



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

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Speaker*



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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
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, Clif	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
GRAY, Avis	Crescentwood	Liberal
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
ORCHARD, Donald, Hon.	Pembina	PC
PALLISTER, Brian	Portage la Prairie	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
<i>Vacant</i>	Rossmere	
<i>Vacant</i>	Rupertsland	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 27, 1993

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Christine H. Massan, Isabelle Thompson, Gwen Pompana and others requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to consider making, as a major priority, the establishment of a solvent abuse treatment facility in northern Manitoba.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Stephen Walker, Victor Walker, Eric Mason and others requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to consider making, as a major priority, the establishment of a solvent abuse treatment facility in northern Manitoba.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Joseph Monias, Gabby Flett, Annie Monias and others requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to consider making, as a major priority, the establishment of a solvent abuse treatment facility in northern Manitoba.

* * *

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Sheila Mullen, Dan Neal, Garth Mihalick and others urging the government of Manitoba to consider keeping the Misericordia Hospital open as an acute-care facility.

* * *

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Millie Harper, Rita Harper, Tommy Harper and others requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to consider making, as a major priority, the establishment of a solvent abuse treatment facility in northern Manitoba.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, I would

like to table the Auditor's Report and Statement of Operations for the year ended March 31, 1992, for the Office of the Queen's Printer.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 38—The City of Winnipeg Amendment, Municipal Amendment, Planning Amendment and Summary Convictions Amendment Act

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme), that Bill 38, The City of Winnipeg Amendment, Municipal Amendment, Planning Amendment and Summary Convictions Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Ville de Winnipeg, la Loi sur les municipalités, la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire et la Loi sur les poursuites sommaires, be introduced and the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 39—The Provincial Court Amendment Act

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), that Bill 39, The Provincial Court Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Cour provinciale), 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 this message.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Finance, seconded by the honourable Minister of Environment, that Bill 39, The Provincial Court Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Cour provinciale, 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.

Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

The honourable minister did this on behalf of the honourable Attorney General (Mr. McCrae).

* (1335)

Bill 40—The Legal Aid Services Society of Manitoba Amendment and Crown Attorneys Amendment Act

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Attorney General (Mr. McCrae), I move, seconded by the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme), that Bill 40, The Legal Aid Services Society of Manitoba Amendment and Crown Attorneys Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société d'aide juridique du Manitoba et la Loi sur les procureurs de la Couronne), be introduced and that the same now be received and read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill 41—The Provincial Parks and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, I am instructed to do the following: Please read script and follow the next three steps.

I move that Bill 41, The Provincial Parks and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi concernant les parcs provinciaux et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois), be introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time, seconded by the honourable Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik).

I am instructed to remember to table the message by saying, I would like to table the message. So I table the message from His Honour. He has been instructed about the bill.

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the loge to my right, where we have with us this afternoon Mr. Arnie Brown, the former member for Rhineland.

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

Also with us this afternoon, we have from the Parkland Christian School sixteen Grades 7, 8, and 9 students under the direction of Mr. Galen Toews. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach).

Also, from the R.H.G. Bonnycastle School, we have seventy-five Grade 6 students under the direction of Ms. Maureen Arnason. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. Vodrey).

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

* (1340)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Port of Churchill Grain Shipments

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, we have been raising the issue of the Port of Churchill since this session opened, and it would come as no surprise that we are raising it again this afternoon to the First Minister.

During the Premier's Estimates, subsequent to the announcement that was made in February of 1992 and after the Arctic Bridge agreement was signed on November 3, 1992, the Premier indicated that he had much more confidence in the new federal Minister of Agriculture, who is now the lead federal minister for the province of Manitoba, and that he had greater confidence that his personal efforts would improve the situation for the Port of Churchill and improve the situation of Canada-Manitoba relations.

Today, we have learned that ships will be leaving for Russia with wheat, 500,000 tonnes, but not from the Port of the Churchill.

There was a lot of optimism from the government ministers opposite, optimism which we shared in February of this year.

Can the Premier tell us what is the status with the shipment of wheat to Russia, and what is the status of the ships for the Port of Churchill for this shipping year?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I would just prefer the member not take liberties with what I said in Estimates. I did not say that I had confidence that it would improve the situation for the Port of

Churchill. I did make the overall reference that the Minister of Agriculture, now the new lead minister, I felt strongly would improve the situation for all of the various issues we have to deal with.

With respect to the Port of Churchill, I have no other information other than that which is available through the media today, which indicates that in keeping with the policy of the Canadian Wheat Board, they are contemplating a shipment on a time schedule that is asked for by the client, which happens to be Russia. Despite our efforts—and we have made considerable efforts to try and convince them to do shipping through the Port of Churchill—they have indicated that the timetable of request by Russia is so early in the season that Churchill, of course, would not be open for the shipment.

That is regrettable, Mr. Speaker. We certainly would have preferred that this not be the case. I know we will be trying to follow that up with the Wheat Board to see whether or not there is any alternative to that schedule.

Port of Churchill Grain Shipments

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): There are two parties to the negotiations and different parts of the negotiations that are being concluded with the Soviet Union—or Russia, rather—particular in light of the fact that, allegedly, they were over their, quote, credit line, to begin with.

We do not have any confidence on this side, watching what has happened with Brian Mulroney and Baie-Comeau getting priority shipping year after shipping year. It looks like Charlie Mayer has continued to acquiesce to the Prime Minister, in our opinion, and has not stood up on behalf of the people of Manitoba.

I would like to know from the First Minister (Mr. Filmon): What is the status of other potential shipments from the Canadian Wheat Board through the Port of Churchill? We are seeing every year a dwindling number of ships and tonnage going through that port. I know the government is trying to do something about it. We have agreement after agreement after agreement, optimism in the winter and very negative results in the summer, Mr. Speaker.

How many ships are going to go through the Port of Churchill in this shipping year, now that we have

been, I think, sabotaged by the federal Conservative government?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, we are facing the same problem that we have faced for the last five years in terms of getting advance commitment from the Wheat Board. We have lobbied as extensively as we know how. The Premier (Mr. Filmon) himself has written to the federal minister imploring him to make use of the Port of Churchill. We have asked the federal minister to actually impose or request the Wheat Board to move grain through there.

We are still hopeful that we can come to some understanding or agreement that grain is going to move through Churchill again this year. I am still optimistic that under the Arctic Bridge concept, as we develop this further, ultimately we will be able to have a long-term life expectancy for the Port of Churchill if we develop the Arctic Bridge concept.

At the present time, there is no commitment. We continue to push and lobby for grain to move through the Port of Churchill. I think our government is very committed. The Premier has certainly instructed all of his ministers to be very active in terms of trying to make sure that all activities that can take place should take place through Churchill.

* (1345)

Northern Studies Centre Funding

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a further question to the Premier (Mr. Filmon) about Churchill.

Churchill has been working to try to get long-term shipping agreements from the Canadian Wheat Board, and, again, the mayor said today that he feels very negative if this federal Conservative government is re-elected in terms of the future of the port.

We have asked questions about the Rocket Range and the status that that has. The Premier indicated in Estimates he is writing a letter to, I guess, the same minister who is responsible for the Wheat Board. We hope we get better results, or I hope he writes it to the Prime Minister.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, we have asked questions for a number of years about the situation with the Northern Studies Centre or the Arctic centre in Churchill. That centre has been funded at about approximately \$200,000. It was reduced and then

increased again, then it was reduced and then increased again. Now we understand there is no security of funds for that centre. We understand, because of the tentative nature of the provincial Conservative government's commitment to this Arctic centre, that the development officer, the one development officer at that centre has resigned.

Can the Premier tell us—this community just cannot keep getting body blows from Conservative governments in Ottawa and Conservative governments in Manitoba—what the status of that funding is for the northern centre and why we have lost a very valuable development staff for that centre?

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I think that we are quite prepared at any time to put the record of this government up against the inaction of the previous administration in the Province of Manitoba and in the situation in which we found the town of Churchill.

We all appreciate the fact that it is the Canadian Wheat Board, it has been stated many times, that offers grain for sale out of this country, and it is the purchaser who determines where they will pick the product up.

We, through the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) and through the different departments, have continually expressed interest in having purchasers take grain out of the Port of Churchill. As has been indicated, the Arctic Bridge is a mechanism that was not established under the previous administration but established under the leadership of this government to further enhance the opportunities of Churchill.

As it relates to the Northern Studies Centre, I believe those questions would be appropriately asked in the Estimates of the Department of Education where the traditional funding has been.

We have committed to the Port of Churchill. We have committed some several thousands of dollars to the Rocket Range program investigation, Mr. Speaker, and as I indicated, I know where the funding is, and I indicated, too, it would be appropriately asked, as it is an educational program, under the Department of Education.

Assiniboine River Diversion PFRA Study Release

Ms. Marianne CerlIII (Radlsson): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Environment.

Due to an amendment in The Environment Act, the minister could request that other jurisdictions provide their studies and information relevant to an environmental assessment in Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, this new power is necessary with respect to the Assiniboine diversion.

Given that the PFRA is not registered to make a presentation at the upcoming Clean Environment Commission hearings, will the minister ensure that all of their studies are made public by the dates of the hearings in Manitoba which begin in a few weeks?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, the Clean Environment Commission will certainly look at what information is available as they go through their hearings, and if they believe there is information that would be useful, that would be vital to any decision-making process, that they would want to have made available to them, then we will see that request.

I am sure that any information that is needed, Mr. Speaker, can be made available. It is not a matter of the commission sorting through material and deciding whether or not they want to hear it. They want to hear all of the information.

Ms. CerlIII: Given that this government has said these Clean Environment Commission hearings will be as thorough as possible and the new amendment gives this minister the power to request this information, I ask that the minister will make a commitment to request that the PFRA studies will be made public, so we can have a complete review, and all the information will be made available for the Manitoba hearings.

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, the answer I gave a moment ago is the correct answer.

If the commission sees that there are gaps or further information they need to make a decision that is fully informed, then they will request that information.

Mr. Speaker, I give you my commitment and I give the commitment to the province that any information that is needed for a proper decision will be made available.

* (1350)

City of Winnipeg Concerns

Ms. Marianne CerlIII (Radlsson): Given that the City of Winnipeg today has taken the unusual action of launching a public ad campaign because of their

concerns for lack of information and studies with respect to water flow, can the minister tell us what he thinks of the City of Winnipeg's concerns in these areas?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Well, Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed that there is a view that the commission will not take a broad enough approach to this licensing process.

We have said consistently that the commission will not be fettered in the concerns that can be brought before it and the information it will be able to request.

When I look at the fact that it is considered that a public campaign is being put in place, I have to ask the question, Mr. Speaker, that the commission should be looking at the facts of the matter, and what we need is to make sure that all of the facts are brought forward. They can then deal with the matter appropriately.

Port of Churchill Grain Shipments

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, on February 17 of this year, we learned with great fanfare of a great sale of wheat to the Soviet Union, now Russia. We learned further that it was the wish of these individuals who were in a delegation visiting our Premier (Mr. Filmon) that this grain be shipped through the Port of Churchill.

The Wheat Board denied it. The Wheat Board said there is no deal. Well, there is clearly a deal. A deal has been signed, and the Premier said today he knew nothing more about the deal other than what the media knew.

Will the Minister of Transportation tell us if he has had any information which would indicate that such a deal has been made, other than media reports, and if he does not, why does he not have that information?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, we go through this course again in terms of what is happening at Churchill or not happening at Churchill. It was our understanding at the time we met with the delegation from Russia, Mr. Kuramin, who was a representative from Murmansk at the time—he made the announcement.

It was not this government that made the announcement that they would be prepared to take so and so much grain through the Port of Churchill.

We further felt this was a commitment on their behalf. We are pursuing it right now to find out what has happened, but my understanding is—and one of the frustrations between the Canadian Wheat Board and Export Klieb, which is the counterpart from Russia—we were under the impression that any further grain, that a good portion of that would move through the Port of Churchill.

We are in the process of finding out exactly what went wrong or what is going wrong because my understanding was that the Export Klieb people by and large had given an indication that they were prepared to take the grain through the Port of Churchill.

We are pursuing that. I will make that information available as soon as we have further information on this thing.

Mrs. Carstairs: But, quite frankly, we cannot deal with just impressions.

Can the Minister of Highways table today correspondence that he has had with the Minister responsible for the Wheat Board and the Wheat Board itself indicating the arrangements that he believed were made in good faith by the Russian delegation meeting with our government?

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, I do not have that information here. I will get what information I have and bring it forward to the member at a later time.

Port of Churchill Grain Shipments

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Can the Premier (Mr. Filmon) tell the House today if there was any funding that was provided to the Russian delegation by the Province of Manitoba with respect to the Arctic Bridge concept?

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs): Yes, there is joint funding between the Province of Manitoba and the Russian organization that was here meeting on behalf of purchasing product from this country.

* (1355)

Substance Abuse Treatment Centre Northern Manitoba

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): An important information meeting was held this morning with Chief Sydney Garrioch of the Cross Lake Band and representatives of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and MKO to discuss the need for a northern solvent abuse treatment centre.

Mr. Speaker, I will table a copy of the brief presented at the meeting for the benefit of those members of the House who were not able to attend.

Given the serious problem of solvent abuse in our province, will the Minister of Health today make a firm commitment on record to provide provincial funding out of the health reform initiatives fund for a solvent abuse treatment facility in northern Manitoba?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): As my honourable friend may well know from that presentation, MKO put forward a proposal to the federal government through the Medical Services Branch for a treatment centre to be located at Cross Lake, and that happened in 1991, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is most appropriate that MKO continue their efforts to seek financial assistance from the federal government to provide that treatment centre at Cross Lake.

Mr. Hickes: Then can the Premier (Mr. Filmon) tell us if he has raised this matter with the federal government, and has he obtained a guarantee of funding this year for a solvent treatment centre in northern Manitoba?

Mr. Orchard: Maybe my honourable friend has this information and, should he not, I would be glad to provide him with it.

Apparently after receiving the proposal from MKO for a \$7-million, 30-bed treatment centre at Cross Lake, that project, it is my understanding, was not accepted by Medical Services Branch federally because they believed that it was too costly in terms of both capital and operating costs compared to other services which are available in the province. This is my understanding of the federal government's position.

The Medical Services Branch is conducting a survey across Canada of substance abuse treatment needs in the native population of Canada. It is expected that report will be completed in late May or early June of this year, Sir, and I would

suspect it might provide some guidance to my honourable friend and to the delegation that was in the Legislature today in terms of where the federal government might proceed next on this issue.

Mr. Hickes: Mr. Speaker, it was made very clear this morning that there are enough studies and papers brought forward, that it is time for action.

So I would like to ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon): Since his own 1992 Health Action Plan stated that Manitoba will launch a major initiative to combat substance abuse in this province, why has this commitment not been put in place?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend, in his preamble, is correct in that we are undertaking initiatives in terms of substance abuse, but my honourable friend is not correct in saying that this initiative has not been commenced, and I look forward to the opportunity of explaining a number of initiatives through my ministry and through government in terms of substance abuse, not the least of which is the tabling of legislation we believe will work in terms of the issue of sniff.

Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat troubled with my honourable friend's direction of questioning in terms of automatically making the assumption that the province ought to provide the entire funding package for a treatment centre which is clearly a federal government responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, my honourable friends, when they were in government and had the opportunity to act on this, did not, preferring to rely on federal government leadership. Now from opposition, they seem to be proposing a somewhat changed approach.

School Division Boundary Review Terms of Reference

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, reports now indicate that the public school boundary review is on once again after being shelved a year ago by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) when he said in the House on March 18, and I quote: "... now is not the time to further impose yet another potential major change on them."—them being school boards.

As with most actions of this minister, mass confusion reigns in Manitoba on these decisions, and "impose" seems to be the operative word used by this government.

So I ask the Minister of Education today: Will she clarify if she is truly proceeding with a boundary

review this time? Is it tied to the establishment of the Francophone division, and will she table in this House the objectives, information on who will be involved, what the projected savings will be and the timetable for such a review?

* (1400)

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, in answer to a question yesterday, I did say in this House that I expected to make an announcement regarding the issue of school boundary review shortly.

Mr. Plozman: Mr. Speaker, I asked for the terms of reference. Obviously, the minister does not know what she is doing again. She cannot even confirm if it is on again, off again—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Question, please.

Mr. Plozman: In regard to this potential review, Mr. Speaker, can the minister assure the House here today that the public will be involved from the very beginning, even before the terms of reference are established, that it will be consulted and that there will be no decisions imposed on the public by this minister, as the Premier seems to indicate is the way—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member has put his question.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, as I said to the member earlier today, as I said yesterday, the issue of boundary review was deferred in an announcement last year. There were a number of issues which the school divisions and the public were working very hard on at that time.

I said yesterday in the House and earlier today that I planned to make an announcement about school boundary reviews shortly.

Mr. Plozman: Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the minister if she can tell us today—not shortly, today—whether in fact she will be following the recommendations of her own reform report, which she released after six months of sitting on it, which asks that governance and greater equality of educational services be a major objective of that report, especially in rural Manitoba, of any consideration of a review.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, again, any information regarding this government's plans and details, of course, would come forward at the time of an announcement.

I would like to remind the member we did say last year when we deferred the issue of school boundary review that there were a number of issues which were ongoing, and those issues have now been brought to a stage, I think, that has provided the public of Manitoba with more information.

Last year, when the school boundary review was deferred, we were in the first year of a new educational funding formula. We are now into the second year.

Last year, we had just completed the final hearings of the review of legislative reform of The Public Schools Act. We did not have that report yet. That report we now have and that has been released to Manitobans for comment.

Last year, at the time the boundary review was deferred, we had not released any information on our plans for Francophone governance. This year, we now do have that legislation before the House.

Fourthly, Mr. Speaker, last year, we had only announced the formation of the Task Force on Distance Education. That final report has now been released before the public. We have four initiatives which have now been completed and are before the public.

Special Operating Agencies Fleet Vehicles Branch

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister responsible for Government Services.

Last year, the government began setting up under its legislation for special operating agencies a series of quasi-private sector organizations that were delivering government services, one of them being Fleet Vehicles. I, frankly, was rather supportive of this move at the time they began.

I note, however, when one looks at the Orders-in-Council that were passed at the time the agency was set up, Orders-in-Council that have been amended just a couple of weeks ago, that the value of the assets transferred had been reduced by some \$2.284 million.

I would like to ask the Minister of Government Services where that \$2.2 million has gone.

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Government Services): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I will get into more of that when we go into Estimates, but briefly what it is, is underestimating. The value of the

vehicles that were going into the new company were underestimated by that amount of money.

As you can probably appreciate, we had about 2,600 or 2,700 automobiles that went in, and it was overestimated, the ones going into that company at the time it was started.

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Speaker, however, at the same time that the organization was set up, it declared in the publicity that was put out that it would be required to produce annual operating plans. I also notice that they have removed that requirement in this new O/C.

I am wondering if the minister can explain why they are changing the way in which these organizations operate.

Mr. Ducharme: In no way are we changing the operating of the SOA that was established.

The year-end was just at the first of April, Mr. Speaker. I will go through the plan with the individual when we do get to Estimates. As I explained earlier, there was a difference that was going in, as we were establishing a new company at the time.

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Speaker, I have been through the plan quite clearly, and the minister has taken a number of steps this year to change the way in which this organization functions.

I am wondering if he will assure us it is not because the organization is having trouble competing in the way he said it would.

Mr. Ducharme: Mr. Speaker, in no way are we having any difficulty in the establishment of the plan. The employees who are involved have done an excellent job. The only question he does have—and it is a logical question—is the overestimation of the vehicles going in.

At that particular time, they were estimated going into the SOA at the time, and as a result of the 2,800 automobiles that were involved, that can easily happen. It was just a book type of entry that established that value at the time of the establishment of the company.

Private Money Lenders Regulations

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) took as notice for me a series of questions from the member for Elmwood (Mr.

Maloway) regarding loan brokers. I am pleased to provide the answers to those questions today.

The member indicated yesterday, in fact stated categorically, that the government had done nothing on this issue and asked when we are going to do something and what it is going to be.

I think it is important to put on the record, Mr. Speaker, that my department did begin to investigate this as soon as the initial complaint came to us toward the end of April and that we have been working with the City of Winnipeg Police closely since that time and have taken a number of concrete actions, some of which I was not able to say in the course of the ongoing investigation.

The investigation is still ongoing. I am able to provide certain pieces of information today, however, that I was not able to report before. Unlike the member opposite, of course, my department has to operate on the basis of evidence, proven evidence, and due process must be abided by.

I can inform the member that under The Business Practices Act which this government was pleased to bring in, my department, after consulting with Crown counsel, obtained from the court and carried out an order to freeze the firm's bank account.

They also obtained and carried out a search warrant. They also received an order granting an injunction which prohibited any representation being made to the effect that a loan had been obtained and from accepting any fee pursuant to that without prior written confirmation of such approval being first received by the lender involved. That was the first point that was raised by the member.

Secondly, he asked a number of questions again on loan brokers. I wish to emphasize first of all, Mr. Speaker, that it is important for the member opposite to understand that orders such as these can only be obtained after one is able to detail their sufficient cause and sufficient evidence for a judge to grant that these orders be allowed.

The second question the member asked, which I will provide the answer for—he asked three questions, Mr. Speaker. That was the first one.

The member opposite asked why we had not acted on a supposed 160 complaints received by the Better Business Bureau. I should first indicate that the Better Business Bureau is not a branch of my department. It is a private, nongovernmental agency of business people, members of the

business community. They do not report to government.

Secondly, I should indicate—and this is very important because the member based the premise for the rest of his question on the first statement, which was inaccurate—the Better Business Bureau did not receive 160 complaints. They received 160 inquiries over a period of time about loan brokers. The member may wish to consult a dictionary—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

* (1410)

Education System Violence Reduction Strategy

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

The government cannot duck its responsibility for the problems in education, including those of violence in the classroom and providing safe environments.

As MTS stated in its report today, quote: Adequate resources have to be provided and that is the responsibility of the government.

The government does not get it, Mr. Speaker, despite numerous reports. Will the government now deal with the issue as raised in the MTS report today by specifically doing three things: co-ordinating services, providing resources to decrease classroom size, and thirdly, providing proper clinician support?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): The issue of violence in the schools is one that has been of great concern and has been discussed frequently and has also, in support of reducing violence in the school, been supported by this government in terms of financial support. That financial support has been offered through our Student Support Branch which has delivered a number of programs which will assist schools in managing violence in the schools.

We have also spoken during the process of Estimates and in this House before about the co-ordination of services which is now being considered by ministers within this government, and we have taken that process very seriously, and I believe that we also have a record to stand by.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Speaker, how can this minister say that they are taking it seriously when they fired 66 people from the very division that created the

document, Working with Violent and Aggressive Students?

How can she make that claim and claim that there are adequate resources at the school division level?

Mrs. Vodrey: That member seems to continually misunderstand—I give him the benefit of the doubt of misunderstanding—when he now knows that clinicians will be hired by school divisions as their direct employers and that the funding for clinicians is provided through the schools funding formula model and that the support for clinicians was increased by this government under the new funding formula model.

Mr. Chomlak: My final supplementary is to the same minister. Will the government stop procrastinating, bring together all the departments to deal with the issue and perhaps in her education reform package that she talked about earlier, they can put something in there about violence and providing a safe environment for children and teachers?

Mrs. Vodrey: The issue of violence in the schools and the issue of violent behaviour is one that has been looked at. I did explain in the Estimates process that there has been a committee which was directed to be set up. Deputy ministers chaired it. It also had a working group. The working group has reported to the deputy ministers.

The ministers will now look at the information which has been provided, and in terms of what will appear within legislation, there have been recommendations which appear in that report regarding rights and responsibilities of parents, students and teachers, and we will certainly have a look seriously at the recommendations.

Children's Dental Health Program Funding Reinstatement

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, last night, I had the opportunity to attend a meeting in Swan Lake in the heart of Tory country. Again, close to 200 people came out to protest this government's decision to cut the treatment side of the Children's Dental Health Program.

People understand the value of this program. It is based on wellness, preventative, and it is very cost efficient.

I want to ask the Minister of Health if he will now admit that he has made a mistake by slashing this program. We would applaud the minister if he would

now admit this and reinstate the funding to a program that is very valuable to rural and northern Manitobans.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, as tempted as I am to garner applause from the negative democratic party, I cannot take up that offer, with all due regret.

However, I will indicate to my honourable friend that since the meeting I had the opportunity to attend in Minnedosa some two to three weeks ago, a number of initiatives have commenced with significant leadership from some of the individuals involved in the delivery of the program in the school system.

