



**Fifth Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature**

**of the**

**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**

**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

**(Hansard)**

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Fifth Legislature**

**Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation**

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NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	NDP
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	Liberal
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	NDP
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	NDP
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	St. 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
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Liberal
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Liberal
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	NDP
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	PC
MACKINTOSH, Gord	St. Johns	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANNESSE, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	NDP
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	PC
McCORMICK, Norma	Osborne	Liberal
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
ROBINSON, Eric	Rupertsland	NDP
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ROSE, Bob	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	NDP
SHELLENBERG, Harry	Rossmere	NDP
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	NDP
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	PC
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	PC
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	NDP

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 7, 1994

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

### PRAYERS

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

#### Committee of Supply

**Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairperson of Committees):** Mr. Speaker, 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 Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

#### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery, where we have with us this afternoon from the Tuxedo Park Elementary School, eighteen Grade 5 students under the direction of Mr. Claude Lemaire. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable First Minister (Mr. Filmon).

Also this afternoon, from the Winkler Elementary School, we have thirty-two Grade 8 students under the direction of Mr. Plett. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Orchard).

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

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there leave—I did not see the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek—to revert to Introduction of Bills? [agreed]

### Bill 206—The Coat of Arms, Emblems and the Manitoba Tartan Amendment Act

**Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek):** I move, seconded by the honourable member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay), that leave be given to introduce Bill 206, The Coat of Arms, Emblems and the Manitoba Tartan Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les armoiries, les emblèmes et le tartan du Manitoba), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

### ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

#### Aerospace Industry Federal Initiatives

**Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier.

A week ago yesterday I asked the Premier a question about rumoured layoffs at Bristol and, unfortunately, later last week we had it confirmed that 230 people, pursuant to The Employment Standards Act, were given layoff notices effective September 9, 1994. These are high-paying jobs in our communities that represent a considerable investment in our province and in our economy.

At the time of the question last Monday, I asked the Premier whether it was dealing with the federal government about any other alternatives for work for people at Bristol in the aerospace industry. On the same day, June 3, that the layoff notice was handed to the Bristol employees, there was indication that a space program would be established and work would be somewhat provided to Bristol along with other companies in Canada.

I would like to ask the Premier: What alternatives are in place? Are there any alternatives in place? How many people will be employed as a result of the federal space program, and can we

prevent these layoffs from taking place September 9, 1994?

\* (1335)

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, I have spoken both to local management and, indeed, even to Rolls Royce senior officials. We cannot prevent these layoffs from taking place in September. I know the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey) continues to work with Bristol, and to what extent is possible, we will be lobbying the federal government to ensure that we would in future be able to see other work in Bristol.

At the moment, as I indicated, the immediate picture is rather bleak with the combination of these layoffs in September due to the overall reduction in defence spending and more expected layoffs at the end of the year as a result of the federal Liberal government's cutbacks of the CF-5 renovations and renewals. That will bring the total to in the order of 400 for the Bristol workforce by the year end, as I understand it, which is not a very comfortable picture and certainly something that we would prefer not happen. Unfortunately, there is not direct ability on our part to supplement that. I do not have the figures on what the space program additional spending will produce for Bristol.

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, in 1992, I asked the Premier and the Minister of Industry a question dealing with the two or three alternatives that the previous federal government was looking at in terms of helicopters.

One alternative the federal government was looking at was the new helicopter program which they announced and then downsized and then was cancelled by the new federal government.

The other alternative in 1992 was a retrofit of existing helicopter fleets, the Huey helicopter, which I specifically asked the government about. The federal government has promised and has delivered on the promise to cancel the original new purchase of helicopters, but we still have the question of retrofitting the existing helicopter fleet.

Has Bristol and has the provincial government pursued with the federal government the original

alternative that was before the previous federal cabinet and which certainly should be an alternative now to look at retrofitting helicopters and getting work to Bristol through retrofit programs in light of the cancellation of the original purchase?

**Mr. Filmon:** The member asks whether or not Bristol has pursued that with the federal government. I am not in a position to answer on behalf of Bristol, but I will take the question as notice on behalf of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey) insofar as any initiatives or contacts that his department may have had.

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, workers in the total aerospace industry are extremely concerned about the employment situation, as we can all appreciate in this Chamber. In November of 1993, the Finance minister, Mr. Martin, stated that companies affected by reductions in aerospace contracts due to military decisions maybe have the ability to have conversion programs to create alternative work for the workers in those aerospace jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Premier, and I would ask if the Premier has pursued with the federal Finance minister, Mr. Martin, any alternative employment in terms of conversion programs which were outlined in November of 1993, which the Bristol workers today feel is essential so that the layoff notice that has been issued by Bristol can be prevented or precluded by alternative work at the plant.

**Mr. Filmon:** Mr. Speaker, I, too, heard the statement by both the federal Minister of Finance and the federal Minister of Employment to the effect that they would be working on things that would convert the aerospace industry into other areas.

In addition to the job losses that he referred to directly affecting Bristol, there are the other job losses as a result of the \$360 million of work that would have come to Manitoba but was cancelled by the federal Liberal government on the EH-101 cancellation. That other number of jobs would, too, have been in the range of 400 additional jobs

for engineers, technicians and aerospace workers that will as well, of course, be seen as a tremendous loss in the industry over the next five years and more.

Mr. Speaker, I will take the question of any contacts with Mr. Martin or Mr. Axworthy on behalf of the Industry, Trade and Tourism department as notice on behalf of the minister.

\* (1340)

### **Physiotherapy Services Reduced Workweek**

**Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan):** Mr. Speaker, we have been very concerned that the government is not in touch with the needs and the cares of patients as a result of their so-called health reform for some time. Bill 22 is one example of where delays in surgery and delays in therapies could very much affect patient care.

My question to the Minister of Health: Can the minister assure this House that individuals such as stroke victims or other individuals requiring some kind of rehabilitation who require immediate attention from an occupational therapist or physiotherapist will not have that therapy delayed by the imposition of Bill 22 at such places as Deer Lodge, St. Boniface or Health Sciences Centre?

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, all of the hospitals in Manitoba and other health care facilities are aware of the concern expressed by government or the condition expressed by government that patient care ought not to be compromised in any action taken to put into effect the principles behind Bill 22.

I think the honourable member may be referring to a news article from today in raising his question. I will use the same article to quote Mr. Jim Rodger, spokesman for Health Sciences Centre. He said: If last year's experience is any indication, patients will not notice when workers there take their days off. This is essentially nothing more than a long weekend, so it has been transparent to the people who need us.

I will take notice of the specifics of the honourable member's question with respect to physiotherapy and therapy services, but as a

general statement, it is my instruction to all the facilities that patient care not be negatively impacted by their observance of Bill 22.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Speaker, will the minister give us his absolute assurance that a patient who is unfortunate enough to have a stroke and require rehabilitation over a four-day weekend, that is now being forced to be taken in some institutions, will not have that therapy delayed?—because the minister knows even a delay of one day can have an impact on an individual's therapy and rehabilitation as a result of stroke. Can the minister give his absolute assurance that delay will not occur?

**Mr. McCrae:** I want the honourable member to know that I understand the circumstances that stroke victims find themselves in. If I was a stroke victim, I could only be very, very glad that we do not have an NDP government here in Manitoba. The reason I say that, Mr. Speaker, is the sweeping nature of NDP reaction to budget realities in other parts of the country, including here in Manitoba when they were in office. I have a very clear recollection of what happened in my own community of Brandon, where, in the name of health reform, nothing was done except the permanent closure of 42 beds at the hospital in Brandon—absolutely nothing else done and they called that health care reform.

That is not the approach that we are using in Manitoba. We are using a phased approach which pays careful attention to the needs of the patients of the system here in Manitoba. That is whom we work for in Manitoba, the patients, and those are the people we serve and will continue to serve.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Speaker, we ask a serious question; the minister takes a cheap political shot. He sounds more and more like the former minister every day in his answers.

My final supplementary is: Will the minister try to answer the question, a very serious question I asked him? Will he give us his absolute certainty that an individual who is unfortunate enough to suffer a stroke and require rehabilitation will not be delayed as a result of the government's imposition on these institutions of Bill 22?

**Mr. McCrae:** Mr. Speaker, it is not a cheap political shot to ask the honourable member to go along with what his Leader said. His Leader was the one who said publicly that he would be happy to defend the policies of the NDP government in Ontario. So I say, let him defend, paying a deputy minister \$140,000 a year while he presides over the closure of 5,000 acute beds. Let him defend that. Let him debate that.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Chomiak:** I believe the minister made an error. It is his own deputy minister that got a \$4,000 raise—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. That is not a point of order.

\* \* \*

**Mr. McCrae:** We thank the honourable member for that clarification, Mr. Speaker. I say to him that his soul mate and the soul mate of his colleagues, Mr. Michael Decter, is one that he can certainly ask for information, if he is looking for information about how the New Democrats run health care systems in this country, and now, if he wants to ask questions about Connie Curran, he can go straight to the source. He can go to the head honcho in Canada for Connie Curran, Michael Decter, who is the former soul mate of honourable members opposite.

\* (1345)

#### Oak Hammock Marsh Comparative Studies

**Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Natural Resources.

Mr. Speaker, when Ducks Unlimited was given approval to build their facility and set up Oak Hammock Marsh as it now is, they committed as a condition of their licence to do comparative studies each year for four or five years in order to track the flora and fauna in that area and to ensure their commitment was kept to, which was that, according to the minister at that time, it would increase and certainly not decrease.

Mr. Speaker, I want to table correspondence from Ducks Unlimited dated April 29 of this year in which the writer, who is the chief biologist for Ducks Unlimited specifically indicates that he does not think costly formal surveys are needed, and he would propose to reinstate surveys in the affected area in a year or two.

My question for the Minister of Natural Resources: Is this good enough for the minister? Can he tell the House whether or not he had knowledge and has knowledge that they are not going to be doing the full comparative studies for the next year or two, and what is he going to do to ensure those studies are, in fact, done?

**Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources):** Well, Mr. Speaker, I would hope that all members would endorse the great success story at Oak Hammock.

Mr. Speaker, I can recall the ongoing questions and criticism that took place in this House about the Oak Hammock project, period, and the devastation that it would create on our waterfowl and our bird populations. I just want to say that none of the predictions that basically were made at that time in the negative have come true, and I want to assure the member in terms of the process that he makes reference to in terms of doing some ongoing studies there, I will take the specifics as to the question as notice.

I want to say we have had over 100,000 people visit the establishment last year, and we have very positive and rave reviews in the positive for that.

**Mr. Edwards:** Mr. Speaker, part of knowing whether or not the positive reviews will include the commitments made to enhance the flora and fauna, which were commitments made by the minister at the time, as well as Ducks Unlimited, it is essential that the comparative studies be done for those four or five years. That was part of the commitment, and that was the reason it was given.

My question for the minister, given that his predecessor in June of last year specifically stated: and we will continue—"we" because he was seeing himself as a part of Ducks Unlimited throughout this—doing them for another four or five years so that we can have the comparative

database that the member speaks about, is the minister saying that he is unaware that Ducks Unlimited is in fact not going to do this for the next year of two, Mr. Speaker, and why is he being so lax in enforcing the agreement which was put into place as a condition of this development?

**Mr. Driedger:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, a commitment that was made by my colleague I will honour, and if the studies and reviews are required, they will take place.

I want to tell the member as well that it is not just the issue of birds in the Oak Hammock area. There is a general downward trend across the nation, and that is a much bigger concern of mine than it is specifically on the Oak Hammock case.

I will give the undertaking that if the reviews are required under the agreement, they will take place.

**Mr. Edwards:** My final question for the minister: This correspondence is correspondence which is now going to be sent to the citizens advisory committee, and it includes an outline and a plan of what they do intend to do, which is less than the full comparative study.

Mr. Speaker, my question for the minister: Once he has had a chance to review this, will he commit to members of this House that his comments in response to this will be tabled in this House so that we can be assured that the minister will not be so lax in the future in enforcing the commitments made by Ducks Unlimited and his predecessor in putting this project through?

\* (1350)

**Mr. Driedger:** Mr. Speaker, I have no difficulty in terms of tabling what the response is going to be. I might say, though, to all members of the House, that we have ongoing discussions and negotiations with Oak Hammock—not Oak Hammock alone but with the Ducks Unlimited people—on various projects throughout the province. In fact, I am very pleased with some of the projects that have taken place, one specifically in my area, the Rat River project which was done in conjunction with Ducks Unlimited.

So I sort of feel a little—I do not have to defend Ducks Unlimited, but I feel a little sensitive about

the implications that Ducks Unlimited are not good corporate citizens for the province of Manitoba. They are doing many, many worthwhile projects, and to date I have had no difficulty in working with them. I will take this under advisement, and I will table whatever response I have.

#### **MTS Yellow Pages Adult Video Advertisements**

**Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier.

On September 9, 1990, just two days before the last provincial election, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) said, and I quote: Protecting Manitoba families has been an important part of my campaign. Our plans include cracking down on drug dealers, tighter restrictions on adult videos and measures to address family violence.

