.

Mr. Plohman: So Manitoba got really taken to the cleaners on this thing, when you think about it. I mean this was—I believe the minister was responsible for bringing this in, in 1988, probably shortly after the election or during his first year in office.

Mr. Findlay: There were 38,165 acres of dry edible beans in the province of Manitoba in 1991. Any payout of money went to producers in the province of Manitoba. It did stimulate diversification into this industry. There are people who are doing some form of processing and certainly lots of marketing of

these beans, and they have found markets for them, there is no question.

So if the plan has been successful in the one sense, it has allowed producers to develop the expertise in growing the beans and develop a market for the beans. Like a lot of other crops it has suffered depressed prices. So the stabilization has allowed the industry to develop. Like any industry that stabilization exists for, it allowed it to develop rather than stumble and collapse because market prices fall.

Mr. Plohman: What I mean is that the support prices were obviously much higher than the program was geared to pay because of the \$20-million deficit here. If it is just a matter of a few bad years—but I cannot see them ever getting out of this, from what I heard about it. Without writing off most of this debt there is very little chance that their premiums—I mean the farmers would not be able to afford the premiums to pay off that debt.

So it would seem that this program was either hastily designed or poorly designed when it was signed. It was not representative of the market at that time, or, as the minister says, it was caught by surprise by the dumping of it by the Ontario growers.

Mr. Findlay: Certainly all tripartites were set up the same way with 3 percent premium contribution by each of the three partners—federal, provincial and producer—with the proviso that the producer portion of the premium could be altered up above the 3 percent if it was deemed appropriate for the continuity of the plan.

The gross margin guarantee has changed in some of the plans. Certainly, beans started at 90 percent and is now down to 85. There has been a lot of learning along the way as to what is the appropriate mechanism for management, what are the appropriate support levels, and how they should respond to changes in the marketplace.

So I will not say everything has been perfect. Obviously it has not, otherwise there would be no deficit. But in the process along the way I think both producers and managing governments have learned a fair bit about how you can stabilize and how you should not stabilize. The probability of drawing countervail is very prevalent in our minds nowadays as we try to market a lot of these crops in the United States with stabilization plans in place to support their production.

Mr. Plohman: Very quickly, the minister says that our share is about 10 percent of that \$20 million. Whose is the rest? Is it all federal liability or the producers?

Mr. Findlay: Producers have no liability for deficit, but the other portion is federal and, of course, the Ontario government is also in the plan and the Alberta government. So it is the other two provinces and the federal government who have the rest of the liability, the other \$18 million.

Mr. Plohman: You are going to give us a list of all of the other deficits comparable to that \$20 million?

Mr. Findlay: Yes. That just reminded me again that I will pass out the information on the Grants to Agricultural Societies and the Feed Analysis Laboratory and Soil Testing Laboratory, which was requested earlier; and we will, by mail, give the member the other information on the deficits on the various tripartite plans.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 8.(a) Administration \$577,000—pass.

8.(b) Tripartite Cattle Stabilization Plan \$1,424,700—pass.

8.(c) Tripartite Hog Stabilization Plan \$6,310,500—pass.

8.(d) Tripartite Sugar Beet Stabilization Plan \$400,400—pass.

8.(e) Tripartite Bean Stabilization Plan \$276,400—pass.

8.(f) Tripartite Lamb Stabilization Plan \$146,300—pass.

8.(g) Tripartite Honey Stabilization Plan \$156,000—pass.

8.(h) Tripartite Onion Stabilization Plan \$16,800—pass.

8.(k) Net Income Stabilization Account \$11,460,000.

Mr. Plohman: Does the department have any involvement other than paying this cash into a separate administration, any involvement in the allocation of these dollars? Before he answers the question, maybe he can answer the second one that I have at the same time. Is the minister aware of any move by the federal government to privatize the administration of NISA, because there was some talk of it in the federal budget?

Mr. Findlay: To the first one, no, we are not involved in the allocation. The allocation of producer is determined by basically his tax

information that comes forward and his contribution in the past year. All the money is paid out directly to producers, the full 5 percent as it ended up being. Next year, he draws 3.5 percent. He has to put his 2 percent contribution in to get the first 2 percent and then the other 1.5 percent could be paid directly.

With regard to the federal government privatizing the administration, right now it is really being administered by what we used to consider the old WGSA administration. I only know what the member has seen. There has been no discussion in my presence whatsoever, no proposals brought forward about that. It was only mentioned, and what they are doing I have not heard at this point.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 8.(k) Net Income Stabilization Account \$11,460,000—pass.

Resolution 13: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$20,768,100 for Agriculture, Income Insurance and Support Programs, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1993—pass.

The last item to be considered for the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture is item 1.(a) Minister's Salary \$20,600. At this point we request that the minister's staff leave the table for the consideration of this item.

Item 1. Administration and Finance (a) Minister's Salary \$20,600.

Mr. Plohan: I think we should put in a bid here. Would the minister go for \$600? No, eh?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 1.(a) Minister's Salary \$20,600.

Mr. Plohan: We want to, just briefly in the one minute I have here, indicate that there are a number of areas where we seriously disagree with the minister, his policies, and issues that he has taken and stand that he has taken.

On the other hand, we are not going to be moving a vote to reduce the salary to the price of one bushel of grain, of wheat, on this occasion. It might be reflective of the minister's success or lack of it insofar as the price that farmers are getting for their produce at this time and would have been appropriate, but in the interests of time we are not going to do that today, and we will continue to scrutinize the minister's dealings as well as his work over the next year. Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 1.(a) Minister's Salary \$20,600—pass.

Resolution 6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,871,500 for Agriculture, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1993—pass.

This concludes the consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture. The next department to be considered is Northern Affairs.

The time is now 5 p.m. and time for private members' hour. I am interrupting the proceedings of the committee. The Committee of Supply will resume considerations at 8 p.m.

* (1440)

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Madam Chairperson (Louise Dacquay): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply is dealing with the Estimates for the Department of Education and Training. Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

We are on page 44, 5.(j) Post-Secondary Career Development/Adult and Continuing Education: (1) Salaries.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Thank you, Madam Chairperson, and welcome back.

I would like to ask the minister, just to begin with, whether she has any items that are in need of tabling at the beginning of this session?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Chairperson, to table today, I have some further information regarding the Manitoba Student Financial Assistance Program with information relating to applicants in the U.S., applicants in other Canadian provinces, applicants in countries other than Canada and the U.S. Those are broken down into vocational/technical education, university undergraduate, master's and doctorate program.

Then I also have to table information on the length of eligibility of Manitoba Student Financial Assistance applicants, and I believe this information was requested in the area of—I have provided, by way of example, programs such as the Bachelor of Arts, the Bachelor of Laws, the certificate program and the Master of Arts program and also with information regarding the special opportunity loan.

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

Mr. Alcock: That was quick. Just one other question on 16-5(j). The Grants/Transfer Payments of \$7,736,800 in this year, the minister need not give this answer right now if she would prefer simply to pull the information together and table it, but I am just wondering if you can give me the distribution of that amount of money.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I will be pleased to table that information when I am able to table it, and I will be able to table it when the final budgets are determined. Those final budgets are not yet determined, but when they are determined then the information will be tabled.

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I was actually just going to say that rather than go to the trouble of officially tabling it, if that should occur after the Estimates period is concluded, you could simply just forward that to my office, at the minister's discretion.

That concludes my questioning on this particular line, and if you would care to pass it.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Sveinsson): Item 5.(j)(1) Salaries \$369,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$135,600—pass; (3) Grants \$7,736,800—pass.

5.(k)(1) Grants \$150,000.

Mr. Alcock: I wonder if the minister could just tell us the status. I realize that we are winding down the Core, and this is just the tail end of it, but the status of both the transfer of the programs to other educational jurisdictions and funding bodies and the nature of the discussions on a renewal or a replacement to the Core agreement, and Education's involvement in that.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, first of all I would like to take the opportunity to introduce Anita Neville who is the acting director of Core Area Employment and Training. In answer to the member's question, two programs are being transferred for completion. The Aboriginal Journalist Program is being transferred to New Careers and the Human Justice/Constable Program is being transferred to Red River Community College.

In regard to the future, it is my colleague the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst) who is taking the lead in the establishment of a new agreement. I look forward to continuing my discussions with him as he keeps me informed about further agreements.

* (1450)

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I would just like, though, on that question of the renewal or the replacement, because I think at this point we are not talking about a renewal of the existing core structure, but there have been some discussions about a replacement agreement now, and we see out of Ottawa and out of Mr. Epp's office some preliminary indications. I am wondering to what extent Education is involved in assisting the Minister of Urban Affairs in these negotiations.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, the responsibility for the negotiation of the agreement does rest, as I have said and the member referenced, with my colleague the Minister of Urban Affairs. Though he and I may have some discussion, it is clearly his role to provide that negotiation and the details of that negotiation.

Mr. Alcock: Yes, I understand. All I am asking the minister about is whether or not the Department of Education has been involved. What I think I am hearing her say is that they have not. There has been no involvement from the Department of Education, in other words no educational input to any discussions relative to a replacement for the old Core agreement.

Mrs. Vodrey: The discussions, it is my understanding, are at the moment in terms of a broad nature. The details of the discussions, as I have said, are being conducted by my colleague, the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst). He is the one who can talk more specifically about the kinds of negotiations which are being conducted at the moment. What the Department of Education has been able to look at is not related to the specific negotiations, instead related to information for the minister about some evaluations of the programs, about certain activities. That information is, again, as information, but the negotiations are being conducted by the Minister of Urban Affairs.

Mr. Alcock: I note that Urban Affairs is up next after we are finished with Education, so we will have an opportunity within the next week or two to question the minister responsible for Urban Affairs on this.