I am hoping that maybe these initiatives coming from the individuals involved in the program might lead to a reasonable opportunity in the community funded by the community.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, will the minister then consider other recommendations, and will he consider the recommendation that came out of last night's meeting asking that the program be maintained for this fiscal year and that a dental health assistant be hired to review the program, and allow people to have input? Those people who deliver the program have not had any input. There has been no consultation.

Will he reinstate the funding—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member has put her question.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I know my honourable friend was unable to attend the meeting in Minnedosa, but when I was at that meeting, I made it very clear to all those who were in attendance that the financial decision of government in terms of being able to maintain the treatment side of the program was not up for reconsideration, that I did not have that kind of flexibility, as my honourable friend requests.

Subsequent to that, Sir, the suggestion was made by one of the superintendents of a neighbouring school division as to whether government might entertain options in which parents might be able to work within the school division to maintain the program. It is those types of options that we are willing to entertain further investigation of fact and possibility.

Fee for Service

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): I want to tell the minister that school boards and superintendents are very concerned about having to pick up this responsibility. They have enough work to do as it is.

Will the minister assure us that this program he is considering now does not involve a fee for service and that it will be open to all people?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated to my honourable friend from Swan River, who was not at the Minnedosa meeting—but she might consult with the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) who was, because one of the superintendents made a suggestion exactly au contraire to what my honourable friend is suggesting now, wherein a superintendent who I believe had a substantial knowledge of how the program has worked made the exact opposite suggestion and asked whether government would consider having school divisions, with cost recovery from parents of children enrolled in the program, be able to explore the option of continuing the program with cost recovery from parents with children enrolled.

Mr. Speaker, that suggestion was not government's. That came from a superintendent who was part of the meeting in Minnedosa.

School Division Boundary Review Government Commitment

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I was sitting back listening to the Minister of Education give a verbal diatribe as to why it is that we do not have reform or restructuring of our school divisions.

Mr. Speaker, I would argue that it is a question of political will. In fact, when we saw the will of the government to change and restructure City Hall, they were quick to be able to take action.

My question to the Minister of Education: Can she tell this House why that very same political will is not there to restructure the number of school divisions in the city of Winnipeg, in fact, in the province of Manitoba?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, it is obvious the member has not been very close to the issues of education and has not had the opportunity to know very closely what the issues are that have been

occupying a great deal of time in terms of education, so let me review them for him again.

Last year at the time that we deferred the boundary review, there was in its very first year of operation, a new funding formula, and school divisions were in the first year of application. Secondly, the hearings had just been completed for the legislative reform of The Public Schools Act. There had been no analysis of the recommendations and there had been no report issued. Thirdly, we had not released our plan for Francophone governance and, fourthly, the Task Force on Distance Education had only just been set up and had not even begun its work yet.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, what is clear is this government has no intention of fulfilling an election promise they made to the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I have been following the issue of education very closely, and the quality of education has been deteriorating under this minister.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is: What is this minister doing specifically to ensure that the quality of education is improving in this province, not continuously going downhill and deteriorating under this particular minister's administration?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, obviously, I reject, as I am sure many Manitobans will, the comments of that member, but I will say to him—and he might be interested in listening further in the Estimates of the Department of Education—that there are a number of initiatives which are underway. There have been a number of reforms which have begun and have been completed within the past three years to look at education and education reform. There are a number which are also currently in progress.

I have said that I will make an announcement regarding the boundary issue shortly.

Mr. Speaker: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

Nonpolitical Statement

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for the Interlake have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Cliff Evans (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I wish to inform members of the House, in recognizing a student by the name of Donald Hallett from the Peguis First Nations Reserve who is graduating from Grade 12 from the Peguis Central School this June. Since 1980-81 till 1992-93,

Donald has attended and completed his education without missing one day in the 10 years that he has attended the school.

Mr. Speaker, the school and his peers are honouring him on June 3 with a special awards night, and I know that members of this House join me in congratulating Donald on this very, very great accomplishment in continuing his education.

Thank you.

* (1420)

ORDERS OF THE DAY

House Business

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I would like to announce, firstly, a Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources will meet on Tuesday, June 8, 1993, at 7:30 p.m. and Wednesday, June 9, 1993, at 7:30 p.m., if necessary, to consider the 1991 and '92 Annual Reports of the Manitoba Telephone System.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the honourable government House leader for that information.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the members of the Legislature whether or not there is a willingness to waive private members' hour.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to waive private members' hour? No? Leave is denied.

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

Motion 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 Education and Training; and the honourable member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) in the Chair for the Department of Environment.

* (1430)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): Good afternoon. 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 Education and Training. When the committee last sat it had been considering item 1.(e)(1) on page 34 of the Estimates book.

Chairperson's Ruling

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Before we move on, I was just going to bring down my ruling from last week.

During the evening sitting of Committee of Supply, meeting in Room 255 on Tuesday, May 25, 1993, the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) used the words "misleading to the public." I had ruled that the words were unparliamentary and had asked him to withdraw.

The honourable member for Dauphin explained that he had not used the words to indicate that the Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. Vodrey) was deliberately misleading but that the global figures presented were misleading to the public.

I subsequently took the matter under advisement. I reviewed Hansard from that evening and past Speakers' Rulings to provide some guidance on the use of the word "mislead." There have been many instances where the word "mislead" in many different contexts have been ruled both in and out of order.

On October 30, 1990, the Speaker ruled: "It is very plain that any words that indicate that a Member knowingly or deliberately misled the House are unparliamentary."

In my opinion, the phrase used by the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), that is, "misleading to the public," was not a direct charge that the minister had intentionally or knowingly set out to mislead the public, and is not unparliamentary in the context in which it was used on Tuesday evening.

I should have not asked the honourable member for Dauphin to withdraw the phrase, and I apologize. Having said that, I would like to remind the members of this committee that, although some words may be unparliamentary one day and not the next, dependent on the context and other factors, the word "mislead" and other words meaning the same thing have caused intervention on the part of the Chair, and I would caution all members to choose their words carefully.

* * *

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Does the minister have any items to table prior to our beginning today, especially those dealing with the reserves, surpluses?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I do have some items for tabling this afternoon. The first one was requested and is a list of the Department of Education and Training Secondments for the 1992-93 Fiscal Year.

Secondly, I have a Manitoba Education and Training Classification Activity during the fiscal year '92-93, where we were requested to provide information regarding the number of classification requests processed, upward classifications and so on. I would like to table that now.

Then, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would like to table information regarding Declared Aboriginal Employees in the Department of Education and Training as of the date May 28, 1993, and that information is broken down by division and is also broken down by classification.

Then, I would like to table the information from Manitoba Education and Training regarding the directors in the department. This information covers all the areas of Manitoba Education and Training with a numerical summary of male, female, disabled individuals, native individuals, visible minority individuals.

Finally, I would table for the member, as I said that I would, the percentage of 1992-93 Net Operating Expenditures by Division in Descending Order of the percentage.

Mr. Plohman: I thank the minister for that information. I wondered if she was also going to provide the FRAME reports, or is that not ready at this time?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it was our understanding that the FRAME reports and that information was to be tabled and available under the line 16.5.

*(1440)

Mr. Plohman: If the minister can make it available before that, it might assist the process somewhat. So if there is no reason why it should not be tabled prior to that, then I would ask the minister to consider that. I am not going to push that point at this time

any further—just to have it considered in terms of facilitating the process.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I want to ask the minister before we get into this section, it is kind of a preliminary question asked in the House about the Northern Studies Centre. Could the minister indicate what line of her department this would be covered or if indeed, there is provision made for this Northern Studies Centre in this department?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I can tell the member that the funding for this particular area is found in the Department of Education and Training, as was spoken about in the House today. The amount of money is \$100,000, and the budget line would be found in the post-secondary part of my department under the Advanced Education and Skills Training division.

Mr. Plohman: I thank the minister for that clarification. That will be helpful.

This particular area deals with the office of the assistant deputy minister, and as I said earlier, the effect of schools funding is an important objective, an expected result of the activities of this particular office.

There was some discussion recently regarding, first of all, the Francophone division that will be set up. I am wondering if the minister can indicate for the record what the grant per student, per pupil, is across the province, in other words, if money is being transferred—and I asked the minister questions under the policy area about the establishment of a Francophone division. We had some discussion earlier this week on that, but we did not clarify the figure of dollars that would be associated with any transference. I would assume that this office would be involved in determining what that would be in terms of the transference to the Francophone division from existing divisions, along with the students when they would move to that division.

Could the minister give us the precise figure on that?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, during our last discussion, I did explain to the member that the Monnin Committee is now in the process of doing its work with the communities, and, through that, there will be a registration process where parents then determine the registration of their children.

We will need to have the results of the Monnin Committee, which will then assist the new school

board, when elected, in looking at the registration, looking at the ages of young people registering within the Francophone division. They will be able to look at the issues relating to transportation within the Francophone division. Then, as a result of that, we would then be able to come with the number for the average per student cost within that division.

As I have said to the member before, there is still some work that is being done. It is in progress at the moment. When all of that work is done, then we will be able to provide the information to the member.

Mr. Plohman: Maybe it is possible that the minister did not understand my question. I think we could have some information that is available now as opposed to waiting till the Monnin Committee has finished its work.

We are not asking at this particular time for the total dollars, even the total number of students that would be registering with the new school division. I assume that the minister is saying that there will be some indication of that from the Monnin Committee when they make their report, some indication of intention by students or by parents, but that is not what we were asking right at this particular moment.

What I wanted to know is the average cost or average grant per student rather than if it varies per division, which I assume it might—the average amount of the grant, of the per-pupil grant for students in Manitoba that could potentially be included in this school division.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the information that the member asks would best be discussed under 16.5 at that particular appropriation, but we could perhaps, given a little bit of time, provide the member with an estimated number this afternoon.

Mr. Plohman: Yes, we had calculated a figure dividing the total amount of dollars provided to the public school system by the number of students and came up with a figure. I believe that to be an accurate figure. However, we would not want to use inaccurate information, so if the minister can indicate what a good ballpark figure would be, without anyone attempting to hold the minister to within \$100 or \$200 or \$300 per student.

Mrs. Vodrey: I can provide the member with a figure of approximately \$4,000, but I would do so with the caution that that information is not being verified by calculation and that is only an estimated number. I

would not expect that the member would want to use that very specifically in further discussions.

Mr. Plohman: Well, that is the figure that I have been using, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, as a result of the simple calculation that we did. However, I wanted to determine whether the minister's figures were in that same ballpark, or whether there was a great variation. For example, would that average be, if it was, say, a ballpark average figure—would it be reflective of the majority of the students who would be transferred over to the Francophone division, knowing that the majority of those students are located in the school divisions of St. Vital and St. Boniface and perhaps Seine River?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I will tell the member, as I have said from the beginning, I am not able to tell him that number at the moment. I am not able to see into the future, and I am not able to provide him with that information.

I have explained what is already in progress in terms of the setting up of the Francophone division, and when that work has been done by the Monnin Committee and then the details looked at by the school board, which we expect to be elected this fall coming up, fall of '93, then we will have more information for him.

* (1450)

Mr. Plohman: I appreciate the minister not having all of the definitive information, but she is certainly in a position to determine whether that figure is an average figure, is reflective of where the majority of students would come from, because she and her department would know this.

I note that the assistant deputy minister's office is concerned about real and perceived equities, and so, therefore, would be fully aware of grants coming from the province by division. You cannot deal with the issue of equity and inequities if you do not have that knowledge and that information.

So the minister is in a position, through this particular office, to supply this committee with information as to per pupil grants that would be provided to, say, the St. Boniface School Division, if I use that as an example. If the \$4,000 figure is reflective, then I will accept that. If it is not and if it is, say, \$5,000, then I think that is significant.

So I am asking the minister if in fact the divisions where most of the students are projected to be transferred from would be reflected by the \$4,000

figure, or is it more likely that figure should be higher than that?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, again I can say to the member, as I have said, that I will not speculate. I cannot speculate. We do deal with grants, but those grants are established again when we have a set of pupils, when we have more details on transportation.

However, he has asked for information regarding the per pupil cost for some school divisions by way of example, and I can tell him it is \$3,700 for St. Boniface and \$4,300 for White Horse Plain. Those differences are a reflection of a number of issues including the tax base.

Mr. Plohman: Would the minister know the variance in the per-pupil dollars raised by local taxation for those divisions, or for all divisions in the province? Would it vary from as low as \$1,000 to as high as \$2,000 additionally per pupil? Because I note in the Francophone policy paper that the minister has issued, there has been an indication that these dollars would also be transferred, that dollars raised locally for each of these students would be transferred.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, the member is getting into some details which we would cover in 16.5 when we have the appropriate staff here, with the appropriate information available at that time. At this point, it would really just be speculation. It would simply be an effort to deal with figures which may not be accurate. So I would ask the member that we look at this in 16.5 when we have the appropriate information to discuss it.

Mr. Plohman: I do not want to push the minister on this and her staff. It seemed this would be a figure that would be readily available. I am talking about averages. That is why I asked it. In terms of the money raised locally, that variance would be something that would be within the routine knowledge of the minister. However, it seems it is not, so I will move on to another area.

If the minister does get the information, an average figure and a variance, I would like to get that as soon as possible. We certainly will be asking that when we come to 16.5 as well.

The issue of amalgamation of school divisions or boundary review, has there been an initiation of any of the components of policy in this area by this office that we are dealing with now? I say that with the thought that, since the assistant deputy minister is

dealing with the whole area of effective school funding and real and perceived equities, satisfaction of school divisions and so on, indeed that would be something this office would play a major role in.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, as I have said, I have not yet made an announcement on the issue of boundary review. I have also said that I would be looking to make an announcement on the issue of boundary review shortly, within the next while. I am not able to discuss any potential details relating to that because an announcement has not been made, and there is, at this point, nothing for the member and me to look at continue discussing around such an announcement.

Mr. Plohman: Is this office involved in putting together the minister's terms of reference and facts involving costs associated with any review, potential savings, that kind of thing? It would seem that savings from the public school system would be an area where this office would play a major role.

I remind the minister that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) is quoted recently as well saying that there are savings to be made. I can get her the quote from the MAST newsletter that just came out, as well. The Minister of Finance, on an open-line show, on, I believe, April 27, indicated that there were major savings to be had, and this review was, by no means, off. It was something the minister felt was very important to move ahead with as quickly as possible because there were savings to be had. I am paraphrasing his statement but it is very close to what was said, as I recall it in that newsletter.

So I understand that the minister has been working on this, and probably does have some information to give to the committee. The announcement does not mean that she cannot talk about it, just because the announcement has not been made yet. We are talking about the principles and concepts involved. I am asking, under this line, dealing with this office as it applies to a boundary review, because we are talking about, I would think, costs, here.

Since the minister's office, the assistant deputy minister in this case, is involved in that whole area of equity between school divisions and costs, it is important that we understand the role that his office would be playing in this review and the status of that preparation.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, again, the issue of boundary review, as I said in the House,

was an issue which was deferred by this government. It was deferred because there were a number of initiatives which were in the process, in some cases, of being developed; some had not even been announced, the details of which had not been announced.

Now, as I have said earlier today, there were four, in specific, that I have referred to. I will go over them again.

One was the issue of the new ed finance formula. The new ed finance formula was in its first year of application. School divisions were dealing with the new formula, the degree of certainty that we believe it provides for school divisions. We recognize that it would require some ongoing reshaping; that is why we kept the committee available to do the work of that ed finance model. That committee did its work, by the way, and some of its recommendations were reflected in the ed funding formula and the announcement this year.

Then, I also spoke about the issue of Distance Education Task Force, and that had only just been struck. Obviously, there had been no report and no work done yet on behalf of that committee. That committee has now provided its report to government; that committee's report is now out and is being reviewed.

Then, I also spoke about the legislative reform issue, and the last hearing was only held towards the end of January. As a result of that, we did not have any analysis of that information or any information which was out for the public to examine. Then the fourth issue, as well, was Francophone governance. Our plan had not even been announced. So with that, we did defer the decision.

* (1500)

What I have said to this point is that it was only deferred, and I expect to make an announcement on it shortly. When I do make that announcement, I will be able to provide the member with a great deal of information that he might wish to ask for at that time, but at this time, I have not made an announcement regarding it.

Mr. Plohman: I am certainly aware that the minister has not made a formal announcement. I thank her for that clarification again, a very interesting dissertation and reiteration of what she said in the House today about why times are better for a review now than they might have been a year ago. I am not

questioning the minister on the issue of why it is more appropriate now to proceed with this review.

Simply, I would assume that the minister would do some preparation prior to making such an announcement and would have some ideas of the concepts she is dealing with and the parameters she wants to have on any review, some contemplation of who would be involved and the format to be involved, something about the timetable and that kind of thing.

All these things would have to be considered, I would think, by the minister and would be some of the things that she would be dealing with in consultation with her staff to come up with a review process that would be acceptable to the general public and to the school divisions throughout the province.

We know it is not going to come out of thin air. At least we hope it is not when the minister finally makes the announcement, that she is not just going to kind of dream it up the day before. So we do have a situation here where we are in a preannouncement stage, and there is a lot of work that has to be done. I am asking about that angle or that aspect of it.

Perhaps the minister can just tell us whether she sees a per-pupil saving, in terms of funding, of any review, and has she projected an amount with regard to that?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, as the member said, this is a time before any announcement has been made, and in the time before any announcement, I would not in any way consider making suggestions, speculations and providing a discussion.

When an announcement is made, then there will be information which I think will answer some questions which the member might wish to put forward at that time, but an announcement has not been made yet. When I do make the announcement and whatever that announcement may be, then I will be able to answer questions the member has at that time.

Mr. Plohman: Does the minister have any projections on per-pupil savings of amalgamation?

Mrs. Vodrey: It seems the member, whatever the announcement may be, seems to want to prejudge exactly what an outcome might be and want to have some details before there has been any input which the member might wish to be a part of.

So I will say again, I have not made an announcement regarding this. I expect to make an announcement regarding it shortly. At the time of the announcement, the member will have an opportunity to ask a number of questions, and I expect I will be able to provide some information for him at that time.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the reason I ask that, of course, is the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) did state that there are savings to be made and it is a quote from his statement.

There seems to be a preoccupation with savings. I would assume that this is one of the major considerations of the government in terms of boundary review. So I ask her whether she has a projection since the Minister of Finance has stated that there are savings to be made, whether she knows whether they have been quantified in any studies. If the minister does not want to say she is including that consideration in her announcement that is to come, fine, do not say it, but the point is I want to know whether this office has been involved in any projections with regard to savings that could be achieved as a result of amalgamation.

It is a simple question, and I think the minister should be able to answer that.

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

Mrs. Vodrey: The member is questioning me on comments made by my colleague at a time when I was not present, and I am afraid I do not know exactly what my colleague said. I was not there. If he has those questions, he might like to ask that colleague in that colleague's Estimates any further details or background as to why those comments were made.

What I have said today is that I expect to make an announcement shortly, and when I make that announcement, I will make sure there is information which the member would like, and we will be able to discuss it further at that time.

Mr. Plohman: Well, does the minister then—if she does not want to comment on her colleague's comments, would she be able to give a direct answer on her opinion? Rather than basing it on somebody else's opinion, this is the minister's opinion I am asking for as a result of any research and studies she may have had done by her department.

Does she have any projections on potential additional costs or savings as a result of any boundary review or amalgamation of school divisions?

Mrs. Vodrey: Again, the member wishes to jump ahead of any information which might be provided in an announcement, and I have said to him, and I think that I can only say it again, I expect to make an announcement shortly.

When I do make that announcement, then we will be able to look at exactly what is included in that announcement, and I will be able to answer questions regarding that announcement.

Mr. Plohman: Well, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, does the minister not want to consult with anyone regarding this announcement prior to doing it?

Mrs. Vodrey: Again—well, let us go over it again. As I have explained to the member, I will be making an announcement shortly, and when we have a chance to look at that announcement and what is included in that announcement, then the member may wish to ask some questions at that time.

Mr. Plohman: Prior to making the announcement, who is the minister consulting with?

Mrs. Vodrey: Again, the answer remains the same. When I provide the information at the time of the announcement, then we will be able to discuss the information contained in the announcement, and until an announcement is made, I am not able to provide any further information to the member.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I am a very patient person, and I can just keep, you know, probing the minister with these questions and she will find it, I think, to her advantage to deal with them.

They are, as the member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) has stated, legitimate questions. I am not asking the minister what will be in the announcement. She may say that she is shelving it until after the next election. She may say that she is going to proceed before the election. She may say she is proceeding immediately. She did not want to give me those details of timetable and so on. So what I am asking her now, whom is she consulting with prior to making the announcement? The minister always talks about partnership.

* (1510)

An Honourable Member: Focus groups.

Mr. Plohman: Well, she has talked about focus groups, and that may be all the consultation that is taking place, but if it is focus groups, then say so.

Is she consulting with the trustees on this? Is she consulting with the Teachers' Society? These are the partners that the minister has mentioned previously in the Estimates process. She talked about the partnership. Is she talking with superintendents prior to this? Whom is she consulting with?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Deputy Chair, as I have said to the member, I do have good discussions on a regular basis with partners in education. I have the opportunity to speak on a regular basis with the Manitoba Teachers' Society, school trustees, school superintendents, home and school parent-teachers associations, and visits when I go into schools, when I go into the colleges and universities, and when I am in the community. So there is a great deal of opportunity for people to raise a number of issues with me.

However, the details of any announcement that will be made in the near future will have to wait until the time of the announcement.

Mr. Plohman: We certainly understand that the minister now is very reluctant to give any details of whether she will be making an announcement that says there is a review coming or there is no review coming. However, the reports in the Free Press today, from the quotes from the minister, indicate that the review is still on. The Finance minister has stated it is certainly something the minister is pressing ahead with at the appropriate time.

We have legitimate concerns in the opposition, representing the public interest, ensuring that the minister is doing her job in the interests of the public. That is our job to ensure that the minister is doing that, at least to our best ability. So it is important we know that the minister is not too far along on any announcement she makes and perhaps gets down the road with imposing certain things as opposed to a true consultative review involving all the partners of education.

I am concerned the minister may, in fact, announce some decisions as opposed to consulting on a review. That is why we want to ask these questions now before an announcement is made, not ask after an announcement is made or to give advice. It is too late then. We need to have an

understanding of what process the minister is going through to get to the announcement.

I ask her to provide that information at the present time, as to, for example, the assistant deputy minister's office at the present time. How is this office involved in the preparation for that announcement? Are financial matters a major consideration in that preparation?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Deputy Chair, let me start with the last question first. The content of any announcement would be revealed at the time of the announcement. The member asks what kinds of things might be considered if there is such an announcement to provide the review. Obviously, I would provide that information at the time of any such announcement, so that information is information which is yet to come.

The member is speculating out loud about perhaps outcomes, and that is purely speculation, and I think it is important to look at it as speculation and not fact. He is speculating out loud. He is wondering out loud about possible outcomes, about what may happen, about how any such announcement might be developed.

I have provided the information that I am able to, and that is to say, that a year ago, slightly over a year ago, boundary review was deferred. As he heard from me in the House yesterday, and obviously from some conversation that he may have had with another minister, this government did make a promise in 1990 that we were interested in looking at boundary review. We have said, as of yesterday, that I expect to make an announcement on boundary review in the very near future.

That is the information that is available at this time. It relates to our government's position, and it relates to a position a year ago of deferral. I have explained that in the deferral there were a number of reasons for deferral at that time. Now I have said that an announcement is to be expected shortly. When I make that announcement, the contents will be available to the member. We will be able to have a more full discussion at that time around whatever the content of that announcement is.

Mr. Plozman: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I hope we will because the minister is certainly not being very forthcoming with this committee at the present time. The questions I am asking are very legitimate on this important issue. I guess I would just like to ask the minister whether she is

consulting, at this time, on the issue of boundary review with school boards in the province prior to making any announcement.

Mrs. Vodrey: I would remind the member that I do have a very strong record of consultation, and that I do have regular meetings. If there is any question around that legislative reform, the reform of The Public Schools Act, never before has there been a public consultation on that reform. The reforms of the past have been done without any public consultation; therefore, with the issue of legislative reform now, there has been public consultation. As I have said, there have been the opinions of over 6,000 Manitobans who have come forward and who have given their ideas of what they believe the reform of The Public Schools Act should look like. That was important information.

That is important information, because it has allowed Manitobans to say what they believe is important before legislation is written, and then before it requires a great deal of discussion during committee hearing process. This allowed Manitobans to say from the beginning where they believed what the reform of The Public Schools Act might look like and what it should look like.

So I would say that there has certainly been consultation on a number of issues. In the matter of the school boundary issue, any further information will come forward at the time of the announcement.