Can the Premier explain, in this International Year of the Family, why Manitoba's Crown-owned Manitoba Telephone System is flying in the face of his 1990 commitment and promoting the Union XXX adult video in a two-for-one coupon offer in The New Talking Yellow Pages Coupon Book?

**Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister responsible for the administration of The Manitoba Telephone Act):** Mr. Speaker, I will take the principal component of the question as notice. I know Manitoba Telephone System has a code of ethics on which they operate and I am sure they are doing it, but I will check the specific incident that the member has raised and report back to the House.

**Ms. Barrett:** The Group Against Pornography indicates that soft pornography like that rented and sold at these adult-only video stores can lead to addiction and the breakdown of relationships and families.

Can the Premier indicate why Manitoba Telephone System now seems to be indirectly sanctioning these sorts of businesses?

**Mr. Findlay:** Mr. Speaker, if the member had listened to the answer to the previous question, she would understand that I am not aware of the incident, and I will bring the specifics back to the House after I talk to Manitoba Telephone System.

**Ms. Barrett:** Mr. Speaker, when the minister talks to Manitoba Telephone System, would he also ask the Manitoba Telephone System why, after the previous government issued a directive in 1986 not to permit display advertising for escort services and massage parlours, it appears that it is okay now for the Yellow Pages to permit display advertising for XXX adult videos, and not only display advertising, but in a two-for-one coupon book.

Would he also investigate that, please?

**Mr. Findlay:** Now that the member has used up her three questions, if she has any more, would she please send them over to me?

#### **Child and Family Services Fee Collection Policy**

**Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows):** Mr. Speaker, when children are taken into care by a Child and Family Services agency, the parents are expected to pay part of the costs based on an income threshold test.

Can the Minister of Family Services confirm that a policy directive will be issued to Child and Family Services agencies so that collection from parents will be done on a more consistent basis across the province?

**Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services):** Mr. Speaker, indeed, in this year's budgetary process, we looked at the issue of collection of fees, and we will be trying to more aggressively pursue that option.

**Mr. Martindale:** Can the minister confirm that the main change is that agencies will now be able to keep the revenue that they collect, which last year amounted to approximately \$150,000 to \$200,000, and that the agencies will have total discretion on how they can spend the money?

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Mr. Speaker, in the overall change in vision for child welfare in the province of Manitoba, which indeed does talk about family support, family preservation and family responsibility, we have changed the method by which we fund our Child and Family Services agencies so that indeed they do not have to take children into care in order to receive money, but that they can use some of those dollars that

previously went for Level I children to refocus around keeping children in their families and providing that support for children.

One of the things that we have done along with that is try to more aggressively pursue collection of payment from parents who voluntarily place their children and that the agencies keep those dollars to deal with early intervention and early child development and family support.

\* (1355)

**Mr. Martindale:** Why is this minister trying to pursue this money more aggressively, as she says, at a time when families are under stress because their children are in care? Is it a cost benefit to the agency, given that the legal costs of going after the money may amount to more than the money that they collect?

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Mr. Speaker, quite to the contrary, I think. Along with our vision—and I will state it again, because I think we are talking about a new way of doing child welfare in the province of Manitoba. We are talking about family support, family preservation and family responsibility. Along with parenting comes a responsibility.

I know that from time to time, in many instances, families for one reason or another are unable to cope with difficult circumstances surrounding their parental responsibility. When there is a voluntary placement into an agency where parents say, will you please take our child and do something with them, I think it is incumbent upon that family, if they have the financial resources, to provide for some of that support. That is only fair to taxpayers in Manitoba.

#### **Norwood Bridge Environmental Licensing**

**Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson):** Mr. Speaker, once again, this government has allowed The Environment Act to be ignored and broken, particularly the environmental impact assessment provisions. This time, it is the City of Winnipeg that has begun construction at the Norwood bridge prior to even when the deadline for the public



environmental notice has been completed in the paper.

**For the Minister of Environment:** Why has the Department of Environment allowed this to happen? Why is the City of Winnipeg in such a rush to take down the overhead rail bridge that was to be used as a bike path and link the recreational walkway and the river?

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment):** Mr. Speaker, I will take the details of that question as notice.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Mr. Speaker, can the minister also investigate why the overhead rail bridge which was to be used as part of the bike path was decommissioned and was not considered part of the developmental and environmental impact assessment? Can the minister describe what provisions there are going to be for a bike path and recreational walkway link between Churchill Drive and The Forks?

**Mr. Cummings:** Mr. Speaker, I am a little puzzled about the connection that the member is attempting to make with environmental licensing for the redevelopment of the Norwood bridge, but I will certainly take the details of her question regarding the old bridge and the further questioning of the process for the Norwood bridge. I will take all that as notice.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Mr. Speaker, can the minister answer the question of why this government is continuing to fund studies at the City of Winnipeg for the TransPlan 2010 transportation plan for the city of Winnipeg, when they are pushing ahead and allowing for the bridge construction prior to there being an environmental impact assessment? Is this not a waste of money for the study from Urban Affairs to the City of Winnipeg for TransPlan 2010?

**Mr. Cummings:** Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed that once again the member would come to this Chamber raising concerns, the same as she did suggesting a couple of weeks ago that there had been a second spill at Abitibi-Price. Her credibility in bringing questions of that speculative nature to this Chamber is not good.

Mr. Speaker, this city does need quality transportation, and this government is committed to making sure that is done in an environmentally sensitive way.

#### Education System Clinical Services

**Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood):** Mr. Speaker, in a letter to the Winnipeg School Division No. 1, the Winnipeg Regional Mental Health Council, a council established by the Department of Health, expressed extreme concern about the elimination or proposed elimination of Child Guidance positions, i.e., clinical services for children. The letter goes on to say that the model of clinical services provided in the school is recognized in Winnipeg and other jurisdictions as one of the most cost-effective ways of providing services to children.

\* (1400)

My question to the Minister of Health is: What are his plans to ensure that accessible, available clinical services are provided to children so that these children do not end up costing the mental health system much more later on?

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to discuss further specifics at a later time.

I also point out to the honourable member that we have in Manitoba announced future programs for child and adolescent mental health services here in Winnipeg and a number of other services throughout the province. Certainly in Winnipeg we are going to have a clinic. The Departments of Family Services and Health working together are working on programs to co-ordinate child and adolescent mental health services in the future.

**Ms. Gray:** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question to the same minister.

If the Minister of Health would perhaps attend one of the Winnipeg Regional Mental Health Council meetings, the chair of that council will tell the minister that these new services he is now adding are not as efficient as providing the clinical services right in the school. One of the reasons is, it is discriminatory to lower-income families.

My question to the Minister of Health is: What are his plans to ensure that those clinical services are available in the school system so that we are doing early intervention and we are not spending many dollars later on when these children need more help?

**Mr. McCrae:** Well, the honourable member has made some interesting points in her question. I would be happy to discuss the matter she raises with the chair of the Mental Health Council. There is certainly no disagreement on my part that early intervention can be a very valuable tool in terms of the long-term situation. I am quite happy to hear further proposals, further comments to be made by the Mental Health Council.

**Ms. Gray:** Mr. Speaker, I have a final supplementary to the Minister of Health.

Will the Minister of Health be prepared to sit down with the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) and the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) to talk about the kinds of services that are currently not being offered by school divisions and to develop a plan to ensure these treatment services, these early intervention services will be available? Will he be prepared to do that and sit down with his colleagues and report to the House?

**Mr. McCrae:** My colleagues and I, Mr. Speaker—well, one of them sits right beside me, so I am obviously quite willing to discuss these things with my colleagues.

When it comes to anybody else interested in health care generally in Manitoba, I think we have demonstrated the last number of months that we are very open to listen to what people have to say, whether they be providers of health care services or recipients or potential recipients of health care services. So we have been very open in our willingness to hear what people have to say and will continue with that approach.

#### **Federal Property Property Tax Freeze**

**Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake):** Mr. Speaker, the Mulroney government's freeze on federal property tax payments to municipalities has been extended by the new Liberal government, despite a promise

to end this inequity. Today, the federal government announced that the '92 freeze will be lifted for Crown corporations, which still leaves many small municipalities with large federal departmental property holdings on the hook for millions of dollars in taxes.

My question to the Minister of Rural Development: What action is the provincial government planning on this matter?

**Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development):** Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite knows, in March of this year I wrote a letter to the federal government expressing our concern with respect to freezing taxes or grants in lieu of taxes. Our position certainly has not changed. Municipalities which do not receive those grants in lieu of taxes have to go to their taxpayers to make up the shortfall. Indeed, we would encourage the Liberal federal government to reinstate the grants in lieu of taxes so that municipalities can indeed pass those on to where they are most needed in their municipalities.

**Mr. Clif Evans:** Mr. Speaker, given that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities found that with the federal government not paying their taxes, local homeowners and businesses have to pay over \$15 million across Canada more in property taxes to subsidize this shortfall, can the minister tell this House what percentage of this \$15 million is it costing Manitoba taxpayers, and will he request a meeting with the federal minister to discuss the concerns of Manitoba taxpayers?

**Mr. Derkach:** Mr. Speaker, I think I just gave the answer to that question.

With respect to the specific number that the member asks for, I certainly will research that and get that information for him.

**Mr. Clif Evans:** Given that small municipalities like Emerson which have a disproportionate number of federal departmental property holdings are being particularly hard hit by the federal government's refusal to lift the freeze, will the minister agree to lobby the federal government for a special settlement package for smaller municipalities which are shouldering a great deal of the burden of this unfair withholding of taxes?

**Mr. Derkach:** Mr. Speaker, I do not want to repeat my answer again. I will simply send this letter over to the member so he can read the position that was taken by myself with respect to the freeze of grants in lieu of taxes.

Let me say that I understand there is hardship in municipalities when grants in lieu of taxes are not paid, because that burden certainly is then passed on to the local taxpayer. This is the objection that I raised with the federal minister, and that position has certainly not changed at this time.

#### **817 Main Street Parking Lot Construction**

**Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas):** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Acting Minister of Housing.

A little while back, I had a meeting with the residents of 817 Main Street. We were meeting about the parking lot that they had been promised would be put in. They have not heard anything new. The summer season is here, and we would like an update on the process of the parking lot for 817 Main Street. When will it be built for the residents?

**Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Acting Minister of Housing):** Mr. Speaker, I will take that question under advisement for the Minister of Housing (Mrs. McIntosh).

**Mr. Hickes:** Mr. Speaker, my second question is to the Acting Minister of Housing again. [interjection] I did not hear my colleague ask for an environmental assessment on the parking lot. I am asking a very serious question here from the residents who have been waiting for years for their parking lot.

I would like to ask the Acting Minister of Housing if he will ensure that there is a meeting set up with the residents to explain to them why there is such a long delay in the building of this parking lot.

**Mr. Ducharme:** Mr. Speaker, I am sure the minister takes all her work seriously. I will take that question as notice.

#### **Home Renovation Program Tender Process**

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson):** Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of ads running in terms of the Home Renovation Program brought in by the government.

I would just like to ask the minister responsible for the program what the successful bidder is in terms of the contract and what the amount of the contract is.

**Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Acting Minister of Housing):** Mr. Speaker, I will take that as notice for the Minister of Housing (Mrs. McIntosh).

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Speaker, in fact, maybe I should restate it. Was there a tender held on that contract? Is it being directed by a Saskatchewan company known as the Film Crew?

**Mr. Ducharme:** Mr. Speaker, again, I will take that question as notice for the Minister of Housing.

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Speaker, while the minister is taking that question as notice, perhaps we could get some indication from the minister if, indeed, as we have received information it was not a tendered contract, why the government proceeded with an untendered contract. Particularly, not only why was it not tendered, but why, in this particular case, were Manitoba firms not given the opportunity to put in a bid under the normal process of the tendering process?

**Mr. Ducharme:** Mr. Speaker, again, I will take the question for the Minister of Housing.

#### **Smoking in Public Places Legislation Amendments**

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

We have been approached by many individuals requesting and asking when amendments to the act concerning smoking in a public place, et cetera, brought in unanimously by this Chamber, will be brought in, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister outline when those amendments will be brought into this Chamber?—because I believe they were promised last year as well.

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health):** Very soon, Mr. Speaker.

\* (1410)

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary to the minister: Can the minister indicate whether or not those particular amendments will include a provision providing for the licensing of individuals or organizations that sell tobacco products?

**Mr. McCrae:** Mr. Speaker, I was just checking my Order Paper to see if it was on the Notice Paper yet because that is how close we are—

**An Honourable Member:** That is how imminent it is.

**Mr. McCrae:** That is how imminent it is, in terms of getting the legislation before the House, and as we used to say to the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans), it will not be very many more sleeps before we are able to answer that question in more detail.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Speaker, can the minister indicate, because we will be meeting with organizations and groups today, whether or not the bill will contain provisions dealing with vending machines for children as well as the licensing of premises or individuals to sell tobacco products?

#### Point of Order

**Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I would think that questions relating to bills that might be tabled in the House certainly in my mind would be out of order.