I do not expect this minister to speak for him. I do not expect this minister to give me details of the negotiations or anything of that nature. All I am asking is: Are Education staff involved, yes or no?

Mrs. Vodrey: No. Education staff are not involved in the negotiation. As I explained, that negotiation is being carried out by my colleague, the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst).

Mr. Alcock: I thank the minister for that response. I am saddened by it, frankly, because there was some hope that a replacement or a renewed Core might have an educational component, and I suspect that from the lack of involvement of Education staff it will not, as has been anticipated, given some of the announcements coming out of Ottawa. That is sad. I think we lose something.

But let us move on. I am prepared to pass this line.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Sveinsson): Item 5.(k)(1) Grants \$150,000—pass; (2) Less: Recoverable from Urban Affairs \$150,000—pass.

5.(m) Literacy Office: (1) Salaries, \$266,900. Shall the item pass?

Mr. Alcock: Perhaps we should just wait a moment until the staff come in.

Mrs. Vodrey: I would just like to take a moment to introduce Mr. Devron Gaber, who is the director of the Manitoba Literacy Office.

Mr. Alcock: I note that we have now passed two lines. I am wondering whether you still have the agreement with the Chairperson, but we will pass on that right now as I realize it is not my place to question the Chairperson.

I wonder if the minister can tell us a little bit about the status of the literacy program? I am particularly interested in the deaf literacy component that has been in place at and through Red River.

(Madam Chairperson in the Chair)

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, I am aware of the program of which the member speaks. I was at the opening of that program. I am informed that that program has not been under our Literacy Office in Manitoba, but rather that program has been funded by the National Literacy Secretariat.

It was funded for a two-year period. Now, Red River Community College has taken the responsibility for that program. Red River Community College also works with the Society for Manitobans with Disabilities very closely in terms of that program, but our Literacy Office does sit on an advisory group in relation to that program.

* (1500)

Mr. Alcock: I wonder if the minister could clarify why that program is not part of the overall literacy program.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, this program was started as a pilot project by the national literacy

council, and the provincial money is focused on community-based literacy programs whereas the national literacy program is focused on the institutional programs. So that then is the differentiation of why the funding and the operation would be not through our Literacy Office. Again, our Literacy Office does focus on community-based programs. This was a demonstration project and it was funded, as I said, by the national literacy council. Our role, again, is in the co-ordination, in the approval of projects. We provide recommendations to the federal government. We also sit on a steering committee, and this particular project is funded by federal dollars.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, two questions which I think are related: When the minister was talking about community based, am I assuming that then means, as opposed to noninstitutional, programs that are operated in service organizations as opposed to the colleges, the universities or the school or adult ed programs?

The second question: I understand that the deaf literacy program was funded by federal dollars. I believe that was a two-year demonstration program. I think the minister has referenced that. Those two years are up. The minister has indicated that Red River is assuming responsibility for that, I believe, in her earlier answer. Are there other literacy activities going on in the colleges or the adult ed programs that are not involved in this initiative?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, literacy programs which are operating through our community colleges: There is one program focusing on Grades 3 to 5, operating at Red River Community College; there is a literacy basic education program, operating at Assiniboine Community College; and there is one precollege prep program which is operating at KCC, Keewatin Community College. All three programs do offer adult basic education in a Grades 7 to 10 program and in a Grades 11 through 12 program.

Mr. Alcock: One of the activity identifications for this particular unit is the increasing public awareness of the problem of illiteracy and the efforts being made to promote literacy.

I am wondering if the minister can tell us how this unit carries out those activities.

Mrs. Vodrey: Firstly, we do work very closely with the Literacy Workers Alliance of Manitoba in its activities, and they are the networking organization for Manitoba. I am informed that this weekend will

be their annual learner-practitioner conference. I did have the privilege of attending that conference several years ago, and it is a great opportunity for both learners and practitioners within the field to come together and to talk about their various needs and initiatives.

We also put out a series of booklets and directories which discuss our initiatives, and then we also, as I mentioned earlier, recommend special projects to the national Literacy Secretariat, and they fund those. By way of example, in terms of a program, they fund the I Love to Read committee, which is an awareness committee. They also provide funding for the Literacy Workers Alliance of Manitoba for their learners-practitioners conference, which I spoke about occurring this weekend. Also, the Literacy Workers Alliance of Manitoba, the materials resource centre. We are looking forward to approval for a READ Canada production of videos on setting up of reading circles. We are also looking for assistance for the Coalition for Brandon Literacy Service, which is a networking and an awareness-raising project.

* (1510)

Mr. Alcock: I thank the minister for that information. I think she may have covered a lot of my next question in that answer, but just to focus specifically on this question of providing networking opportunities for literacy practitioners, can she just review quickly how that is carried out?

Mrs. Vodrey: We do work, again, at that networking through the Literacy Workers Alliance of Manitoba. We also provide a number of training events across Manitoba. We certify instructors at three levels and through that certification process, it is an opportunity for instructors to come together and to collaborate on their programs, as well as developing some formal skills.

I have to table for the honourable member information from the Manitoba Literacy Office, which will list for him the training events run by one of our trainers, September '91 through June '92.

Mr. Alcock: I wonder if the minister—I note in the expected results that enrollment is anticipated to be roughly 800 in the current fiscal year—can relate that to the demand that exists within the province. Does that pretty much meet the current demand, or how long are the waiting lists?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed that the number of people registered who actually were able to take

advantage of those literacy programs in '91-92 was 1,011, and that the number of people able to take part in those programs was greater than the projected 800.

Generally, I am informed the waiting lists are not long, and we understand that the reasons for that would, of course, be important because when people do make the decision, as we discovered through the task force, to come forward with literacy issues, that they are anxious to become involved in a program as soon as possible. We certainly continue to acknowledge the need for training.

Mr. Alcock: I just want to bring the minister's attention to the bottom of page 112 in the Supplementary Information book that the minister provided. Under Expected Results, she indicates here that: Outputs are measured—is the starting statement, and then it goes through—in terms of a consistently high rate—including the economic and personal benefits. I would like to focus on the economic benefits for the individuals, their families and the community.

Can the minister tell us what measures are used to determine the economic benefits for individuals, their families, in the community?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed that we do an annual statistical return to determine the reasons why students first began attending literacy programs.

We ask that they identify reasons such as personal reasons or employment reasons or further training reasons. We did use funds provided by the national secretariat to establish this. We did look specifically at the link between the community-based programs and institutional programs where students may go on leading to their further training.

We found that last year we had 29 students who went on to college ABE or upgrading programs; 14 students went on to college training; 3 students went on to university programs; and 45 students did go on to other training. So we do recognize the role that literacy plays in allowing students and Manitobans then to further their training for their employment and economic benefit.

Mr. Alcock: I thank the minister for that information. That is very encouraging. I think it does make the case, as the minister has made in the past, about the benefits that accrue to people from improving their literacy.

What the minister has repeated to me there are the numbers who have gone whatever way as a result of improving their literacy skills. But what it indicates here is that outputs are measured. There is a measure of some economic benefit. Now, we can presume that someone who manages to increase their skills is employable at a higher level and will achieve higher income and that.

I am just wondering, though, if the minister can provide for us the measures of the economic benefits—quantities, amounts. I am fascinated at trying to understand how they have constructed a measure that really captures this information.

* (1520)

Mrs. Vodrey: I begin by referring the member to the recent Economic Council of Canada report, the Conference Board of Canada reports, which do discuss the economic benefits which accrue from reducing illiteracy in Canada.

What we have at the moment is a somewhat indirect measure. We have been able to collect from students a base line of data of those students who have identified employability as their main goal in terms of literacy training.

Now this is the first year of that particular gathering of information. We intend to follow the progress of those students as they move through college programming and into the work force.

Again, this is a process, and through the process we will then be able to determine the specific economic benefits that accrue to that individual as time goes on.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, I thank the minister for that information. I have read the Economic Council report with some interest. I am always interested in measures that attempt to collect information and quantify results in some way. I appreciate that this is the first year, and therefore there may not be a database of sufficient depth or breadth to do any real analysis on it.

I would encourage the minister and the department to continue with it, and I am prepared to pass this line.

Madam Chairperson: Item 5.(m) Literacy Office: (1) Salaries \$266,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$55,600—pass; (3) Grants \$587,000—pass.

5.(n) Special Skills Training.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, perhaps we could await the arrival of the minister's staff person?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, I would like to introduce Mr. Bob Knight, who is the acting executive director of the Special Skills Training.

Mr. Alcock: I want to go through this particular item with some care. It has been several years since I had any direct involvement with the New Careers Program. I note here under Expected Results that in that particular program alone they are going to training some 300 people.

The experience I can say that I had with the New Careers Program, and it was in several situations in several different locations, was universally positive. I found it to be a high quality program that delivered very thorough and very meaningful training.

I think the measure of that is a great many of the people who were trained under that program, at least the ones that I recall being involved with, continue to be employed. Many of them had very marginal skills at the beginning of it. When I have an opportunity to talk about the way public policy can work to directly benefit people, even people who are very seriously disadvantaged, this is certainly one example of that.

At that point, the New Careers Program provided, I think it was a full two years, 24 months, of support. I know that was downgraded at one point to I think about 18 months. I would like to get a sense of what the current shape of the program is. How many months of support are provided? What is the break between classroom and site and what sort of sites are currently being supported?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, I would like to give the member the information on the projected program activity for '92-93. Recreation Director is a two-year program; Retail Managers is a two-year program; Family Day Care Providers, a one-year program; Community Mental Health Workers, a two-year program; Aboriginal Journalist, a two-year program; Child and Family Service Workers I, a two-year program; Mental Health Workers, a two-year program; Child and Youth Care Workers, a two-year program; Training for Trainers, a two-year program; Child and Family Service Workers II, a two-year program.