Mr. Plozman: Can the minister indicate whether the reform that she talked about which resulted in the report on the panel on education legislation reform, whether the recommendation on school boundaries is a consideration in the process that the minister is going through right at the present time, prior to her announcement?

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the recommendation that comes forward from the panel on education legislation reform was again a comment. It was outside of the specific scope that that committee was looking at in terms of where Manitobans believe they would like to see amendments to The Public Schools Act. They have made a comment on information which Manitobans have provided for them.

How this relates to the announcement that I might make in the next short while, we will have to wait until we see the announcement.

Mr. Plohman: The minister does not even want to tell this committee whether she believes that her philosophy with regard to her review is consistent with what is being recommended here or what is being noted as a comment by the panel.

I point out to her that they are suggesting that the public wants a special commission. In the newspaper today, the minister said she is looking at a special commission. She is quoted by Don Campbell that she is looking at a special commission.

That is more information than the minister has been prepared—I would have to characterize her comments in the Free Press as being quite forthcoming compared to what the committee is getting here.

The minister seems to have clammed right up on this issue as she perhaps, in a moment of disregard for the consequences, decided to make some comments on the review. She talked about the idea of a commission. I want to ask the—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please.

* (1520)

Point of Order

Mrs. Vodrey: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I do not believe it is appropriate for members to speculate on a frame of mind or on motivation in terms of answering. I believe the member is doing that right now.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The honourable minister did not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Plohman: Can the minister indicate then—I think the minister's actions are something that anyone can draw conclusions about with regard to this, the contrast between what was said in the paper and what is being said in this Chamber—nothing in the committee and some speculation in the media. There is the difference.

I just wanted to ask the minister, is that one of the considerations then, a special commission, or has that been ruled out by the minister?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, again, in the committee this afternoon, I have given information to the member regarding reasons for deferral, what has been accomplished by the Department of Education since the time of the deferral. I have

outlined four specific areas, some were not even announced at the time of the deferral, which have now been announced and are very close to being accomplished, so that information has been covered this afternoon.

I have also this afternoon explained to the member that I will be making an announcement shortly in response to a question that was posed yesterday by a reporter in the Free Press. The question specifically has not been posed this afternoon, but the information was, if there was to be an announcement on a boundary review, would it be possible that among the options which might be considered for such a review if it was announced, would it be perhaps a commission?

At the time, I said a commission would be a possibility if in fact that was the announcement. However, I have said an announcement has not been made. Until the announcement is made, any details about the content of that announcement, what it would be, will have to wait until the announcement is made.

Mr. Plohman: The minister has made an announcement through her statements that this is just a deferral and therefore a review and a campaign promise by the government in the election campaign of '91 is still on. In other words, it is just a deferral. That is clearly an announcement that a review is pending. The exact details of that announcement are what is at issue here in terms of whether it will include a commission or not, whether there will be consultation or not and all of those kinds of things.

So the minister cannot backtrack to the point of saying now that she cannot even tell this committee whether she is going to have a review or not. That clearly has already been stated so hiding from that fact is fruitless.

I want to ask the minister now as she contemplates this announcement whether in fact the governance issues and education services as outlined as a concern and identified as a concern, especially in rural areas, by the panel in their comment in their report on legislative reform will be taken into consideration in drawing up the terms of reference that will be included in the announcement.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, again, I do not want to make this difficult for the member; sincerely, I do not want to make this difficult for the member; but I will say that until the announcement

is made, it is very difficult for us to discuss these issues.

If he is asking, is government concerned about service in rural areas, has government been looking at issues in relation to service in rural areas, I will tell him, yes, we have. That is why last year we struck the Task Force on Distance Education and I have explained to the member that the third and final report of the Task Force on Distance Education has been released and we are expecting that it will be examined by school divisions.

We understand that as we have spoken about before during this Estimates process that the issue of Distance Education is very important to particularly rural and northern Manitoba, though we have also understood that Distance Education certainly has an application within the city of Winnipeg.

We have spoken about, as recently as Monday, the Distance Education issues being integrated within our PDSS section of the division of the Department of Education and Training because it would be important that the curriculum development and Distance Education be both in consideration at the same time.

So if he is looking specifically at concerns and action being taken to support rural schools and northern schools in Manitoba, I can tell him that that action is already underway, and we have already completed the work of the Distance Education Task Force.

If he wishes to ask further how that may relate to an upcoming announcement, we will have to wait until the announcement is made.

Mr. Plohman: Under the objective of this particular section of the department: implementation and evaluation of policies for the Administration and Finance and Support to Schools divisions, what role is this section of the department playing in preparation for a position on boundary review?

Mrs. Vodrey: I just wonder if I could ask the member to refer to that section again, please?

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, on page 29 of the Supplementary Estimates booklet, Financial and Administrative Services, Office of the Assistant Deputy Minister, Objectives, second line, implementation and evaluation of policies—leaving out, processes, operations and services. I did not quote that. I just said, implementation and

evaluation of policies for the Administration and Finance and Support to Schools divisions.

I asked the minister, referring to that objective from page 29 for this section of the department, what role this section of the department is playing in preparation for a position on boundary review?

Mrs. Vodrey: This particular set of objectives refers to our school funding model, and that is where the work is particularly tied in to this objective.

Mr. Plohman: Funding models are an integral part of the function of any school division, and development of policies with regard to boundary reviews or configurations are tied very closely to that. That is why I asked the minister the question, whether this section is playing any role in developing a position on that.

If the minister is saying no, there is no role being played, then, fine, I will ask these questions dealing with the role under another section.

Mrs. Vodrey: The answer is no. Again, further information regarding the announcement will have to be discussed at the time of the announcement.

Mr. Plohman: Does the minister have any analysis from this section on per-pupil costs or savings of the boundary question?

* (1530)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, again, I have answered this question several times this afternoon about any of this information, and I have explained that when, in fact, there is an announcement which I have said to the member will be shortly, then we will be able to discuss anything further, relating to the content of that announcement.

Mr. Plohman: The minister tabled a list of accumulated surpluses of divisions, without identifying them, as the percentage of their net operating expenditures. Has the minister discussed with her staff the fate of operating surpluses under a revised boundary configuration?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the answer is no.

Mr. Plohman: Can the minister tell us what her position is on surpluses under a revised boundary configuration for Manitoba school divisions?

Mrs. Vodrey: Again, as I have said when we discussed the issue of surpluses into the future in the past, no. It is very difficult to speculate in general. I did make that point when we discussed this the last time we were sitting.

The information regarding surpluses in any proposed announcement I will be making shortly I am not going to comment on at the moment, because we do not have that announcement before us.

Mr. Plohman: In preparation for the announcement, is the minister, in a formal way, consulting with anyone outside of her department?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, again, this is a question which has been asked this afternoon and which I have answered this afternoon. I am prepared to answer again, if that would be helpful.

The answer is I have had, since I have been minister, a great deal of contact with all of the educational organizations and also parents and parent-teacher home and school associations, also with individual parents, parent councils and Manitobans.

Since I have been minister, I have spent a great deal of time making sure I have that kind of contact with Manitobans. So I can tell him that this contact is ongoing.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we know the minister has talked with people in education, and from time to time, yes, as circumstances develop, it can be done very informally. I am asking about formal consultation with anyone, any groups, outside her department in preparing the announcement on boundary review.

Mrs. Vodrey: The answer remains the same. The answer is that there is consultation going on, on a regular basis, of issues of interest to the partners in education, to parents, to individual schools, to individual Manitobans. There is information brought forward frequently regarding issues that people feel are important. I can tell him again that the consultation and the discussion, which I think is very important—it was spoken about a great deal today—is important and is ongoing and then any further information regarding a proposed announcement would come at the time of the announcement.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister is saying that the announcement is being developed and the position by her staff in the department?

Mrs. Vodrey: What I said was that as Minister of Education I have contact with many Manitobans and with the educational partners, as we all do as MLAs and as elected individuals, and certainly as Minister of Education, I have contact as well.

Mr. Plohman: Has the minister put out any proposals at all for feedback yet on this issue prior to making the announcement?

Mrs. Vodrey: The member would like to get the information that would be contained in an announcement through some other method. I have explained to him that I will be making the announcement shortly and that when I make the announcement there will be information. The member might like to ask questions at that time.

I know he has been speculating out loud about what that announcement might be. He has even been hypothesizing about portions of the announcement. I have been again attempting to provide him with the answers that are available before the time the announcement is made, but now the information that I believe he would be seeking would be contained within the announcement.

Mr. Plohman: I am certainly disappointed in the minister's unwillingness to be forthcoming in any way, shape or form in this. I think this is illustrative of the general mode of operation by this minister's secretive approach to things, dropping them on the public without any outside consultation.

As much as the minister says that there is consultation, we have not seen any evidence of that from the minister's answers, any evidence whatsoever from any groups outside her own staff within her department who have been consulted in coming up with her final announcement. It would seem to me that the minister has either not consulted or is choosing to hide relevant information from the Legislature and the committee.

The minister should realize that is not her role and that is not proper protocol and ethics by a minister of the Crown when coming before the committee.

Point of Order

Mrs. Vodrey: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, first of all, I say nonsense to everything the member has said so far. I would also like a clarification of the member's accusation of unethical behaviour.

Mr. Plohman: If the minister does not have it clear already, I think—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable minister did not have a point of order, but I would ask all members to choose their words very carefully so that we do not provoke any animosities here.

* * *

Mr. Plohman: I certainly would not want to do that, Mr. Deputy Chair. As I have indicated, the minister has not been forthcoming and is not doing her position any favours in terms of its position in the Legislature. Certainly, we are not pleased with that, and I do not think the public will be either.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I want to—

* (1540)

Point of Order

Mrs. Vodrey: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, before we move on the issue of forthcoming, the member simply wants to have the announcement before the announcement is made.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The honourable minister did not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister continues to abuse the rules of the House by interjecting with non-points of order, and she knows that very well after being here now a couple of years. She certainly should know what a point of order is.

The minister knows as well that I have not asked her for the announcement. What we have asked is what preparation, what consultation she has done, whether she has considered certain pieces of information. She has refused to answer every one of those questions, and we could go around this thing for hours. I am prepared to do that.

I think, and I am sure my colleagues agree, that this minister has to have more respect for the Legislature. I say that seriously. More respect, it is not a game. It is a time to supply information, and that is what is lacking in the minister's attitude towards what is happening at this committee, a lack of respect for the process and for the Legislature of Manitoba and the parliamentary process. That is what I am raising with the minister. I could not say that more seriously.

It is clear that those aspects that I have asked about are important aspects for the public to consider prior to any announcement, and that is what the minister has a responsibility to live up to in terms of her position as minister. I am going to indicate to the minister that this will not serve her well, this secretive approach to these major concerns.

As much as I would like to continue this and would be quite willing to and patient to do this, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am going to move on and, at the same time, note the complete reluctance of the minister to provide forthcoming answers to this committee.

Point of Order

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would like to indicate that certainly a member of the Legislature who has been a member of government and a cabinet minister indeed should understand the process of the Legislature. He knows full well that when any government or any minister of any government is making an announcement, indeed that announcement is made and then members of the opposition do have the opportunity to ask questions. So the minister is within her right.

I guess I might just like to point out—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable minister did not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

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Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The honourable member for Osborne, on a point of order.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): No, I am just going to ask a question.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Just one minute then. The honourable minister, on another point of order.

Mrs. Mitchelson: No, not on a point of order. I have my hand up to speak.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, not then on a point of order, but just on a comment. We have a member of the official opposition who is the critic who is condemning a minister of the government for many different aspects that fall under her responsibility.

I might just like to comment and say that when the critic for Education was the Minister of Highways, I might ask him to make some comment on how much consultation he did prior to building the bridge north of Selkirk to nowhere, which cost the taxpayers of Manitoba some \$27 million to \$30 million?

We have a member of a government that was turfed out that was extremely irresponsible in making that decision. I have not checked back through Hansard and the records and the kind of information that the then-Minister of Highways did

put on the record as to who he consulted and how many Manitobans actually supported that decision and how many people indeed today travel over that bridge that was built that went absolutely nowhere. So we have a—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. Could I ask the honourable members to deal with the line that we are on. That is Financial and Administrative Services. I think the bridge issue falls under the Department of Highways.

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I actually would like to make a serious intervention here, if I might.

We are in this committee room. We have been in this committee room for some 20-odd hours on this particular department. We have a bunch of staff from the department who are being forced to sit through this.

I agree with what the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship said and what the minister has said to date that a minister should not be forced to reveal in advance policy decisions that may simply be in formulation. That is not what the member is asking for. I think this is just generating into a farce. I think it is a waste of everybody's time.

The member is asking clearly, what process did you go through; who did you talk to; how are you arriving at that? I think those are legitimate questions. I think if all we are going to do is sit here and play word games, we should shut the process down and go home.

Surely, there is a role in the Estimates process for people to ask legitimate questions and receive honest answers. Otherwise, I mean this whole business that we are engaged in right now is discredited.

To the extent the member asks questions that he knows he should not be asking, I would grant the minister some leeway, but I would like to hear a few answers to some legitimate questions.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: 1.(e) Financial and Administrative Services (1) Salaries \$903,800.

Mr. Plohman: Is this the Internal Audit section? Have we passed that line? Internal Audit is also covered under this as well, is it not?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Yes, it is.

Mr. Plohman: Yes, I want to ask the minister, with the hope of course that we will get more forthcoming answers from this minister, whether she could give

us a review of the audits that were completed under this section this past year and some indication of some of the findings. We will be asking more detailed questions on that.

So if the minister is able to provide some of that to us at this time—I understand that for the next year, for the year coming up, Workforce 2000—as printed in the Supplementary Estimates—Stevenson Aviation Centre, Professional Certification, Administration, Pupil Transportation and New Careers will be audited. Could the minister give us a report on this past year's activities in this area?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would like to start by introducing Jane Holatko who is the Director of Internal Audit and who has joined us at the table.

In terms of the audits for the Department of Education and Training for the year 1992-93, they include the Manitoba School for the Deaf, Distance Education and Technology Branch, Assiniboine Community College, Red River Community College, Keewatin Community College, Program Analysis, Coordination and Support branch of the PACE Training division and the Post-Secondary Career Development and Adult Continuing Education branch. The last two are in process.

In addition, there were general audit certifications done in this past year, as well.

Mr. Plohman: Can the minister give us a review of the Distance Education audit? Obviously, that section was eliminated in this year's budget. Was that as a result of anything that came out of the audit?

Mrs. Vodrey: No, the restructuring of that particular branch was not as a result of the audit, and the restructuring of that particular area was, again, as I have spoken about, an effort to bring the work of the Distance Education and Technology Branch in as a part of our Program Development and Support Services division.

* (1550)

Mr. Plohman: Was there any contemplation of eliminating this division when this internal audit was begun because, obviously, the work was done for nothing if the division is gone?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the audits that are done are done to improve management practice. They look at information such as management processes, legislative and

administrative requirements, financial reporting and controls. That was the work of these audits.

However, the audits do not include decisions of government policy in terms of the restructuring which has been done with the Distance Education and Technology Branch which does integrate it much more fully with our Program Development and Support Services work.

Mr. Plohman: I did say that the division was eliminated, and, of course, that is not true. There are several—a large number of staff; I take it 37 staff remaining versus 49 the previous year. Obviously, the work is still ongoing.

However, the audit was as of the operation of the branch at that particular time as opposed to what it might exist at the present time. I asked the minister whether there was any contemplation of those changes prior to deciding on which sections would be audited this year. Was that a consideration in determining whether this section would be audited?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, again, the auditing that was done on the Distance Education and Technology Branch was part of a regular audit cycle, and, obviously, the auditing can only be done on what exists currently and it cannot be done on what may exist in the future.

Mr. Plohman: The minister just said earlier, and as I know, the internal audit to work as it was set up when we were in government—the internal audit function; was set up in a number of departments throughout the '80s. I do not know whether Education was one of them, but certainly most departments were established with an internal audit function.

It was to improve management and the internal workings of the branches that were selected for audit. This was done on a rotationary basis, I would think, throughout the whole department over a number of years with a few branches every year, but that contrasts somewhat with what the minister just said that, obviously, the audit could only be done on what existed at the present time—at that time—not what was going to exist in the future, but there are recommendations made about what will exist in the future, what changes should be made.

I would ask, then, whether the changes that were made were consistent with what the audit had identified for improvements.

Mrs. Vodrey: The audit, then, as the member knows, really deals with the issues of management

practice, not necessarily the issue of configuration or staffing.

I am informed that, as a result of internal audit now, they are in the process of reviewing and doing a follow-up of the audit recommendations. Though Distance Education has been integrated, there is still, as I would remind the member, the Winkler area.

So the results of the audit process are being followed up, but I would remind him that they focus on issues relating to management practice and not policy decision.

Mr. Plohman: Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, as I understand it, they also deal with adherence to legislative requirements, on the part of the branches that are being audited in the adequacy of financial reporting.

Can the minister indicate, for each of these branches, the major recommendations, or would she be prepared to table those on the workings of the branches that were audited this past year?

Mrs. Vodrey: I believe the member was asking for the recommendations of the internal audit as they looked at the Distance Education and Technology Branch.

What some of the recommendations were: An improved program prioritization supported by cost-benefit analysis, a formal plan of long- and short-term resource needs, review of Distance Education, review of funding mechanisms. The recommendation also was improved linkage of operational and financial planning. We were also recommended to look at consistency and provincial perspective of the plans and policy for Distance Education and Technology course development, delivery, funding and other support, also, the establishment of departmental reporting mechanisms based on the role of Distance Education and Technology, and formal evaluations and business case reviews of major new initiatives.

We also were to look at improved internal controls, financial monitoring and accountability of contracts and partnership agreements, use of gross accounting procedures for the Manitoba satellite network, expenditures supported by appropriate contracts and sufficient invoice detail, review and realignment of the ISP Winkler staff workload, and also improved program budgets, proper invoice coding to program areas and monitoring at the

program unit level, and decisions on the ISP inventory and student record systems.

Mr. Plohman: I asked the minister if she could table those for each of the audits. Can she do that?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am prepared to table those results, and I will table them at the next sitting.

* (1600)

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Deputy Chair, I believe last year, this section conducted an audit of the Labour Market Policy unit. I wonder if we could hear a discussion of the results of that.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am informed that it was not a specific audit of the labour market area, but rather it was a review and an audit of what was the former PACS area, policy analysis and co-ordination area. I am informed right now that the work relating to that area is in a draft report stage.

Ms. Friesen: I believe last year's Estimates suggested that there was a separate audit to be done of the Labour Market Policy unit. I am just trying to look for it in the book. Was that a mistake or were plans changed in the middle?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am informed there has not been any change, that the audit was for the policy analysis and co-ordination unit, the former PACS and the labour market area is a portion of that unit as it was structured at the last Estimate's process, and, therefore, it would have been part of a review of that total area.

Ms. Friesen: When does the minister expect that to be completed?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, there is a process when the draft report is done. We expect, because it is in part of that process, to have the final information in about a month's time.

Ms. Friesen: Would the minister be tabling that when it is available?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am informed that those reports are internal to government. However, I am tabling this year some summary information of the completed areas and would be prepared to table, whether it be Estimates next year, the similar kinds of summary information relating to that area.

Ms. Friesen: I am interested in the section that would deal with the Labour Market Policy unit. I wonder if the minister could tell me, since she has the staff here, the kinds of questions that were being

asked in that unit. How many people were you evaluating? What level of evaluation is it? Is it an audit which looks at results?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, the audit which is done by the internal auditor is not an evaluation of the effectiveness of a program. The auditor informs me, again, as I believe it has been stated before, the auditor does not evaluate people or programs. The auditor does examine management process and also financial controls.

Ms. Friesen: Then in the evaluation of the management process in that particular unit, would there be any evaluation of what appears to be the absence of any labour policy, strategy, document, anything available to the public? Where is the management process in that unit that is not leading to the presentation of any labour market strategy?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, again, the auditor in Internal Audit does not evaluate program outcomes, and so would not be looking at that specific issue but instead looks at the management practices and the controls. They look at issues such as the setting of objectives: are objectives defined and understood? They look at issues of planning: does a planning process take place, and is it effective? They look at program review and evaluation: are programs reviewed on a periodic basis and any required adjustments made? They look at program efficiency and effectiveness to say: are criteria set and monitored in order to assess a program's efficiency and effectiveness?

They also look at areas such as financial reporting and controls, and they look at the reporting and monitoring, financial planning, internal controls and checks. They look at protection of assets, central government financial control procedures and policies.

Ms. Friesen: I am sure since the minister has already a draft version of this report she could tell us what the evaluation is of the planning process in the Labour Market Policy unit.

Mrs. Vodrey: No, I do not have a copy of the draft report. The report in the process is sent to the assistant deputy minister of that area, and the assistant deputy minister of that area is reviewing it, and then it is passed on to the deputy minister. So we are not at the stage where I have a draft report.

Ms. Friesen: Do we have the staff here who conducted that evaluation?

* (1610)

Mrs. Vodrey: I did introduce Jane Holatko who is the director of the area. She is of course in charge of the audit. The staff member who conducted the audit is not here. Again, I just would say that it is important in the matter of an audit that there is some separateness in terms of the practice and that we have to be careful in terms of what we are asking the auditor to comment on in terms of the line of questioning the member is pursuing.

Ms. Friesen: So we do in fact have the supervisor here who presumably laid out the questions and supervised the production of that particular report.

As the minister knows, I have made many attempts in Question Period and at other times in fact to find any kind of strategy from the Labour Market Policy unit, to find any kind of reports. So this is not a new question on my part of having asked about the effectiveness and the planning and the goals and where this unit is going.

So now that we do have somebody here who has met with that unit, who has posed some questions, it seems to me it might be helpful if we could have a sense of where the planning and the goals and the efficiency of that unit are.

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

Mrs. Vodrey: The issue of the labour market policy which flows or governs that plan is best looked at under 16.4. The auditor, as I have explained, does work relating to the management practice. The auditor would not be able to comment on the issue that the member is asking and that is the issue of what exactly the work has been within that area. We can discuss that work when we do get to 16.4.

Ms. Friesen: But since we do have the staff here in audit, and what I am trying to get at, and I will certainly do that when we get to this unit later, is to try and understand why there has been no labour market strategy from this government at a time of recession, at a time of educational change, at a time when most Manitobans are really fearing for their educational and labour future.

So it is a major issue, I think, for Manitobans. Perhaps here we can eliminate one reason for the absence of that strategy. Is it a management problem? Is there a difficulty there? You have done an audit. Does it show any difficulty? If it does not, then we can eliminate the management aspect. And when we come to the other section which looks at the unit itself, then we can look for other causes.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, first of all, I completely reject the member's statement of no policy. I completely reject that.

We have been speaking about the work that has been done by that unit over some time. I simply point to the reorganization of the post-secondary side of the department. I point to the signing of the Canada-Manitoba Labour Force Development Agreement. I point to The Colleges Act and the colleges moving to governance. There certainly has been a lot of work done in that area, and we can certainly examine the work that has been done in that area when we get to the budget line.

In terms of the Internal Audit, as I have explained, the director of that area is here. She has explained. She has provided the information to me and I to the member of exactly where in the process the internal audit report is and that she would not be commenting on the issues that the member is asking.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, it is the minister I am asking to comment. I am asking her to comment on the management and the efficiency of her Labour Market Policy unit, which she has done an audit of and whose audit staff she now has with her in the room.

The minister, for example, mentioned the signing of the Canada-Manitoba Labour Force Development Agreement some years after other provinces have signed and certainly two years in delay from the documents that we have had in this process. In 1991, it appeared that some distance had been gone towards the signing of that agreement. Two years later and with only a year left to run in the program, six months of which is going to go into planning, we have just begun to look, in this province, at a labour market development plan.

Here is an audit which looks at efficiency. Is this efficient? The minister wants to parade it as an element of inefficiency. Well, I would like to see the audit and hear from her perspective whether this was an efficient way to proceed with the development of the Canada-Manitoba Labour Force Agreement.

(Mrs. Shirley Render, Acting Deputy Chairperson, in the Chair)

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Acting Deputy Chairperson, it seems that the member would like to speak about the process that we went through in terms of the signing of the agreement and what in fact we did in

terms of the signing of the agreement. I am more than happy to talk about that and the decisions that were made and the negotiations that occurred within the negotiation for the Canada-Manitoba Labour Force Development Agreement.

As I have said before, in the process of signing, many provinces did not sign at exactly the time that the agreement came into effect. It did not affect the funds flowing. We can look at any effect that the member might be concerned about in terms of the signing of that agreement. However, the agreement is now signed. We can talk when we get to that budget line around the issues that were negotiated by Manitoba, but I have made a number of them clear.