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I do believe the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) was referring not just to the bill, but also the government's policy, if indeed it does have a policy, and, in fact, while the bill did appear on the Order Paper yesterday for notice, there is no bill currently before the House, but the clear question was in terms of policy. If it had been strictly on the bill, it might be considered out of order, but we are asking a serious question of policy on this issue that I know you are very personally concerned about, Mr. Speaker, the rights of nonsmokers.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I have just been informed, yes, indeed, notice has been given on said bill. Therefore, the honourable member's question is out of order, because you are anticipating that the—[interjection]

\* \* \*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Now, the honourable member for Kildonan will rephrase his question.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Speaker, I will rephrase my question to the minister.

Can the minister outline what the government's policy is with respect to tightening up the legislation in dealing with the issue of providing tobacco to people under age and the problem of smoking in Manitoba?

**Mr. McCrae:** I am sure the honourable member will feel duly chastened as a result of his asking an inappropriate question in the House in the way that he has and that he will do a better job of framing his questions in the future.

The federal government has proclaimed legislation that was passed by the previous government dealing with vending machines, and it already has an impact on any locations that are age-restricted. That we hope will be helpful in the whole problem of limiting access of tobacco products to young offenders, or young people, I should say. [interjection]

Well, we just want to keep them from becoming young offenders. That is all—[interjection] They are young offenders—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I would remind the honourable minister to deal with the matter raised.

**Mr. McCrae:** I would love to deal with the matter raised, Mr. Speaker, but honourable members in the Liberal Party tend to want to distract me from this issue. I think I know why, because they have had such a hard time with the federal decision about the taxation of tobacco products. I know they are a little embarrassed by that, but that is understandable considering all of the circumstances.

If the honourable member will wait just a little while longer, we will share with him the contents of the bill. I remind him that the bill has also been

the result of significant consultation with interested parties.

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

#### **Introduction of Guests**

**Mr. Speaker:** I would like to draw the attention of honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have with us today His Excellency Tadeusz Diem, the Ambassador of the Republic of Poland, accompanied by his wife Ada. On behalf of all honourable members, I would like to welcome you here this afternoon.

#### **NONPOLITICAL STATEMENT**

##### **Manitoba Junior Hockey League Awards**

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

**Mr. Jack Reimer (Niakwa):** Mr. Speaker, on the weekend, a special awards banquet was held here in Winnipeg to pay tribute to the outstanding players and coaches of the Manitoba Junior Hockey League. The event was highlighted by the naming of individual award winners of personal achievement in the various categories of hockey excellence along with special recognition to the St. Boniface Saints who won the Manitoba Junior Hockey League Championship for 1993-94.

Individual award winners which I would like to mention are: Ryan Smith of the St. James Canadians, who was the scoring champion for the Manitoba Junior Hockey League with 125 points. He was also the leading goal scorer with the Manitoba Junior Hockey with 58 goals. He was also the most valuable player for '93-94, and he was the runner-up for the Junior A player of the year in Canada which was between 119 Junior A teams across Canada.

Also, Cory Cyrenne of the St. Boniface Saints won the Vince Leah trophy as the rookie of the year. Ryan Tempel of the St. Boniface Saints won the top goaltender award. Bob Miller was the coach of the year from the Portage Terriers.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to read out the all-star team for the Manitoba Junior Hockey

League for '93-94. In goal was Ryan Tempel of the St. Boniface Saints; defence was Laird Lidster of the Portage Terriers, also Cory Francis of the St. Boniface Saints; the forwards were Ryan Smith of the St. James Canadians, Jason Gudmundson of the Winkler Flyers and Darcy Pelletier of the Southeast Blades.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating these excellent individuals in the Manitoba Junior Hockey League. Thank you very much.

#### **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

##### **House Business**

**Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, would you canvass the House to see if there is unanimous consent to set aside the Estimates of the Department of Justice in the Chamber in order to consider the Estimates of the Department of Highways and Transportation for today and for Thursday, June 9?

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there leave to set aside the Department of Justice in the Committee of Supply for today and Thursday and bring forward the Department of Highways and Transportation for today and Thursday? Is there agreement?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Speaker:** There is agreement. Okay.

**Mr. Ernst:** Mr. Speaker, would you again seek unanimous consent of the House to set aside the Estimates of the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism being considered in Room 255 in order to consider the Estimates of the Department of Environment for today and for Thursday, June 9?

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there leave to set aside the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism which is currently in Room 255 for Estimates review for today and Thursday and to bring forward the Department of Environment for today and Thursday?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Speaker:** There is agreement? There is agreement, sir. That is done.

**Mr. Ernst:** Shall we go for waiving private members' hour?

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

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** No, you do not have that one.

**Mr. Ernst:** I move, seconded by the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson), 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 Environment; and the honourable member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) in the Chair for the Department of Highways and Transportation.

#### COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

##### ENVIRONMENT

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

\* (1430)

When the committee last sat, it had been considering item 2.(a)(1) on page 52 of the Estimates book.

**Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson):** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, well, coming out of an interesting Question Period, it is now apparent that at Oak Hammock Marsh the government has stopped counting birds, and they are now counting tourists and people. [interjection] They are flocking to the site.

##### Point of Order

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment):** On a point of order, the birds have

taken up residence, and the tourists are flocking to Oak Hammock.

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

\* \* \*

**Ms. Cerilli:** The question of the hour is, where are the birds?

**Mr. Cummings:** The Minister of Natural Resources is responsible for the bird count— [interjection] This is a serious issue.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** It is a serious question. She wants to know where the birds are. [interjection]

Order, please. Could I ask the honourable members to add just a little bit of decorum, and let us get on to the business of 2.(a)(1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$4,157,100.

**Ms. Cerilli:** We are in section 31.2 (a) Environmental Operations. Am I correct?

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** That is correct.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I do want to pick up from where I started off in the House in Question Period and see if the minister does have any more information with respect to the development at The Forks. The Forks development has become, I think, one of the success stories of Winnipeg, and we are very concerned that there is going to be environmental consideration—

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** He is listening.

**Ms. Cerilli:** The minister has escaped his seat. I will wait.

I am concerned about future development at The Forks, particularly with respect to the expansion of the Norwood Bridge and plans for south point and how those two things are going to converge and potentially take away from what has become a real asset to the city. I think that we want to retain the integrity of the access to the walkway and to the riverbank, and we want to make sure that there is not going to be a lot of concrete that is going to run over the walkway and turn it into a tunnel, which is one of the concerns that has been expressed to me from some of the proposals that are put forward to go through at The Forks.

I want to give the minister a chance, if he has some information now, to expand upon the consideration to ensure that there is a recreational walkway and bike path that is going to connect from The Forks to the Churchill Drive park area, another beautiful park site within the city, and that we are going to have this kind of integration of environment and development concerns, that we are not paying for a study at the City of Winnipeg for a transportation policy, but at the same time we are forging ahead and beginning construction without due consideration of environmental green space, recreational use, all those kinds of issues.

**Mr. Cummings:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, this has reached a long and torturous end from the original concept of The Forks and all of the debate we had about environmental hearings that occurred when The Forks was originally being developed.

I do not have Hansard in front of me, but unless I am very mistaken, the member for Radisson or some of the former members, particularly the former member for Wolseley, the Liberal member for Wolseley, were on my case and everyone else's about environmental hearings and the process regarding the establishment of The Forks in the early stages to the point where environmental process bogged down the rejuvenation, if you will, of the refurbishing and the rebuilding of The Forks and the development of The Forks. In fact, during the summer games when Prince Philip was here and he was to canoe down the river and come up to the dock, that dock did not exist, because it was held up because of the fight that was taken through under environmental assessment with the Clean Environment Commission, and he had to wade in over top of mud flats to get up on the banks of the river.

I find it quite ironic that we now have a position put forward on behalf of the NDP that this development is now very desirable and that a good job in fact has been done in the way The Forks is laid out. The boat dock was very controversial—the boat basin I guess is a better way to describe it. The delay that caused some considerable embarrassment in completion of that project that I described earlier was as a result of everyone trying

to make sure that all of the correct environmental examination had been done of the site, any potential burial that might have been inadvertently uncovered or covered over, saving of any flora and fauna that might be legitimate from our history.

Basically what they found, when they began digging along the banks there, was that was where the railway used to dump their cinders out of their tenders. We had a large buildup on the bank of, not what was sensitive ground or sensitive burial ground even, but an old garbage dump essentially, where the railways had unloaded their cinders and other waste and built up, strengthened the banks.

Now we are into examination of the Norwood Bridge. As I understand the process, the Norwood Bridge proper will be going through an environmental review. The removal of the one bridge that the member referred to in her earlier question, I suppose those who are doing planning in the city and in The Forks redevelopment area are going to have to answer for how they see that development of The Forks unfolding.

For a moment I thought she was referring to the other bridge which is over closer to the point. I believe it is still there, and I do not think there are any plans to remove it. It is part of the ongoing planning for the development of the area.

I do not think the member should consider, every time there is an environmental review of a bridge in the city of Winnipeg, that this constitutes another opportunity to do a traffic flow study through the Clean Environment Commission.

We went through that discussion, long, arduously and in great detail over the Charleswood Bridge. We were even so simon-pure on that thing that we brought in a chair from outside of the commission who had some experience and some knowledge on the municipal side of the issue. I know that certainly his thoughts after the completion of the process—and he did everything very carefully and very conscientiously in reviewing the process, but the process is ill equipped to deal with a traffic study. Of course, the city has its responsibility with its own plans to do the due diligence in providing long-term planning for traffic corridors, traffic flows, rapid transit.

\* (1440)

I could go on at great length in the sympathy that I have for the City of Winnipeg in designing transit corridors, rapid transit capabilities. The city is not quite big enough to be able to afford some of the more expensive types of rapid transit that might at some time in the future be feasible. Certainly the overhead railways, monorails are probably not affordable in the near future for the City of Winnipeg. Certainly the bus corridors, the Pembina Highway potential for more rapid transit along there, I understand that those are all things that the city is actively considering.

I really think, if the member wants to get into a debate about public transit in the city of Winnipeg, that she should seize the opportunity during Urban Affairs Estimates to get into it. I am more than willing to discuss it, but frankly it does not fall directly under Environment or environmental licensing.

The Norwood Bridge will be licensed. The Norwood Bridge is in some serious structural difficulty. We cannot continue to ignore it. In the early stages of preparing for construction, I understand that there is a lift station that they are going to have to relocate. That has some environmental consequences because they will be tinkering with the bank.

But once you get beyond the impacts on the banks of these rivers, the traffic flows and how that is designed is really not an area that the Department of Environment or the Environment Commission can properly deal with it. It does not mean that they are not important; it means that there are other venues certainly within the city's own structure.

The member would be somewhat out of place, I think, if she is suggesting that the provincial government should be meddling in the design of the traffic corridors within the city through the environmental process. If she feels that strongly about this issue, she might well also want to appear at City Council as a citizen of the city and explain her position either personally or on behalf of the NDP party and how they view the unfolding of

rapid transit or improved traffic flows within the city.

It is an issue that the city has spent a lot of time—and they have lobbied for support on some of their studies. I see nothing wrong with the province being supportive and their looking at developing plans and supporting them in that process. Ultimately, in infrastructure construction, I guess it is a shared expenditure through the block funding of the city. I do not think I am prepared to make any further comments on this issue in that respect.

Ms. Cerilli: There are a number of issues that I want to pick up on from what the minister has said. First of all, I want to clarify for the minister and for the committee that the comments I made with respect to The Forks were that I think there are a number of things there that are very positive for the city. It is a very popular, urban, downtown green space. That is one thing. The market centre, the open market, is very popular and provides needed grocery shopping for downtown part of Winnipeg, which does not have a lot of access to grocery shopping. These are a number of issues, I would also like to emphasize for the minister, that are Environment issues. As we start developing toward a more sustainable development approach, we have to realize that has implications for urban planning to a large degree.

I think, as I said in my opening statement, that we have to start—I do not know the word to use—deconstructing some of the rigid boxes that are departmental and jurisdictional boxes that we find ourselves in. I hope that the minister will continue to discuss the plans for this very exciting and important area for the city and for the province.

I am concerned about overdevelopment. I am concerned about our not ensuring that there is going to be an ongoing, large amount of green space there, recreational space, and I am concerned that there is going to be no blockage to public access to the riverbank, that there should be continuous access to the riverbank. I think all of these are in Plan Winnipeg.

I would emphasize to the minister that he referenced the environmental impact assessment that was done on the Charleswood Bridge. That is



not one of the assessments that I was very much involved with, but I think that there is a role for the province to play. The City of Winnipeg does not have its own environmental impact assessment provisions, and it relies on the provincial government on these kinds of developments, particularly class redevelopments, to fulfill that role. I think we do have a role to play as guidance.

One of the questions I have initially was from the House with respect to the elimination of the overhead rail bridge. I am hearing conflicting reports that there still is going to be continuous access for cycling and recreational use, and that overhead rail bridge was not important to ensuring that that access is going to be there. On the other hand, I have people telling me that the rail bridge was significant for the kind of cycling and recreational use that is intended for The Forks or is desired for The Forks, and that it makes us wonder why the deconstruction of that rail bridge was done with such haste. Why was it done before April 22, which was the deadline for appeals to the environment notice that was in the paper?