We have a proposed program for community land planners which would be a two-year program, guide training which is a two-year program, hydro line pretraining which is a four-week program. Then we have a proposed Brandon project which would be a two-year program, and we have a transport drivers

program which is 11 weeks. Following those programs—and I do have information on sites.

There are approximately 70 sites listed. So I will give a couple of the sites by way of example, and then I am prepared to table this list for the member's information. Transport drivers location is in Winnipeg, Manitoba Hydro lines trades prerecruitment training in Garden, in St. Theresa Point, in Oxford House, Gods Lake Narrows and Wasagamack.

Community Mental Health Workers, St. Theresa Point, Wasagamack, Garden Hill, Red Sucker and Lynn Lake.

The Recreation Directors, Norway House, Berens River, St. Theresa Point, Shoal River, York Landing, Norway House, Nelson House, Split Lake by way of example.

Retail Managers, Lac Brochet, York Landing, Gods River, Oxford House, Tadoule Lake and Split Lake by way of example. There are further offered in those Retail Manager and Recreation Director areas.

Again, Mental Health Workers II offered in Winnipeg, Dauphin, Thompson, Brandon, Fisher River.

Child and Family Service Workers I, Virden, Hodgson, Gypsumville, Bloodvein, Portage la Prairie, Dauphin.

So I think from some of the examples the member will have an idea of the effort to provide a number of locations. I will make sure that this list is copied and will table the list this evening for the member.

Mr. Alcock: I thank the minister for that. Of the three major program areas here, New Careers, Stevenson Aviation Technical Training Centre and Manitoba Technical Training Centre, is New Careers the only one that provides monetary support for the people that are attending the program, or do all participants in the three programs receive salary support or living expenses while they are attending?

* (1530)

Mrs. Vodrey: The New Careers Program is the only one in which the trainees receive provincial wage support; the Stevenson program, the trainees receive U.I. benefits while training; and the MTTC, the trainees receive either U.I. benefits or federal training allowances or provincial student financial assistance.

Mr. Alcock: Sticking with the New Careers then for a minute, can the minister tell us the amount of the provincial wage support and how many months that is offered for?

Mrs. Vodrey: The period for the wage support is a 24-month period. The trainees receive a percentage of entry-level salary. That percentage goes up in six-month increments. The starting point is 70 percent; after six months, 75 percent; 80 percent; and, finally, at 85 percent. We also attempt to secure cost sharing for programs, either from the federal government or from the employer agencies.

Mr. Alcock: Of the 300 participants who are referenced in the Expected Results section of the Supplementary Estimates, how many of those will be people starting new New Careers programs in this fiscal year, as opposed to those who are completing the second year of their two-year program?

Mrs. Vodrey: We are predicting 132 new intakes. The balance would be those trainees completing the second portion of the 24-month period.

Mr. Alcock: I should say that I am very pleased to hear the information from the minister. I think this is a superb program and one that is well worth the support.

The Stevenson Aviation Technical Training Centre, the Manitoba Technical Training Centre—can the minister just tell me why these two units are funded under this particular appropriation and not more generally with the other centres and colleges and that? I am just not understanding why this has been separated out.

Mrs. Vodrey: These three programs are administered under the Skills Training unit. The two which the member has referenced in this question are not government institutions; therefore, they would not be administered by the colleges. They are small institutional training programs; therefore, they have been clustered under this Skills Training appropriation.

Mr. Alcock: Then could the minister explain to me how they differ from those organizations that are funded under the Private Vocational Schools?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, these programs are provincial programs. They are funded by the province and they are, in fact, public institutions.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, I am not certain if I fully understand the answers the minister has

given me, because in the previous answer she indicated these are not government programs, but now they are public institutions. I wonder if she could differentiate between those two states of being.

Mrs. Vodrey: I am sorry if I appeared to give that information to the member. These are provincial institutions, but they are not provincial institutions of the magnitude of Red River College for instance. They are, in fact, much smaller programs, but they are public programs. Because they are smaller, it appeared more appropriate to group these programs under the Skills Training unit.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, so am I correct in understanding that—well, no I guess I was thinking of the 52 staff years that are referenced here, but then I notice there is another \$861,000 in Professional Fees. Are the 52 SYs the complete teaching and administrative staff for the three programs?

* (1540)

Mrs. Vodrey: I am pleased to talk about the breakdown of those 52 SYs. Three of the SYs fall to Administration, 42.26 fall in the New Careers area, six relate to the SATTC and one relates to the Manitoba Technical Training.

Mr. Alcock: Then, the one at the MTTC for the 425 staff, am I to assume then that the \$861,400 in Professional Fees cover some contract teaching staff or some sessional staff or something in the range?

Mrs. Vodrey: The one SY is for the provincial liaison officer. MTTC is operated on behalf of the province by career development institutes, and this has been the case since the beginning of that program.

Mr. Alcock: Can the minister tell me where SATTC and MTTC are located and how long they have been in existence?

Mrs. Vodrey: MTTC is located in downtown Winnipeg in what would be referred to as the core area. It is in the process of moving from one place in downtown Winnipeg to another place in downtown Winnipeg, and it has been in existence and operating in downtown Winnipeg for approximately seven years.

The Stevenson program is located in the old air base on Ferry Road, and it has been operating since the early '80s.

Mr. Alcock: The \$861,400 in Professional Fees, how does that get split between the three programs?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, \$800,000 of that goes to MTTC. I am informed that the balance, the approximately \$61,000 remaining, is split between the other two programs, but the majority of those funds does go to New Careers, because Stevenson does not really have the need to require consultants.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, the minister indicated, I believe, when I was asking about the wage or income support to participants in these programs, that participants in the MTTC program received either U.I. support or student aid, which was another thing that was referenced, and there was a third which I am forgetting for the moment.

The question is, though, the costs of these 425 people attending this program, is that wholly covered by the \$800,000 in fees that are paid? Or is there some other fee that is paid on their behalf either by the provincial government or by the federal government?

Mrs. Vodrey: In terms of the cost of attending MTTC, first of all, the federal government does provide some direct purchase training, and therefore they would then pay the cost.

In addition, individual companies also purchase the training, companies such as Westarc, Fibreglas Canada, Society for Manitobans with Disabilities, Boeing Canada, Canadian National Railways. Those companies then pay the cost of training.

There are also some provincial entry students. For those provincial entry students, they pay the cost equivalent to the college tuition fee and then the province pays the balance.

Mr. Alcock: In professional fees alone, we are paying something in the order of \$1,800, almost \$1,900 per student. Are you saying that there are fees paid over and above that on behalf of the 425 students who attend the Technical Training Centre? Could you give me a sense of the length of term of the training program and the per-student cost?

* (1550)

Mrs. Vodrey: The course length is split roughly evenly between long term, or up to 18 months program, and short term, which can be two to five days training. The student intake and the graduation do occur on a continuous basis. Courses which are 10 weeks or longer are courses such as computerized accounting, office

technology, computer programming, electronic technical, the microbusiness applications, administration and management, and office automation.

Mr. Alcock: At the Stevenson Aviation Technical Training Centre, I note that this is for the Aircraft Maintenance Engineer Program. I trust that this program works closely with certain purchasers of such training or employers of trained personnel, such as the Air Canada maintenance base, in that I was out meeting with them not long ago and they were indicating a desire to enhance their training. Is training offered there on the maintenance of the new airbus?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, the Stevenson program is an apprenticeship program. It is operated in conjunction with the Department of Labour, and the certification is provided by the Department of Transport. The purpose is to provide apprenticeship in conjunction with a variety of employers. It tends to work with some of the smaller companies, and by way of example, Air West, Winnipeg Flying Club, Bearskin Airlines, Athabasca Airways, Perimeter Aviation, Air Manitoba, Hicks and Lawrence, General Air Care, Flying Service Limited, Labrador Air Safari, Buffalo Narrows Airway, and other agencies throughout Ontario, western Canada and the Northwest Territories and other agencies which I have not named just as a result of time.

Mr. Alcock: Yes, we can pass this particular line. I just wanted one final question here on the Stevenson Aviation Technical Training Centre. It indicates here under Activity Identification: as well as the capacity to offer other industrial training requirements. What other types of training are offered there?

Upon receiving that answer, we can pass this line.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, Stevenson also operates the nondestructive testing program, which is a short-term course delivered throughout the year as the industry and governments require. They also offer the Avionics S Prep courses, which are short-term courses again delivered throughout the year as industry and government require.

Madam Chairperson: Item 5.(n) Special Skills Training: (1) Salaries \$3,793,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$1,172,400—pass.

5.(p) Workforce 2000—

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, I am not disappointed but surprised that Ms. Neville has not come in. I understand that she is taking on responsibility for this program, is that correct?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, yes, Ms. Neville will be taking over as the director of Workforce 2000, but as today is her first day, I have asked Mr. Bob Knight, who has worked in an acting capacity, to stay to assist for Workforce 2000.

Mr. Alcock: That is fine. I have a number of questions on this particular area. I did want to remark, though, on the appointment of Ms. Neville as the head of this particular unit; I think she brings a unique combination of skills and will provide a very welcome addition to the work undertaken by this group.

It is nice to see somebody who has both a public policy background as well as very practical skill in the delivery of education programs—and I think some credibility in the private sector—willing to take on such a responsibility.

So I am going to be interested over the next year or two as we watch the work of this initiative or this group proceed, just to get some sense of how well it is able to meet its objectives. I think an initiative of this sort is certainly long overdue.

I would like to maybe start the questioning by asking the minister first just to give me a sense of the activities of this particular unit. I note that there are 24 SYs attached to it, 18 of which are professional, and a further \$1,663,200 in professional fees. I wonder if she can first help me understand the distribution and tasks to which these 18 professional staff are assigned, and I certainly want to know a lot more about the \$1,663,200 in Professional Fees.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, Workforce 2000 is Manitoba's new skills training strategy. It is mandated to promote the private sector involvement in the human resource development and workplace training.