I spoke about wanting the recognition of our colleges within our Manitoba Labour Force Development Agreement. I have spoken about a number of issues which are contained in that agreement. It was important to Manitoba that the agreement reflect the interests of Manitobans. The member seems to have some trouble with that. She seems to feel that we should have just signed an agreement as it was presented, and that by one example. So I have let her know that that was not our position and that we certainly did some negotiating.

Again, in terms of the overall labour market strategy, there has been information coming forward. I have also explained when we have discussed it in the past that the labour market strategy, though it is developed from within the Department of Education and Training, there is also an opportunity to talk with other government departments that would be important in terms of developing the labour market strategy.

Also from that area, in co-operation with the federal government, we produced Manitoba Prospects, which provided information to Manitobans who are looking at labour market forecasts for professions and for the kind of work that they might like to do.

So there has been information which has come from that particular department. I am more than prepared to talk about it in greater detail. When that detail is discussed and the member has full information, we can then perhaps continue on with her concerns about—or any concerns which she might express.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Acting Deputy Chairperson, the issue we are looking at here is an internal audit of a unit which, to me and to other Manitobans, seems to have been very unproductive. I am trying to eliminate some of the reasons for that lack of productivity.

* (1620)

You have done an audit which has looked at management, which has looked at planning, at goals, at efficiency and effectiveness. You had a Labour Force Development Agreement, which was ready to be signed in 1991, not the earliest but by no means the latest at that point. Then between 1991 and '93 it seemed from the outside that nothing happened in that unit. Nothing happened with the signing of that Labour Force Development Agreement except, yes, the minister says that money flowed. Yes, money did flow.

One of the purposes of that Labour Force Development Agreement, in fact, is to co-ordinate the purchasing of policies, to co-ordinate the attitudes and the relationships with community colleges and with post-secondary education. What happened in those two years was, in fact, the reduction of our community colleges, the withdrawal from courses and programs by the federal government without any co-ordination. That is the problem, and we are suffering with that now, so where is the efficiency in the management in this particular unit?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Acting Deputy Chair, again I absolutely reject the term used by the member, "lack of productivity." She is absolutely wrong in that area. She is asking for information, and I have been providing her with information which speaks to the productivity of that unit, which speaks to the work of that unit, so I completely reject the premise that she is putting forward her questions on.

I have explained to her what the work of the internal auditor has been. Her questions focus much more on what she is looking at as an area of outcome, and in terms of the area of outcome and the productivity, I differ. I tell her that there certainly has been productivity and there has been work.

When we look at the Canada-Manitoba Labour Force Development Agreement, there was a process of negotiation with the federal government. Yes, we look for this Labour Force Development Agreement to lead to a much greater sharing of information, but the federal government has made

certain decisions, which I have spoken about in the House before, regarding how they wish to fund, what they wish to fund. I have explained to her, as well, the federal government has indicated that they will be funding students differently. In the past, they had funded a number of their students, not only as fee payers, but also they had provided funding which also helped to underwrite the costs of the course. The federal government has made these changes. These changes are made. She is somehow trying to tie those decisions of the federal government very specifically to our signing of the Canada-Manitoba Labour Force Development Agreement.

When we get to that area, we will be more than happy to talk about where things are now and exactly what has occurred in the time of the negotiation. We do look forward to now a much greater collaboration; however, there are other areas which also flow from this. I know that the member may want to talk at a later time about the Canada-Manitoba Labour Force Development boards, which also we will be looking to move ahead with now we have the agreement signed.

In terms of the influence on the colleges, it was very important for Manitoba to look at protecting our community colleges. We had to do some negotiation in order to make sure that the colleges were represented within the signing of that agreement, and that was part of the time-consuming negotiation which took place in the preparation for signing of that agreement.

We also had to look out for the interests of Manitobans in terms of making sure that where the federal government was funding, if they made any changes, the interests of Manitobans as providers could be looked at. There were a number of issues. The member may want to discuss then the details of the negotiation that led up to the signing of that agreement, but if we are looking specifically in terms of the development around the labour force area and if we look at the work of that area, I would say that area has worked hard. We will be able to discuss what that area has produced, but I have given her some examples this afternoon.

If the member wishes to look at the area of internal audits specifically, I have explained that the internal audit did not look at that particular area alone; it looked at a whole segment of the post-secondary side. I have explained to her, as well, the process that occurs with an internal audit and that the

information in a draft form is given to the assistant deputy minister. The assistant deputy minister is currently looking at that information, and then the information will be passed on to the deputy minister. I also explained that it does not comment on outcome. It does not comment on personnel. The member seems to want to have some comment drawn about the issues of personnel and productivity, and that is not what the internal audit does.

Ms. Friesen: We should just correct the record, because I did make no mention of personnel. My concerns indeed are outcome, and they relate in the context of this particular line to efficiency, to management, to review and to this particular unit. The minister may want to spend, I think it was, 10 minutes simply repeating herself. I mean, she may find that is very interesting, but it really does not move the process very far.

It makes no sense to say that this unit is part of a larger one and the larger one was reviewed. The issue is that, yes, this unit was reviewed. Here we are a year later, I am quite prepared to understand that there is not a report ready but that you have a draft report. It does seem to me that here is the Minister of Education who has conducted an internal review of a unit, I should use the word audit of a unit, which, I think, has some significance to Manitobans right now and which there have been concerns about in the delays in certain areas and in the absence of a visible document.

If we had a labour market strategy in front of us, I think we might not be asking these kinds of questions. We would be asking different kinds of questions. But I do not understand why a minister who has her staff here, who has conducted in the last year a review which includes this unit, is not prepared to ask any questions or answer any questions on that particular unit.

Did, for example, this audit include the question of the planning of a labour market strategy in Manitoba, and did it ask any questions as to the review and the internal efficiency of that unit which has led to the absence of such a report?

Mrs. Vodrey: If I can help the member distinguish in terms of her questions what information might come from this, first of all, the internal audit asks the question: does an operational plan exist? It does not ask, specifically, the kinds of questions which the member has been asking.

I think it is important to note as well that, as minister, I have to be careful to not have interfered within an internal audit. The information of the draft report, if I ask for that information now, it may be seen, I am informed, as interfering. I want to be careful not to have done that.

Ms. Frlesen: So we have an interim report that is going to the deputy minister, and then it will be referred to the minister? Will that full report be tabled or is it simply an abstract of that?

* (1630)

Mrs. Vodrey: I can go through the process again for the member if it is helpful, that there has been a draft report which has been submitted by the internal auditor, by the person who did the audit to the assistant deputy minister of the particular area. The assistant deputy minister does have a chance to look at the draft report.

The comments are not whether the ADM likes what is seen in the report but rather does the audit process appear to have been fair. Then the draft report of the audit is returned to the auditor who does produce a final report, which is then given to the deputy minister. At the moment, the draft report is with the ADM and the ADM would be reviewing it.

As I have also explained, the audits are not tabled, but what I have agreed to table today in these Estimates is the information that I have of a summary nature of the areas which have received an audit and in which the report is complete.

Ms. Frlesen: In the case of this particular section, when does the minister expect to table that?

Mrs. Vodrey: As I have said, these reports are not tabled.

Ms. Frlesen: The minister is going to make this report available then in some way.

Mrs. Vodrey: As I have said this afternoon, first of all, the audits are not tabled. The audits have never been tabled. The audits were not tabled under the previous administration. What would be available for the member at the Estimates next year would be, as I will be making available for this year where there has been a completed report, it is not the audit report itself, is a summary outline of the findings. That is in fact the most that has ever been made available under any administration.

Ms. Frlesen: So the minister is going to make available a summary, an abstract of this report that will include the Labour Force Development unit.

Mrs. Vodrey: What we had discussed earlier today was those areas in which there has been a final audit report. We do not have at the moment a final report for the area, which included, among others, the labour force area.

What I have said is, next year at Estimates, when that final report is available, at that time it might be considered if requested to simply provide the summary of some recommended actions. That has been requested of the final reports which have been received. I have said that under those areas in which we have a final report, I will, for the first time, table summary information of recommended actions.

Again, I would remind the member, this has not been done before, and it was not done under the previous administration.

Ms. Frlesen: So the minister is going to make available a summary of the post-secondary career development of Distance Education, of the PACE, which includes labour market development policy and of the community colleges, the ones that were done last year—sorry, except the Labour Market Policy unit.

Now, I do not understand why the minister is saying, this report will be ready soon. I mean, after all, the money presumably was passed last year for this to be done within one year. It is not included on the things that the minister expects to do this year, so would it not be appropriate if the minister is going to make available any kind of summary that it be done as close as possible to the year in which the money was paid out and for which the minister had planned the completion?

I mean, we assume, obviously there are problems, and you do not necessarily always manage to do things on time, I think that happens to everybody, but why would we be having to wait 11 to 10 months more for something which was presumably paid for, voted on last year?

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

Mrs. Vodrey: Again, I would remind the member that the operations are ongoing and that funds available in one year does not necessarily mean that the project is completed within that year.

As I said, when I stated the work of the Internal Audit, two were actually in process. They were not completed. The two in process are the Program Analysis, Co-ordination and Support, the PACS branch, which includes the labour market area that the member has been looking at. Therefore, that one

is not ready and, certainly, we would be able to discuss it at Estimates next year.

What I am able to table for the member for the first time, because it was not done when her party was in power, is information which relates to items requiring action which could be seen as a summary of some of the information within the internal audit and that only for the areas in which there has been a final report.

Ms. Friesen: That still does not address the problem of why the minister expects there to be to be another 10- or 11-month gap before the availability of this. I mean, if it is going to be available next month or the month after, which would be reasonable if it was voted upon a year ago—yes, things are continuing, but you are asking us to vote here on a whole other range of things. I mean, if you are not going to make available any of the information until a year from now, one must only assume that the work is going to continue for another year, and that surely affects the kind of list that has been provided here for this coming year, for the next fiscal year. So it is very difficult to judge this list if earlier lists have not been completed and in fact are going to extend for another year.

Would the minister, for example, undertake to make that summary available on completion?

Mrs. Vodrey: Again, this information is internal. It is often useful in Estimates when available at the Estimates time, and what I have said this year is that I am prepared to make available for the first time information of the completed areas. This is not a completed area. Therefore, it will not be available.

Ms. Friesen: Then my question was: Will it be available on completion?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, again, we are discussing the functions of the internal auditor, and in order to demonstrate the functions of the internal auditor, we have agreed to table some information. That information has not been tabled in the past, was not tabled by the past government and has not been tabled by this government. The information is, by and large, confidential information, information for use internally.

* (1640)

Again, the member seems to be having some difficulty dealing with the fact that the internal auditor must remain impartial and objective, and somehow the member is tying that work to specific outcomes, and she is in fact making it very difficult for the work

of the auditor and for the auditor to remain impartial. The auditor's work, again, that activity must be measured against certain standards, certain standards, for instance, by the chartered accountants in Manitoba, and therefore, when we look at the work of the internal auditor—I have described the kind of work that branch does, that part of the department does, but I have also been very careful through all of our discussion to ask the member to remember the work of the internal auditor must be seen as impartial and objective. We will not be dealing with anything which in any way jeopardizes that particular objectivity and impartiality.

Ms. Friesen: I do not think it will need anybody to read the record to recognize that I have never questioned the impartiality, that I have not made it difficult for the auditor. It is the minister I am speaking to. It is the minister's policy, the minister's audit and the minister's questions. In fact, I have used the same language that the minister used of management planning goals, efficiency effectiveness criteria and review. Those were the items I was asking about.

The minister has offered, and I thank her for that, to table certain aspects, certain summaries of some reviews. Now it seems to me that she is saying she will not table others. That is what I am finding difficult. It has nothing to do with the auditor or her impartiality. I really resent the minister putting those kinds of words into my mouth or attempting to.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, again, I said to the member that because this work is often done and available during the Estimates process, that the information when completed would be available at the Estimates time next year as we have provided the information for this Estimates time. If she checks the record, she will see that has been said today several times.

Ms. Friesen: As the minister well knows, the issue is that that audit was voted upon. It will be two years by the time the minister is tabling any kind of summary, and that is my question. Why is there such a long time delay when it could be tabled—whatever the minister is choosing to table, and I recognize that a summary in a summary is very much interpretive, so I am not under any illusions as to what the minister is going to table out of that—but it at least will be a summary of some of the questions that have been looked at in this particular area. The minister seems not to be interested in making that

available on completion and that is the part I do not understand. Some can be tabled on completion. Some cannot. Why is that?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, again, the discussion this afternoon has focused around not protecting the minister, but protecting the auditor's impartiality. That has been the issue and the pivotal point that we have been looking at. The member has every right to question government policies and actions and government record, and I have already begun to discuss those actions and our record on an area and about a budget line which has not yet even come up during the Estimates process. I am more than prepared to talk about those particular areas.

Now the member wants to add to that and wants to talk about internal audit findings, but she has occasionally used another word. She has used the word "review". I think that she has confused the terms of the internal audit with the term of review. What she seems to be interested in is a discussion which would best take place around that budget line around information regarding that particular area, that labour market area, and she may wish to talk about what kinds of reviews or information is available.

However, in the area relating to the internal audit and to the internal auditor, we have to look at protecting that auditor's impartiality, and I have explained why. I have also explained that what I have been prepared to table in order to look at the work of the internal auditor is information that is far beyond information which was ever given by her party when her party was in government.

Ms. Frlesen: I do not know how many times I have to repeat this, but the issue of the auditor's impartiality has not been brought into question by anybody. It is the minister who has raised that and continues to raise it.

The issue is, why is the minister prepared to table some summaries on completion, and not this one?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, I have said as well several times this afternoon that this information is internal, but that through the Estimates process, for the Estimates process, some of this information may be useful. I am prepared to do that during the Estimates process, but I have also said that the other information that the member wants is not available yet. Therefore, it could be made available for the Estimates process next year.

Ms. Frlesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I guess that will simply have to stand on the record. The minister will have to leave us with two years of absence of information where she has a completed one and she is not prepared to table at that time. I guess that will be part of the government's record.

In that context I want to look then at the relationship of this auditor to the Provincial Auditor. Could the minister tell us, after the deputy ministers receive those reports, what the link is with the Provincial Auditor?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, the Provincial Auditor has access to our audit reports; the Provincial Auditor may rely on our reports. However, our auditor does not report to the Provincial Auditor.

The Provincial Auditor may audit areas of our department and may, in fact, rely on the audits which have been done by our departmental auditor. But it is not a reporting relationship, and our departmental auditor reports to the deputy minister.

Ms. Frlesen: Are there ever meetings between the two auditors, or does it occur between the Provincial Auditor and the deputy minister?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, both occur.

Ms. Frlesen: I want to ask about the Workforce 2000 audit. Perhaps the minister could begin by giving us an outline of what the questions are to be asked there, the range of the review and the timing on that.

* (1650)

Mrs. Vodrey: The area of Workforce 2000 will be audited partly by the Provincial Auditor and partly by the internal auditor.

We were interested in the auditing of that area, and when the Provincial Auditor was looking at what areas may be audited, as well, we had also expressed an interest and saw an area which we believed would be useful. Therefore the Provincial Auditor said, I am informed, that they would certainly do part of that audit, and then a part that they would not be doing, we will be doing ourselves in the internal audit.

Ms. Frlesen: And this is arranged between the deputy minister and the Provincial Auditor.

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed that the Provincial Auditor does have an opportunity to speak with the deputy minister and also with our internal auditor. They, however, do make the choice of the audit area. There were several areas in which we would

be interested in having the audit done, and they chose to do Workforce 2000, but they have not yet defined the scope of their audit.

Ms. Friesen: I am just interested in running over again the independence of the auditor within the department. The minister made a number of comments earlier about the reporting line to the deputy minister but not to the Provincial Auditor, so I do have some questions about how these discussions take place and where the actual choice is and where the reporting lines remain.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the internal auditor reports to the deputy minister in terms of the findings of the report. The internal auditor does not report to the deputy minister how she will go about doing her work. The deputy minister does not consult about the kinds of questions that will be asked, and how that work will be performed. That is where the impartiality lies for the work of the internal auditor.

In terms of the Provincial Auditor, the Provincial Auditor has the ability to make decisions about where audits will lie. However, the Provincial Auditor does have some contact and discussion in terms of areas which we might like to have audited, but they did choose themselves to do Workforce 2000.

Ms. Friesen: The minister said that the scope of this audit has not yet been determined. Could she give us some idea of the timing of this? We may not know the scope. What are we looking for on a completion date, or when will we know the scope of the audit?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed that the Provincial Auditor has begun work, but we have not received a report or information on the scope of that work yet.

Again, they do not report to the department. The Provincial Auditor does not report to the department. So we look for the information to come regarding the scope of their work, and then we will be looking at areas which are not covered by the Provincial Auditor.

Ms. Friesen: Given the fact that we have had some discussion over the continuing audit, the absence of conclusions yet in the Labour Market Policy unit, I am concerned that by next year we do have some basis for discussion of Workforce 2000, and so the timing does become an issue. I understand the minister has not received from the Provincial Auditor what I guess will be requests for information from the auditor of this department. When do you expect

to receive it? What kind of timing do you have? Do you have an expectation or a commitment to conclude that before the next Estimates?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, I am informed that really the closest we can give as a date is before the end of the fiscal year. We do not have an indication from them of exactly what the date may be.

Ms. Friesen: Just to clarify that, that is, the request from the Provincial Auditor may not come until the end of the fiscal year, so in fact we may not be looking next year in the next Estimates at any completion of the Workforce 2000 audit?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, I am informed that really this depends very much on the scope of the report and in terms of when the Provincial Auditor brings that report forward.

Ms. Friesen: As I understand it, the Provincial Auditor is going to be requiring or requesting information and assistance from this department and, presumably, from the Auditor's section in Workforce 2000. As I understood it, the minister was saying the Provincial Auditor chose the work and will require some section of it, or some portion of it, to be the work of the department.

* (1700)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, the Provincial Auditor will define the scope of the work. The Provincial Auditor will table the report. Then we will look at areas which were not covered by the Provincial Auditor, and our own Internal Audit will then look at auditing those areas which were not done by the Provincial Auditor.

We have talked about this as a joint area. We identified this as an area we would like to have audited. The Provincial Auditor has also agreed to audit in this area, but we cannot give any further detail now on exactly what our particular part of the audit will be until we have the information from the Provincial Auditor.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The time being 5 p.m. and time for private members' hour, committee rise.

ENVIRONMENT

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

Environment. Does the honourable minister responsible wish to make an opening statement?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): It has been my practice to keep my opening remarks very short. I will put a little bit more on the record this year perhaps than I have other years, with intention mostly to make sure that we are getting a full range of information upon which there may well be some questions asked.

The department's strategic plan has been I think fairly well spelled out in the mission statement, that is, to ensure a high quality of environment for present and future generations of Manitobans. There are a number of trends that are evident with respect to environmental management and I would like to outline those.

There is an increasing public concern and expectation on environmental issues even though we have tough economic times.

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. I wonder if I might request the co-operation of all members in having their private meetings either in the loge or outside the Chamber in order that the critics may hear the minister's opening statement.

Mr. Cummings: There is also increased concern about the health and environment link which is something that I do not think has been debated enough in this House from time to time. There is a development and evolution of the sustainable development concept, one which I believe is becoming increasingly well accepted and practised across the country.

There is an internationalization of environmental issues as well. It is becoming increasingly apparent that jurisdictions, countries, provinces cannot deal in isolation with environmental issues. We have far more interest in approaching environmental issues in new manners using new technology, using new approaches of doing what are some of our old responsibilities. There has been an emergence of a number of new players in the environmental responsibility of this jurisdiction and others and an increasing complexity of environmental issues.

The department, I believe, has a high degree of technical competence, despite some of the questions and criticisms that are raised in this House from time to time. The department has a sound reputation across the country. Our laboratory is considered one of the best in terms of its standards and its quality. The water quality

objectives that were produced in this province are used as an example in many jurisdictions.

Harmonization of environmental regulation has been something that the department and myself at the minister's level have been working on for the last number of years and have in fact been leading in the nation in terms of bringing together the various jurisdictions for responsible harmonization of environmental standards.

The Ozone Depleting Substances Act has also been well criticized from time to time. There is absolutely no dispute that Manitoba and our record of legislative action has been ahead of the pack, particularly in ozone depleting substances.

We have an effective Emergency Response Program, and a successful reorganization of the department has been undertaken. I believe there is a high sense of morale and purpose among the staff and I want to put on the record that that is appreciated and I think serves the public of Manitoba very well.

A number of issues I will address just as quickly as I can, Madam Chairperson. First of all, in water, our responsibility is to ensure that domestic water is safe, wise use of existing and assimilative capacity in our waterways, minimization of the introduction of toxins into Manitoba's waters, minimize risks and impacts related to exotic species, protection of sustainable use of ground water and surface water, protection of water quality at our borders and within the province and ensure no net loss of aquatic habitat.

A number of areas that could be classified under waste: insure the environmentally acceptable management of solid waste, hazardous waste, biomedical waste, pesticide containers and residues and liquid wastes and sludges. Let me address one part of that particularly, Madam Chairperson, the handling of the pesticide container problem in this province, despite the number of times the issue has been raised, is by far recognized as one of the more practical approaches and is doing a good job in terms of the percentage of containers that are being returned and are being properly managed. The fact is that Manitoba has been able to dispose of the collected containers while other jurisdictions, specifically Saskatchewan, still have a large proportion of their containers in storage.

That is not to be critical of Saskatchewan, necessarily. It has been a difficult problem, but it is to recognize that there has been some success in Manitoba, and that needs to be acknowledged.

Madam Chair, we are on track, I believe, to meet our 50 percent reduction of solid waste by the year 2000, and that we will be able to ensure the proper management of dangerous goods through a number of initiatives in the department, through the establishment of the Hazardous Waste Corporation, and that we will be competent in our ability to respond to the challenge of pollution prevention.

Under air, we must maintain a scientific knowledge base to track air issues such as global warming, ozone layer depletion, and toxics in air.

Just on that point, I would like to indicate that we have what is now known as the boreal study. Manitoba is going to be one of the centres, at the Nelson House area, that will be used as a baseline. Scientists from NASA and around the world will be descending on this province to co-ordinate and gather data here and in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, and other locations to show the effects of global warming and to provide some baseline data. It will be an internationally recognized and, I believe, highly successful study.

We have a responsibility to co-ordinate our contribution to maintaining and improving transboundary global air quality, identify, monitor and control point sources of air emissions and track ambient and urban air precipitation quality.

Under land use, the Department of Environment is involved in: ensuring sustainability of terrestrial resources; protect our soil quality; establish standards for acceptable soil quality; ensure the diversity, productivity and quality in vegetation and wildlife habitat; develop and implement a management plan for contaminated sites; co-ordinate the interface between land use and environmental issues as a preventative strategy.

* (1430)

I want to indicate that while all of these cut across various responsibilities within government, it indicates, I think, very vividly the good reasoning and the positive effect of having sustainable development committees of cabinet working to make sure that the various projects, that the various initiatives are co-ordinated between departments.

We are pursuing a number of specific strategies through the harmonization of effort at the national

level through ministers in council. We are working with local governments and departments in focusing on regional solutions to a number of the environmental issues in the province. We have a responsibility to develop innovative approaches and enforcement, and develop alternative approaches to command and control which, with the greatest of respect, was the topic that we were debating yesterday in Question Period, about whether or not command and control is the only way of achieving goals within environmental regulation or whether there are other practices that are equally as effective. We need to place greater reliance on targets, objectives and standards rather than prescribing specific technologies or approaches, and we need to extend resources through involvement of others using delegation and empowerment.

The Department of Environment is a small department, and it works closely out of necessity and out of practicality, but in fact one of the most effective ways of accomplishing the goals of the Department of Environment is working with the other departments in this government, the Department of Agriculture specifically, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Labour, Department of Highways. We work with all of those departments very closely on various topics.

The department continues to work towards our remediation of contaminated sites. In 1993, the installation of alternate water systems for Stony Mountain and Ashern will be completed in conjunction with the Department of Rural Development and the federal government. The final stages of cleanup and soil remediation will be initiated at Domtar in Transcona. The clean environment act cleanup activities with respect to the former Manfor site are continuing.

I want to refer again specifically to the Transcona Domtar site because we have now completed the tests of the system that may well be brought to this province in order to treat the Transcona soils. There has been a community meeting completed whereby the members of the community have indicated that they are willing to consider the establishment of that site for the treatment of the soils, and that ongoing process will be in their backyard for a couple of years while the work is done.