All of these kinds of things are, I think, legitimate concerns for people, and they want to be involved in this process. There have been a number of people, as the minister has referenced, who have been very active and involved in trying to have some community input into the developments at The Forks. So I will stop there and let the minister respond to my concern about the need for this particular rail bridge to be used to ensure that there is going to be cycling and recreational access continuously from The Forks to Churchill Drive, a proposal which, as I understand it, was accepted by the city and is in keeping with Plan Winnipeg.

**Mr. Cummings:** Well, I do not need to defend my position in terms of support of The Forks. When I was first an elected member, my city colleagues took a bag lunch and took me down to The Forks, and there was nothing but a bunch of decrepit buildings and some large acreage of gravel and cinders and pointed out the vision that they had for the development of this area.

In relationship to the bridge that has been removed, I do not think that should necessarily be

unexpected. I think that the member might better address, if she believes in the concepts and the principles of sustainable development as she professes to, then she might also recognize that that means that other responsible authorities also have to take their share of responsibility for environmental matters. It does not mean that one level of government is totally coming in over another.

In development of a bicycle crossing there, I would think that might well be something that the general public might want to discuss with the city in terms of its long-range plans, and those will be presented as part of the environmental hearing and what spans they intend to have, how they intend to manage foot traffic, how the foot traffic and bicycle traffic can be merged, if that is what has to happen. I would certainly encourage that that occur as part of that process.

I think that we have just received one of the nation's premier awards for The Forks and its status as tourism in an urban development, an urban redevelopment project. So The Forks board is held in very high regard, based on the record that it has been able to produce up till now. The city, the province and the federal government all have representation there, as I recall the structure of that board.

I am not familiar with the bridge that has been taken down. I make that very clear. I think the member is perhaps pushing the wrong buttons in terms of what she would like to see this evolve into under the reconstruction of the Norwood Bridge. The province does not necessarily dictate, but they certainly run the process and will, from the environmental point of view, provide the answers that may be raised around the reconstruction of Norwood Bridge.

\* (1450)

I would take it even a little bit further. This is not just an environmental issue. It is also an issue of tourism, of community access, of developing downtown bicycle corridors.

When the member says that Environment has a role to play in the urban area, I agree wholeheartedly. I sit as a member of the Urban Affairs

committee. I communicate regularly with this municipality and others. That is why I constantly reference the fact that I am very pleased to have had a chance to spend a year in Municipal Affairs so that understanding and those lines of communication were there before I ended up in Environment, because really that is one of the major client groups the Department of Environment has to work with. The connection is very obvious. The principles of sustainable development all apply, but that also means that other departments, other responsible jurisdictions have to also apply their planning and their best judgment for environmental protection and enhancement.

We are talking about a seriously altered environment, however, when we are talking about the area around the Norwood Bridge. We are talking about redeveloping it into what may well be a very attractive area, but I do not think that from the environmental point of view we are going to be talking about saving of sensitive plants. We will be talking about making sure the riverbank is not damaged, or that if it is that it is repaired, so it is kept in as close to a practical and original setting as possible.

I am not sure where the member wants to take this questioning. If she is asking, will there be a hearing on the Norwood Bridge, I anticipate there will be. If she is asking me to go back and horsewhip the city for taking removal of that bridge, I do not think that I am in a position to do that.

Ms. Cerilli: I will start off by asking if the minister has reviewed or been briefed on the proposal for the Norwood Bridge. To be more specific, he said there will be a hearing. Can he be more specific to describe what type of an environmental impact assessment process this development will have?

Mr. Cummings: I have been involved in a discussion at the early stages about what the city wanted to do. The specifics of the reconstruction I am not familiar with. I will check to see if staff has received anything that resembles a proposal.

The proposal has been brought forward, it has been put on the public registry and is proceeding through the process. In fact, there has not been much feedback at this point, and I suppose that raises the question about what I said earlier. If there are no significant objections that are raised, then there will be a decision point as to whether or not a further public process will be required. But they are going through the process as required.

Ms. Cerilli: I think we are going to be spending some time on this issue then, because as I understand it, when this project was initially presented, there was an ad in the paper and there were numerous, like hundreds, of objectors.

Now there has been a second notice and there have been fewer, I would even say quite a bit fewer, numbers of people. I think that those members of the public were under the impression that they already had sent in their letters and let the various governments know, the city and province know, that they were very concerned about this development and that they would like to have input through a hearing.

This sort of leads us back to the questions I was asking yesterday about when there is a development and the public are the ones that have to intervene, so there is going to be a thorough assessment—it is their responsibility, they are the ones who carry the can in ensuring how extensive the process is going to be—what kind of information do they get?

As in this case, it seems that they are either misinformed or misled because they are under the impression that they have already done their job and sent in their letters and made their position clear. Then there is another notice, a new process, and they are told that there was not enough objection and they are going to have to be satisfied with not having a full hearing on the development.

I find this is totally unacceptable. This is completely unacceptable. If the minister would go back, I think that there are probably hundreds, over a hundred letters that the public has sent in with respect to this development. I think there is an obligation to have a thorough public,

environmental impact assessment process on this development.

**Mr. Cummings:** So the member is clearly stating then that she wants a public hearing.

**Ms. Cerilli:** That is pretty clear. Does the minister have any question about that or any reason to believe that is not warranted under this case?

**Mr. Cummings:** I just wanted the Environment critic for the NDP clearly on record as to what she thought should happen in the case of this bridge.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Is the minister now prepared to tell us what the government's policy is with respect to this bridge? Are they going to follow a process? Are they going to make it clearer at the committee today what that process is, so the public of Manitoba can read the Hansard and be sure of where this government is going in terms of environmental impact assessment and in terms of the development related to The Forks?

**Mr. Cummings:** This project is going through the process as laid out by The Environment Act, which was written by the preceding government and ultimately passed after we came into office, which allows for the information to be brought forward for licensing purposes, put on the public record. There is a decision point, whether or not a public hearing process will be necessary, based on the feedback that comes from that process.

It is the director's decision actually at that point, and then there can be an appeal to that if people believe the director has somehow recommended a course of action that is not in line with what they want. I suspect that what the member is referring to is that the city has its own series of open houses. In fact, that was the problem with the Charleswood Bridge situation where the city held its open houses and felt that it had in fact an opportunity for public input. The process, therefore, does have a bit of a duplication, but not one that I think the member can too easily point to as being anything more than a case of overkill because really there are two opportunities for people to be involved.

Frankly as I understand the issues that were raised earlier, and I did not follow it precisely, most of the issues that were raised at the open houses were matters of planning, of traffic flows

and those sorts of things, so the environmental process sometimes gets abused in that respect.

If we are talking about environment problems, then that is the appropriate venue to deal with them, but I think there are an awful lot of other side issues that get thrown into these questions and are generically called part of an Environmental Impact Statement.

Once you get passed the immediate vicinity of the bridge, then the city has processes and a responsibility to follow its own processes in order to deal with those issues.

\* (1500)

**Ms. Cerilli:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, so the minister is now saying that urban planning issues related to traffic flow and volume are not environment-related issues for assessment consideration. I mean, is that what the minister is saying?

**Mr. Cummings:** If the commission is being charged to look at a bridge or if a broader traffic, that does not mean that we are charging the commission with a broader traffic study.

The member is picking up the cudgel for an awful lot of other groups out there who want a city-wide environmental study—for lack of better words—of traffic flows on how we manage traffic in an urban setting. So if she wants to get into urban traffic management and those impacts, then I think she might want to get into the discussion with the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh), who will be very willing to discuss what some of those problems are and how the city and the province are moving to address them. But to say that every time we deal with a bridge in this jurisdiction, we need to have a complete assessment of traffic flows across the city does not seem to me to make a great deal of common sense.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I would say to the minister that he is missing the point in a number of areas. The point I raised in the House today in Question Period was we have the traffic study coming down the pipe from the city; this government has funded it through the Department of Urban Affairs TransPlan 2010.

My question is, why is the government allowing developments to go ahead before that plan is presented from the city? Why do we have all of this bridge construction and traffic routing going on before the plan is presented? Why is the government giving up its authority through the environmental impact assessment to try and make sure that this planning is going to be done in keeping with environment provisions because we do not have the plan and the survey that is being done through the city?

So that is the issue. The other side of it is, in the environmental impact assessment the government does have the ability to address all of these issues. I am not saying that we should have a traffic study done for each bridge that is being looked at in the city, but what I am saying is that we should be waiting for the entire urban traffic plan to be developed before we go ahead and take down old bridges and build new bridges.

I drive over that bridge pretty much every day. I know about the congestion problems with the double traffic lane that goes across that bridge. I am familiar also with the access problems to The Forks that could be developed if one of the proposals that is being presented goes forward, where you are not going to be able to access The Forks coming from the north.

You know, I guess I would just beg to differ with the minister that these are all environment-related concerns. These are part of the urban environment, and we have to be concerned about traffic volume and traffic flow, and that is the purview of environmental impact assessment and the Environment department. I do not know what kind of expertise the department has on the commission or through the department to make sure that these kinds of issues are going to be considered in an environmental impact assessment, but certainly in this day and age, I do not think the minister can be safe to say that these are not issues that should be addressed in an environmental impact assessment on a project of this magnitude in the centre of the city.

I mean, we had an assessment on the Charleswood Bridge, and it just makes sense that

we are going to have similar consideration in the downtown area at the core of the city where we have, I think, increased volume of traffic, it would be safe to say. We have to get with the '90s, I would say to the minister.

He has raised other issues that I wanted to talk about too, but I will leave it there, and I want him to respond to this issue of examining the study that the City of Winnipeg is doing prior to having the department withdraw its requirement for environmental impact assessment without having the study there and the study completed.

**Mr. Cummings:** The member chooses to ignore the fact that the bridge is in poor structural repair. It needs to be replaced and it has begun the process. The city has had its open houses, the Department of Environment has now given notification and published information that it has, and it is moving along. I am interested that at this late juncture the critic for the New Democratic Party is now suggesting that no matter what the public has said, there must be a large public hearing to deal with this issue over the next period of time.

The traffic studies will not do away with the need for a bridge at that location, and everyone knows that there is a limit to how much automobile traffic you can pile into a particular area. I appreciate the member putting her party's position on the line, but it does not detract from the fact that we are well into a process which is, I think, quite a credible process despite the member's protestations to the contrary, and we will wait and see what feedback we have received.

**Ms. Cerilli:** The minister is talking about the wonderful process that has been conducted on this, and I would ask the minister, has there been a public hearing on this project?

**Mr. Cummings:** The city held an open house. We have not.

**Ms. Cerilli:** So the minister is saying that because there was an open house run by the city that there has not been a public hearing under The Environment Act, and seems to be implying that is not necessary and that somehow it is going to be replaced because of an open house where there has

been no, I think, opportunity for members of the public, who have the right and who certainly have the understanding, to present an alternative vision for what the city is proposing there.

I think that in this day and age we want to make sure that we are going to look at those ideas that come forward from the community that are going to raise concern about the direction that urban planning or any kind of planning and development is going. So I would just ask the minister to clarify if my assessment of what he is saying is accurate, that he is saying that there is no need for a public hearing on this development because the City of Winnipeg had an open house.

**Mr. Cummings:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member is deliberately misrepresenting my comments. There is no connection in terms of the environmental hearing process between the city having a public open meeting and whether or not we will eventually call an environment hearing. I said earlier in reference to the Charleswood Bridge that there was confusion caused around that, and I thought we cleared that up as a result of the process that we went through with the Charleswood Bridge. I really resent the member attempting to twist this, that for some reason there might be some lack of concern on our part about whether or not there needs to be a hearing.

If the public is not as disconcerted as the member appears to be about having a hearing, then that will obviously impact on the decision one way or the other. I hope she is prepared to write the City of Winnipeg and write me, go on the public media and demand a public hearing on the bridge. I hope that is the route she is now embarking on, if that is what she really believes.

\* (1510)

**Ms. Cerilli:** I think that it is the minister that has been trying to twist what I have been saying a number of times today. I will go back then to asking the minister if he and his staff can clarify the notice in the paper that was for an EAPF. I am not familiar with that abbreviation. Can the minister tell me what that abbreviation means, if it is a city process or a city board that put a notice in the paper on this development, and can he also tell

us the number of people that responded under that public notice in the paper?

**Mr. Cummings:** Unless the member has something she would like to share with me, as far as we can recall, it would not be included in any kind of notice that we would put out. It might be something that the city would have publicized.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Can the minister then clarify for the committee the number of appeals under the public notice that was in the paper regarding this project? The deadline, I think, was April 22, '94. How many notices or how many letters of concern were submitted to the department?

**Mr. Cummings:** I believe there was only one.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Will the minister endeavour to get for me the number of other submissions regarding this project that were sent in prior to the notice that the Department of Environment put in?

**Mr. Cummings:** If the member is asking me to report on who may or may not have sent information to the city, I suggest she should ask the city.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Has he been in contact with the city, and is he aware of the number of groups or individuals from the public who have written to the city with regard to this project raising concerns about this project?