It does have four major components: Training Advisory and Brokerage Services; Private Sector Training Initiatives; Industry-wide Human Resource Planning; and Province-wide Special Courses.

In terms of the training advisory brokerage, the purpose of this is to assist firms to become aware and to address their human resource needs through sound education and training initiatives and to develop a computerized inventory of training

programs, services and public and private suppliers for employers seeking assistance and information.

The training incentives are to encourage work-based skills training for new and existing employers including entry-level training, training and upgrading. Small and medium-sized firms may receive financial support for direct training costs, and basic and advantage wage subsidies.

Under the payroll tax refund program, larger firms may qualify for a refund of up to 0.3 percent of their payroll to a maximum of \$100,000 for costs related to employee training of a more generic nature.

* (1600)

In terms of the Industry-wide Human Resource Planning, again, the major activity is "to facilitate industry-wide training through three sets of activities: human resource planning, industry-specified priority and training initiatives and trades and technology updating."

In addition, there are also province-wide special courses "to support and to encourage the life-long learning and adaptability to the changing realities of the workplace through Core Skills and Train the Trainer programs."

In terms of breaking down the professional area, there are two area managers, one financial administrator, one program administrator, three senior training consultants, 10 training consultants and one computer programmer.

Mr. Alcock: I wonder if the minister could provide some further information on the \$1,663,200 in what are listed as Professional Fees here.

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed that amount is actually program funds, and that last year there was a direction to have us categorize them as professional fees, but, in fact, the meaning is program funds.

Mr. Alcock: Does that mean when we look here at Private Sector Training Initiatives, where it says here, "firms may receive cost-shared training support, including costs of instruction, tuition, rental equipment," that is where that money would be drawn from?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, that is correct.

Mr. Alcock: So then none of this \$1,663,200 would go to hire additional staff?

Mrs. Vodrey: The answer is no.

Mr. Alcock: I wonder if the minister can talk a little bit about the process that they use to establish Industry-wide Human Resource Planning?

Mrs. Vodrey: The process is one, as I have described several times, in discussion with the federal government and in the development of the Canada-Manitoba Labour Force Development Agreement, we have been able to identify sectors of interest.

So the process is, first of all, sectors of interest are identified which it is believed will be of benefit to Manitoba. In addition, we are also approached by sectors to assist and to provide them with some assistance in this human resource planning.

When the sectors are identified, the process then is industry driven, and our role is to facilitate the bringing together of the employers to assist in the development of the terms of reference and to assist in identifying the training necessary. In this process, we also attempt to secure cost sharing with the federal government.

Some of the sectors which have been identified in Manitoba, either identified by Canada-Manitoba as a sector of interest or have identified themselves to Workforce 2000 are the aerospace industry—the Manitoba Aerospace Human Resource Co-ordinating group has been developed to address the long-term training needs and the future skill requirements in the aerospace industry—the manufacturing sector, the garment industry, the printing and publishing industry, agriculture industry, hospitality and tourism, and also the transportation industry.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, the first area that the minister read off was the Training Advisory and Brokerage Services in which there is a proposal to establish a computerized inventory. What is the status of that project? Is that inventory in place now?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, the inventory is not yet in place. We have been meeting with Ontario to review their process called "Skills Link," and at the moment we are utilizing that database on a pilot basis. Ontario is willing to sell us the software. An assessment is underway. We also need to consider an alternative, a Manitoba stand-alone database, so we will be evaluating the Skills Link program and then we will be evaluating that in relation to again a Manitoba stand-alone database, and then a decision will be made.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, how much does Ontario want for Skills Link?

* (1610)

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed that Ontario would like approximately \$115,000 to establish this Manitoba stand-alone database and then \$25,000 for an annual line charge, and the additional cost would be a one-half staff year to maintain the base.

Mr. Alcock: Under larger firms in the Private Sector Training Incentives sector here you mention the larger goods-producing firms which can qualify for a refund of up to three-tenths of a percent of their payroll to a maximum of \$100,000. Can the minister tell us how much of that has been accessed to date, how many firms have qualified, how much has been refunded?

Mrs. Vodrey: The total number of companies is 68. The number of training plans approved is 564. The number of trainees is 12,612, and the total cost of the training is \$3,122,344, and of that cost of training the provincial share is approximately \$1.5 million.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, I was asking about the number of large firms that have qualified for their refund of up to 0.3 of 1 percent of their payroll to a maximum of \$100,000 for costs related to generic employee training. The minister indicated some 564—I assume these are training incentive contracts for employees—for a total of 12,612 employees at a cost of \$3,122,344, of which the provincial share was \$1.5 million.

Now, when I come to Expected Results here and we see Training Incentives Contracts, we have Small/Medium Firms and then we have Large Firms. Can the minister relate this information to that? Am I mixing two separate sets of information, or are the 564 training incentive contracts a part of that total of 600?

Mrs. Vodrey: The number that I read out, 68, was the actual number of large companies for 1991-92. We have predicted for 1992-93, 100 large companies. In the small to medium companies, the actual in 1991-92 was 791. We are projecting in '92-93, 500 new companies. In addition, I am informed, there is a significant amount of carry-over as well from '91-92.

Mr. Alcock: Then the \$1.5 million, which is what the provincial share of this \$3,122,344 is, if I am understanding this correctly, that would be the tax revenue foregone as a result of this refund, or is that grant provided under what are listed here as Professional Fees or Grants/Transfer?

I am wondering, with this matter of this 0.3 of 1 percent of payroll refund to a maximum of \$100,000,

that is a benefit that is provided in addition to the \$3,396,000 that are budgeted for here, and is the amount of that benefit the \$1.5 million the minister referenced?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, yes, this is a benefit. The payroll tax refund is not included in the printed Estimates for the Department of Education but will appear in the Department of Finance. It is, in fact, a foregone revenue for the province.

Mr. Alcock: To the amount of a million and a half?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, approximately.

Mr. Alcock: I realize that this is not the correct department to get the fine details of this from. I will raise this matter in the Department of Finance, but I note that when that program was announced, I believe the projected budget was some \$8 million. I am wondering why only a million and a half has been proffered, is that simply the level of the uptake?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, yes, there were some cost estimates put forward, and the total value of the first year has been \$3.1 million. Again, I will remind the member that in the first year this was restricted to the goods-producing industry.

We now have the expansion of the payroll tax refund to include the large, service-base industries, and we expect additional uptake in this year.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, I note in the other expenditure line, we have \$495,000 in grants and transfer in addition to the \$1.663 million which, I understand, has been mislabelled as Professional Fees but is, in fact, fees paid on behalf—I would have difficulty understanding the difference between it and transfer payments. Can the minister differentiate between those two lines, given her earlier remarks?

* (1620)

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, the \$495,000 listed in the Grants/Transfer Payments was the estimate for the industry-wide training, and the area which we have discussed, Professional Fees, that was an estimate for training for incentives for the smaller businesses. As we progress into the fiscal year, if there is a need for adjustments between those areas, then that will be looked at.

Mr. Alcock: Is there some sort of ongoing data collection for evaluative purposes which will allow us to look back on this initiative over the next few years to get a sense of the degree to which it is meeting its objectives?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, there is ongoing monitoring, and it is in the form of collecting data regarding activity. However, for the 1992-93 year, we will be developing a specific instrument for piloting.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, I am prepared to pass this line. I am looking forward to hearing the results of this. I think it is an interesting initiative, and I suspect it can have some positive outcomes if it is managed properly.

Madam Chairperson: Item 5.(p) Workforce 2000: (1) Salaries \$958,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$2,438,100—pass.

Resolution 30: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$93,945,900 for Education and Training, Post-Secondary Adult and Continuing Education and Training, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1993—pass.

Item 6. Universities Grants Commission.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, perhaps we should allow a new team on the ice.

Mrs. Vodrey: I would like to introduce Dr. Léo Letournou, who is the executive director of the Universities Grants Commission, and Mr. Waverly Simpson, who is the commission secretary.

Mr. Alcock: I am pleased that we are finally into this. We have been moving rather rapidly today. I hope that we will have the opportunity to spend some time on how we fund the universities because it is an area that I have considerable concerns about. I think that this government's track record in supporting these institutions is not very good, and there are a great many questions about why the government has made the policy decisions that it has made.

Perhaps to start us, I would like to understand the government's support of the role of the Universities Grants Commission, period.

It has been suggested by some at the universities that, given the level of political direction that is currently taking place, the role of the Universities Grants Commission as a buffer has been somewhat compromised and that perhaps the government is looking at transitioning towards a new form of administration of the funds that go to universities.

I am wondering whether that is indeed the intention of current government policy or whether that is a direction that we can read into government decisions relative to the universities?

Mrs. Vodrey: I do not believe that the member can read those comments into the position of the Universities Grants Commission. He is perhaps expressing what may be his opinion but the role of the Universities Grants Commission is still to place the case of the universities before government. Government provides policy and the Universities Grants Commission does remain a buffer between government and the universities.

Mr. Alcock: Then I wonder if the minister can start by breaking up the Grants line among the various universities and giving us both the grant totals and the year-over-year increases by institution?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, the University of Manitoba received an operating grant of \$162 million, and that represented a 2.42 percent increase. The University of Winnipeg received slightly over \$22 million, \$22,705,410, and that represented an increase of 2.58 percent. Brandon University received \$14,980,620, and that represented an increase of 2.75 percent. Collège universitaire de Saint Boniface received \$4,316,792 for an increase of 3.31 percent.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, the minister identified the role of the Universities Grants Commission as representing the positions of the universities to government while government made the policy decision. Can the minister tell us why it has been the policy decision of this government to fund universities at a rate below the rate of inflation?
* (1630)

Mrs. Vodrey: I will remind the member, the rate of inflation is 1.6 percent. We have funded the universities at over 2.42 percent for the University of Manitoba, 2.58 percent for the University of Winnipeg, 2.75 percent for the Brandon University and 3.31 percent for Collège Saint Boniface. This funding is the second highest funding in Canada.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, we will come back to that particular phase of the discussion after the recess. I will bring in my tables.