We are also continuing to work on the Manfor site at an enormous amount of money. We have already put about \$9 million into the cleanup of the Manfor

site. Manitoba Hazardous Waste Management corporation has embarked on developing a soil treatment facility for petroleum contaminated soils. That will be up and running this summer. We are also pursuing cost sharing with the Government of Canada under its Contaminated Sites Program with respect to the cleanup of some of the sites I have mentioned above. So this is a very important area, and there has been a lot of activity going on there, Madam Chairperson.

Environmental liability, I think, is probably, in the minds of many people, one of the most important aspects of environmental responsibility these days, one of the most controversial as we try to assign proper liability and assign that responsibility so that dollars can flow for the cost of cleanup. We have worked with the stakeholders of Manitoba to develop principles for effective allocation of responsibility for cleanup. We have also chaired the national task force and through departmental personnel have headed up the national task force, and the results of these initiatives will be used to prepare our policies and our legislation to deal with this item.

I would like to say that we just returned from the ministers' meeting 10 days ago where the work that was led by Manitoba was accepted by the ministers. I believe that we have now a template, if you will, for across Canada for how environmental liability can be assigned in terms of the cost assignment for owners and preexisting owners and get on with some uniformity across this country in how we enforce the laws, how we make the polluter pay for their errors of the past, get on with making the environment better for the future.

The department is involved in an inter-departmental basis and at the national level in a position that requires or allows us, as a province, to put forward a strong negotiating position regarding NAFTA and regarding the side agreements. The basic premise that we want to assure is that we will see an upward harmonization of environmental standards from the level of enforcement of environmental laws across the board that will be acceptable.

Public health inspections remain a high priority. To better address the department-wide issues, many of the current public health inspectors have been reclassified to environment officers, and their responsibilities have increased in conjunction with

our increased presence in the communities of rural Manitoba as a result of our decentralization.

The department continues to work closely with the Department of Health with respect to delivery of public health services.

Madam Chairperson, the department emergency response is very active. They have been running a 24-hour emergency response program. The service across the province mainly regarding environmental accidents or emergencies that may arise. It seems to me that a lot of people forget that this small department responds to about 400 calls, ranging from minor incidents to the 20-day evacuation of Oakville, which was obviously one of the larger responsibilities that we had to deal with this past year.

The department anticipates increased training and regionalization for our emergency response workers. Pollution prevention is part of the reorganization of the department. The Planning and Innovation division was responsible for introducing a number of new initiatives which would eliminate pollution at its source. As a cost-containment measure, this branch was eliminated this year, but has been replaced with a line responsibility where an awful lot of the initiatives that they put into place are now being operationalized within the department. This branch launched a number of new programs such as the CFC and The Ozone Depleting Substances Act. The regulatory framework for The Waste Reduction and Prevention Act has brought national attention to our ability to lead into an orderly and progressive reduction of waste in this province.

This has been done with a tremendous amount of personal effort on the part of the people in that section and using some fairly limited resource, and using some imagination in bringing in the resources and the help from various other sections which have overlapped in responsibility in government. I believe that it has worked very well.

The first province to enact CFC legislation—we now have 5,000 trained service technicians in this province, and that will also indicate that we are in a fairly successful working relationship with a number of industrial and environmental groups. All of this was initiated through the former working group that brought the industry, brought environmental groups and the department together to make recommendations to government. They made

policy recommendation; they made suggestions for regulatory amendments. They helped develop a compliance guide, a citizens' guide, a building owners'/managers' guide, and vetted a number of industrial concerns, and provided a communication linkage that was previously not available.

We have extended the secondment of the co-ordinator in that area until the end of September of this year, and I believe that we have taken a rather bold step because we now have mandatory certification of technicians in this province which puts us well ahead in terms of the containment of CFCs, even though we are a small portion of the potential numbers of CFCs that can be released.

* (1440)

Under waste reduction I will try and summarize some of the things that have occurred there. But the fact is that beverage container and packaging regulation came into effect in 1992. To ensure that container recovery meets or exceeds levels achieved in other provinces, these requirements were put in place, that there would be a filing of a reduction program by the beverage industry, licensing the distribution, target recovery rates, a monitoring program.

Financial assessments are being made against the industry and retailers are being required to either install recycling bins or inform customers of the closest recycling depot. I can indicate that by the first of August, as I have said previously, a decision will be made on a go or a no-go proposal to regulate the beverage container industry into a deposit program or into another program that would hopefully have an equal success rate.

In the past year, we have done a number of things in terms of newspaper recycling. To say it quickly, we have put a quarter of a million dollars from the old newspapers into the fund in regional processing centres and in enhancement of recycling across the province.

We have a request for proposal process that we have been following on tires. An announcement has been made, as you will have recalled, but we expect to have a used-tire management program in operation by this fall. As of the first of June, it affects anyone who has successfully recycled a tire and will be eligible for a \$2.50 rebate to help offset that cost. That will continue to be funded through the use of a \$3.00 levy on tires. Out of that, we will also be offering 50 cents to any municipal site that runs a

recycled tire or a tire collection depot in order to help offset some of their costs as well.

The decision to establish the used-tire proposal followed 14 different responses that we had from our request for proposal process and we received everything from tires to energy to tires to alternate products. In the end, the decision was made that a number of the proposals wanted monopoly positions in the province and none of their proposals seemed to be able to answer the concerns that we raised in that respect and we indicated that we would go with an open system of refund for a properly processed tire. We have since had an informal response that would indicate that almost half of our tires may well be taken up by existing recyclers as they expand their operations.

A number of recycling networks have now been developed. We now have eight recycling networks and over 60 municipalities that are serving a population of 160,000 outside of the city of Winnipeg. The Manitoba association of regional recyclers has been founded to ensure that experiences are shared and problems are identified and addressed.

The department has also been active in the establishment of a mid-continent recycling association involving six states and two provinces in an initiative that was followed from a meeting of our Premier with leaders in these other jurisdictions that I believe will have some very positive long-term spin-offs to this province and to the region as a whole in terms of waste reduction.

A number of regional waste management proposals are underway. We have put out \$200,000 out of the Environmental Innovations Fund to help 10 regional waste management initiatives. Over 75 municipalities have taken advantage of the matching grant program available to investigate their regional management problems. We work closely with those people and the Department of Rural Development to establish a strategy to reduce ultimately some of the waste disposal grounds out there but most certainly to make available a more environmentally sound waste management system.

I will spend a couple of minutes talking about the Environmental Innovations Fund, which has now been renamed the Sustainable Development Innovation Fund. It provides funding for development and implementation and promotion of environmental projects. The source of revenue is

the environmental protection tax, which applies to alcohol beverage containers and disposable diapers and some portion of the tire fund as well.

Applications for funding and support are received from community groups and associations, student and parent-teacher associations, business and citizens organizations. As of March, the funding support totalled \$876,000, had been earmarked for recycling, composting, education and awareness, regional waste management, regional recycling networks and market development. In addition, major program initiatives improved solid waste management facilities—and to manage used tires are being contemplated for the balance of this fiscal year.

Environmental Youth Corps was an opportunity to prepare for environmental challenges of tomorrow by helping young people gain valuable education and experience. The program encourages youth to volunteer throughout the province for projects to improve and protect Manitoba's environment. We have committed \$1 million to a five-year program inclusive at an expenditure level of \$200,000 per year coming from the Sustainable Development Fund.

The purpose of the Youth Corps is to promote and maximize the involvement of the youth in environmentally related projects. I have to indicate that it has been highly successful in involving young people. We have 6,500 youth between the age of six and 24 who participated last year on 65 projects throughout the province. In '92-93, the program had 8,000 participants. The projects eligible for funding include water quality, waste minimization, fish habitat, restoration, protection of flora and fauna, wildlife habitat and rehabilitation of natural environment in local parks.

There has been much discussion here and in other parts of the province about joint review panels. This year we should see the completion of the first joint review panel in this province. The North Central Transmission Line panel includes Mr. George Campbell, Mr. Harry Wood and Mr. Tom Henley. I think, undoubtedly, they will become the first panel to complete their work on a joint basis and report, given that the Conawapa panel is no longer active.

We have spent an enormous amount of time and energy on Shoal Lake. There is water quality monitoring that is continually occurring there and, for the third year, with a major study on water quality

of the source of our water for half of the people in this province, will scientifically document present water quality conditions. While we use all available means to protect this source, the study will identify impacts from present developments and will undoubtedly lead to some further action on our part as we attempt to make sure that jurisdictions outside of our own co-operate with us in assuring the quality of water in this basin.

Manitoba has put forward the view that there should be a rational planning process around the Shoal Lake area and the Shoal Lake basin. We believe that pursuing this is a priority, but we continue to have concerns and stress the need for a multistakeholder group envisioning Canada, Ontario, Manitoba, Winnipeg, First Nations Band 39 and 40 to receive the broader impact from them, as well as cottagers, miners, fishermen and associations of other responsible activities in that area to give us a broader quality management, basin management plan for that area. It is increasingly difficult to get all of those players at the table, and the ability to protect the water will ultimately hinge on that plus the co-operation of the Province of Ontario.

Our sensitive area regulation, you will recall, was discussed in this Chamber. It has been in a position to be implemented on very short notice. It presently is in limbo as a result of a direct request by the First Nations in that area asking that it not be implemented while negotiations are going on, on the basin-wide management plan. Then as a demonstration of good faith we have agreed not to implement it at this point, but it is available to be implemented on very short notice if we feel that those negotiations are not proceeding in the best interests of the water quality.

We have spent some considerable amount of time with KPM mining. Our attempt to have them present information in the city of Winnipeg has not yet been complied with, but we believe that is the only way that they will be able to show us and show the people who are the consumers that they will be able to adequately protect the water quality as they proceed with their exploration, and it appears that they will be working on that exploration.

We have declared Sections 8 and 10 under The Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Act. It provides for licensing of handlers and transporters in accordance with these sections of the act and will require that materials be disposed

of at a licensed facility. Adequate controls, we believe, are in place to control future disposal facilities, and now that these sections are proclaimed, implementation and enforcement are proceeding.

* (1450)

The fact that we now have a successful siting for the Hazardous Waste Corp., that it is now proceeding with its contaminated soil management, will lead us to have a controlled environment and a practical point of allowance for disposal of material. That is the second part of enforcement, frankly. People need to be able to feel when they are being regulated that they have an option as to where they want to take their soils or other contaminated products. The development and construction of a facility of this nature will enhance our ability to enforce as well, because there will be a much more willing compliance on the part of producers of some of this material, because while they are coming under compliance today, they are somewhat limited in how they may expand some of their operations because they may feel some constrictions of where they will be able to find additional disposal for that which should be classified as hazardous material.

We have recently introduced a regulation to control stubble burning, and those regulations will be in place this fall subsequent to the passing of an amendment in the Legislature which will allow us to have RCMP officers to be declared as environment officers as well. I believe it is a practical solution which we have been able to work out in co-operation with a number of other departments, particularly the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Natural Resources, and I think it has been a successful conclusion to what was a very tough situation that occurred in and around the city of Winnipeg last fall.

We have successfully finished publishing and releasing the second State of the Environment Report, and I would only take a moment to again compliment members of the department who put the work together using editors and using contributors from other parts of government, other parts of our regulating departments, because, again, with a fairly minimal budget, they have come forward with a report that I think is based on a lot of well-founded data.

It now has started on the first trend line. This is the second report. So we can start to compare the

information one to the other, and I think we have the foundation for a very readable report which I think is quite useful to all of our educational systems, and I think it is useful to everyone else in the province who has enough interest to sit down and look through the trends and the concerns and the positive things that are included in a State of the Environment Report.

Zebra mussels are still with us. They are not in this province yet, to our knowledge. By working with the Department of Natural Resources using educational programs, using some brochures, using some promotional material and doing a lot of promotional work in areas where we believe campers, boaters and others who would have a potential to have zebra mussels attached to their equipment, we have managed to at least delay if not stop the advent of zebra mussels in this province.

I have mentioned the Manitoba Hazardous Waste Corporation and what I think that its successes have been and where it will ultimately end up. I close my remarks by stating the obvious, which is that we are well on our way to having the second voluntarily sited and constructed hazardous waste management facility in North America. The first voluntary siting was the one at Swan Hills. The R.M. of Montcalm has taken a leadership role and, with the licence now firmly in place, with the corporation prepared to start operating in soil remediation this summer, we believe that we will attract the interest of some very highly qualified investors and experts in this area to work with the province in establishing this facility. I think if that is accomplished that we will have not only the means of regulation but we will have the means of disposal, and that will effectively help close the loop.

I will close at that point, Madam Chairperson, and invite questions.

Madam Chairperson: Does the critic for the official opposition, the honourable member for Radisson, wish to make an opening statement?

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Just very briefly, I want to put some concerns on the record. First of all, let us start off with a general comment about this government's approach during this budget, which the theme seems to have been, we are making tough decisions. When we look at what is happening in the province and across the country in terms of environment, we can see that the tough decisions are not anywhere near being made. The tough decisions that we as a community have to start

making are in becoming more sustainable and to start to balance the economy and the environment, we are nowhere near doing that.

It is interesting when we look at the statements made by the government now that they have completely dropped all reference, when the Premier (Mr. Filmon) is speaking, we do not hear references to sustainable development anymore. All we hear now is, there are tough decisions, and they have again bowed down to the old style of economics, which ignores environmental concerns. So I think that we can see that with a lot of the issues that are raised in the province, this government is not making the tough decisions in terms of environment.

It is difficult as the critic in the opposition, given our limited resources, to think that we can come anywhere near to following all of the environmental problems in the province. Whenever we do come up with industries that are not in compliance with their licence, that are not being inspected properly, and we see the kind of blockade that we are dealing with in situations like with Palliser, with the Abitibi-Price licensing of their effluent, with the horrible long-term effects like the Stony Mountain situation with the hazardous waste there.

Even though it sounds, from the minister's statements, that there is a lot of activity in this area, it is clear that we do not have an efficient system. We know that there are a lot of industries that are in violation. I hear all the time that mines are in violation of their licences for effluent. We hear, and we know, because it is documented to some extent now, that the water quality in Manitoba continues to deteriorate.

One of the concerns that I have raised before is that the department continues to hide behind its procedural operations and is not forthcoming with information. The government has not been supporting citizen actions. We get information that, when there are citizens concerned about the quality of their water or reports of airborne emissions, they are met, in the department, with a lack of information; with not being given a clear indication about what their rights are; people are not encouraged to participate in environmental assessments; they are not given the information that they need.

We just have to be concerned, I think. Even though there is a lot of talk about moving in a positive direction, I do not think that we can be confident that

happens, that that is what is happening. I have listed a number of other areas here. We just continue to have delays in the area of hazardous waste. There is not a week that goes by where I do not get some complaints about the sewage lagoons not operating properly in this province; there being leaks and that is not being dealt with; the poor performance in this province on waste reduction and recycling; the way that we are not actually having the polluter pay; that there is no input, financially, from industry in a meaningful way.

So, with that, I will end off and just try and get right into some of the questions.

Madam Chairperson: Does the honourable member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs) wish to make an opening statement?

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Madam Chairperson, yes, I do. For the purposes of these Estimates I will probably be the critic for the duration, since the critic is off busy doing other things.

Madam Chair, I was concerned with this particular department from budgetary day on, because while it appears that there has been an overall increase for the Department of Environment of some 4.5 percent, when one examines line by line what has happened to this budget, one sees a very strange ordering of events.

We see, for example, that the government is still touting its Institute for Sustainable Development, and I think we would all like to think that Winnipeg is the site of such an international institute. But to date, other than glossy reports, we have seen nothing concrete that has come out of the International Institute for Sustainable Development.

* (1500)

The government, obviously, has some long-term hopes and dreams for this particular institute and is prepared to spend some \$1.375 million on it. I would like to know what the federal contribution is because recently we have seen that declining in its actual value. The reality is that Manitobans, on a day-to-day basis, are much more affected by the line of the minister's department which is entitled Waste Reduction Prevention and Planning.

When we look at that particular line in the budget, it has seen its staff cut in half and its budget reduced by some 56 percent which does not bode well for waste reduction plans on a day-to-day basis. In reality, I think one should remember the old adage

which if one takes care of the pennies, the dollars will look after themselves.

Well, in this particular department, we seem to look after the dollars, but we ignore the pennies, and I think quite frankly to the disadvantage, ultimately, of our children and our grandchildren who want to live in a community where waste reduction is considered one of the true measurements of whether we are ecologically concerned.

One only has to look at the amount of waste that gathers around this building to realize that we are still very slow in changing attitudes and in changing the directions that people have with respect to their own individual as well as governmental business production of waste and the means by which we can prevent that.

I am also concerned about the increase in environmental operations because almost all of that increased money has gone into one specific piece of legislation and that is The Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Act and that there has been no other change in environmental operations in the province of Manitoba. We also know, of course, that the joint environmental assessment review which was well funded has, in essence, been curtailed dramatically, because Conawapa has been cancelled.

One wonders what will happen next time the next government—this one or any other government—decides to revitalize this particular project. Perhaps, the government should be considering doing an environmental assessment of such a project, such a far-reaching project, when they are not under the gun to approve such a project. That is always the weakness of much of what goes on in any environmental review not just by this government, but by any government and no matter what their political stripe, that a government makes a decision or a business makes a decision, although most often it is government, to spend large sums of money.

Those large sums of money are tied to a whole wish list that the government wants to do, encouraging business, encouraging and stimulating job creation, all of which are positive goals. Unfortunately, the environment so often takes a second role and a secondary role to those other ambitions and in particular times of recession, the environment appears to be coming lower and lower and lower in any evaluation that is done. A year ago I think in the Angus Reid poll, the environment was

the No. 1 issue for all Canadians. In the most recent poll, the environment is No. 6. That makes sense.

When people cannot feed their families, when they do not have jobs, they do not have the ability to pay their rent, they are not going to consider the environment as being quite so critical in their day-to-day life as that putting of the food on the table. All the more reason, I would suggest, that environmental reviews are perhaps done in a logical and reasonable fashion and not when other, quite frankly, mandates are competing for the interests of the population at any one given time.

I also want to get into some debate with the minister about the Clean Environment Commission and philosophical debate about the Clean Environment Commission. We have I think, as a political party and I refer now to the Liberal Party, tried to be extremely supportive to the Clean Environment Commission. We were not particularly happy with the decision it made about Oak Hammock, but we did say before they were brought in to do the review that if they made their review and in their best judgment having heard witnesses that we certainly were not able to hear, that there would be no environmental long-term damage, we said we would abide by such a decision.

The decision was made on Oak Hammock Marsh, the project went forward, but then, while we are still dealing with the construction of that particular project, the Clean Environment Commission made another report. This time it was with respect to logging in provincial parks. They made strong recommendations, recommendations which were, quite frankly, not accepted by the government, and so the Clean Environment Commission's report was swept aside.

That does not give us great comfort in knowing that it is this very Clean Environment Commission that is yet once again looking at the Pembina Valley project. If the Clean Environment Commission comes out with a report which the government likes, if one looks at the Oak Hammock Marsh concept, they will agree with it. If it comes out with a report the government does not like, they will sweep the Clean Environment Commission aside and not pay any attention to its recommendations. That has to be of grave concern.

I would like to know exactly where the minister stands and where his government stands on whether they are going to support

recommendations that are made by the Clean Environment Commission or whether they are going to quite frankly swing with the tide. When the tide is out and it is in government's favour, then they will say, wonderful, we appreciate, we support, we encourage the Clean Environment Commission. When the CEC comes up with a report that does not, and the tide is in, well, then they will say, sorry but we are going to push the tide back out again.

So those are the issues that I will be dealing with in the Estimates process, and I look forward to some interesting debate.

Madam Chairperson: I would remind the committee that we will defer dealing with item 1.(a) until the completion of the other line-by-line items.

At this time, I would invite the minister's staff to enter the Chamber.

Mr. Cummings: First of all, I introduce my deputy Norm Brandson; ADM Serge Scrafield; Wolf Boehm, who is responsible for administration; and Kent Hawkins, who is a man of many talents, but is responsible for public health inspections.

We will attempt to answer questions as quickly as we can, Madam Chair. I would only like to make a couple of comments, however. However my critics wish to handle the process is fine with me. There were only a couple of things that I would like to respond to in terms of the opening comments.

I am particularly sensitive to the question of whether or not I or this government in general, of how we would deal with the Clean Environment recommendations. I want to make it very clear, particularly in the response to whether or not there should be logging in Nopiming Park, that the commission was making a recommendation in an area that was not part of the charge to the commission.

In fact, we have since gone to a very extensive process to respond to the recommendations of the commission. In fact, every recommendation of the commission has been responded to, including the one regarding the amount of logging that should occur in parks. The result of the review that has been done, as a result of the practicality of how operations are being allowed to proceed, the recommendations in that particular area will actually come very close to being accomplished, even in the area that was outside of the Clean Environment Commission's jurisdiction of recommendation.

* (1510)

At least we are in a much better position to respond to the question of logging in parks. As much as we have reviewed it in detail, we reviewed it in principle, reviewed it in terms of what are needed lands to be set aside in this province and what the definition of "parks" had been. We have simply not responded by taking logging out of one park and putting it in another, as has occurred under previous administrations.

The fact is that a number of the parks in this province were established and called parks even though the parameters under which they were established allowed for multiple use. Frankly, what has occurred over the last few years is that the public has chosen to—and there are certainly a good number of reasons, but the public has chosen not to accept the multiple-use aspect.

The Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) has responded, I believe, fully and completely in that respect. I would like to indicate that the respect of this minister and this government for a Clean Environment Commission on their recommendations is not at all besmirched by the decision that was made in that respect or the decisions around Oak Hammock, because as more and more people go to Oak Hammock today, what they have found is that this project is meeting the requirements that were placed upon it under the environmental review. That is the type of result that one should be able to expect from the review of the panel, the implementation of their recommendations.

I think the time would be more usefully spent if we get on with the questions that the opposition considers a priority, and I will step down.

Madam Chairperson: 1.(b) Executive Support (1) Salaries.

Ms. Cerilli: This is the section that deals with overall departments, priorities and directions. I want to start off by asking: How would the minister summarize the policy priorities for his department, and how is that decided upon? [interjection] How are you deciding what the priorities are and what your priorities are for the department?

Mr. Cummings: Both this critic and the Leader of the Second Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) have referenced the question of priorities. I said, I believe, during this process last year that when we were moving toward the declaration of Sections 8 and 10, under Dangerous Goods, that would be our priority in getting on with any initiatives we were going to be

putting forward, that would be one of the most important aspects because it is a section that needs to be dealt with and an area that was of concern to us.

That was tied to a larger strategy of course of getting the ability of the Crown corporation, the Manitoba Hazardous Waste Corp., in a better position to respond to demands that might be placed on it as a result of that, and at the same time there is a great deal of work that goes on within the department in terms of a strategic planning process. Frankly there are choices of the department, and I as minister and we as government have to move on.

I know that our critics have said that the Planning and Innovation Branch that the changing of their responsibilities could be considered as throwing out of the initiatives that they have taken over, and that is certainly not the case. What has happened is that they have been producing initiatives probably as fast or faster than could be followed up on.

The fact is that all of those initiatives are being internalized within various sections of the department. So in establishing priorities one simply has to say, what is the most important thing that you can do to protect the environment, protect our future resources?

When I look at what we can accomplish in hazardous waste—this is with or without the Hazardous Waste Corporation itself being able to treat the materials—that is one of the areas where we know that technologically and with the addition of some staff in that area that we can make progress.

We also know that waste management, the waste disposal ground regulation and the changes that have occurred there, while those were not big changes in terms of pages of regulatory work, they have had a traumatic effect across rural Manitoba.

I have had, frankly, a fair bit of backlash from rural municipalities who were not too keen on this. I have to say that things have changed over the last year, that I now see a lot of municipalities that are taking the alternate approach, that they want to be ahead of regulation, they want to be ahead of some of the concerns that people are raising.

The difference is that the public has said to their local governments that we want you to deal with this problem, and the same thing is occurring simply in the way people approach the service that is available through their local waste disposal ground.

Voluntary separation of waste at a rural municipal waste grounds was unheard of. It is happening with a high degree of success in some areas.

The City of Winnipeg, of course, has run a highly successful landfill operation over the last number of years. We now recognize that one of the most important things that can be done in impacting on waste reduction in the city of Winnipeg is to get better access to the people who wish to have recycling opportunities, and we will be moving forward on those initiatives as well.

The Province of Manitoba has taken a very active role at the national level on a number of issues, and people might well ask why we would do that when there are local responsibilities that need to be pressed forward. But contaminated sites liability has a tremendous impact on the people in this province and therefore we have put a fair bit of effort, not big numbers of man hours, but a fair bit of effort on the part of a few people in the department.