**Mr. Cummings:** Have I had direct communication with the responsible bureaucrats in the city? No, I have not.

The member is now taking up the cudgel of that NDP gimme group, the Choices, which is the only objector that filed with the Department of Environment, to the best of my knowledge at this point. So now it is very clear what the strategy is. They want to delay and they want to confound the process in the name of the environment. In fact, it is not environmental issue, once you get past the specific core responsibilities, that we are dealing with. It is a planning issue, and if she has a planning problem with the City of Winnipeg, then for goodness sake, talk to the City of Winnipeg.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, has the department had any contact with the city that

would have received numerous letters of concern regarding the Norwood Bridge project?

**Mr. Cummings:** I would assume that at the staff level we actually work fairly closely with them.

**Ms. Cerilli:** So then the department would be aware of the number of letters of concern and letters of appeal that were sent in to the City of Winnipeg with respect to this project. Could he tell the committee the number or the volume?

**Mr. Cummings:** That is not something that either party would be under obligation to be in discussion with or be providing to each other. I frankly cannot tell you whether the city would have shared that information with the department or not.

But the member is attempting, in fact, might even be succeeding, if someone were to be listening to this inane conversation, to confuse the public out there in the difference between the city, municipal responsibility and their planning and environmental responsibilities that they have to take responsibility for and the Manitoba Environment Act responsibilities that we have a greater responsibility for in the specific development of the bridge itself.

I really think the member should stop trying to confuse and confound the process. If she does not like the process let her say so but do not try and alternately flip back and forth between the city's process and the province's process. Once they have gone ahead with their—they have started their planning process, they have then triggered the environmental process within the provincial jurisdiction, and we are dealing with that.

If the member is attempting to make some kind of a case that we are pulling the wool over the public's eye, I think she is on very weak ground.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I beg to differ with the minister. I think that I am on very strong ground because I—you know, I have been quite amenable over the Estimates so far with the minister. I think that we have gotten along fairly well, but I also think that this government has a horrible record on environmental impact assessment, and they may go back and say, well, it was better than yours but times are changing and this is not acceptable.

It is not acceptable for this government, on project after project, to continue to manipulate environmental assessment process, and I am afraid that is what is happening here again. The minister talked about having responsibility only in a certain area in terms of assessment, and I would say that I saw the notice in the paper with my own two eyes. I cut it out of the paper. It clearly said it was a Manitoba environmental notice of appeal for an environmental assessment, and the deadline was April 22.

Crossing that bridge before April 22, I saw that there was construction going on prior to any public opportunity to be completed for appeal to the department. So that is where this is coming from. That is where this is coming from, from my own observation that there was one thing in the paper which said the public had the opportunity to raise issue until April 22. Before that deadline was even up there was construction going on on that bridge project. Now the construction seems to have stopped.

The overhead bridge is gone and I have had phone calls to my office from a number of people who have a lot of time and effort invested into this area, who, I think because of their expertise, have something to offer. I think it is legitimate that I raise these questions here because, as I just said, under the department's authority, as indicated from that notice that was in the Winnipeg paper, they have a responsibility.

If the minister says I should just go and talk to the city, I think that he is wrong, that I can raise this issue here because this department has a responsibility to conduct an environmental impact assessment on this project that is going to be thorough, that is going to look at all the issues related to this environment and development question and is going to make sure the city is not going ahead with the construction prior to fair and thorough consideration.

The member for Riel (Mr. Ducharme) seems to be having some difficulty with my statements. If he wants to put some information on the record, he can have the opportunity to do that. I know that he also represents a constituency.

### Point of Order

**Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Government Services):** I would just like to say that people in the south end of Winnipeg have long waited for this bridge, and they expect this bridge. It is a good project. She should maybe go back to the city and talk to the city in regard to their engineering designs and what they have planned.

They have hired engineers. It goes back five, six, seven years they have been working on that project. She should go back and gather that information instead of bringing it up here.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Order, please. The honourable minister did not have a point of order.

\* \* \*

**Ms. Cerilli:** For the information of the member for Riel, I do talk to the city on a regular basis, but I would also inform the member for Riel that his government has a responsibility under The Environment Act.

\* (1520)

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Could I ask the honourable member to put her remarks through the Chair and not open debate with the honourable Minister of Government Services? It will not help the circumstances that we are in this afternoon.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, this is but one project that the government is involved with, in terms of environmental impact assessment, that seems to be presenting some problems. I said in my opening comments and again today that I think that this is an area that the government has really, really not been in compliance with The Environment Act, that there have been a number of incidents where there are grounds for court action, there are grounds for, well, legal prosecution, I guess, for violation of The Environment Act. I think that this is one of the areas that—it is the real record of this government on environment issues.

In terms of responding to some of the other issues raised here, I also represent an area of the city that relies heavily on this bridge. As I said, I cross the bridge myself pretty much every day, unless I come the other way, over Provencher. But I think that we also want to make sure that this

development is going to be done in keeping with a forward-looking vision of The Forks and of environmentally sound urban planning and urban traffic flow.

The government continues to claim that it believes in sustainable development, in change, but yet on issue after issue, as exemplified by the way that it mishandled environmental impact assessment, we see that it continues to just push through development and do things in the same old way.

I think that, you know, there are groups out there. The minister has made disparaging comments about some of the individuals who have put their thoughts forward to the city and to the department with respect to this development. I would just suggest that perhaps it is time that we started taking a second look at some of the alternative vision, because certainly we can all see that it is necessary, that there are serious problems in the city and in the province in terms of environment development, and we have to start doing things differently.

I, for one, believe that the environmental impact assessment process is one of the best tools that we have to start doing that, and we should start respecting it and following the legislation more to the letter and make sure that we are not going to be compromising the process in order to try to get developments pushed through that are on some other agenda, other than a sustainable agenda.

I would just ask the minister to, you know, not try and put words in my mouth, and I will not try to put words in his mouth with respect to these kinds of issues.

I want to ask the minister if the Manitoba government through any avenue, be it through The Forks Corporation, through the department directly, through appointments that they have, if they have any influence into the planning of The Forks, particularly in terms of environmental concerns.

**Mr. Cummings:** The Manitoba government has its shared responsibility as part of the Forks, now the combined board, Forks and Core Area, but where they have an environmental issue that needs

to be dealt with through our process, they are a regulated body the same as anybody else.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I did not follow that answer. Will the minister repeat the answer, please?

**Mr. Cummings:** What I said was the Province of Manitoba has input through its membership on The Forks board, the same as our other two partners do, but if the member is asking, what do we do in terms of environmental matters, they are a regulated entity, the same as other independent organizations might be, or other individuals, or other corporate bodies.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Can the minister tell the committee who is on that Forks Renewal Board as appointed by the Province of Manitoba, or the government of Manitoba, and how were they selected?

**Mr. Cummings:** No, I cannot, nor do I think it is necessarily pertinent in relation to the environmental issues. I cannot off the top of my head name the members of the board. [interjection] Well, yes, I think that they are appointed the same way that the federal representatives that Mr. Axworthy appoints are brought forward. The member for Riel (Mr. Ducharme) has pointed out that in fact the Pawley administration would have used the same route to appointment that this government does.

Now if the member has information that she wants to bring forward about something the board is or is not doing in relationship to environmental matters, I would be more than glad to try and answer her.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I do not want to belabour that issue too much. I know that the committee is coming up to look at The Forks development. I am just trying to get some background information. Just to clarify then, these are the folks on the committee appointed by the government who are there to take forward the perspective and the vision of the provincial government with respect to The Forks. Is that correct?

**Mr. Cummings:** I would hope they carry forward—in a broad sense, when this government particularly appoints people to boards and commissions, we attempt to appoint quality people who are prepared to bring forward their own

intelligence to bear on the topic in front of them. I think that they would resent being at least notionally referred to as puppets of this government.

**Ms. Cerilli:** The minister is going to talk about my putting words in his mouth when he has just said that about what I asked. Now, let us get real here. I did not use the phrase, puppets of the government.

**Mr. Cummings:** That was the implication.

**Ms. Cerilli:** No, the implication is in terms of policy. I would think that this government has some vision for The Forks, I would hope. It may be a vision that we agree with; it may be not. There are a number of issues related to The Forks where we could have the debate. The question that I am asking right now is, is it the expectation that these people are there to bring that vision, which I hope would include some sense of the environmental concerns, the sustainable development aspects of The Forks?

**Mr. Cummings:** The member is determined to make the discussion around The Forks solely an environmental issue.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Sustainable development.

**Mr. Cummings:** Well, the member says now that refers to sustainable development. Then, if it refers to sustainable development, it would follow that it is not just the Department of Environment that has input into the ultimate planning process that The Forks Corporation embarks upon. They spend an awful lot of time in the early formative stages. There were public hearings; there were open houses, ad nauseam, as I recall, over the vision that they had for The Forks.

\* (1530)

I was not deeply involved. I became involved where there was an environmental issue that was raised regarding the boat basin and marina, or whatever the title was, at the near end of The Forks. I really am disappointed, I guess, that the member is following this tactic in terms of trying to alter whatever plans might be in place for the Norwood Bridge. If there is ever an abuse of the environmental process, it is when it is required to deal with a very broad range of issues that are not



part of the mandate that is given to it in a particular situation.

There is no question that people have a lot to say about how The Forks might develop and where the redevelopment of the bridge will ultimately take that area. That is not necessarily a direction the Clean Environment Commission is equipped to direct the city on. The concepts of sustainable development means that you have a broad consensus-based solution to your planning that respects the business and environmental concerns that are raised, so you can have a healthy community and a healthy environment. You can have jobs and a healthy environment.

I really am puzzled and disappointed that the member now appears to be putting herself in a position where she wants to be obstructionist in terms of how the process will unfold around the Norwood Bridge and The Forks.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Now the minister is calling me obstructionist. I have been called a lot of things by this government. We will add that one to the list.

I would just like the minister to clarify. I was going to ask the minister this question at the outset of these Estimates as we move into the area of sustainability, so to speak, if he would define his definition of development from a sustainable perspective, because I think it is important here. I mean, he has made reference to that himself. So I would like him to clarify that for the record. How does the Minister of Environment define sustainable development?

**Mr. Cummings:** Well, the member knows as well as anyone else the range of definitions that people like to apply to sustainable development but, in fact, it means that we have development in a way that we are able to protect the sustainability of the environment and at the same time have the opportunity to develop our society so that we have a sustainable lifestyle as well.

Now, this is a perfect example of where the member is mixing and matching to suit her own purposes, and when we look at the Norwood Bridge and the reconstruction of a bridge that has been there since when, 1914 or somewhere in there? There was probably a crossing there before

this one was built. It is now being seen as some sort of an attack on the local environment to replace that bridge.

The bridge needs to be constructed so that it is compatible with the immediate area. Part of that is an environmental question, and that will be dealt with, but the larger plan that the city brings to bear on how it will unfold its traffic, how it will direct the traffic, whether it is to that bridge or to others, and how many spans it should have there to accommodate the traffic that is available, will be handled through their planning process.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Well, I am going to leave this section now, this issue, but I would just like to see if the minister would agree with me that sustainable development, in a way, is about mixing, is about starting to connect environment, economic development, health and justice issues, and that all of these areas, in terms of urban planning, certainly have implications for the urban environment. The minister had said that we have had such an impact on the environment in the urban area, but creating a healthful sustainable urban environment, I think, is going to have implications for all sorts of government departments and government services and industries including transportation, including urban planning.

You know, this is where we will have to depart and, I think, agree to disagree, but I guess that is why we are on different sides of the House. [interjection] The member for Riel (Mr. Ducharme) says it is a good thing.

I am going to take a break now and pass it over to my Liberal colleague, and we will go from there.

**Mr. Cummings:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member challenged me and then obliquely ignored the comments about sustainable development. It seems to me that if you are talking about an opportunity for sustainable development anywhere across Canada, this province is one of the areas where that is achievable. We have an environment that is in pretty good shape despite all of the criticism and all of the concern that is raised from time to time, some of it legitimate, some of it perhaps overstated. At the same time, we have

tremendous opportunity for our economy, which is still maturing, to grow in a way that is very sustainable.

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

When we look at the opportunities for lifestyle enhancement in the city in terms of how the city wants to develop its core area and how it wants to develop its traffic lanes, then I think you can look with some confidence to Plan Winnipeg and the long-range planning that they have started in conjunction with the Province of Manitoba, in conjunction with their surrounding municipalities as to how they will develop over the next quarter century.

We have an unprecedented state of co-operation I think between the surrounding municipalities and the City of Winnipeg. That does not mean that there are not ongoing examples of friction, but it is a much better working arrangement than it was six years ago, which I am very confident is a result of this government and the City of Winnipeg and the surrounding municipalities recognizing that if they are going to have an opportunity to benefit from a sustainable development, that it starts with working together and it starts with having long-range plans. The reconstruction of this bridge is not incompatible with their long-range plans.

The member, in my view, far too often likes to insert process instead of planning. Planning does need to be brought forward, examined for where it will take us, examined for the impacts it will have on the community and on the environment, and, ultimately, planning decisions are very often what we end up arguing about rather than environmental matters. If the planning is done properly up front, there would not be environmental issues associated with it.

Ms. Cerilli: I just want to respond. If planning is not process, I do not know what is. If urban planning is not a process, then the minister can debate me on that one.

I just want to refer to a document developed by the acting general manager for the Parks and Recreation Department with respect to the river parkway system priority for the development of

sections of riverbanks along the Red and the Assiniboine.