Let us start then this way. What was the base request from the University of Manitoba to government, to the Universities Grants Commission?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, that request is made in confidence to the Universities Grants Commission, and it is not something that I am in a position to release to the member.

Mr. Alcock: Well, now, if I understand the process correctly then, the universities provide information to the Universities Grants Commission. That indicates to them their basic requirements in order to maintain existing operations, and they may provide additional information on new courses that they might like to proffer in order to receive approval or comment from the commission and government.

The commission then takes that information, works it over in some form, and then makes a presentation on behalf of the four institutions to government. Is it the minister's position that that information that is presented to government from the Grants Commission is not available to the opposition?

Mrs. Vodrey: The request of the universities, as I said, is confidential, between the universities and the Universities Grants Commission. However, if the member would like to have that information, he could approach the universities and they could determine whether they wish to release it.

The budget process, which he has referred to and which I am happy to talk about, was in fact separate from the program approval process, which the member has also spoken about. I think it is important to differentiate those two.

In terms of the Universities Grants Commission budget process, first of all, the Universities Grants Commission does request that the universities submit their budgets by a certain date. It is usually in June or July of a given year. Then the UGC staff provides a thorough analysis of the university budget for the commissioners. The UGC invites officials from each university to present their budget and to discuss the priority areas, the stress points and their longer term objectives.

UGC then prepares a set of funding recommendations for consideration by the Minister of Education and Training. The minister reviews and modifies the UGC recommendations, and then the set of recommendations forms a part of the department's Estimates, which are presented to government. Government analyzes the funding recommendations and determines the funding level. Then the funding level is announced and the money is available to the UGC from the Department of Finance. Then the UGC allocates the resources to the institutions, and the allocations are made on the basis of general cost increases, identified needs in programs, and capital provided in the budget documents of the universities.

The program approval process comprises a number of steps. First, a university has to submit in writing to the commission a statement of intent which provides the commission with sufficient information to decide whether the university will be allowed to proceed with the development of a program proposal.

The second stage is contingent on the UGC granting approval to proceed to the development of a program proposal. If the commission grants the university the right to proceed, a proposal is then developed and is subsequently vetted through the various processes within the university itself. These include the various committees and subcommittees at departmental, faculty and university-wide undergraduate or graduate committee levels, with the final adjudication by the Senate. Once this internal process is concluded and if the program is retained, it is then submitted to the UGC for approval.

The third stage consists of the UGC submitting the program proposal to the other universities for comments. These comments are in turn sent to the initiating university for rebuttal.

The final stage is the consideration of the entire package for a decision by the UGC.

Mr. Alcock: Perhaps we could stick with the budgeting process for the first little while, and we will come back to the course approval process.

As the minister has outlined then, the universities submit budgets to the UGC. The UGC undertakes some analysis, invites officials from the universities in to discuss, presumably respond to questions, clarify information et cetera. Then the UGC makes funding recommendations to the government, acting in its role as intermediary.

Are those funding recommendations and the background documentation available to the opposition?

* (1640)

Mrs. Vodrey: During the process, the documents are confidential between the university and the Universities Grants Commission. Following the process, if an individual wishes to obtain that information, then it would be up to the university to make that available.

Mr. Alcock: At what stage in this year's process are we at? Are we at the point where that information could be available through the institution?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, for the year 1992-93, this information should be available now through the institutions.

Mr. Alcock: Then, as I understand it, if we go through this process, we have the university submitting their budgets, the UGC analyzing them, having discussions with officials, and then the UGC forwarding their funding recommendations to government. The minister has said that those funding recommendations are now available to the institutions, and should the opposition require them, they would have to go through the institutions.

Do the various institutions currently have those packages of funding recommendations that were forwarded on their behalf to government?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, just to clarify, the universities may choose to make available what their original budget submission to the UGC is. However, the analysis of that budget submission is not available.

Mr. Alcock: Well, then I return to my original question. How does the role of UGC differ from any other department that receives submissions from organizations that are funded by government, analyzes them and puts them forward to government? What exactly is this buffering role? Who does it represent? Is it simply an extension of the minister's office and direct conduit for government policy, or does it have some function to represent the needs of post-secondary education and, particularly, the universities in this community? If that is the case, why is the information that the UGC collects not available for public review?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, the Universities Grants Commission does perform a kind of a balancing function in that it does provide to government information and analysis on a confidential basis regarding budget requests, but the Universities Grants commissioners are not staff of the Department of Education. They are representatives of the general public.

Now the Universities Grants Commission performs the allocating function. The government approves an overall amount of funding available for universities. The Universities Grants Commission then allocates that funding according to their analysis. As the member has requested a distinction between a department of government and the UGC, in a department of government there is not an allocating function, but for the Universities Grants Commission there is an allocating function

from a grant of money made available to universities.

Mr. Alcock: Let me deal with the minister's last remark first, an allocated function. So that the UGC when it comes forward to government is not putting forward specific budget requests on behalf of each university. It is not saying the University of Manitoba X, the university of Brandon Y, et cetera, it is asking for an overall amount of money that it then receives and then it determines how that money gets spread among the three universities without any government input.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, the UGC provides to government what the commission believes would be a percentage increase. That percentage increase is not broken down by way of institution. Now, I am informed that sometimes institutions may be discussed, but there is not a specific request by institution to government. The UGC recommends to government what an overall increase may be, what capital requirements might be, access requirements might be, but it is not by way of institution.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, so universities submit to the UGC their budget requests. UGC undergoes some analysis of that, invites the officials in for discussion, et cetera. Then the UGC puts forward a funding recommendation to government that does not contain information on specific institutions. Is that correct? Is that what the minister is saying?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, that is correct.

Mr. Alcock: So the only information that the minister/government would receive is a year-over-year percentage increase, a one-page memo that says you might throw in X or Y.

* (1650)

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, this percentage increase is what is presented to government, and also included in that is capital, and the individual institutions are not identified. That is, in fact, then what maintains the arm's-length relationship between government and individual institutions.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, when the UGC comes forward with a new program recommendation, the home of that program is not identified.

Mrs. Vodrey: In a previous answer I discussed that the program approval is a separate process to the budgetary approval. In the program approval the

Universities Grants Commission has several choices. Their first choice is to refuse the proposal, the program approval. The second choice is to approve the program but without resources. The university would then be required to fund from within, or the Universities Grants Commission may approve the course with resources. When there is approval with resources, then there is an approach to government to see if government wishes to approve this course and, in fact, has the resources to support the approval of this course.

Mr. Alcock: After the UGC and its budget approval process has gone through the various budgets and had the meetings with the officials and made its funding recommendations, which are not forwarded to government, where does that information go? Does it just stop there at the UGC?

Mrs. Vodrey: After the analysis is done by the Universities Grants Commission, I am informed that analysis is then stored at the Universities Grants Commission. It does remain with the commission.

Mr. Alcock: Is that information shared with the universities who submit it?

Mrs. Vodrey: No, that information is not shared. This is an analysis done by the Universities Grants Commission, and following that analysis, a recommendation is then forwarded to government on a percentage increase. So it does not return, I am informed, to the universities.

Mr. Alcock: What would be the harm or the danger in sharing with the universities the UGC's position or perspective on their submissions?

Mrs. Vodrey: Some decisions are made when, in this case, the Universities Grants Commission receives all of its information, does its deliberating, and then makes that decision based on the information and the presentations submitted by the university. But it is very important not to pit the universities specifically against government. So the process of Estimates is one way in which the government then discusses their accountability for university funding, and we certainly would not want to have a system in which it makes it difficult for the universities in the next year then to work with government specifically because they had been pitted against government in one year. That is why the Universities Grants Commission does make its decision. They do make it in a confidential way, and then the process proceeds as I have described to the member.

Mr. Alcock: I think, Madam Chairperson, given that the hour is approaching five o'clock, I will come back to that particular response when we resume at eight o'clock.

I would like to just clarify what the minister just said. Is it the position of the government, or of the Universities Grants Commission in this place, that somehow if the universities were provided with the analysis that was done by the Universities Grants Commission on the budgets of the various universities, an analysis which the minister says is not forwarded to government, that providing the universities with that analysis would somehow pit the universities against government? I wonder if she could clarify how this would occur.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, this analysis is an analysis for the purpose of budgets and for the purpose of a recommendation to government. This kind of a process is, I am informed, always confidential. There has been some concern raised that if it was not confidential then it may lead to some difficulties between governments and specific universities. However, as I have told the member, I am looking to announce a university review, and I will be announcing that review shortly. I do look forward to announcing both its scope and its mandate.

When I do announce that university review, then that might be a good time for the member to raise his concerns before that particular review, because it seems that he has some concerns. He has raised them a number of ways today. At the moment I have explained what the present practice is in terms of the budget process, and through the budget process the process of analysis, and also the opportunity for universities to present their budget and also present their budget with the particular concerns—I described those issues of stresses—issues of priority to the Universities Grants Commission, so that the Universities Grants Commission is fully aware by the universities of what their particular issues are. That is the process that is currently in place, Madam Chairperson.

Again, I would say that, if the member sees some particular difficulty with that budget process, then perhaps when the university review is announced he might like to make some comments on how he sees the process of budget analysis working with the Universities Grants Commission and their role in it.