The other setting of priorities, of course is—well, very often occurs through the type of debate that we are engaged in here. We have public reaction in terms of—and we need to be able to recognize whether it is in this type of debate or in public forums that I am involved in, as to what concerns may be in the public forum.

That is very much reflected in the licensing process. The technical aspects of a licence are very often the easy part. I think we probably have a number of examples in front of us for the coming summer—the Fisher Branch issue, the Pembina Valley water pipeline—where the biggest challenge to the commission and to regulators will not be the technical answers that are required, but making sure that adequate public input is available and that adequate information is available as to any impacts on how those are quantified and dealt with.

Establishing in the priorities of the department, we obviously did a lot of discussion with the department through my own office and we set the priorities as I outlined, particularly regarding the hazardous waste.

Ms. Cerilli: Madam Chairperson, so am I to understand when I ask the question how you set priorities, the first thing that you said was that we look at what we can do and that would be a concern.

The next thing you talked about was waste reduction and recycling and then you mentioned leadership that this province is taking with respect

to national issues like viability for contaminated sites and then you also mentioned public concern as expressed at hearings and then you also said that lowly critics also have an influence on priorities, and I guess that is by the issues we raise.

* (1520)

Well, that is a concern to me because nowhere there is there any mention about what are the most serious concerns with respect to the environment in Manitoba. One of the concerns that I have is the lack of scientific data that we have that is generated from our government in Manitoba. If you are saying to me that your priorities are not based on the serious concerns that are affecting the ecosystems in the province, that is shown by the initial comment of, you look more at what you can do given what we often say is pretty limited resources in the department.

So I do not know if you want to clarify for me, if that indeed is how you are setting the priorities, because the questions I was going to ask following this are to have you put on the record what you see as the most environmentally damaging activities in the province—what are the most damaging things that are happening in the province and what are the most serious threats to the variety of natural resources that we have in different areas in the environment?

Mr. Cummings: Let me be very clear. One can either give two-word answers here or we can get into longer discussions. We talk about a process of establishing priorities. I indicated that we chose an area that was obviously one that would have the most beneficial effect for the environment in the province.

We are not backing off on our existing mandate unless there are parts of that mandate that no longer apply. We have our basic responsibilities that I indicated in my opening remarks.

I indicated that hazardous waste, through implication of what happens as a result of declaring Sections 8 and 10, were our priority. It was not a question of whether or not we could or could not do something. It was a question of what we could do that would create the most effective benefits to the environment.

In terms of all of the other aspects of what follows from that, it was clearly identified two years ago in the State of the Environment Report that water quality is one of the areas that needs to create the most concern.

Frankly, the process that we have put in place, where we are increasing our knowledge in the area of water quality and monitoring, is giving us the ability to strike licensing requirements, to evaluate projects that end up going forward to make sure that mitigating or offsetting actions are in place. Those are the kinds of things that begin to protect and ultimately enhance the water quality.

We have spent millions of dollars, albeit not megamillions, but there have been millions of dollars spent in this province over the last few years on increased water retention and water quality enhancement. We know if we do not protect the water quality that we have taken the first step towards the degradation of the environment.

This has been primarily an agricultural—and we talk about broad applications across the countryside, if you will. It varies from agriculture to logging to mining to urban sprawl. All of those things have an impact on water quality. Coupled with that is the fact that industrial activity can have a dramatic effect on air, water and soil. Therefore, the priority ties very nicely with the one area that we have identified a couple of years ago that we need to continue moving on, and that is the protection of the water quality enhancement.

Ms. Cerilli: Let us start off talking about water quality first then in answer to the rest of my question.

What are the most damaging activities in the province and in what areas is the water quality and water resources in the province most threatened?

Mr. Cummings: Madam Chairperson, I guess the question is so broad and sweeping that one could either answer it now in a few short words or take the rest of the day talking about the broad impacts of living on this planet. Almost every activity that occurs as a result of mankind in this province will have an impact on the environment.

As a farmer, I was somewhat offended when a number of environmental groups pointed out to me when I first came into office that agriculture could be seen as offensive to the environment. I do not think there is anyone here who would say, however, that we should eliminate agricultural activity. What we need to recognize is that the protection of the water, the soil and the air from environmental impacts that we are all concerned about leads us to a number of actions, whether it is in agriculture or mining or the other activities that come back to certain basic principles to ensure that the domestic water is kept

available to us in a purer possible way, to make sure that we, in licensing discharges, recognize any impacts that may come from that, the minimization of release of materials that could be classified as toxic. Obviously, you have to be the most concerned about anything that could be classified as a persistent toxic in the environment.

Minimizing all of those risks, it is difficult to indicate whether there is one activity known to this province that would be the most environmentally damaging. Certainly, you could sit at the end of Winnipeg's combined sewer outlet and say that this is the worst thing that is occurring in Manitoba. You could pull up behind a chemical applicator on some of our farms and say that this is a terrible activity.

However, you have to look at what are the real impacts and what are the accumulative effects of any of the activities that occur. You could go to a tailings pile in northern Manitoba and say that this is the worst thing that could happen to the environment in this province.

I think we have to look at it from a broader sense as to what activities are impacting on some of the more important areas of our responsibility and deal with them. We deal with the whole cross section.

Some of the emissions that used to be allowed by industry into Winnipeg's riverways through the sewer system, treated or otherwise, are probably now somewhere out there in the Churchill estuary. You know, you could take this question as broad and as wide as you want to, and you could ask: Is that why we have PCBs in the blubber of the whales in Churchill Bay?

I think it would be much more accurate to talk about how we manage potential and real impacts on the environment and how we mitigate against them. Rather than attempt to pinpoint a particular activity, I take the other approach that we should point to what is our most important responsibility, if we have to in fact prioritize one ahead of the other. I point to water quality as being one that we identified a couple of years ago.

Ms. Corliss: The minister seems to be insinuating that this is not a legitimate question. We are talking about priorities here, and I remind him that I am asking him these questions as he is in his role as the Environment minister, not as he is in his role as a farmer.

I am wanting to find out if we are setting priorities. We have limited resources. What is the priority then

of all of these things that the minister has mentioned? What does he think are the activities that are causing the greatest damage to water quality in Manitoba?

* (1530)

Mr. Cummings: One of the greatest concerns that I have is that you will end up with toxics in the water, that you will end up with erosion that helps to get those toxics in there, that you can end up with improper discharges, that you can end up reducing the aquatic life and the fish and the biota through overloading of certain riverways as a result of human activity.

I take the discussion one step further, and that is, well, we are the regulatory body. We can look at the Assiniboine River as a perfect example if we choose to. I will bet my farm that in historic days the Assiniboine River was dry many times during the summer. Why is it not dry today? It is not dry because the activities of man have put retention in place and regulated the flow so that the waters do flow continuously down that river.

We live in the Prairies, and it makes the job of regulation that this department does even more problematic. We do not have spring fed rivers running off the slopes of the mountains. We have to deal with the reality of prairie rivers, prairie wells and prairie lakes which very often become neutriified simply because of lack of rainfall and increased concentration that goes with that in the waterways.

So it becomes a matter for the department to make sure that they are adequately regulating and controlling any impacts on the water. Very often that, outside of some of the regulated waterways such as I point to the Assiniboine, becomes affected by the whims of nature.

I can point to a dozen communities outside of the city of Winnipeg who, without dams in their local creeks, would not have sufficient water in order to flush their toilets. It is that practical out there in some parts of the province. The regulatory aspect that we have in Environment is very much tied to some of the other work that is done in other departments, the departments of Rural Development and Natural Resources where they are working to make sure that enhancement occurs in retention, volume. Obviously you can have volume, but if it all goes down the river in the first six weeks, it does not much help you when you get to November and you want

to discharge your lagoon—November would be too late already, right?

My point is that the department works from the regulatory aspect, but we work very closely with the other departments to make sure that the water quality is enhanced in the long run.

Ms. Cerilli: In the beginning of his answer, the minister made a comment that he does not want to see toxins and discharges go into the water. Well, I would just ask, toxins from what and discharges from what? What are the concerns that the minister would have of potentially harmful impacts on our water resources?

Mr. Cummings: Madam Chairperson, frankly, what that reflects is that my earlier comments were not seemingly accepted as being a responsible answer to the question. That is, if you are talking about toxins getting into the water, you are talking about hazardous waste. When we talk about hazardous waste, the way we regulate that, the way we get it out of the environment will be through Sections 8 and 10, will be part of the process that will help us with that.

So this is not a scatter-gun approach, it is a reasoned approach. The point I want to make, and this is not a reflection on anybody's question, is that this is an integrated approach. Just dealing with Sections 8 and 10 in and of itself, you might say that if that is all we did all year, we would not be much of a department. But, essentially, you asked what our priorities were. We said that we have moved up the level of activity in this area, made it a priority to get better regulatory capacity in this area, and it reflects very much back onto water quality which is what we believe is—if we must choose between the three elements that the environment has to deal with, soil, air and water, then obviously the water is our greater concern at this point.

The Department of Agriculture has put forward a lot of effort and works with this department in terms of soil erosion. Frankly, you talk about toxics getting into water, erosion of soil does carry toxics into the water in a degree that can be unacceptable. That is why there is such an emphasis that has been put in that area.

The same thing, however, is true about human effluent. Rural residential development can be a wonderful lifestyle, but unless thereto we put into place proper sewage systems and regulation, we can end up with a contamination of ground water in

a manner that is most unacceptable and becomes very difficult for communities.

I can point again to a number of communities who say they need water supplies because their wells are contaminated. Why are their wells contaminated? Because they have had improper sewage disposal from their private residences.

Why have they not dealt with it? From the historic manner of disposal of human effluent, they have not put in complete systems or they have not put in proper septic tank systems. This is the area that is increasingly being regulated as well, as people begin to realize the problems that are associated with this.

The contamination from gas stations is certainly evident, but it is more evident inasmuch as you can smell or taste gas pretty quickly, but you might not recognize at the critical moment when you have also a contaminated well from other sources. There can be health problems associated with that very quickly.

The Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) gets all kinds of requests to enhance water and sewage, but smaller communities out there very often want the water first. That may very well be as a result of the scenario that I just talked about.

When we talk about the larger centres in this province, we have to worry about what industrial wastes are getting into the sewage streams and make sure that we do not expose ourselves to undue risks in that area as well.

Ms. Cerilli: I guess what I am trying to do with these questions is just sort of establish some kind of sense of where the greatest threats are in Manitoba and what are the sources—the most threatening hazardous waste to water then in Manitoba.

Mr. Cummings: The member is asking me to pinpoint a single source that has polluted a significant amount of ground water or surface water. I suppose that in itself might be difficult because what is important to one person might not be as important to someone else, or what is important environmentally, why should one aquifer be less important than another environmentally.

So the point is that there is a number of historically contaminated sites. We have Manfor, the major contamination of an aquifer there. We only hope that the water of the contaminated ground water does not get over to the rural residential wells that are

about a mile away from the plant site or get into the river.

We can look to the Bristol situation, which has received a lot of publicity but does not have the volumes that we find in other areas. That is not to discount the gravity of what occurred there, but one needs to put—if you are asking me, which is I think what you are saying—to put a graduated number on what is the most important source of contamination, I have to say that in the long run we may well be pointing to what would be improper disposal practices, things that people might do as part of their everyday operations, and not realize that they are getting themselves into difficulty.

* (1540)

I point to ACRE as a perfect example, agricultural pesticide containers as an example of where people did not appreciate the difficulty that might be associated with their activity. The disposal of those containers in waste disposal grounds that were not acceptable, the disposal of them carelessly in road sides and other places was not acceptable, the dumping of unused materials was not acceptable.

The same thing applies to oil fuel, waste from industry. You can go through a whole gamut of these types of situations that can have long-lasting impacts on water quality. Again, if you contaminate an aquifer, you have probably got a problem that will last for a century. So many people have historically not looked to the problems associated with dumping on ground, if you will, not realizing the long-term effects and problems associated with that getting into aquifers.

We do not have a long history of a highly industrialized society. A lot of the heavy industry has been located near the mining communities, in the city of Winnipeg, and in the other larger communities, so it is fairly confined in that respect in terms of areas where you would look for industrial contamination.

Something as long-term as changing and upgrading the sewage treatment in the city of Winnipeg, and the regulation of any discharges into the sewage system in the city of Winnipeg, probably, in terms of volume, has had a better impact on the environment than anything else. But I do not think it is my position to sit here and point to the City of Winnipeg, or point to the City of Brandon, or point to the agricultural community and say that they alone

are responsible for contaminating problems that we have in this province.

We are all collectively dealing with a number of situations that relate to these activities. We spent—I do take some umbrage about this one, not with this member particularly, but with the critic from her area—enormous resources looking at the air quality around Palliser Furniture. A number of people have said that that is a terrible polluting process. But when our officers went out there and looked at the sawdust that was presumably blowing onto people's sites from the Palliser plant, where was it coming from? It was coming from houses that were being constructed right beside them in the housing development.

I guess I am saying that we have to get into perspective what are some of the real polluting problems out there. When I talk about what might be getting dumped, or might have been dumped historically into lagoon systems that were not recognized as being polluting, are probably now the cause of long-term concerns that we have about water quality. You only need to look down our streams, particularly near our larger centres, to see the concerns that can be around that.

We are only today, in the last decade—Manitoba is now seen to be the one jurisdiction where the treatment of—we have a higher percentage of urban effluent treated in this province than any other province in Canada. That, I think, speaks volumes about why I have been able to say with some impunity that the state of the environment in this province is not as bad as some people would like to make it out to be.

Ms. Cerilli: What we are talking about here is setting priorities, and I would say that it is perfectly reasonable for the Minister of Environment to point, to use his word, to certain areas and say, this is a contaminating practice, this has to be a priority. He mentioned twice that there was a problem with the sewage in Winnipeg. I hope that will translate in having some strong recommendations and not just guidelines but standards that are going to be recommended from the Clean Environment Commission report that we are waiting for on the river quality. I also find it incongruous when there are comments about the ACRE pesticide containers being a problem, but there is a hesitance to make comments about the effect of the pesticides that are used. So I mean these are the kinds of attitudes, I guess, that we are dealing with.

Since we are discussing, you know, setting priorities, I think it is reasonable to ask sort of these broader questions, and that will relate to something that the minister mentioned, which is trying to make the connection between health and the environment.

I would ask the minister in the same vein what the department considers the greatest risks in Manitoba to people's health from environmental contamination, environmental problems.

Mr. Cummings: I think the answer is that it would be any potential release of toxics into our drinking water or into our air.

Ms. Cerilli: I thank the minister for that straightforward answer. I will pass over to the Liberal Leader.

Mrs. Carstairs: Madam Chairperson, I have a number of questions in this particular area.

I would like to begin with the fact that if this is the executive support branch of the minister's department and there are seven staff, can he outline for me the number of co-ordinating committees with other departments which exist between members of this support staff and members of, for example, the support staff of the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), the Department of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), the Department of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), or any other departments that might exist?

Mr. Cummings: First of all, at the senior level there is the Interdepartmental Planning Board, which is all the deputy ministers from this area. I guess I am going to have to take a minute to contemplate all of the various levels at which we work. The Department of Environment works daily with the Water Resources branch, for example, of the Department of Natural Resources getting information and co-operating on response to licensing and other matters. Water quality and water quantity have a number of overlapping areas.

The Provincial Land Use Committee, which I chair, all departments co-operate to provide information to that area. When I indicate that that is the Cabinet level, but there is all of the various work that goes on without ever getting to Cabinet in terms of the work that the interrelationship of those departments on provincial land use, the Crown lands, sales, appeals of Crown lands uses, those sorts of things.

There is the Sustainable Development Committee of Cabinet where we have again the same process where only additionally the various departments assess their areas, assess the projects and processes in their own area and then we have to come together in agreement between all of those areas as a result of the analysis that is done cross-jurisdictionally.

* (1550)

The Department of Environment enforces ministers in rural Manitoba, in several sections of The Public Health Act—I guess all of The Public Health Act regulations are enforced by our officers. So there is a close working relationship there.

There are a number of other areas that we work. The Department of Environment is almost always represented on a number of ad hoc committees that may be stuck on certain issues because environment is invariably part of the process from the point of view of industrial development. Wherever there is licensing required, there are technical advisory committees on each of those processes for all the other departments that could have input are asked to be represented as part of that technical advisory committee.

I think if you would like a list of those or if you wish a more generic answer which I just gave that you would have to agree that the Department of Environment is involved with almost all of the decisions that are made on the resource side of government—resource and, to a large extent, health.

For example, there is a committee working on biomedical waste which the Department of Environment and the Department of Health are equal participants. Those sorts of things mean that we are in contact with other responsible, regulatory bodies in the government almost daily.

Mrs. Carstairs: What I would really like to know is at what process is the Department of Environment involved because it is a strange department in many respects? Strange in the sense that it deals with all of these areas, but decisions frequently seem to get made by other departments.

I want to know at what stage the Department of Environment gets involved? Only when it becomes clear to the Department of Agriculture, oh, gee, imagine, the Department of Environment maybe should be involved in this, or are you involved from the beginning?

Mr. Cummings: Very much from the beginning. There are certainly incidents where we could all point to the fact that perhaps either this department or other departments might have been involved sooner.

But I would have to say, now that I have been in this area for four years, I guess, in excess of four years, I find that that was one of the challenges when we came into government, came into this area, and the co-operation between the departments has increased dramatically, probably as a result of two things. Number 1, as ministers and as deputy ministers, we have all been challenged to work cross sectorally as part of our approach to sustainable development and the decision-making process that surrounds that, and also by the increased responsibility that we have in relationship to all of these areas.

Let me provide an example. A very vivid example was the regulation of stubble burning that has just recently occurred. It has been a process that could be controlled under a number of different areas, depending on the location, depending on the nature of the problem. Natural Resources, Agriculture, Environment were all involved. Natural Resources used to become involved where natural resources were being threatened by a fire or by domestically lit but perhaps escaping fires. Bog fires would be a perfect example, peat moss fires.

The Department of Environment was responsible for air quality, so we immediately had a responsibility from the start. The Department of Agriculture—in the early planning stages of how we would face the problem of stubble burning, the Department of Agriculture was expected to take the lead because they had an educational responsibility.

The Department of Environment was involved in the obvious aspects of air quality. We are also involved from the point of view that The Environment Act has the capacity to be expanded to regulate these types of functions. As the member would recall, in the early discussion of control of burning, particularly in the Winnipeg region, the Department of Agriculture took the lead, but the Department of Environment was very much part of all of that activity.

The network was out there through the Department of Agriculture to do the educational function. When it became necessary to deal with an

emergency situation, of course, then emergency response was able to be implemented, but when it came down to finally implementing the regulations, they were implemented under The Environment Act. However, we have right from the start made sure that all departments were involved in that.

That is a very small example, but that is pretty typical of how these types of issues are handled. I would indicate that right from the start the interdepartmental planning board is meant to be the co-ordination.

Mrs. Carstairs: I am presuming that the managerial position under subappropriation 1.(b) is the deputy minister. Is that correct?

Mr. Cummings: That is correct.

Mrs. Carstairs: Can the minister explain why his deputy minister seems to be one of the lowest paid deputy ministers?

Mr. Cummings: Actually he has asked me that a couple of times, too. It is not a reflection on the present incumbent, but it is the entry level at which the present deputy minister entered at, and under terms of restraint, we have not been increasing anyone's salary beyond what would be normal incremental increases. Therefore a number of people are in that situation.

I think the member has frankly raised a question that all of us need to think about in a broader sense. If I were to have brought in an increase in this department at the DM level for an existing personnel at the same time as we were asking everyone else to take a 3.8 percent hit on their salary, I do not think it would take much imagination to describe what would have occurred to me and what would have occurred in this House. Therefore, we are in the situation that we are.

Mrs. Carstairs: Well, the minister may not realize it, but there is a little bit of method in my madness here. I think the minister is quite aware, whether he admits it or not in this Chamber, there is a certain pecking order in deputy ministers. Some are considered a little bit more senior than other deputy ministers are considered senior. Perhaps, I can make these assertions because I am leaving public office and I do not have to worry about ever having a deputy minister.

The reality is that on the pecking order of deputy ministers, this deputy minister is not very high. What impact does that have on his influence when he meets with other deputy ministers?

Mr. Cummings: I am enjoying this discussion because when I meet with other Environment ministers across the country, I am the lowest paid of them as well, and I like to think my influence is quite substantial. I would say the same thing is true in terms of the civil service. We are a small but, I would blush to say, an important department.

The influence of the Department of Environment in fact goes far beyond just the size and/or the level of reimbursement that we receive.

* (1600)

Mrs. Carstairs: I notice that the Communications budget for this particular subappropriation is 22.4, which is not high in and of itself, but I decided that I would do a little tracking. It turns out that the Communications budget for this department, if one just takes the appropriations, is some \$434,600, which seems like an inordinate amount of money for a department that only has a budget of \$16 million.

Would the minister like to tell me just what they are spending \$434,600 on in terms of communication?

Mr. Cummings: That is mainly telephone bills, Madam Chairperson.

Mrs. Carstairs: Well, I am glad it is mainly telephone bills, but very high telephone bills. Would the minister like to explain why this particular branch has, in overall percentage terms, considerably higher telephone bills than other government departments?

Mr. Cummings: Well, take \$126,000 away from that, and that is the amount that would be left for telephone communication. Part of it may be reflected on the decentralization model. We have a very small department, but we have just recently decentralized into other sections of the province. That would obviously increase our operating costs. In fact that has been one of the questions this department and others have to wrestle with in terms of making sure providing that service and keeping within our mandate is not simply replacing travel costs with other costs.

I stand to be corrected. I am sorry. There was \$126,000 spent on publications, so then the information I am receiving is that the \$400,000 is primarily telephone. The second aspect of that is, if I can speak to the \$126,000, that we have published things such as the ozone pamphlet. Those are the kinds of things that we have put out. The fact is that this department does an awful lot less public

communicating than we did a few years ago. The fact is that has been one area that we have been very conscious of the fact that while the department has a responsibility, it does not have a propaganda responsibility, and we have been very conscious about making sure that the costs in that area have been contained.

There are a number of things that go with that. I have just received the information that out of the \$126,000 that would have gone into publications, \$80,000 of that was for advertising under The Environment Act where we have a statutory requirement to publicize applications for licence. That would be a large part of that.

In terms of why the volume of telephone communications, I am not sure that I have made the comparison with other departments. I am not sure on what basis the member would say that this is inordinately high compared to other departments. We, frankly, do an awful lot of business on the phone. I personally have probably contributed a fair bit to that cost myself. Part of that would be national responsibilities. Part of it would be the fact that we have found in a number of situations that when you have a rural minister, you probably have increased travel and telephone costs, because communications that I might make out of my office would necessarily add to the department's costs as well.

We also have—and we do not have a breakdown—but my deputy is indicting to me that as part of our emergency response responsibilities that we sometimes get some extremely expensive phone bills. There is a very expensive type of communication that we have been involved in and that may in fact be the answer to part of the question as to why this, in relationship to the size of the department, would appear to be an expense that is different than the normal pattern.

Mrs. Carstairs: I will get into it a little later, but it struck me particularly for example in Waste Reduction and Prevention Planning, which had an overall reduction of 56 percent, actually saw an increase of 47 percent in communications. That is what alerted me to going through the rest of it, quite frankly, and trying to figure out what had happened with respect to the minister's communication budget, but 2.6 percent of his budget is very high.

Just for purpose of clarification and then I will get off the topic, because I got confused with his presentation at one point. Of the \$434,000, is that

\$126,000 to be subtracted or am I to find that \$126,000 someplace else?

Mr. Cummings: You will find it someplace else. It is additional to and will be found in another place in the Estimates. I would just indicate, the waste reduction area was not reduced. It was the planning area that was reduced.

Frankly, that area, when you talk about communication costs, I can indicate in a very practical sense that since we introduced the new waste disposal ground regulations and the CFC regulations and the newsprint and used tire regulations that we have introduced, all of that has involved not only a lot of communication in the province, a lot of that has involved communication on a broader scale across the country, particularly tires. It just struck me that almost all of the phone calls surrounding tires, for example, would have been made out of that area. We followed Alberta and B.C. very closely, and I have been in communication with them.

I would have to indicate even as well that all of the information for the waste disposal grounds, or almost all of it, would have probably come through that area which would involve work outside of the city and would have been disadvantaged of a centralized program.

The other thing that I think needs to be touched on is that I have asked specifically that we not travel as much out of this department. Departments of Environment everywhere do more travelling than other departments and many responsibilities the last couple of years. We have said that conference calls might be much preferable to airline tickets in order to get certain jobs accomplished. That might have reflected in this area as well as a result of that directive.