There are five criteria. One of them is linkage potential. One of them is ownership, public benefit, costs, and other factors which are being considered. This paper outlines a number of areas and talks about a plan for how to make sure that we are going to develop our riverbank property in a way that is going to fit it into a context of sustainable development for this city.

\* (1540)

I come from a background in health education. To me, if we are going to have healthy communities, we have to have opportunities for preventative health care. That is how I fit this into my vision of sustainable development, that we have to have places in our city where people can go and have as much as possible a natural setting to recreate, to do some preventative health care and get some exercise, and that we have to invest in that.

In the long run we were going to save money in terms of health intervention through hospitals and very expensive technology and all that kind of— [interjection] This has a lot to do with the Norwood Bridge as the minister is indicating, because if we do not have the assessment that is going to ensure that we have this kind of vision included into the development at The Forks, we are going to have concrete around the river, and people do not want to go and ride their bikes and enjoy nature because there is none there. They just have concrete.

Mr. Cummings: They could not ride their bikes by the river if we did not do riverbank enhancement.

Ms. Cerilli: The Minister of Environment is speaking out of turn that what I am wanting to do is ensure that we are not going to compromise the good things that have happened at The Forks, that we are not going to now, as I just said, turn part of the walkway into a tunnel with concrete and block part of the access to the riverbank and green space by putting in a monstrosity of an overpass and a bridge system that is going to compromise the integrity of The Forks development as a green space and natural setting in the centre of the city.

So I think the issues that I am raising—

**Mr. Cummings:** . . . the water that they have there, because you have a dam at Lockport. That is why you have got water that is as high as it is at The Forks. Talk about an unaltered . . .

#### Point of Order

**Ms. Cerilli:** On a point of order, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson.

**The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose):** Order, please. The honourable minister will have his opportunity to respond.

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**Ms. Cerilli:** Thank you, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, for calling the minister to order. I just want to finish my comments by continuing to clarify for the minister how this fits into my vision for sustainable development and for environmental impact assessment. I am fully aware that, as the minister says, we often end up debating process.

But I would also say to the minister that is the business we are in. We are in the business of developing policy and that comes from a process, in my opinion, not often enough of consultation to the community. That again ties into environmental impact assessment where we have a tool where we can bring the community in and listen to what they have to say. They have a lot of good ideas. They have certainly a perspective that often gets lost, I believe, in government, when we stop looking at how development actually impacts on people's lives, on their daily experience of living in that habitat that we are creating in the city.

I hope that the minister can understand now where I am coming from. I would ask him to clarify for me if he has seen, or if his staff have seen, this document that is being presented from the city. I know that there has been some concern because of budget restraints about moving in this direction at this time, but I hope that I have clarified how I look at it in terms of providing the facilities for preventative health and providing the opportunity for people to have a safe and natural place to recreate, something that I think is really important in an urban environment. Thank you.

**Mr. Cummings:** I had an opportunity to spend some time with a group that referred to themselves as urban architects, and I could not agree more with the member in terms of what she is saying about the responsibility that we have to create a hospitable environment downtown. When you have a heavily populated area, you inevitably end up with a core area which might well be the older part of the city and anything you can do to enhance that area.

I am simply telling the member that if she is truly committed to the issues that she is bringing forward here, she is only getting part of the answer from me because the environmental hearing process is only part of the answer. There is a larger planning process of which the environmental impact of this bridge and the hearings or the process—that could lead to hearings or might not lead to hearings for that matter—that surrounds it are only part of it. There is a larger responsibility for those who are in fact the urban planners and the City of Winnipeg and their environmental plan that they have for the core area of the city.

I guess we can probably debate this until the river freezes over and we are not going to agree, but I think the fact is that the member is only catching part of the responsibility when she brings the concerns to this table. There is also a significant other jurisdiction out there that has in fact the lead on a lot of these concerns, and we would be more than glad to hear from her regarding her concerns.

**Ms. Norma McCormick (Osborne):** I would like to proceed into some of the detail of the Environmental Operations appropriation and ask some questions specifically on pages 29 and 32.

I note that the staff turnover allowance is cited at 53.9, which is in excess of 10 percent. Can you give me some information as to why you are anticipating such a high staff turnover?

**Mr. Cummings:** Unless I am reading the numbers incorrectly, that is actually a relatively small number. That is \$53,000 as compared to \$4.151 million. So that is a particularly small amount of money that is left there as an allowance.

**Ms. McCormick:** Can I ask then, just in raw numbers, what you are anticipating, what figure you are using to calculate your staff turnover allowance?

**Mr. Cummings:** The rule of thumb is around 1 or 1.5 percent. If it would provide the member with some confidence, I was quite amazed at what was a fairly high rate of turnover in government when I became aware of the larger picture in the provincial government. The rate of turnover is actually far beyond that. So this department is actually quite low, although I would suggest that the other departments, their numbers are shrinking as well, but I do not think they are that low, or at least the larger ones certainly are not.

**Ms. McCormick:** Dropping down to the Other Expenditures, I note that there is a line for Other Operating. Is any of this amount presumed to be used for the purchase of laboratory services with the transfer of the environment labs to EITC?

**Mr. Cummings:** The Other Operating, I suppose, to some extent, some of it could be unanticipated, but what is referenced is everything from meals to computer-related charges to loss, damage, insurance, extraordinary costs, some publications that might not have been anticipated earlier on, assistance reallocation, transfer costs, some membership fees and registration. It is a bit of catchall, but it is not a big number in relationship to the total number. The laboratory dollars are allocated on page 32 under Supplies and Services at \$1.7 million. Part of that will be the laboratory costs.

**Ms. McCormick:** Actually, that is where I was going with this. I was curious as to whether there are laboratory expenditures anticipated in the Environmental Operations side in addition to the Environmental Management side.

**Mr. Cummings:** They are all allocated in the management page.

\* (1550)

**Ms. McCormick:** So any of the expenditures which were incurred on the operation side which would require lab analysis would be run through the Other appropriation.

**Mr. Cummings:** Yes. That is only for this year, mind you. In the changing of the labs to independent operations, amalgamated labs—the lab has been gradually moving toward more of a cost-recovery system. You would probably be familiar with the fact that certain fees and services have increased the last few years.

But for this year, in the interim, to establish what would be normal needs and what even might be their normal fee structure, as I understand it, there is an agreement being struck between the new independent lab and the department to provide the same services that we received last year for roughly the same dollar. In other words, our appropriation for what it cost us to run the lab, we were able to redirect that, in the appropriate numbers, to cover our costs for this year, but as we get a better understanding of what real costs are, those numbers will undoubtedly have to be adjusted.

**Ms. McCormick:** Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, so what I understand then is there is a commitment to a rate structure in this fiscal period which makes you confident that the amount appropriated for the purchase of lab services will be enough for the department to operate and that there will be in a coming fiscal period some perhaps upward revision of the rate structure which the department will be subjected to along with all of the other commercial clients.

That being the case then, I would like to turn to the lines on page 32 with respect to the staff years. I note that there is a drop from 87.44 down to 51.44. Does that indicate the transfer of the lab staff?

**Mr. Cummings:** Yes, that reflects the numbers, 36, with the lab staff. The member made a leap of faith saying that next year the cost reflection might well go up. That might well be right but I do not think we are positioned to acknowledge that one way or the other yet. I would presume that the member agrees with the philosophy behind this. That is, not only does there need to be well-serviced laboratories out there competing for business on a basis that is founded in solid business approach and cost recovery, but it is the same as

our Fleet Vehicle change that we made to a Special Operating Agency. It does require all of us to look at what our real costs are.

You could argue that there may be situations where people might think twice before they order a certain test to be done. At the same time, that is probably not a bad thing because there may well be some rationalization of the work that is done when you reflect the real cost of doing it. That was probably reflected in the manner in which the lab prioritized its work up until the changeover came. The high priority work was done in as a quick a turnaround as possible, but there were matters that did not get done on as high a priority. All of that will, I hope, start to shake down over the next few months.

**Ms. McCormick:** The minister has also made a leap of faith, Mr. Acting Deputy Chair, with respect to my anticipated support without equivocation for the new SOA.

On one level I can understand the rationale the minister is operating from, but I do have some concerns that I would be prepared to discuss at a later point. For right now the transfer of the 36 staff positions accounts for the reduction in staff years. I wonder what then accounts for the increase in staff dollars on this line. You will note that it was \$2,499,000-plus for salaries on the line and then it goes up in this Estimates expenditure to \$2,530,700. I am kind of curious how you have managed—I think this is very clever—to get rid of 36 staff positions and even get an increase in the allocation.

**Mr. Cummings:** The dollars have already been deducted. The 36 are not included in the calculation of the salary. The staff numbers are the only numbers that are changed there. It is not 36 less and the payroll the same size. The payroll for the numbers that were left was a certain size, and then the . . . payroll for those numbers that were left is a certain size. The calculation already reflects the downsizing, but there is a small increase there which—and it is small, \$37,000, that reflects increments and other normal entitlements that would go with salary benefits.

**Ms. McCormick:** So if I understand correctly, the \$2,499,000 indicated as the expenditures for '93-94 is not true. That is not an accurate expenditure figure. That would be almost a proration basis.

**Mr. Cummings:** I suppose it depends on how you wish it reflected. It is adjusted so that you are comparing apples and apples, is what it really is intended to do. It did not mean to confuse the issue, but it was meant so that the bottom line, at least as I read it, is so that the bottom line figures are, in fact, comparable. You do not need to adjust them.

**Ms. McCormick:** I can see what you have done. I just think that it is a bit of a misrepresentation to imply that you have got 87 staff years for the one amount, and then you get 51 for an increased amount. It does provide for some confusion.

**Mr. Cummings:** I understand what the member is saying. I guess it is not unusual, however, with having seen a number of these types of representations before. You can have a staff year—and it is not meant to have happened here—but you can have a staff year with no dollars attached to it. All this was meant to reflect was the number of staff years that were allocated, but the dollars are meant to be compared on a staff-to-staff basis. There was actually an increase of \$31,000 to pay the same number of staff this year over what those staff got last year. If you calculate the columns vertically, you do get a balance as well.

**Ms. McCormick:** So all I need to do, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, through you to the minister, is pretend in my mind that the 87.44 is in fact 51.44, and I will have it, right?

**Mr. Cummings:** I am not sure if the Auditor agrees with the term "pretend," but that is fine by me.

**Ms. McCormick:** You have given me the invitation to offer you my comments on the process of transferring the lab to an SOA, and I was wanting to make sure that one of the essential considerations in the first run is covered off, and that is the issue of accreditation. If the lab's services are to be fully useful to those people who are looking for the analysis of environmental sampling, there is a process for assuring

accreditation. Equally there is a process for occupational safety and health sampling analysis, done generally through the AIHA. Has consideration been given in the transfer of the mandate from the Department of Environment through to EITC with respect to ensuring that this laboratory facility in its new incarnation remains accredited in both systems?

\* (1600)

**Mr. Cummings:** Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, that is a requirement of their charter.

**Ms. McCormick:** The other concern that I would have with this private sector entity is the possibility that if it operates under the Board of EITC that many of the people who are on the list—I do not know if they are called directors, or at least the council—are people who are potentially going to be people whose organizations may submit samples for analysis. For example, we have Bristol Aerospace, Simplot, D.W. Friesen, Standard Aero, some engineering firms, rolling mills, Inco, Western Glove.

Does the minister see any possibility for a conflict of interest with respect to the lab being accountable to people who are in fact the community who may be seeking analysis or submitting samples to this organization?

**Mr. Cummings:** Interestingly enough, one of the accusations used to be that because the department had the lab housed within the department that therefore you could not trust the results that came from the lab. The accusation was the department was covering its own backside because its own lab would not condemn tests as a result of something they may or may not have been controlling themselves, which, frankly, was a crock.

I do not see shadows behind every bush on this issue. The member raises an issue that undoubtedly needs to be examined, but certainly in the interim and in the first year as this transition is being completed, it is not something that I have been troubled by. I have not spent a lot of time following through what relationship there might be in terms of looking for work.

We have a situation where just getting on with the amalgamation, I think, is going to be the major

struggle between the three labs here, and how it will evolve from there, I suppose, is probably still somewhat of an open question. This is not being driven by any one of the originating departments. I would think the member might agree that there is some validity to taking that approach as well. I hear the question and it will not go unnoticed.

**Ms. McCormick:** I think I would feel more comfortable if this had been driven within the lab groups themselves. Now the Department of Environment is in fact going to be more a client of this new group than the provider of the service. For that reason, the purpose of my questioning on this line is to ensure that the department continue to have access to the quality and timeliness of analysis that was there before.

I guess that is another area for questioning. If a commercial lab goes into competition with other labs in the marketplace, will this then mean that the department will also be free to seek laboratory analysis from other private sector labs? If it works one way, does it work the other way as well?

**Mr. Cummings:** I think the member would likely appreciate that that is not likely in the initial stages. It is no different than the fleet vehicle. By the way, this is not a special operating agency inasmuch as it is set up slightly different, with reporting to the agency that it is. By comparison, however, in the transitional stage, there are mutual grounds for wanting to support each other, if you will. The new entity needs the business.