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. The hour being 5 p.m. and time for private members' hour, I am interrupting the proceedings. This committee will reconvene at 8 p.m. this evening. Committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

* (1700)

IN SESSION

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Res. 31—Violence Against Women

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes), that

WHEREAS December 6 marks the anniversary of the murder of 14 women in Montreal; and

WHEREAS almost one million women in Canada are battered by their spouses or partners each year; and

WHEREAS battered women, afraid of reprisal, or economically disadvantaged and unable to support themselves and their children, are beaten, on average, 30 times before going to the police; and

WHEREAS 1991 statistics indicate that Winnipeg has the highest ratio of women murder victims among all major Canadian cities, with 64 percent of homicide victims women, most of them killed at the hands of their current or former spouses or partners; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba government has recently released the Pedlar Domestic Violence Review into the Administration of Justice in Manitoba, which stresses the necessity of sanctions by the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry has also provided valuable insights and recommendations for dealing with the matter of domestic violence; and

WHEREAS Manitobans are becoming increasingly concerned about the impact of domestic abuse and violence against women.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the government, in the strongest possible terms, to

outline a fully funded plan of action to deal with the issue of violence, including education, counselling programs, core funding for crisis shelters and phone lines; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly call for an immediate parallel plan of action from the federal government; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly request that the Minister of Family Services, the Minister responsible for the Status of Women, and the Minister of Justice develop this strategy based on recommendations consistent with those in the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, the Pedlar report, and in full consultation with community groups.

Motion presented.

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, I wish I did not have to rise on this private member's resolution. I wish I could ask that this resolution be placed at the bottom of the Order Paper because it was not necessary to discuss the issue anymore. I know that is not the case. I am afraid that, unlike other occasions when we have risen in the House to deal with this issue, where I have asked that the resolution be passed in a nonpartisan way and have addressed my remarks in a nonpartisan way and have had the minister responsible for Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) come back with an amendment that completely turns around the construct and the meaning of my resolution, that I cannot, in all conscience, put my remarks on the record in a nonpartisan, nonpolitical way because I know that the government will not respond in a nonpartisan, nonpolitical way.

I would like nothing more, Mr. Speaker, than to be proven wrong in my last statement, and I would be more than happy to stand up in the House upon the passage of this resolution by unanimous consent to apologize to the government for having misrepresented their motives in this regard.

The women in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, would also be very happy to be able to say that this was truly a nonpartisan issue that was being dealt with in a nonpartisan fashion.

In addition to some of the statistics that I have placed on the record in this resolution, I must add, and this is something that I read just today, that a woman is raped in Canada every 17 seconds. I cannot do the mathematics, but in the 15 minutes that I will be speaking, dozens of women in Canada will be raped. Mr. Speaker, this is an epidemic. This is an epidemic that must be dealt with as one

of the highest priorities of all levels of government. Every 17 seconds a woman in Canada is raped. By the time my 15 minutes is over, 53 women in Canada will be raped. Now, that is a statistic that is almost too much to believe.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, I do not think that there is anybody in this room who would question the validity of that statement because if there is one thing we all agree on in this House, it is that we are in the midst of an enormously difficult, complex and supremely important problem. Where we disagree is in what we do about that enormously complex and important problem. In my resolution the word "action" occurs several times. This government is not noted for its action in situations like this.

Mr. Speaker, there have been some statements made and some additional funding provided, particularly by the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) in his latest budget, and we have on this side of the House applauded those actions. However, they come at the end of four years in government. They come as we are in an increasing crisis situation when it comes to violence in our society, not just domestic violence but women are over 95 percent of the victims of violence in our society. The vast majority of those women are the victims of violence perpetrated by men they have known in a loving, intimate relationship.

Mr. Speaker, back to the inaction of this government. We have before us several documents—and I have stated this time and time again, as have other members of the House—that are superb as a resource for the government to follow. The Aboriginal Justice Inquiry; the Pedlar commission; we now have the Suche report which does not deal directly with domestic violence, but certainly has recommendations in it that could be and should be implemented.

* (1710)

Mr. Speaker, these recommendations are being honoured in absence of action rather than by action. Today in Question Period, I asked the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) about the implementation of the Suche report dealing with residential care facilities. The minister, in his government response a month ago, had listed some immediate items that were going to be undertaken. The only two immediate items that have been undertaken in that report are the Children's Advocate act, which we on this side of the House have some serious problems with, and the working

group which was announced on April 30 and will not even be meeting until June 4.

All other recommendations from the Suche report are on hold until the working committee gets together, studies, makes recommendations to the government and undoubtedly the government will study those studies and those recommendations, and issue another press release touting the action that they are undertaking.

Mr. Speaker, the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry—how many months has it been since the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry was made public in this House and in the province of Manitoba? Again, a document that the government itself says is a unique document, a wonderful document, and it must be worked on to be implemented. What have they done about the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry? Virtually nothing, particularly in the chapters that relate to domestic violence and to children.

The Pedlar report was initiated with a great deal of fanfare and again, Mr. Speaker, the report itself is an excellent document. We have never had a single word of complaint from this side of the House about either the work that Ms. Pedlar did or the report that she engendered. It is an excellent document which makes it all the more concerning to us about the inaction that this government has undertaken, the lack of action of this government in implementing the recommendations of the Pedlar report.

Again, Mr. Speaker, they have instituted, have set up a committee, again a committee, the members of which are exceptional women, and we have stated publicly how pleased we are with the putting together of the domestic violence community advisory committee, which was announced last December 6 on the second anniversary of the Montreal massacre.

Very little has happened as a result of that committee being put together. I think it highly unlikely that the inaction that has taken place on the part of that committee is a result of their unwillingness or inability to meet or to provide suggestions to the minister for implementation. I suggest, and members in my caucus agree, that it is rather a lack of urgency on the part of the government. The government is, as we have stated many times in the past, very good at issuing reports, issuing press releases, commenting on those

reports and then putting together committees which will do more talking and less action.

Mr. Speaker, there are things that we have suggested in this House that could be done to try, in a small way, to break the cycle of violence. This requires an action and a commitment on the part of every department in this government, both the Pedlar report and the Suche report and the government's response to those reports state, as well as a commitment on the part of the community to work together to attempt to make changes.

I must say that I was a bit concerned by the statements put on the record last Thursday in private members' hour by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) when he was commenting on the private member's resolution put forward by the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid). The concerns that I have with the Minister of Finance's comments I think are the kinds of concerns that we have generally with the government. That was that the Minister of Finance said education will not reduce domestic violence, funding will not reduce domestic violence. The only two things that will reduce domestic violence are stricter laws and—

An Honourable Member: Education.

Ms. Barrett: No, and role models by people who are in roles of leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I have absolutely no quarrel with the fact that you do need stricter laws, which is why we supported and brought forward the motion that we did last Thursday. I have no quarrel with the fact that people in positions of authority, role models must take leadership roles in changing society's attitudes beginning with their own attitudes and behaviour.

The problem I have with what the Minister of Finance said is that education is not a major component. To our way of thinking, it is absolutely essential that every component of our government, every component of our society must be involved in eradicating violence. By saying that we will rely on stricter laws because people who perpetrate violence know what they are doing and know what is right and wrong and therefore if the laws are stricter changes will take place is, to my way of thinking, a very simplistic response to an enormously complex problem.

Many of the people who perpetrate acts of domestic violence think there is absolutely nothing wrong with what they have done, which is why they

continue to do it again and again. The reason they think there is nothing wrong is because they were parented by people who were abusers and abused in their own lives as children. They have never had a single point in their own life that has been positive or affirming or given them a sense of morality or basic understanding of the role of people in our society and how people should communicate and interact with one another. They do not understand and they do not believe that they have done anything wrong because their wife is their property, is their possession.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, we have hardly, as was stated last Thursday, moved forward in our understanding of violence and in our understanding of our role as members of society. To state that the basic response must be stricter laws and everything else is less important and less effective is one of the major concerns that we have about this government's actions in the part of domestic violence and the eradication of it.

Justice is one element, but without all of the other parts of our government and society working together, we will not do anything more towards eradicating domestic violence except putting more people behind bars for a short period of time and then they get out and do the same thing.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that the government members will be able to support our resolution so that we can get on with the work together of making this a safe province and society for all Manitobans—men, women and children—that we understand that the government understands and begins to take action based on the underlying principles in every report they have received in the last four years which says that this problem is a major interconnected problem that must be dealt with by, not only all levels of government, all departments within government and all members of society. Thank you.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate very much the opportunity to respond to the resolution today placed on the Order Paper and moved by the honourable member for Wellington. I agree with all the things the honourable member said except for the partisan parts. If the honourable member reviews her own comments in the record of this debate and she does not find partisan things there, then her definition of partisan and mine are not the same.

Nonetheless, I have never questioned the bona fides of the honourable member for Wellington when it comes to issues related to violence against women with one exception, and that is follow through, and I will not get into that because she does not want me to talk about Daryl Bean today and I am not going to do that.

Having made the decision not to do that, Mr. Speaker, we will move into the resolution moved by the honourable member and a helpful amendment which I hope will commend itself to the attention and support of all honourable members in this Chamber.

* (1720)

There is no doubt that every single member of this Chamber looks at the facts placed before us by the honourable member for Wellington and wonders why, at this stage in our history, when we think of ourselves as the best country in the world, and we are told by the United Nations that we are the best country in the world, that we still have these serious problems in a so-called civilized society. I share with the honourable member that concern. This government shares that concern with the honourable member, and shortly after our election to government in 1988, we began to take action with regard to the matter.

Honourable members will remember the Honourable Gerrie Hammond, as she then was Minister of Labour in this province, and previous to that, taking a lead role in the Women's Initiative. In her capacity later as Minister responsible for the Status of Women we saw the Abuse is a Crime public education program, which did much to raise in the minds of Manitobans an awareness about the tragedy that accompanies domestic violence and the need for us to do something about it.