Mrs. Carstairs: Two years ago the communications function of this department, as well as all other departments, were reorganized and they were put over in the Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship.

What is the relationship between that and your department? Presumably you no longer write the ads. That is written by the communications department, as I understood was supposed to happen. Are you then charged for those ads as part of your communications budget?

Mr. Cummings: That is correct. I would think in the case of the ads that we referred to in terms of

licensing, these are pretty generic and probably specific. So the layout might be handled differently, but I am sure they are pretty generic and we probably do most of the work internally.

Madam Chairperson: Item 1.(b)(1) Salaries \$292,500.

Ms. Cerilli: I just want to go back here before we pass this section. This is the section dealing with policy.

I know that the Sustainable Development Round Table has developed a policy on overall government changes to become more sustainable. Is this the area that would oversee that, or what responsibility would the department have in implementing that kind of a policy for government?

Mr. Cummings: First of all, the work that the member refers to would primarily be the responsibility of the Sustainable Development Secretariat, which is made up of employees who are working there on a full-time basis representing various disciplines from different departments.

Each department then becomes involved in subcommittees that would provide advice to the secretariat on the type of work that they are doing. The secretariat does the major portion of the writing. They do the major portion of the policy thinking that would go into a lot of those documents that you are talking about. So we would not be directly involved.

* (1610)

I, as minister, would be involved because I am part of the round table which the secretariat reports to the Premier (Mr. Fillion) and his staff to the round table.

Madam Chairperson: 1.(b) Executive Support (1) Salaries \$292,500—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$79,900—pass.

1.(c) Waste Reduction and Prevention Planning (1) Salaries \$167,000.

Ms. Cerilli: This is the division that has been eliminated, as I understand it, and I guess, first of all, I want to see where the staff that were in this area have been allocated.

Mr. Cummings: First of all, what you see here is what was the old Planning and Innovation division. I think all of those personnel are still with us. The secretary of Planning and Innovation is—they are all still located in Winnipeg. They are all still with us but under different direction.

I think the answer that provides maybe the most illumination for the member would be put in this context. When the SYs were eliminated, when the staff years were eliminated, two of them were vacant, so that did not mean that there was any warm body that was looking for a job. The balance was reassigned into other vacancies in the department. Out of that group, one was able to pick up a fairly significant responsibility with the Department of I, T and T, so that meant that there was not a staff year in the Department of Environment that was needed for that person.

Therefore, many of the same functions are still being performed but under different direction, but we no longer have a director at that level. They are reporting to other people existing within the department.

Ms. Cerilli: That is what I am trying to understand, where are these people reporting? You only had three staff that were working on all the issues and all the programs under waste reduction and now we have those people hidden, it seems, so I appreciate that you probably saved some money from not having a manager for that small number of staff, but where are these people working then? Do they still have the same job responsibilities, or where are the positions operating under, I guess is a better way to phrase the question?

Mr. Cummings: Laurie Streich is with Environmental Management; Michele Guay is with Operations; Jerry Spiegel is director of the newly established Pollution Prevention Branch; Lorna Hendrickson has gone to I, T and T. Gerry McCormick—the other position there was vacant. The people associated with the WRAP group are all under the new Pollution Prevention Branch, which means that their responsibilities still encompass a good deal of what they did before, but they have to do some forward thinking in terms of the processes that we implement in the department or initiatives that we take to prevent the—as the branch says, pollution prevention.

Ms. Cerilli: Why was this change made with the staff being moved in this way? What was the reason?

Mr. Cummings: I think it could be best described as a way of saving some administrative dollars, saving some dollars cost to the department. At the same time, we took a lot of their functions and put them into the regions in terms of the planning, put

more responsibility on some of our other structure, but provided us with a reorganization that saved some money. At the same time, we felt that we could redirect their responsibilities on a more decentralized approach.

For example, while it may seem insignificant to urban members—and it is not a reflection on my critics but the reality of how we have to administer our responsibilities—the Department of Environment did not have much of a presence outside of the city of Winnipeg, not a big presence except in the larger centres.

We are now more decentralized, and as a result, we are more involved with the regulation of a lot of responsibilities that people used to have to come to Winnipeg to get answers for. That includes everything from lagoons to even advice that we are now providing to the agricultural community in terms of construction and planning regarding agricultural operations. So that information and expertise is diffused. Certainly, that does have some impact on the overall make-up of the head office here in Winnipeg.

Ms. Cerilli: My concern in this area is that the WRAP strategy was just undertaken. Am I correct in seeing that there is no longer any division that is being referred to by that name?

Mr. Cummings: That is correct.

Ms. Cerilli: Not only do I think that this is going to confuse people, especially when we have so many people trying to participate through all the various task force committees that are dealing with waste reduction, but I am also concerned, with an area that is so active with so many committees and programs, why there are only three people working in this area. Now it is not even clear how many other responsibilities people have that are supposed to be dealing with the Waste Reduction and Prevention program. If this an area of focus, why are there so few staff?

Mr. Cummings: Essentially, it is the same number as we had performing this function before in relationship to the WRAP responsibilities.

I think the member would have to appreciate that we cannot simply continue to expand or to accept the status quo. One should not simply change for the sake of change, but I think we have to push along in the evolution of matters such as the WRAP. The regulations are well established. The administration

of those regulations can be assisted in a number of ways by other sections of the department.

The fact is that if I am faced with a choice between an environment officer who will help administer The Dangerous Goods Act or adding—and I emphasize the word "adding"—to the WRAP branch of the administration, then obviously I think the choice is such as we described when we were talking about priorities earlier.

We want to get the dangerous goods handling and transportation process in place. We have said from the start that we would put any additional resources or redirect resources if they were available to us.

* (1620)

The numbers are small to begin with, and we have not reduced the number of people who are available there. For example, recycling programs, we could have half a dozen recycling co-ordinators in the department if we chose to.

We are in fact getting a lot of regional people involved. We are getting a lot of involvement from the municipal people. The City of Winnipeg is very active and responsible in this area moving on their areas as best they can.

I think that this was a reasonable approach. I am a little surprised that people are taking this as a sudden backing off from the need to get on with waste reduction when at the same time we have now got our tire levy in place. We are, I think, the third jurisdiction in western Canada to move in this direction.

Ontario has just withdrawn their levy, let alone put somebody in charge of managing their tire program. So I do not think in comparison to other jurisdictions we are doing all that bad.

The fact is that in beverage containers, we now have the beverage container industry regulated. While that is not evident tomorrow by whether or not there is going to be a deposit, the decision has been made that by the 1st of August that will be concluded.

We have also made the direct approach as part of how I believe we can accomplish things more efficiently in government, but there is nothing wrong with having to bring in a contractor for six months or maybe less if that is what it takes, or eight months if that is what is required, to deal with a specific matter and then allow it to move on.

With the greatest respect to the gentleman sitting in front of me and other civil servants, one of the biggest problems that government has in containing its costs is to fill long-term SYs because then you do end up with a situation where you have, if you have to cut back, people with real problems, families sitting there uncertain of their future.

To be able to bring in contractors to deal with short-term issues is an efficient way of managing dollars, and the example is the beverage container industry. We were able to, rather than put a full-time staffperson in place to manage this, get a contract with Arthur Andersen, a nationally, internationally known accounting firm for \$15,000.

For over two years, we were able to acquire a highly skilled professional group to manage the beverage container regulation for us and the administration of it. The fact is that even gave some comfort to the industry, because Arthur Andersen was able to give them the competitive confidentiality that they required. Pepsi did not want Coke to know how many cans they were selling in Manitoba. They wanted confidentiality by having an independent third party dealing with the numbers in a manner that was acceptable to the industry. We were able to voluntarily get information from the industry that we otherwise would have had to regulate out of them.

It is a different way of approaching things, and it is a small item. It is not a broadly based activity in our department. It is a very acceptable way of managing a specific problem, if you will, for a specific period of time without having to produce the SYs or establish the SYs that would then give me the credibility of saying, well, we have increased the number of SYs in this department by 10 percent; therefore, we are doing a good job of looking after the environment. We can do a pretty good job, and the method of judging it is not necessarily by the number of SYs or even the number of dollars, but by the efficacy of what we are doing in the end.

Ms. Cerilli: Well, that would lead me down a whole different line of questioning. How many positions or contracts are being contracted out into this department? That money does not seem to be shown in this division, so where would it be shown?

Mr. Cummings: That particular contract was funded out of the Sustainable Development Fund.

Ms. Cerilli: Was it department money or is this another project that was done with money under the Innovations Fund?

Mr. Cummings: It was a project. It has a beginning and an end and allows on the 1st of August for decisions to be made.

Excuse me, Madam Chairperson, there is an additional piece of information. I do not want to leave the member with the wrong impression because second to this is the fact that we are establishing, through this mechanism, a licensing process in the province. The costs that are being borne by the industry, the dollars that flow into government, will offset those costs. The industry pays a licensing fee to government. Those dollars are available to offset the kind of costs that we are talking about, so it really becomes a bookkeeping matter. In order to keep it clear and, if you will, transparent, the money is attributed out of that fund. The fact is the government does recover, although we do not recover directly into departmental coffers.

Ms. Cerilli: The issue seems to be that you are using Innovations Fund money to contract out work that would have been done to implement the WRAP program by staff from the department. Am I understanding this correctly? Is that what you are doing?

Mr. Cummings: I think the member is choosing to reflect on this in a way other than what the reality is. The department did not have to hire or use existing staff to run this program. That is correct, but it is not the kind of job that would likely have led to a long-term job within the department because ultimately if we—and as an example—went to deposits, the program might well be run outside of government. The fact is that this was not replacing staff. This was frankly a very innovative way in my opinion of dealing with a short-term issue that we had to get control on so that we can implement the recycling system in this province. It did not replace staff. You could argue that staff could have been hired but it did not replace staff.

Ms. Cerilli: The minister was saying at the beginning that they are saving money and creating short-term contracts. I was concerned in finding out what the SYs in this division have done, but we are finding out that work that could have been done in this department is being done using Innovations Fund money to contract out.

I mean there are all sorts of other related issues that we could get into with this and I think generally the whole area of waste handling has been understaffed. I mean, we continue to have programs

that rely on paying people less than minimum wage because they are working under the ARC-type programs. We have the responsibility for landfill changes put onto municipalities that do not have the money to put staff in those landfills to make sure that regulations are implemented. This whole area, I mean, we are not dealing with it in a way that is going to make sure that we are having secure employment for people.

Other than that, I want to move on and ask the minister, the staff who are working under the waste reduction programs, what is their technical expertise and what exactly are they doing, the two staff or three staff who are still responsible for the waste reduction area, the WRAP program?

Mr. Cummings: I would like to answer the postamble from the last question before I answer the specifics of this question. I hope the member is not advocating that we should not use every means available to us to try and be efficient in how we do our work. I do not apologize for the fact that we probably have asked a lot from these people. I have never been shy about acknowledging the hard work that they have put in. That is not a question in my mind. They have worked hard. They have been recognized publicly by me and I appreciate the efforts that they have put in.

* (1630)

Contrary to the view that a lot of people have of civil servants in many cases, we have a lot of hard-working civil servants in the area and we need to encourage them to use innovative ways of dealing with problems that we have been unable to fund them to the level that perhaps they might have wanted.

Every time we are challenged like that we come up with some better ways of doing things. I point to the beverage container aspect, I point to the waste disposal ground regulation as areas where people whom we have worked with outside of the department and people within the department have responded; the environment officers, the public health inspectors across the province have responded. They have taken on the extra responsibility, and they have got the job done.

So I hope the member is not saying, because we appeared to be short staffed, because we were scratching for dollars here and there, that we somehow were not getting the job done. Not only were we getting the job done, we were finding ways

of doing it more efficiently and probably much more cheaply than any other jurisdiction in this country.

Let me give another example of why we should not think that the old-think is the only way to administer a department. When I point to The Ozone Depleting Substances Act, we established a partnership with the industry. Industry provided the training program at cost to its technicians. We now have 5,000 trained technicians in air conditioning in this province who are licensed under the CFC Ozone Depleting Substances Act, which we can point to as being the only jurisdiction in the country that has any kind of standards such as that that have been imposed, and the industry has worked with us to the point where we have got almost all of it done for free.

Now, if I am going to be criticized for that, I would like to hear the member's response on the record so I can take it out with me when I go campaigning, because that is what the public is expecting from us in terms of how we administer our departments.

Furthermore, when asked about the quality of the people who are administering in there, Marjorie Simpson came to us from the Vital Statistics branch. I would think she came there as a result of the offer that this government made that we would use people to the best of their capabilities in other parts of government when sections of their branch may have been getting decentralized. I suspect that was how Marjorie came to us. Marjorie has worked as secretary to the Conawapa panel as well.

Jim Ferguson and Rod McCormick came from the Biomass Institute and the Recycling Council of Manitoba, and that is where they got their grounding in recycling and waste handling.

Ms. Cerilli: The minister neglected to answer my question, which was the qualifications and expertise of the technical and professional staff who are working in this program.

(Mr. Gerry McAlpine, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

Mr. Cummings: I just provided it—Marjorie Simpson, Jim Ferguson, Rod McCormick, and the background that they brought to the area. Jerry Spiegel is still heading up the pollution prevention branch. His qualifications, well, he has headed the waste reduction area and Policy and Planning and evolved into handling some of the waste reduction areas as part of his responsibility in Policy and Planning.

It seems to me only logical that Policy and Planning should not continue to handle these things in the long term, that they should become operationalized within the department. It makes eminent good sense for someone who might wish to spend more time evolving and working on planning and policy matters to not be saddled with the day-to-day responsibilities that go with some of these other functions.

Ms. Cerilli: Well, my concern is that with so few staff, the area that needs to be addressed is creating, working on some kind of end use for the collected recyclables, working to identify markets locally or as close locally as possible, using some kind of economic tools to encourage, using market forces—that is often the term—to encourage waste reduction. I am wondering what kind of expertise there is in the area or with the staff to do that.

Mr. Cummings: All of them, to varying degrees, have had a lot of interrelationships with the industry as a result of their past experiences and their experiences within the department.

Now the member has gone from what I think is being critical of the fact that they are not getting enough support to being critical in the sense that maybe she now is saying that they do not have the qualifications to do what they are doing. You cannot have it both ways. Either they are valuable to us or they are not.

Now it seems to me that the energy and the synergy, if you will, of this area is as a result of their various experiences, and the wide experiences they have had related in this area originally did flow from the fact that they were part of the policy and planning area.

I do not necessarily think that government can be the main source of knowledge in terms of markets, market development, particularly in the area of recycling. Government can assist. Government can co-ordinate. Government, in some cases, can make arrangements to subsidize, but government cannot in itself be omnipotent to everything that goes on in the province.

When you think of things such as recycling, there are some very well-organized, well-run and profitable companies out there that have been in recycling for the last 30 years. They got into it because they saw that they could provide an end market. They developed that, and they have developed a lot of profit around it, if I look around

and judge correctly some of the things that they are doing.

So I believe that programs should be developed that enhance the opportunity to use the private market to develop end-use markets for the products. An example would be that newsprint has bounced around to the \$35 to \$45 value, but as the economies of scale have developed, as the demand for old newsprint continues to grow, it is very likely that we will see some increase in the value of newsprint, which will help drive the reclamation of this newsprint because it will now return more money from the market.

It also applies in the terms of tires. We have just announced a \$2.50 rebate for companies that recycle, find an acceptable end use for a tire. I have already run into one person who believes that given a little bit of time, he would be happy to take most, a big percentage, of the tires in this province without the levy. That is a result of market forces at play. If he can find the equipment that he needs at a price that he anticipates and not be faced with—or have sufficient technology in that equipment that would meet the emissions standards, then that simply proves that government would be foolish to involve itself any further in the market.

Alberta and B.C. regulate who hauls the tires across the province. In conjunction with administration, we have decided that we are not going to get into the regulation of tires to that extent. We believe that as minimal amount of intervention through this system as possible will give us the results that we need. The buyers and the users of tires in this province will not be tied forever to a levy as opposed to—again I point to Ontario. They have put a \$5 levy on their tires. They did not get rid of the tires and now they have got rid of the levy.

* (1640)

So, again, you should not judge our success or lack of success by how many people we are able to employ in government. They may be getting employed in other sectors of our economy as a result of policy and decisions that government makes, as a result of intervention that government may make in the market. But we do not have to be the source of all information in terms of finding the market for some of the recyclables.

(Madam Chairperson in the Chair)

I would suggest—and this is not a reflection on the people employed in the department—but I would

suggest that government might be the least likely to find the right market for some of the recyclables. It is a reality of where you market the material out there.

The example of the tires, the example of the fact that we now have the grocery products association coming to Manitoba to see whether or not this might not be the best jurisdiction in Canada to run a multimaterial recycling program, because they do not have it splintered into a number of government areas that are already regulated, that government supplies the end market, the government intervenes in who should be employed in terms of the handling of the material.

It can be market driven, and the Wrap Act can be used to enhance or change the direction of the product by doing the same thing that we are doing under the tires, by providing an incentive that comes from the product in the first place.

Ms. Cerilli: Okay, we will deal with tires. The minister is being known, at least by this member, for his convoluted answers. It is a good strategy. But we will deal with tires.

Right now, I would say that the process is not working. The minister, in his opening remarks, talked about proposals to locally reuse and create some kind of an industry to reuse the waste tires. I understand that there has been about 14 proposals. I would like to find out what some of those were, but I understand that none of those have been accepted.

I am concerned that what right now we have is that there is a government collecting the \$3 on tires, that that money is just going to the government coffers. I do not know what is happening with the tires. I do not know what garages or different establishments are doing with the tires. So I would like some clarification of that.

The minister talks about there being a system, but there does not seem to be a system. There seems to be a situation where, maybe, we will not have the tires going to landfills, but it does not seem like we are going to have any kind of reuse happening locally.

So one of the things that I would ask is if there are staff in the department who are promoting this with industries locally—for example, with asphalt industries—or if there is some other program or local industry where there have been some accepted proposals for what to do with the tires.

Mr. Cummings: The member is correct to say that a "system" is not in place at this juncture. What we have is a fund which we committed to the recycling of tires, and that commitment remains. The monies do not flow into general revenues to disappear forever. They will be reallocated through the Sustainable Development Fund to a fund that would probably reflect the same type of organization that we have under the ACRE board where a combined industry and government board would administer the fund, and the fund would specifically pay for its own costs of operation.

The \$2.50 is effective next Tuesday for any recycler who can demonstrate a proper end use for a tire. During the period between now and the first of August, we will be working with people who have experience in the area to give us advice on how a system should be exactly structured, and how to attempt to put in place systems that will properly monitor and control the dollars that will be available for the tire fund.

The systems in other jurisdictions have been contracted out and managed somewhat similar to the model that I am talking about. We intend to use their experience plus our own to develop a program where we can show a direct response from the tire removal to the dollars that are collected. That is a hard commitment, one which we have no desire to waver from, because I saw what happened to Jim Bradley in Ontario when he collected \$5 and had 13 million tires sitting in a pile that had no home.

We may well not get all of the Manitoba's tires that are sold in 1993; they may all not be recycled in 1993, but we have already an existing industry that believes that he will expand, he will double, he may even quadruple his output given the ability to access the tire fund for the products that he is putting out. There are, of the 14 requests for the proposals that we had, still some of them who are still modifying their proposals so they were prepared to come back to the province with modified proposals.

A number of them, however, wanted a monopoly on the tires that were available in the province and chose to protect existing industries so that they were not put out of business.

That would not have precluded a lot of them coming into business, but some of the leading proponents wanted five-year guarantees on all tires. What that would have done was it would have tied up the levy for that period of time. Technology is

moving so fast in this area that, as I said earlier, it may well be that we will not need the amount that we already have in place. That levy might well be adjusted after three years. That is the kind of thinking that is in place.

We intend to make sure that we guard ourselves against inappropriate collection of the levy, against people getting the levy and not using the tires in the manner that they prescribe. We intend to do what we can, and I think we can successfully guard against tires being imported from Saskatchewan and Ontario and collecting our levy. That can be a concern.

We look to Saskatchewan. They do not have a levy for reclamation of tires, neither does Ontario now, so there may well be an effort to bring tires across the border to collect the \$2.50 here. Saskatchewan, particularly, I have held discussions with them, and I would expect that they will move in a very similar direction as we have on the tire reclamation. Alberta has a system in place that also appears to be working but not taking all of their tires at this point.

Ms. Cerilli: This should be industry's problem. This should be the retailers' and tire manufacturers' problem, for making sure that we do not have piles of tires set up.

How can the minister explain that the system is or the levy as it exists now and the proposal that this government has made is not going to simply have us have different piles of tires elsewhere and is going to ensure that the manufacturers and the retailers for the tires are the ones that are going to be dealing with disposing or collecting them and making sure that they would travel to the appropriate industry to be reused?

Mr. Cummings: The member's approach may well be a useful suggestion, but there is not a jurisdiction that I am aware of that has chosen, as I think she just said, to regulate anybody who sells a tire to have to make sure that tire is properly disposed of in the end.

* (1650)

What generally happens is that a levy is imposed on the tire at the point of sale that then, through what is simply a subsidy, allows for someone, some industry to make use of that product. You will find, if you look through the industry today, that the Goodyear stores, the Canadian Tire stores have already found ways of moving the tires that end up

at their door. They are not all going into landfills. In fact, the private enterprise is finding a market for a lot of tires out there today, which government does not need to be involved in.

The request for proposals brought forward show there are 14 different ways of dealing with these tires, but the incentive payment, we concluded, would be a better way of getting an industry going in this province. It may well be that we will end up with three or four smaller recyclers doing various things.

I would suggest if you are talking about recovery of energy to replace hydro, that becomes very much a matter of having to keep the levy high enough in order to be able to afford the system that would support that. That might be the only choice in the end, but I do not think we have explored all of the options. The people who came forward with their various proposals, there has to be a recognition, you can only make so many doormats.

In B.C., there is a wide variety of products that are being made, and B.C. has found that they are exporting less and less tires all the time, that they are finding other industries springing up. I have looked to every jurisdiction where government has got involved with helping to finance or guaranteeing supply or income to companies that want to process the tires, and I have not found a successful example yet. What has generally ended up being the case is that it is the industry proponents who bring a big chunk of their own money to the table, apply their innovation and their efficient operations to it, who are the ones who have survived.

It is not that long ago that a pyrolysis plant in B.C. was seen to be the answer to all problems of tire recycling. I now find that the parts for that plant are for sale. The incineration aspect, the consultants that we hired to look at what are the possibilities across the country for recycling and what are examples that we could pick up on told us that an incineration plant for the production of alternative energy sitting next to the biggest tire pile in North America still lost money.

The availability of tires drove them to put the plant there. They had no transportation costs, and they still could not make enough money out of the production of energy. Now that might reflect on the type of incinerator they used, but it certainly shows that government has every opportunity to get burned if it gets too far into this process. Then, not

only is the levy at risk, you probably end up with taxpayers' dollars at risk, and I refuse to go down that route.

Ms. Cerilli: Until we are going to have some kind of use that meets the criteria of the government, starting on Tuesday, where are the tires going to go in the meantime?

Mr. Cummings: To begin with, part of our announcement also included that there would be a 50-cent tire allocation to municipal waste disposal grounds that they could receive upon having—through the potential recycler, if he chose to come to a particular site, he could pay 50 cents—the municipal site could expect to receive 50 cents apiece for the tires. A recycler will not be paid until he has recycled the tire. In other words, we are not going to pay \$2.50 a tire to have somebody pile them and possibly have them walk away from the piles somewhere down the road. That is not what we envisage at all.

But where will the tires go on June 2? They will continue to flow in the same general patterns that they are right now. I believe that the demand will increase in a gradual manner, that we will see an incremental growth starting immediately from Winkler. Winkler, in fact, is the plant there—the name is not important. The plant located at Winkler has in a preliminary way said that they may take half the tires in the province. I will withhold judgment on how quickly that will occur, but that is an example of how we will start to see a change in the direction that the tires flow.

There are also other companies around, large waste companies, that may well be willing to put in place operations. There are at least two private investors here in Manitoba who have expressed a large degree of interest in expanding on some ideas and building some infrastructure of their own to take the tires without having to have any guarantees from government. If one or both of those should ever come to fruition, that will take another large incremental bite out of our tire supply.

I think that is a better approach than to allow for inappropriate disposal of the tires, which leads to accumulation of tires in an uncontrolled manner. We will not allow that, because we already have regulations that regulate the size of tire piles or the conditions under which they may be stored. We believe we have the bases covered in terms of protection of the environment.