The departments that used to do business with their own labs need the assurance of budget and timeliness as you raise. So there is a mutual support mechanism there in the early stages. There is a lot of complex possibilities that evolve from this when you talk about timeliness without really addressing it. I am not sure that I am equipped to address it completely, but I talked about prioritization within the work the lab was doing for the department.

We got timeliness, but we also—through prioritization, there was other less important water sampling work, for example, that was pushed back. Those who, from the outside looking in, wanted to or had a different vision of how they

thought the labs should be working were quite concerned about the issue of timeliness, whether it is this lab or any other. So it is something that the new manager and the administration are going to have to work out.

**Ms. McCormick:** I guess I am just kind of interested in this new status then, with the department having almost preferred client status to this new organization. I am surprised. I had read early documentation when this was an idea, and I had understood that the preferred option was to create an SOA, but I must have missed something along the line if that is not how it turned out.

I guess the other question then is, with respect to the ability to compete in the private sector, what assurances would be there in fact if your department is both the preferred client but also the captured client, you know, one that they know they have no matter what? What is going to ensure that the service continues to be as affordable and as timely to the department as it is to the people who can take their money and walk down the street and use another lab?

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

**Mr. Cummings:** It is being addressed by contractual arrangements in the short term. I think that my personal view is, and I am not deeply immersed in this issue because of the management structure that it now has, that we are a client. But I think that as with other situations, some of them SOAs, there is a period of maturity and evolution and then the question becomes, what is the next step? Is the next step, in fact, the one that you are referencing where the department seeks out the best price it can get for best turnaround, or does it have some kind of a preferred client status on an ongoing basis? That is possible and might well be practical considering the nature of some of the things that we do, but that would have to be decided by a contractual agreement for an appropriate reimbursement and level of productivity at the lab, is the way I would see it unfolding.

**Ms. McCormick:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I have a couple more questions. One is with respect to the capitalizing of this endeavour. What mechanisms

would be in place to ensure that the services that are offered by this new corporate entity would, in fact, continue to grow and meet the different and potentially expanding needs of the department?

\* (1610)

**Mr. Cummings:** Well, I think if the concepts of competitiveness are there and fee for service and the department prioritizing its own needs as well, then there needs to be capitalization. One of the problems that we have had in the last few years is, frankly, that we probably should have capitalized the lab more, but because there was some thinking and certainly there was a tight budgetary situation all the way around, whether it was this lab or whether it was other departments, there needed to be some broader discussion about the position of labs in the future of the province. If we want to have a development in a certain area in the province, we need to have aggressive laboratory services. This is one way of coming at it.

The issue that the member raised earlier—I have had it pointed out to me that the EITC board does not, in fact, become involved in the day-to-day operations of the lab. If there was any potential for interference beyond the broader policymaking aspect, that certainly would be minimized. It was recognized at the start and some more capital is now being made available through EITC for the labs to be able to provide better services because, in fact, there were some tests that I believe we were ill-equipped to perform, frankly.

**Ms. McCormick:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, what will be the role of the department in the recruitment of a permanent chief operating officer for this entity? Will there be any involvement, or will that be solely the responsibility of the board of EITC?

**Mr. Cummings:** Up till now, it is varied somewhat maybe from the original conceptual thinking a year ago, but at this point the department is not deeply involved in that aspect of it. Certainly, in the development stages of this plan, the department was consulted and was part of the process, but I am not sure that I could advise that we would likely be part of that selection process.

I am not sure that it is necessarily critical that the department be part of that, and I think that demonstrates the change in roles. Now more important to the department is what kind of service are we going to get, and that will be defined by an agreement.

**Ms. McCormick:** I am not suggesting that you would want to be part of the recruitment, but I think in the answer you have given, it is important that someone who has a familiarity with the operations of laboratories be in place, you know, the CEO. So I can trust that EITC will recognize that fact.

I want now to ask some questions about the relationship between the amalgamated laboratories and how it will relate to the development of laboratory facilities at the MEC. You and I have had some discussions about whether there would be still an ongoing need for the very sophisticated laboratory facility that was proposed in the first licensing agreement with the Manitoba Hazardous Waste Management Corporation.

Can you see the new MEC being also a client or a captured client of EITC?

**Mr. Cummings:** I do not have all of the facts in front of me to be able to answer that question, but I would anticipate that the new centre will want to have some laboratory capacity of its own. They will not want to be a captured client.

One of the reasons that the investors whom we are negotiating with were chosen, was that they brought a vision that did speak to looking at a lot of new and perhaps different approaches. If they in fact evolve in that manner, it would certainly seem to me that from a business point of view, they would want either a contractual arrangement or a capacity of their own.

We are still under some discussion, as the member knows, regarding the development plan for the facility at Montcalm. I have not had my weekly update. I can probably envisage what the answer is, but I do not have the precise answer in front of me.

I am reminded that certainly the kind of work that they are doing, they are going to have some

onsite capacity of their own. They are not going to be running back and forth to another lab with their day-to-day operations, but the scope of that lab I think will be revealed in their development plan that we will ultimately approve.

**Ms. McCormick:** That opens a whole new series of questions that I am not sure we would want to get into today. It does relate to the importance of having ongoing sampling, particularly with this soils remediation facility. I guess I can leave it at the minister's discretion whether he wants to move into that area now or wait for a later line in the appropriation where we will be speaking about the corporation.

**Mr. Cummings:** Well, I will leave it to you, whatever you want.

**Ms. McCormick:** If you have no concern about getting into it then, one of the things that is operational on the site now is the bioremediation facility, and there has been some stated concern. I know, when we brought the corporation before the committee, I had raised some issues around the frequency of testing of samples. There was a concern in the community that in fact there was air stripping going on.

The concern that I addressed at the time was dispelled out of hand by the corporation's officials, but I want to know now, from the perspective of the Environment department, whether the department believes that the activities going on with respect to soil bioremediation are within the terms of the licence, or is there any concern in the department that there are soils that are being accepted for treatment that are contaminated with substances which are not included in the licensing agreement?

**Mr. Cummings:** There are two aspects to your question. One that we touched on yesterday is that as the corporation becomes increasingly active, our own monitoring and sampling process needs to be picked up accordingly so that we are satisfied that they are living within the conditions of the licence. We have no reason or no evidence that they are not within their licence at the operations that they are undertaking now. Certainly, from my uneducated eye, any operations that I have seen



occurring there do not strike me as being in violation of controls that we might have envisaged with the licensing process.

I think there is always a very extreme situation that can be discussed, even the transportation of material. I have had people indicate to me that simply transporting material that you are allowing it to volatilize. Every time you transfer gasoline from your pump to your car, there is always a bit of volatilization that goes on. We are dealing with materials that volatilize, plus a lot of heavier stuff that does not, so as I understand it, very often the more concentrated contaminated soils that they are looking for, certainly our regulatory regime indicates that is what should be going to them rather than a lot of the light stuff.

**Ms. McCormick:** Is the department taking a reverse-onus approach to ask the corporation to provide any sample results? For example, the concern has been raised that they are taking soil contaminated with PAHs, with heavy oils, extractables, things that are not within the scope of the licence. Is part of the enforcement of the conditions of the licence a requirement for the corporation to report on the frequency of sample analysis and the findings from the analysis to demonstrate in any way that they are staying within their licence?

\* (1620)

**Mr. Cummings:** I am told yes.

**Ms. McCormick:** How is this reported? Do the analyses of the samples go routinely or on an as-requested basis?

**Mr. Cummings:** It is handled through the local office in the region, and that is one reason why we are double-checking what our understanding was of which way it is, in fact, handled. It is one of the things referred to yesterday as well that we are increasing our capacity in the region to control what the corporation may or may not do as they become increasingly operational.

I think that the process, you will recall, is one that was brought forward from a proprietary process that we are involved with in the soil remediation at this point. It seemed that there was actually a very good acceptance of the process and

the amount of product that went through there last year.

Certainly, the fact that you are raising the issue that someone had raised concerns with you, this is the first indication from anybody that it has been brought to my attention, that local or otherwise were concerned about the activities onsite. Of course there is a pretty detailed monitoring system being set up that ultimately should provide the security that the community might be seeking in terms of what is being operationalized there.

At the same time the province is going to have actually a much cleaner role, approximately after the 1st of July in terms of that question that was raised several times about being the regulator on the regulatee, if you will, the relationship between the department and the corporation. In my view, we have always been the regulator and they get regulated the same as anybody else.

**Ms. McCormick:** So I guess if your department has not received the concerns around soil contaminated with substances for which the bioremediation technology is less than powerful, it indicates to me that it is either a malicious allegation or that the people who were bringing this to my attention chose only one route and perhaps not the more appropriate route. So I will go back and endeavour to have the concern that has been lodged with me lodged within the department, if in fact there is substance to it.

Another area I am interested in is the statement in the annual report of the Hazardous Waste Corporation which says that a comprehensive environmental monitoring program was developed for MEC comprising base-line data collection as well as ongoing and operational monitoring. The environmental quality of the site and within an eight-kilometre radius will be watched on a continuing basis. Is the department the recipient of this ongoing monitoring data?

**Mr. Cummings:** Yes, we are. Let me add one comment on the previous point. What I said was that I had not received any concerns. I am not aware of whether or not the department may have, though. We will both check our files.

**Ms. McCormick:** So the question then, answered affirmatively that the department is in receipt of the base-line data collection—how is this done? Is it done in the form, for example, of an annual report made by the corporation to the environment?

**Mr. Cummings:** That is more or less correct, but bearing in mind that it is only the last year that we are getting up and going and that we get regularized information. The format that will end up being public knowledge, I suppose, will likely end up being in an annual report or an annual piece of information that is published, because certainly that is what we are committed to. That is what the corporation is committed to in terms of keeping the community comfortable with what is going on at the site, but it has not been much more than a year that it has been operational, I assume.

**Ms. McCormick:** Perhaps we can come back to this at a future time, but just for now, does the department prescribe any form within which this data is expected to come back, either through the licensing condition or through the department's own protocols?

It is just very interesting that we dealt with flora and fauna monitoring around Oak Hammock Marsh today and that seems to have been altered a little bit, and now we have a licensing condition placed on the corporation for monitoring, and again, your answer that it has only been up and running a year, seems to me kind of begs the question about whether or not, if there is going to be an impact, it might immediately be seen, so you would want to know immediately to correct it. So I am just curious if there is any kind of protocol that the department sets out on the regulated bodies when in fact they are asked to do reporting on an annual basis.

**Mr. Cummings:** I am told that the reporting requirements, as they are spelled out in the licence, are quite onerous and your question was, do we prescribe the nature of the testing or are we prescribing the nature of the reporting. I think that from our recollection that is largely spelled out already and that we will be following the procedure. But I think more importantly, when I

said that it had only been operating for a short period of time, that does not mean that the information has not been forward. I was referring to getting it the same as we were talking about the air quality reports from the province. They are not necessarily in a format that you are ready to publish, although I do not think they are going to be too complicated or too voluminous yet in the early stages of the operation.

**Ms. McCormick:** Just a final question before I turn it back to the member for Radisson. What I am hearing then is that I could go into that licence and I could take the criteria placed on the corporation and then go back to the department and find some kind of compatible match between what was expected to be provided and what is available with the department.

**Mr. Cummings:** That is correct.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, this is the area that has the Expected Results: To ensure that no planned activity or development takes place until the proper permits, approvals, are secured and appropriate limits, terms and conditions are imposed to ensure adequate protection of the environment and public health. So this is a rather onerous responsibility, a serious responsibility, and I have talked a fair bit already today and yesterday about making this connection between environment and health and how we can develop tools in our governments in our various other procedures to make this connection.

\* (1630)

I would like just to start off by asking the minister to indicate to me what his government has done to ensure that this environment and health connection is going to be made and that we are going to have more of a movement to preventative health care. I have made comments in the House as well about health reform means that we start eliminating pollution at source and realize that a lot of our costs in health care are related to the slow and insidious encroachment of environment degradation and how increases in cancer and immune-related illnesses, respiratory illnesses, allergies, all of those kind of things are being shown to be related to environmental

contamination, either water, air or other changes in foodstuffs, cigarettes—[interjection] Booze, the minister says.

So I would ask the minister to indicate how this division, specifically in this department, is moving to start to ensure that we are going to do all that we can to start putting some emphasis at the front end in terms of public health.

**Mr. Cummings:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, certainly that is an important aspect of how the Department of Environment has to deal with these issues, and we work quite closely with the Department of Health. The Department of Health is part of the Technical Advisory Committee, wherever one is struck on our licensing issues. We get advice and seek advice regularly from the Department of Health. So it is not an unusual or incompatible concept that the member puts forward, because I think we, to a large extent, are practising it now.

**Ms. Cerilli:** What I am asking the minister is just a brief explanation of how, other than having one person from the Department of Health on the TAC committee, which, you know, I would like to know who that person is, if it is always the same person or if it changes, and just some other explanation of concrete actions, policies or initiatives that the department has in this area.

**Mr. Cummings:** I think the question begs a pretty far-reaching answer. It varies all the way from the Conawapa review, where the Department of Health had a lot to say about how it thought that should be structured and some of the questions that should be asked, through to rather mundane day-to-day operations. We do have a Health-Environment review committee, along with the technical advisory committees. Certainly, we have restructured ourselves in terms of a Pollution Prevention branch, where initiatives are being sought out in order to provide preventative measures rather than reactive.