There are tragedies also in this province, an unacceptably high level of abuse in the residences, the homes of this province. There were some women in this province, too many women in this province who paid the supreme price of living in a society which still is far too violent.

Mr. Speaker, I have attended a number of vigils. [interjection] The honourable member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs) suggests too many, and I agree with her. We attend vigils for women who have indeed had their lives snuffed out by an abusive partner or, in some cases, allegedly by an abusive partner. But we do not need any further evidence to know that there are problems that need

to be addressed. This government has been addressing them.

Since that Abuse is a Crime public information program and even prior thereto, funding for services to families in this province has been increasing very, very significantly in the last four years. Funding for abuse shelters for women has increased extremely dramatically over a comparable period of time previous to our coming to office in 1988. We have the Osborne House and the first aboriginal shelter. We have vast improvements to crisis line services, and all of those things are important to deal with those who are victims of the system.

There is no question that more has been done and more still needs to be done in the area of public awareness, and that includes education programs, prevention programs like counselling. I was pleased earlier this year to note the announcement by my colleague the honourable Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gillshammer) with respect to increased funding for Evolve, for the provision of services to offenders on the prevention side.

The honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) seems, by her gesticulation, not to find that to be the thing to do, or maybe it is a question of quantum. We can always agree that as long as there is a single woman in this province suffering at the hands of an abusive partner, there is more that we could and should do.

The honourable member for Wellington would be the first to recognize that there are problems that face governments in trying to solve all of the problems that face us. Indeed the government before us noticed the significant problem of trying to keep up with the services to the extent that this government had to come along and improve funding for the programs and services I have referred to, extremely significantly. [interjection] If the honourable member wants to portray that as a partisan comment, I might be willing to acknowledge it is. Nonetheless, it is true.

I as the minister responsible for the administration of Justice take some pride in the fact that we are dealing far more comprehensively with these problems than has ever been done before in the history of this province. I point to the Family Violence Court operating here in the city of Winnipeg, hopefully to be extended to other centres in the province. I see the statistics that flow after a year of operation of that court. I see the different

way that victims are being treated in our justice system; I see the different way that offenders are being treated; I see that we have reduced the time taken to process these extremely unfortunate and tragic cases through our court system and I say, well, we are making improvements. So, what is this resolution all about?

This resolution is all about what it should be, and that is to keep the pressure on government, this government and other governments in this country to continue until we have made more significant gains in these areas. There is nothing wrong with that.

I assure the honourable member that I see absolutely nothing wrong with bringing in a resolution to try to do something about violence against women. She enjoys my full support, but do not do so with another message, a message to try to show that somehow the honourable member and her colleagues would do a better job. Because we can only judge the job they would do on the job they have done.

All I am going to say about that is that the performance by government in Manitoba has improved significantly in the past four years. Now, if the honourable member thinks I take a whole lot of pleasure in that, she can rest assured she is wrong about that, because I continue to read headlines the same as she does; I continue to hear about gruesome stories of violence in family situations; I continue to be touched by the tragic circumstances some people unfortunately find themselves in.

That is why the honourable Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Mrs. Mitchelson), the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer), myself and other members of our government are committed to continuing in the work that is underway, continuing in that work to improve safety in our province for all members of our society, to deal as best we can with those who find themselves in dangerous circumstances, to treat them sensitively and try to bring an end to the cycle of violence that cripples whole families, whole communities, whole provinces and makes us all weaker for that.

So the honourable member ought not, through bringing in a resolution like the one she brought in, slip in some kind of message that the government is not serious about what it is doing, because this government is indeed serious. Its actions speak

fairly loudly about how serious it is. We will compare our actions to those of previous governments in this province. We will compare our actions to those of actions taken by other governments in other jurisdictions, including the federal government with whom we are working closely and finding that attitudes in the federal government and other governments right across this country are improving to an extent that should give the honourable member reason to feel better about it, but not to feel that we are doing enough.

No one is going to say that. Nobody across this country is going to say that, but it gives me some pleasure to look at what we are doing in Manitoba and to see that other provinces are looking in on us and saying: Oh, maybe we could do it that way; oh, maybe we could improve our services in the court system, for example, and in the enforcement system and in the corrections system like Manitoba is doing. Maybe we can do that, too. Thereby, we are sending a message all across this country: the problem is serious; let us work together and do something about it.

I have attended conferences. I have had meetings with ministers, federal ministers, provincial ministers. Everybody wants to do what the honourable member is suggesting in a resolution. This government is leading the way in a number of important areas.

* (1730)

So I hope none of my comments have offended the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) this afternoon. They were not intended to do that, because, like her, I view this as an extremely serious matter. Let us get serious. Let us work together. Let us work with community advisory committees such as the one set up by the government, referred to by the honourable member. I am meeting with them tomorrow morning and discussing problems that we will have as we approach our work together.

As Ms. Pedlar said in her report, community involvement is critical in the resolution of these problems that we all agree are there. This government is asking for that. We have a group of people willing to lend us their expertise, their experience, and we value that. We also have a commitment of funds made by government in various areas, a commitment of funds to tackle head on, and as we said the day we released the Pedlar review, to go eyeball to eyeball with offenders and

work with them in our correctional institutions and try to heal the problem that we have in our province.

In working toward the goal that we all share, I am going to move, seconded by the honourable Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Mrs. Mitchelson), that Resolution 31 be amended by deleting all the words following the first "WHEREAS" and replacing them with the following:

the government of Manitoba has recognized the increasing concern of Manitobans about domestic violence and spousal abuse present in Manitoba society, and has responded accordingly by implementing a zero-tolerance policy with regard to domestic violence in Manitoba; and

WHEREAS the government of Manitoba has implemented a consultative process with community groups and an interdepartmental working group to respond, review and implement recommendations contained in the Pedlar Domestic Violence Review; and

WHEREAS the government of Manitoba is fully committed to the elimination of domestic violence and spousal abuse in Manitoba society.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba continue to support the government's actions and initiatives designed to eliminate and deal with the issue of domestic violence and spousal abuse, such actions and initiatives including those of education and counselling programs, and the provision of crisis shelters and places of safety; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the government, when developing further action plans and initiatives dealing with the issue of domestic violence, consider the recommendations contained in the Pedlar Domestic Violence Review, and continue to consult with community groups.

With those comments, Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Motion presented.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, first I must comment on the amendment itself, and really once again what we have before us is another amendment that really changes the intent of the member for Wellington's (Ms. Barrett) original resolution. The minister talked about how everyone wants to do what the member for Wellington has put forward, but refuses to allow the resolution to come to a vote. If in fact they did not want to allow it to come to a vote, the minister could have just talked

out the resolution as opposed to once again making an amendment.

Well, Mr. Speaker, without having the amendment itself we can say that we would support the original resolution that was put forward. In fact, 95 percent of the amendment that the government has put forward once again is something that we would no doubt be able to support. Because, as the minister started off in his comments, no one questions that there is a sincerity of the Chamber, if you will, in terms of trying to do what we all feel is absolutely essential to do.

In fact, the other day when I was speaking on the resolution we talked about the government's resolution. We saw an amendment to the government's resolution. We have seen the member for Transcona's (Mr. Reid) resolution. We have seen different resolutions, Mr. Speaker, and different debates inside this Chamber that have talked about domestic abuse, domestic violence, child abuse, seniors abuse and so forth. I believe that those are all areas in which it should be safe to say that all members in this Chamber would like to be able to contribute in a positive fashion, to see the government in particular take some very firm actions. At times we see resolutions such as this that come forward, that are fairly specific, that are asking the government to take certain actions and the government for whatever reasons has chosen not to allow that particular resolution to come to a vote.

Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity to debate this issue on a number of occasions this session, and last Thursday night, or last Thursday in the early evening, I saw a very good reason as to why it is important that issues of this nature come to this Chamber, why it is very important that, in fact, it not be debated just once and then left.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Why is that?

Mr. Lamoureux: The government House leader (Mr. Manness) asked why, and I am glad it was him who asked why, because after I had spoken last Thursday the government House leader stood up and put some comments on the record, in Hansard, that I really find completely unacceptable. The Minister of Finance best rethink his personal position, because I sure hope that it is not the government's position, but the government has to sit down with the Minister of Finance and tell him what it is that we are trying to achieve as a

government at the very least, because I am sure that the Minister of Finance is likely the only individual on the government side, I would even suggest possibly the only individual in this Chamber, who believes what he has said.

I would like to quote what the government House leader said, and it goes on, on page 3948 of Hansard, "I would also like to say that, in my view, domestic violence will not be resolved through education. I wish it would. It is not that education is not good, but if we really believed that education is going to resolve domestic violence I think we are thinking we are more important than we are."

Mr. Manness: Right. I stand by that.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, and the government House leader stands by it. Well, I think that he stands alone, Mr. Speaker. I do not think there are many government ministers or backbenchers that would stand alongside him with this particular issue, and if there is, I look forward to, in the next 20 minutes, government members standing up and supporting the government House leader. In fact, maybe we should be having a resolution dealing just with that if the government members support the type of comments that the government House leader put onto the record.

So what is the solution, Mr. Speaker? The government House leader's solution is, and I quote, "quite frankly, the only solution we have right now and the first step is tougher laws."

(Mr. Jack Reimer, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

Mr. Lamoureux: Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, no doubt that has something to do in a major part of combatting or facing reality and wanting to rectify the problems of domestic violence, but that is nowhere near as important as education. Education has got to be the first priority when it comes to combatting domestic violence.

I think, having heard the type of comments that I heard from the government House leader last Thursday that debate of this nature is, in fact, worth its while, because it brings up opportunities for us to get the government, in fact, all of us inside this Chamber—or to make all of us in this Chamber more aware of some of the issues and how we can address some of those issues.