Ms. Cerilli: Still it seems like you are going to be relying on when there is a user in place. I do not know if the Continental Tire company at Winkler is going to be able to make sure that they start getting the tires with the imposed levy starting on June 2. Starting on that day there are going to be people that are paying the levy, but there is not a guarantee that those tires are not going to be going to the landfill.

Mr. Cummings: There is a responsibility and a guarantee that the monies collected on the levy will go for the removal of the tires from the waste system. If they are not removed in '94 that money will remove them in '95. The dollars will not be scalped.

We may be able to use some dollars to enhance some of the municipal collection areas, that type of thing, but the tire monies will remain focused in the waste and tire area. When the system is running fully operationally it will take the full amount of the levy. If technology advances the way some people suggest it may, in three years or four we may well be able to reduce the levy or eliminate it.

Ms. Cerilli: Right now I am not talking about the money. I am talking about the tires. I am concerned that industry does not have its mechanism in place. I am talking not again about the retailers, just about the manufacturers, to ensure that these tires are going to be collected in a safe way. What is going to be in place?

Mr. Cummings: I believe they are being collected in a safe manner today. The disposal of them is not one that is necessarily appropriate. Tires in landfills are benign, but it is a loss of potential energy and a resource. That resource need not be buried. It should be put into an alternate use today. I think our regulations are adequate to protect the environment today.

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

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Committee Report

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairperson of Committees): The Committee of Supply has considered certain resolutions, directs me to report progress and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

* (1700)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

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

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 200—The Child and Family Services Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), Bill 200 (The Child and Family Services Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfant et à la famille), standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing? [agreed]

Also standing in the name of the honourable member for Interlake (Mr. Cliff Evans), who has one minute remaining.

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing? [agreed]

Bill 202—The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale), Bill 202 (The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la location à usage d'habitation), standing in the name of the honourable member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand? Is there leave that this matter remaining standing? [agreed]

Bill 203—The Health Care Records Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), Bill 203 (The Health Care Records Act; Loi sur les dossiers médicaux), standing in the name of the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Penner).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing? [agreed]

An Honourable Member: Call it six o'clock.

Mr. Speaker: Okay. Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock? No? That has been denied.

Bill 205—The Ombudsman Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), Bill 205 (The Ombudsman Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'ombudsman), standing in the name of the honourable member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing? [agreed]

Bill 208—The Workers Compensation Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid), Bill 208 (The Workers Compensation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les accidents du travail), standing in the name of the honourable member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing? [agreed]

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Mr. Speaker: Are we proceeding with Bill 209? No. Bill 211? No. Bill 212? No. Are we proceeding with Bill 214? No. Are we proceeding with Bill 216? No.

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Res. 28—Active Living

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson):

WHEREAS physical fitness is essential in keeping people of all ages physically and mentally healthy; and

WHEREAS the government of Manitoba has developed the Active Living Program, over a six-year consultation period, with input from the Manitoba Fitness Directorate in co-operation with the departments of Education and Training, Culture,

Heritage and Citizenship, as well as the Manitoba Sport Directorate; and

WHEREAS the Active Living Program, through the use of games and other promotional materials, encourages a lifestyle that will promote lifetime physical activity; and

WHEREAS good physical health helps prevent many ailments that afflict our society; and

WHEREAS Active Living will be introduced in Manitoba schools where students will have the opportunity to participate in the Canadian Active Living Challenge; and

WHEREAS the Active Living Program will also be introduced to the public through local workshops where communities can explore ways of creating a supportive environment for the program.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba encourage the people of Manitoba to incorporate the Active Living concept into their daily living.

Motion presented.

Mr. McAlpine: Mr. Speaker, it is a real pleasure for me to stand at this time and speak on active living. Active living, through the use of games and other promotional material, encourages lifestyle changes that promote lifetime physical activity. This approach promotes all forms of exercise from moderate activities to world-class competitive sports. Active living is designed to fit all ages, abilities and lifestyles. The best form of good health is expressed in a person who practices physical activity on a regular basis. Conditioning of all walks of life through active living along with good nutrition, a major force in promoting longevity and improved quality of health.

If we as legislators could encourage and stimulate the masses into true active living to the extent of challenging all of our body systems, would we not make major progress in reducing the health budget of \$1.8 billion per year? As well, what about the Family Services of just \$1 billion and a rising budget. I believe we all know as we look around the Chamber the importance of active living, creating a healthy mind and body or the lack thereof. People who are physically fit feel better about themselves and thus are more successful people.

Therefore, I am encouraged by this resolution and the fact that active living as a lifestyle was introduced into Manitoba schools earlier this year,

for what better way to promote a lifestyle than with our young population? Society today is far more accepting of participation in physical fitness as a way of life than we were 20 or 30 years ago.

I am not necessarily saying that I am a shining example, Mr. Speaker, but I can remember when I was a boy going to school, although I was very active in sports and track and field, I never had the appreciation for fitness as I do today. For me to even think of running a mile in those days would have been bordering on insanity. Today, either my level of insanity has increased or my appreciation for running five to 10 miles is like a walk in the park. It has given me an understanding of the importance of being physically fit. I feel a lot better about my appreciation for active living today as opposed to 30 years ago. Maybe it was because back then we took health for granted. Today, because of active living and a keen interest in nutrition, I have not had a sick day that I can remember in 10 years.

I feel this can also be achieved by the majority. The question is: Are the majority willing to take the responsibility? I believe it is appropriate that Manitoba Fitness Directorate continues to play a lead role in promoting active living for all Manitobans in concert with Education and Training, Health, and Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, with municipalities and with many nongovernment organizations. I am pleased the province and our government remains committed to the further development of active living in Manitoba, and therefore would support Resolution 28 as presented.

Saying this, I am optimistic that my colleagues will come through on June 22nd in supporting me in the Celebrity Challenge Half Marathon as part of our caucus team. I believe, and I am sure many of my colleagues agree, that we, being referred to as the leaders, should always lead by example rather than follow. I always welcome the opportunity to participate in active living and good health as a way of life. I believe it is our duty as individuals to care for our physical attributes, whatever levels we have inherited, and to strengthen them through practising good health. Active living will help us achieve our goals.

This was something I feel was evident when I addressed several hundred physical education teachers from across North America about a year ago at the University of Manitoba. Here was a group of people who are gaining a higher profile in the

schools today and under this active living philosophy, will, I hope, continue to grow to make lifelong impressions on all their students.

They too feel that the active mind of the physically fit are in a category of the more teachable than those that are not. There is no question in the minds of these individuals that the importance of active living must be encouraged amongst our young people. They are our future and it is their attitudes and habits that are going to carry us well into the 21st century.

* (1710)

It is interesting to observe that people who practise active living have better understanding of their conditions than those who take them for granted. Look at our athletes as an example. Nobody knows their bodies and conditioning better. They treat their physical fitness and activity like a fine-tuned machine.

This practice is available and should be considered as a means of dealing with our own well-being. Too often, great numbers of our population turn this responsibility over to medical practitioners who are treating the many with crisis care. This is compounding the problem and is contradicting the philosophy of active living, nutrition, as well as good health.

I appreciate crisis care has its place, but not in every instance in attempting to stabilize one's health where minor ailments are the test. I support making our body systems work for us and to keep them working rather than trying to replace them through substitution of body chemistry.

This is achievable through this resolution, but we must maintain our focus individually and collectively including all groups promoting active living.

I commend the Manitoba Parks department and the recreation association for establishing an active living committee which is exploring the many ways in which parks and recreation practitioners can integrate the active living concept into their strategy planning.

This will help to enhance their ability to meet the needs of their groups. What better way to utilize our parks than to create nature trails for walking, jogging and cross-country skiing? What better way to appreciate the beauty of nature and to get the physical benefits of activity in Manitoba's parks?

There is something about the energy one gets while enjoying the freedoms of nature. It creates a

useful and vibrant energy that is near impossible to explain, but we all know the feeling is real. It does exist. We, as participants, must capture every emotion that emanates from this experience.

People feel energized, stronger and more youthful experiencing the fruits of nature in which active living is expressed. I believe that nature was created by our maker, is an expression of perfection. If we believe this, as it is perfectly true, then why would we not want greater exposure to nature? Why would we not want nature flowing through us?

Is it not reasonable to expect that if nature is perfection, if we had nature flowing through us to create health, that we would be more fit and healthier through nutrition to enjoy more active living?

I believe this is fundamentally elementary. Then why are we not more open to this principle of creating health? The Manitoba health community's network of community committees, dedicated to the health and well-being of individuals and the community as a whole, has recognized the simple straightforward model for community mobilization which active living provides. The active living approach has been viewed as a very appropriate way to empower the grassroots and equip community residents to identify priorities and work toward meaningful solutions to issues and concerns.

I believe that we are capable of accomplishing anything that we want to without limitations provided we are committed and focused on our goals. Anyone who participates in active living knows that the reason we do not do more is because we program our brains with negative thoughts, and I would challenge any and all in this Chamber to take up the task. You will be amazed and proud of the results. I believe it is just a matter of making up your minds and doing it.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would like to make reference to a few theories and quotes. The first is the theory of the last inch as it applies to what I am saying. Rule No. 1 is the last inch is the hardest of all. Rule No. 2, what we want most always lies beyond the last inch. Rule No. 3, the last inch always looks impossible. Rule No. 4, most people would rather quit than face the last inch. Rule No. 5, the great secret for making it across the last inch is to stop thinking about it and begin. Rule No. 6, we must walk the last inch alone. Rule No. 7, once we have

walked across the last inch, we feel exhilarated and triumphant. No. 8, once we have walked the last inch we can reach back and help others through it.

The nervous system and our brains play a major role in whether or not we tune into the active living concept, and to say that we are too old is only an excuse, or to say I am too fat is only an excuse as well, or to say that I have a handicap is only an excuse, and there are others as I look around the Chamber. They are only excuses. There is a book called *As a Man Thinketh*. There is a quote in there that reflects my feelings and I will quote this: Man is made or unmade by himself. In the armoury of thought, he creates the weapons that destroy himself. He also fashions the tools with which he builds for himself heavenly mansions of joy, strength and peace.

By the right choice and the true application of thought, man ascends to divine perfection. By the abuse of wrong application of thought, he descends below the level of the beast. Between these two are the grades of character, and man is neither maker and master of all the beautiful truths pertaining to the soul. None is more gladdening or fruitful of the divine promise and confidence than this. But man is the master of thought, the molder of character and the maker and shaper of conditions, environment and destiny.

Another thought in theory to help you in this quest for health, physical fitness for active living to promote longevity can be summed up in this quote: Sow a thought, reap an action.

An Honourable Member: Sow in thought, reap in action.

Mr. McAlpine: Sow a thought, reap an action. Sow an action, reap a habit. Sow a set of habits, and reap a character. Sow a character, and you reap your own destiny.

We are in control of our own destinies. We merely have to take responsibility and make the decisions, what our destinies are going to be, active living or not, and remember, the past does not equal the future.

Also, do not focus on your failures. Get up there and take another cut at the ball. The time to start is now. Go for it. Active living is your key Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this time.

* (1720)

Mr. Jerry Storle (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, my remarks are going to be fairly brief to this resolution.

I have had a chance to speak with the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) on a number of occasions about issues relating not just to recreation but to health. I have some respect for his approach to a holistic view of health and health-related matters, but I have to say to the member—[interjection]

The green ones that the member for Charleswood (Mr. Ernst) is referring to is probably pond scum. That side knows a great deal about that matter. Pond scum is an ingredient in many herbal remedies. I am not sure whether the member for Sturgeon Creek can recommend pond scum, but I know some of his colleagues can. [interjection] Pond scum, that is right. It is algae, used in a more, perhaps, understandable phrase.

Mr. Speaker, what I am concerned about is that this resolution is very much in the same vein as the amendments that come from the government side. It reflects a disdain, if you will, for fact. This resolution is as inconsistent with what the government is doing as any of the programs and the answers that we get from the government ministers on a daily basis.

The fact of the matter is that while I respect the member's intention, and I respect his commitment to a holistic form of health maintenance which includes a balance of many things in life, including recreation and diet and many other things, this government has done so many things, Mr. Speaker, that would undermine the ability, the will of people from all walks of life to maintain that healthy lifestyle.

This government has cut funding to the people in our society who need it most. This government has cut funding to education, to our young people. It has cut funding to groups who support recreation programming and seniors, Mr. Speaker. It has cut money across the board to groups who would otherwise be out there promoting the kind of lifestyle that this member talked about and referred to in his resolution.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for the Interlake (Mr. Cliff Evans),

THAT this resolution be amended by removing all the words after the first "WHEREAS" and substitute the following:

WHEREAS this government has ignored the relationship between physical, mental, and

emotional health and one's economic circumstances; and

WHEREAS the province of Manitoba has 55,000 unemployed and many tens of thousand on social assistance or underemployed; and

WHEREAS this government has cut funding to many groups who support health, recreation and education programming.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this Legislature condemn the government for its inability to co-ordinate its rhetoric with its action.

Motion presented.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member's amendment is in order.

Mr. McAlpine: I have not had an opportunity to review the amendment, but in terms of what the honourable member for Flin Flon is speaking, I think he has missed the point of the resolution that was given here in the interests of everybody in Manitoba.

I understand, in listening to the opposition through Question Period, that they are coming from a different perspective. They do not understand. They expect that government should be doing everything for the people. All this resolution has offered is that we are asking people to take responsibility for their own selves. The member for Flin Flon, he does not believe that is an important aspect, taking responsibility for creating health and also for physical fitness.

If people take the attitude that the honourable member for Flin Flon and the opposition are promoting, we are going nowhere. We are going to have a Health budget not at \$1.8 billion, but probably \$3 billion and \$4 billion. Is that what they are looking for, because that is what he is implying with this amendment? He is talking about us doing away with all the funding for all the Education and what, and all the other departments, Family Services. What kind of a message is he giving to the people in Manitoba? I do not understand the rationale of people that speak and do not understand what they are talking about. It is a matter of pure common sense.

* (1730)

I have seen, in my short term in this Chamber, that there does not appear to be a whole lot of common sense across the way. They talk one thing, but they do another. When they look at this resolution, the amendment "WHEREAS the province of Manitoba

has 55,000 unemployed and . . . " what does this member expect this government to do, to go out there and take people and give them jobs? That is what you are asking. That is what the member —[interjection] That is the problem today, Mr. Speaker, because of the fact that the people find it easier to stay at home and live on the welfare rolls that the NDP have built up over the years.

It is better for these people to sit on the welfare rolls than go out and get a job or sit on unemployment. That is the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie), as he sits there and he chuckles from his seat. All we want to do with this resolution is to ask people to take responsibility. The member for Flin Flon sees fit to make his amendment and to try to score some points with these welfare, unemployed people.

This is political posturing that this honourable member is offering. He goes on to say that "WHEREAS this government has cut funding to many groups who support health, recreation and education programming".

Mr. Speaker, I had a constituent, and this is a couple of years ago or soon after I was elected, in the fact that they were relying on government to provide the grants and to do the work that volunteers have grown accustomed and built this country.

This leader said that before the grants were readily available to them—this is a gymnastics organization in my constituency—she said that years ago, before they were getting grants, they used to have 60 and 70 volunteers doing what had to be done to run that organization. With the grants they ended up with three people doing the same work as those 60. When the grants were cut back to this organization, she said, thank God, we are finally going to be able to get somebody in the community doing something for themselves, and we will get the volunteer spirit back.

That is the kind of message that we are getting. In the '70s, when the NDP, the opposition that we face today, and many of those members are still sitting in their seats, I served with a service club. It was a service club that was looking to serve the community's greatest needs. As time went on and as the NDP lived throughout their life, through the 70s and the early 80s, it was almost impossible to find a project that we could tie into to serve the communities greatest needs. There was nothing, because the NDP and their government philosophy

were doing everything for whatever for the people, and that is the wrong approach. To me, this is bordering on communism or whatever you want to call it. That is what it is. It is socialistic. It is full of socialism right through to the end. That is what this opposition is looking for. This is what they talk about. Nobody is taking the responsibility over there.

Now this Kinsmen organization which I belong to, we used to have 40 members within that club.

Mr. Storie: How many do you have now?

Mr. McAlpine: Well, the honourable member for Flin Flon asked me, how many members are there now? Well, there were 40 members in this one club. There are less than 15 members with five clubs combined.

Do you know the reason for it is because they are still looking for the communities' greatest need because governments have provided the things that people can do for themselves as volunteers. So I am appalled at what this member for Flin Flon with his resolution is saying, that this government has fallen on bad tidings as far as this government and the people of Manitoba are concerned by cutting back.

What they are talking about is providing less for people in terms of encouraging people to take responsibility, and what they are doing is they are creating an environment of dependency on governments. To me that is the wrong approach. It is the same thing as our own body systems. The more you substitute for a body system, the weaker it gets, but I do not know whether the member for Flin Flon understands that.

Just like our children, the more we do for our children, the more they expect from us, but what he is saying and criticizing this government for, in cutting back—what I am saying is people have to take responsibility. They have to stand up and do for themselves what they are capable of doing. They have to get out there and set goals rather than waiting for the welfare cheque or the unemployment cheque, get out there and create their own destinies.

Now maybe the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) has difficulty creating his own destiny because he is of a mind set that enables him only to see what other people can do for him, not what he can do for other people.

John F. Kennedy said, do not ask what the country can do for you, but what you can do for your country. The honourable member for Flin Flon does not understand that, but that is something that he

should take at heart when he considers writing amendments to resolutions—resolutions that he is asking government to do the things for people.

People take responsibilities if they are encouraged to do that. That is what we should be doing in promoting active living. We should be helping people to take that responsibility and show them how they can. Give them the confidence to do what they are capable of doing for themselves.

* (1740)

So I would hope that my fellow members and colleagues will defeat this amendment with this resolution and take the responsibility as true Manitobans should and as true leaders and legislators in this Chamber should take the responsibility for themselves and all Manitobans. I suggest to the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) to maybe take a little walk in the park one day and really find out what life is all about. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Ben Sveinson (La Verendrye): Mr. Speaker, I have a few words to say on this topic. Listening to the opposition across the way, it is obvious they were not ready to discuss or to speak on this subject, but there are a few things I have to say about this resolution put forward by the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) and indeed the amendment. So I will just put this on record, and then we will vote on it very shortly. I will just say a few words.

Let us take a look and see exactly what has happened to society over the years. You look back many years ago and a canoe has become a motor boat, a bicycle which you pedal, or indeed just walking to a store, has become a motorcycle or a car. We have done this thing of trying to provide everything for our children and for our people that we never had or we thought we had missed somewhere, but the fact is that all this has affected us in a physical way.

I am no exception. I do not stand here preaching at people in the sense that indeed I am a physical specimen that should be put up on some kind of a pedestal. However, I would just like to point out a few things that indeed over my years of growing up as a child, my childhood and into later years, some of the things that I have done.

I have played a lot of baseball. I thought I was a fairly good baseball player, and I was. However, in later years, after I got married and raising our

children, we had a family team which we played baseball all over the southeastern area. When we quit, or our family team finally stopped playing baseball a few years ago, my oldest brother, who happens to be 56, 57 years of age, was playing baseball at that time.

It was a mixed baseball team so in fact our sister-in-law, who was pitching for us, happened to be 53 years of age and she still plays baseball to this day, so she must be in neighbourhood of 57, 58 years of age right now.

It is a thing of getting together. It was part of our family thing. It was a creative effort to be with our family and having fun, but the fact remains that this is active living.

There are many things we have done over the years—hunting, fishing. Many of these things are an awful lot of fun and I think many of the people—when I say that I have had one of the finest childhoods anybody could ever have, I really mean that because I had endless amounts of fun and was very, very active in doing them, and in fact I was very physically fit.

My children also are very physically fit. However, yes, Mr. Speaker, they are big fellows. I have two sons and a daughter. Both have been active in many different kinds of sports. [interjection] Well, the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) mentions how strong my sons are.

Believe me, I used to play with this idea of arm twisting. Well, just to let you know how strong they are, I quit twisting wrists with my two sons about 10 years ago. That would put them in the neighbourhood of 14 to 15 years of age. They are big fellows and very strong. So I have had a lot of fun with them. There are many times that I have taken my sons out fishing and had a good time with that.

But let us take a look at our working areas, industry, manufacturing and so on. What has happened in our workplaces?

We have gone from a labour-intensive, physical type of work to mainly machines, pushing buttons, things that in fact do not take creative thinking at all, in other words, in ways of making that particular physical job easier, because anybody can push a button, it does not take creative thinking.

Many of these things have been lost, and so in fact, what do we do today? We have to teach our young people not just computers, not just higher

education but, indeed, we have to teach our young people that that is not all there is to this world.

There are many, many things that we have to encourage our young people to do. We have to encourage them to test their skills and their stamina in many things like basketball, baseball, judo, karate, many different types of sports, but I think we have to go further than that.

We have to teach them from young within our homes, within our schools, as the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) has put forward a number of these initiatives within our schools, and I am very happy of that, but we have to encourage them to work that into their everyday life.

In doing this, in fact, it becomes part of you. Indeed, we get back to that where the connection comes between physical and indeed creative thinking. That is a thing that we can think up many different things to do.

I will just take a little jaunt back to when I was a young person, things like for example, trapping and fishing. Would you believe, Mr. Speaker, that I was a very, very accurate shot with a slingshot?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Sveinson: Oh, indeed, indeed.

An Honourable Member: I do not believe it.

Mr. Sveinson: I loved playing with bows and arrows, slingshots.

An Honourable Member: And yet, he turned out to be a straight arrow.

Mr. Sveinson: Indeed, I quit playing with that slingshot when we were having some fun at quite a distance when my brother stuck his head out from behind one of the buildings and, very accurate as I was, I snapped off a fastshot and I happened to take half of one of his front teeth out. After that, I decided to stay away from that kind of thing and be very careful with the different things that I did.

I could go on endlessly with what active living can do for us, but indeed I would recommend to everybody in this Assembly, and indeed all the people of Manitoba, to take part in the many different functions that are happening for the next few days in our province. It is active living, it is a good way of life, and it is active thinking in the end. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is the amendment as moved by the honourable member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) on the resolution of the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), Active Living. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

All those in favour of the amendment, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

An Honourable Member: On division.

Mr. Speaker: On division.

The question before the House is the resolution of the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), Resolution 28, Active Living. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? Is that agreed? No?

All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, Yeas and Nays.

Mr. Speaker: Yeas and Nays. Call in the members.

* (1750)

(Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

A STANDING VOTE was taken, the result being as follows (Yeas 24, Nays 0):

Yeas

Barrett, Cerilli, Cummings, Dacquay, Derkach, Doer, Downey, Driedger, Enns, Ernst, Gilleshammer, Helwer, Lamoureux, McAlpine, McIntosh, Mitchelson, Orchard, Penner, Praznik, Reimer, Rose, Santos, Sveinson, Vodrey.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Mr. Speaker: The motion is accordingly carried.

The hour being after 6 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Friday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 27, 1993

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Presenting Petitions

Solvent Abuse Treatment Facility
for Northern Manitoba

Hickes 3437
Ashton 3437
Martindale 3437
Wasylycia-Leis 3437

Misericordia Hospital/Acute Care Facility
Carstairs 3437

Tabling of Reports

Auditor's Report, Queen's Printer Office
Mitchelson 3437

Introduction of Bills

Bill 38, City of Winnipeg Amendment,
Municipal Amendment, Planning
Amendment and Summary Convictions
Amendment Act
Ernst 3437

Bill 39, Provincial Court Amendment Act
Manness (for McCrae) 3437

Bill 40, Legal Aid Services Society of
Manitoba Amendment and Crown
Attorneys Amendment Act
Manness (for McCrae) 3438

Bill 41, Provincial Parks and
Consequential Amendments Act
Enns 3438

Oral Questions

Port of Churchill
Doer; Filmon; Driedger 3438

Northern Studies Centre
Doer; Downey 3439

Assiniboine River Diversion
Cerilli; Cummings 3440

Port of Churchill
Carstairs; Driedger; Downey 3441

Substance Abuse Treatment Centre
Hickes; Orchard 3442

School Division Boundary Review
Plohman; Vodrey 3442

Special Operating Agencies
Alcock; Ducharme 3443

Private Money Lenders
McIntosh 3444

Education System
Chomiak; Vodrey 3445

Children's Dental Health Program
Wowchuk; Orchard 3445

School Division Boundary Review
Lamoureux; Vodrey 3446

Nonpolitical Statement

Attendance Award, Peguis Central School
C. Evans 3447

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Committee of Supply

Education and Training 3447
Environment 3468

Private Members' Business Proposed Resolutions

Res. 28, Active Living
McAlpine 3495
Amendment
Storie 3498
McAlpine 3498
Sveinson 3500