* (1740)

Because on this particular issue, from this particular government House leader, he is completely out to lunch. I do not believe he really

understands how this issue can be addressed. I think he has not been listening to the AJI, or has not possibly even read the AJI report or heard any commentaries, or any—I do not believe the government cabinet has even caucused the AJI report, or at least when they did, the government House leader was not there. The Pedlar report, another report that dealt with domestic violence, again, I believe either the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) was not at the cabinet table when it was being talked about or this government is going in the wrong direction and the Minister of Finance is a lot more influential within his cabinet than I think he is.

Mr. Manness: Am I not allowed my view?

Mr. Lamoureux: Yes, the government House leader (Mr. Manness) is allowed his views. I just hope that he does not try to superimpose his views on the government, because his views—in my opinion, and I would hazard a guess, in possibly 55 members' opinions in this Chamber—is wrong.

That if we are going to have a chance at combatting, at trying to address the real issue of domestic violence, we have to put in resources and emphasize the importance of education.

Mr. Acting Speaker, this is not just something that politicians are saying, this is something that groups, women's groups, all groups are saying. There has got to be more of an emphasis put on education.

Having said those few words, once again I just wanted to comment that had this particular resolution come to a vote, we would have, in fact, voted in favour of the resolution and once again encouraged the government House leader (Mr. Manness) to do what he had suggested he would do and allow the vote to take place on the government resolution which has been amended. Because, after all, that is the reason why I sat down, was because I believed that the resolution was going to be voted on.

Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Acting Speaker, I rise to speak on the amendment as presented by the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae).

When I began my remarks on the main motion, on the main resolution today, I said that we had proposed a resolution similar if not exactly the same wording previously. I had responded and spoken in a very nonpartisan way and had asked the government to respond in a nonpartisan way as well.

At that time, the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) got up and did very much what the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) did today, which is put in an amendment that completely changes the tone and the tenor and the focus of the resolution that I had brought forward. This is perfectly legal under Beauchesne, but it does once again make the point, unfortunately, that this government is not interested in listening and talking and acting truly on this issue.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the Minister of Justice's amendment is only slightly less self-serving than the Minister of Family Service's amendment was last session. As I recall that amendment, that is not saying a great deal.

The amendment that has been brought forward by the Minister of Justice speaks about the government of Manitoba's actions. It is really not a very long list of actions. Not a single one of those actions will we or have we taken exception to. We have not taken exception to anything that this government has actually done in attempting to deal with the issue of domestic violence. What our resolution stated and what this amendment completely obliterates is the fact that this government's actions have been marginal, have been narrow, and have not begun to address the full complexity of the issue that confronts us.

Mr. Acting Speaker, when the amendment states that the government of Manitoba has recognized the increasing concern about domestic violence and has responded by implementing a zero-tolerance policy with regard to domestic violence. If there really truly were a zero-tolerance policy to domestic violence, we would not have any, or any domestic violence that we had would be immediately dealt with on a wide range of fronts. What this government has done is address this issue on one small area.

They have begun to make some changes in the justice system for which we congratulate the government. They have initiated the province's zero-tolerance, domestic violence-free zone publicity campaign. They had Abuse is a Crime last year which they no longer have as a public relations proposal. I guess they feel that the media is not an effective avenue for reaching Manitobans or making their attempts to change attitudes and values, but the idea that the government has acted by implementing a zero-tolerance policy is laughable

or would be laughable if it were not so dreadfully inadequate.

The second thing that the government has done in this amendment is implemented a consultative process with community groups and an interdepartmental working group. Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, again when those actions were originally undertaken, we congratulated and applauded the government on those actions. Nothing else has happened in months and months and months. There is a major press release about the establishment of these working committees. There is a major public relations exercise about what wonderful things are going to happen and how the government is taking action.

The government is not taking action in any meaningful and effective way when all they do is establish the groups, do not ask them to meet, do not provide them with guidelines, do not tell them they have a deadline to meet, do not say here are some resources within which to work. They just establish the groups and then say, we have done our job. Months go by before those groups have their first meeting, and the idea that this is an action plan that is worthy of our opposition agreement and acceptance as an amendment to my original resolution is laughable.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the third "WHEREAS" that the government talks about, the government is fully committed to the elimination of domestic violence. Well, to rephrase an old statement, that statement, that sentence is nothing but parenthood and apple pie or perhaps to put it in the Canadian context, saskatoon pie. Nobody in the province of Manitoba who has any sense about the issues facing us is anything but committed to the eradication of domestic violence in Manitoba, but there are 30 people in this province who do have the power and the authority and the responsibility to actually do something about it. Many of those 30 individuals are sitting in their chairs on the government side as I speak. What they are doing is minimal and marginal and not to be congratulated as anything but the narrowest of first steps.

Then the resolution, as amended, goes on to say: "THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba continue to support the government's actions and initiatives" Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, we will continue to support the government's actions and initiatives as soon as it has some. As I have stated before, the

actions and initiatives this government have taken have had the result of a lot of pieces of paper on which are written a lot of good ideas and out of which has come virtually nothing.

The Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) talked about prevention in his remarks prior to introducing the amendment. This government does very little in prevention in any department, in any of the departments that need to be working together to deal with this issue.

* (1750)

Mr. Acting Speaker, we have asked for a year and a half for the provincial government to fund a series of programs called parent-child centres, very cost-effective, grassroots, community-based, community-driven programs for parents, particularly single parents, particularly young women single parents and their children, a program that had been proven over five years to be enormously effective in a preventive capacity, a program that is addressing itself to the needs of one of the groups that is most at risk in our society from a number of kinds of violence, not the least of which is domestic.

Has this provincial government taken on itself to carry on the work of the federal government when their pilot project funding ran out? No, it has not. There is not enough money. No, there is not enough money to fund a preventive program that has proven itself, that talks to and addresses these very serious issues. No, there is not enough money for that, but there is certainly enough money to put into Oak Hammock Marsh, into twinning Highway 75, into doing a whole number of things that this government sees as priorities. So leave us not talk about the initiatives that this government has undertaken, particularly in prevention.

The Minister of Justice also remarked about the program directives that this government has undertaken and the services that it has funded, and he spoke in particular about the additional funding provided to Evolve. We congratulated the Department of Family Services for having provided that additional funding. We also have asked why one particular group in our Manitoba society which has shown that it needs services for whom services are not currently provided, why his department will not fund the abuser programs that are currently being run out of the Service de Conseiller, the only accredited family service agency in the province of Manitoba that provides services to those whose first language is French—no, not even \$50,000 to help

provide a program that will deal with abusers, that will help abusers.

If the Minister of Family Services actually consulted one to one with the people who provide services to abusers and to victims, he would know that it is essential that these services, particularly when you are dealing with emotional, societal value, individual value, basic kinds of issues, must be delivered in a manner that will be most easily understood by the person.

That means that the government has recognized that they provide culturally appropriate services through immigration programs; they provide culturally appropriate services to the aboriginal community; they will not provide culturally appropriate, i.e., language of origin services, to those in the Francophone community. So let us not suggest for a moment that this government's action plan in that area is anything but minimal at best.

Finally, Mr. Acting Speaker, I would like to say that—well, almost finally, depending on how much time I have—the final resolution resolved in the amendment states that the Legislative Assembly requests the government of Manitoba that it consider the recommendations in the Pedlar review and continue to consult.

Well, my understanding from the statements made by the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer), the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) and, I imagine, the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) and the Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Mrs. Mitchelson) is that they will use the recommendations in the Pedlar report as the basis for action. To me, the word "consider" does not say they will. The word "consider" says, we will put it into the pot, and we will see if we want to do it.

They are backing off from even the minimal commitment they made in the press release around the Pedlar report. If I were one of the working group that is trying to work with the government on implementing the Pedlar report, I would be very concerned and upset about that.

Finally, the last thing I want to do is to get into an argument or a discussion with the government about what we as government did versus what they as government are doing. But I should say that we are not saying in our resolutions that we would do a better job or that we did do a better job. What we are saying is that this government is not doing the job for which they were elected. This government

has had four years in which to implement changes, and they have not begun to do that in any meaningful way.

As well, the situation that was facing us in 1988 when we turned over the reins of government to the current government are very different than they are today, and I think that as the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) stated, things are changing all the time. They are moving, they are evolving, they are becoming clearer. The issues that we are dealing with today, this government has had four years and five budgets to address.

We will absolutely not be able to support the amendment as produced by the Minister of Justice and say again that it is simply another way for this government to avoid action, to avoid taking responsibility for groups and programs that they are legislatively required to do.

Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Acting Speaker, when the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) brought forward this resolution, she brought it hoping that we could bring forward an issue and get co-operation from all members in this House to deal with a very serious issue and that is violence against women.

She outlined the seriousness of this problem. What we were doing in this resolution is asking the government to put forward a strong plan of action to deal with this violence, asking them to deal with calling the federal government to put in a parallel action plan, because this is not only a provincial problem, it is a problem right across Canada.

The amendment brought in by the Minister of Justice has completely changed the focus of this resolution and has ended up being another resolution patting the government on the back. It makes us wonder whether this government is really serious or interested in this very important issue, whether this government is interested in dealing with the problem of battered women and the abuse that takes place of women and children.

This government speaks about the action that they have taken. They are outlining their activities but we really have not criticized the government for what they have done, except that we have said that they have not done enough. More has to be done to help women that are being abused in Canada. By bringing in this amendment, the government has given the indication that they are not very serious about this matter, and they are not very serious about dealing with this major issue that is facing women.

I find it disappointing that they would choose to bring in an amendment that would just be self-serving and patting themselves on the back, rather than dealing with a resolution that addresses a very serious problem.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Reimer): Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have 12 minutes remaining.

The hour being 6 p.m., I am leaving the Chair with the understanding that the House will reconvene at 8 p.m. in Committee of Supply.

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Monday, June 1, 1992

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