We have preventative public health programs that are developed by the Department of Health. It is worth reminding ourselves at this juncture that we in fact have 38 public health inspectors that are part of the Department of Environment today, so

really the public health issues are very much part of our day-to-day menu.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I thank the minister for that answer. So the 38 public health inspectors are part of the Department of Environment?

**Mr. Cummings:** Yes, this is one of those areas that, I suppose, comes from various forms of government reorganization over the years. All public health officers outside of the old boundaries of the city of Winnipeg, I think—is that the right way to describe it?—are employees of the Department of Environment. The City of Winnipeg itself is responsible for public health administration within the boundaries of the old city boundaries.

So there really was a recognition right from the start—and you will recall that there was a joining of Environment and Workplace Safety and Health at one point in the early years of our mandate, and there was some logic to that, except that the workload was very onerous in the number of issues that were evident in both departments, I suppose. But there was a lot of overlap as well, which is another area that we are attempting to reduce, and that is why I referenced earlier, we have an awful lot of people from various disciplines who are also signed up as environment officers.

An example perhaps that helps demonstrate public health overlap with environment issues, it is very evident in rural Manitoba, when a lot of the regional staff are there representing Department of Environment, the local community to a large extent probably has always thought of them as public health inspectors. It is only recently they started calling them public health inspectors and environment officers.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I am looking for the section in the annual report that lists the number of areas that the health inspectors are responsible for.

**Mr. Cummings:** Page 37.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Can the minister give me some direction on the staff?

**Mr. Cummings:** Page 21 of the Supplementary or, pardon me, the annual report—and the question was?

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

**Ms. Cerilli:** Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I just want to take a look at, as the minister said, the onerous responsibility, the heavy workload, the number of different areas that these people are responsible for. We have 38 individuals throughout the province, and the minister has made the comment that they are doing some reorganizing to try and reduce the workload. I would like an explanation of that. What is the department doing to try and reduce the workload?

**Mr. Cummings:** Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, first of all, a number of times I have referenced the fact that we do bring other people in or other disciplines in to act as environment officers as well, but at the same time, I think one of the ways that we think will help reduce workload is to put an increasing onus on those who are regulated so that the officers can get on with enforcement and checking for violation if that is what is needed. But I referenced earlier, even the licensing process, where you go through a rather onerous licensing process as opposed to perhaps an equally rigid but less complicated permitting process, where the standards are laid down—here are the regulations by which you must operate; if you want to operate, you have to agree to meet these standards—to some extent, that is a demonstration of how you can reduce the workload in the regions.

\* (1640)

**Ms. Cerilli:** The minister has made reference to putting the emphasis on enforcement. We were sort of getting at this yesterday when we were talking about how these are connected, that even, I think, the average citizen has the sense that there are people who do inspections and then enforcement flows from that.

Is the minister saying that there is going to be more onus on the industries or the sites that are regulated to do self-monitoring or self-regulating? Is that the direction that the minister is implying? Is that what is happening?

**Mr. Cummings:** I would not maybe go so far as to say self-regulating.

One example is the ozone regulation changes we made, where some of the educational responsibility lies with the industry. Another aspect is that we probably have a fair number of outdated responsibilities that we can prioritize our regulatory regime and the enforcement of it based on the level of risk that is associated.

For example, even the increased workload that occurs with stubble burning, obviously there are certain parts of the province where enforcement is much more important. In fact, that can lead to some, I suppose, discrepancies across the province, but it means that the risk and the level of exposure that is potentially there from certain activities needs to be looked at in terms of the amount of resources that we apply to them. It also explains why I do not think there have been any examples of where there has been a shortage of resources that have been applied under emergency situations.

This department, the Department of Health, Natural Resources, EMO, over my experience anyway, have bent every effort to respond under emergency situations, and that is an example of simply prioritizing your work responsibility. They were not out expecting hog barns, for lack of a better example, I suppose, during the Oakville derailment. It is the same as any other reasonably competent enforcement agency, prioritization goes a long way towards helping to make the workload manageable, and particularly if you look at it from a risk-management perspective.

**Ms. Cerilli:** So if I am understanding correctly, you are saying that there is prioritization that is being done that is based on the risk presented to the public by that specific site. Is that correct?

**Mr. Cummings:** The public and the environment, of course.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Okay.

So we have 83 public health inspectors, some of these people I think, if I remember correctly, are also responsible for Environment Act inspection and enforcement, as well. Are there any other additional people besides those 83 then that are in the department who are doing this kind of inspection enforcement function?

### Point of Order

**Ms. Cerilli:** On a point of order, my dyslexia is catching up with me. I have reversed the numbers. It was 38 that you quoted to me as public health inspectors. I am sorry.

\* \* \*

**Ms. Cerilli:** Are there any other people in the department, then, who have this function of environmental inspection and enforcement in public health inspection enforcement?

**Mr. Cummings:** There is about an equal number of what would be classified as environment officers, but they would not be doing public health inspections. They would not be qualified in that area.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I am working from page 21 for the annual report from '92-93, so it is safe for me to put in on this chart that there are approximately, or there were, perhaps, approximately 38 individuals who are responsible for The Public Health Act inspections, and then there are approximately 38 who are responsible for all those items—13 listed under The Environment Act, as well as The Dangerous Goods Handling Act, as well as all those other smaller requests.

**Mr. Cummings:** A total of 70, 38 and 32.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Have there been any changes to how these inspections are done and this enforcement is done? I mean, this is an area I have commented before that is expanding. There are more areas that are being regulated and designated for having standards set, and the big concern that many of us have is that we have 70 individuals responsible for this in the province.

I am looking at the chart and seeing that in some of the areas there are more inspections done than establishments that exist. I am wondering if some of these are going back to the same place and following up, and if there are examples where we have operations that are going uninspected. Agricultural operations, for example. There are 41 establishments listed in the chart, and there have been 21 inspections; manufacturing and industrial plants 205, and 196 inspections; recreational operations, there are 31 establishments and 17

inspections; incinerators 199 and 23 inspections. Those are some of the ones that are under the line.

So the question I am asking is, are there some of these that are duplicate inspections and follow up, or is this some kind of a systematic inspection system where the public could look at this and have some confidence in some of these figures? It looks like, in some cases, we are keeping up but then in others it looks like we are not.

**Mr. Cummings:** I am told it is a combination of complaint-driven spot checks. You will notice that one item partway down there, scrap dealers, there are only 17 in the province and there were 177 inspections, but of that, 87 may have been caused by complaints or at least that was the number of complaints that were registered—84, pardon me.

Agricultural Operations, I am not sure what that would even refer to. I am told that it would have been seed cleaning, feed mills, that might have dust emissions in a populated area, that sort of thing.

But if you look across the top, the member had referenced Public Health, Food Service. There are 3,187 establishments and 3,945 inspections. I am told, as I recall the numbers by comparison between the services, that we were able to provide in the city of Winnipeg where there is a split-jurisdictional responsibility, that the City of Winnipeg actually spends a significantly higher amount of money on food inspections, et cetera, but it is probably partly driven because of the density of the number of restaurants within the area.

**Ms. Cerilli:** One of the comments the minister made is that they are dealing with this heavy workload by prioritizing based on risk. Can I ask the minister to indicate what the priority areas are for all of these on the two pages, pages 21 and 22.

\* (1650)

**Mr. Cummings:** Before I ask the department to give me further information, I think it is worth looking at No. 9, Swimming Facilities. The numbers would indicate that potentially every swimming facility that we know about was inspected three times. I suppose those numbers do mean something.

We do not have the list with us, but one does exist, and that the regions, in consultation with central administration, lay out their priority workload and establish their priority lists jointly in the area that they are going to concentrate, so if the member is, we can provide a partial list, I think maybe if the member will give us another minute or two.

**Ms. Cerilli:** You can provide that to me another time. I will just carry on with my questioning because we only have seven minutes left for today.

I would be interested in talking about how the regions established these priorities and how much of it is complaint driven. On the next chart, it looks like there is an awful lot of complaints related to private sewage, to unsanitary conditions, to private water supplies, lots to dwellings and buildings, and I wonder if that is the way priorities are set, or if there is some other way of looking at health and environmental considerations.

One of the other concerns that I have, I alluded to earlier that I hear some horror stories of industries or sites being informed before an inspection is done, particularly in the city of Winnipeg, maybe this is more where they are inspecting restaurants. Restaurants know when the inspector is coming, and they sort of clean up their act. Then we have the inspector come, and after that, things go back to a not-so-safe situation. I am wondering if the minister has any comments related to that and if we can be assured that this is not the case.

I have heard, similarly, with dangerous goods that oil has been flushed out of an industry down the sewage system, and when the inspector comes, it is made to look like that has not been happening, so I would just ask the minister for some comment there to reassure us, reassure the committee. What is the policy?

**Mr. Cummings:** First of all, I think we take some pride in the fact that we attempt to respond when complaints are raised, to make sure that we are not overlooking something. Certainly, when occasionally we are accused of not responding to complaints, upon reviewing that, we usually find that that has not been the case.

As for the spot inspection or prior notice of showing up for inspection, I would not expect that that is a practice that is followed, or certainly would not be good enforcement policy if it were. On page 21, there are a number of issues that the department has ticked that they consider priorities, and frankly, the first nine items at the top of the page under Public Health, temporary food service, retail, mobile, food processors, uninspected meat processors, water supply, semi-public water supply, swimming facilities. Then under The Environment Act, waste disposal grounds and livestock production operations, municipal wastewater facilities, and other Environment Act licensing have been the four areas that we would likely have that are quite high on our list, and we have not gone through some of the other items.

We have a priority consultation going on with the Department of Health, through Health-Environment committee. There are efforts being put into regulatory reform, particularly on the drinking water side. A high level of public concern obviously surrounds that latter issue, but the high levels of public concern also drive some of our enforcement priorities. If in this specific area you have—and we have had examples of where domestic sewage has been a problem. Obviously that becomes a priority for the officers in that area because you have to be seen to be, as with any enforcement program, enforcing it at the same time as you are carrying out enforcement.

I suppose that we are also spending a fair bit of time, centrally at least, in trying to work on the establishment of some national priorities, areas of interest that reflect nationally, public—or drinking water, pardon me. Water for human consumption is one of those areas that we actually have a significant ongoing interest in at this point.

Air emissions is one that we referenced not that long ago, and we spent a fair bit of time on that issue and contaminated sites. All of those are—contaminated sites have taken up probably the most amount of departmental effort this past year in terms of getting on with establishment of a regime to deal with them in a fair manner.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Would the minister agree to provide me with a list of the contaminated sites that are indicated, 390, in the report and appreciating that that is from '92-93 and there may be more identified now?

**Mr. Cummings:** It is public information on the registries. Sorry. We have a registry of contaminated sites which is not on the public registry. You will get a copy, however. Anytime you are absent in the House, should I suspect you are out checking out another contamination site?

**Ms. McCormick:** Just do not buy one.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I will try not to buy one, as the member for Osborne suggests. One of the other ones that I think is problematic in the province, especially considering the new regulations that were brought in, is the waste disposal grounds. I know that as I travel around in rural Manitoba I often come across fires burning. I have some photographs that have been sent to me from different sites, and sometimes you do not even know which ones they are—[interjection]

I talk to some people, but I think it is the department's job to do that work, and I will leave it to them. I will certainly raise the issue now. I think that this is an area that deserves some attention. What I would like to get in the remaining minute and a half is some indication from the minister of how this inspection enforcement is being done.

**Mr. Cummings:** Well, I suppose in rural Manitoba this has, in fact, caused about as much controversy as any. Again, as government, we inherited a situation where traditionally waste disposal grounds have been left alone.

**The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose):** Order, please. The hour is now 5 p.m. and time for private members' hour. Committee rise.

#### HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

**Madam Chairperson (Louise Dacquay):** 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 Highways and Transportation.

At this time, I would ask if the honourable minister has an opening statement.

**Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation):** Yes, Madam Chairperson.

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

**Madam Chairperson:** Order, please. The committee has been called to order, and the minister is attempting to give an opening statement. We are all experiencing difficulty hearing the honourable minister.

**Mr. Findlay:** I will make just a few casual comments to open the Estimates. I know the critics probably have a shortage of time and would like to devote their attention to particular issues of interest to them.

Just in a few general comments, transportation as an industry has been integral to the development of Manitoba, the development of Canada, particularly because of the wide-flung geography that we live in and because we are so export oriented we have to move commodities of people over vast distances inside and outside the country.

Our initial transportation certainly started with water, particularly here in Winnipeg, and it evolved to rail connecting the country from sea to sea. The road system has been developed over the last number of decades and certainly the air industry has been a critical component of transportation the last 40 or 50 years.

I think there is one thing we can say about transportation; it has evolved in response to need in terms of movement of people and goods. It has gone through dramatic change over the course of time. I think all members in this House will understand that change has not stopped at any point in time; change will continue.

We have a lot of jobs associated with the transportation industry in Manitoba. It is probably fair to say we have 4 percent of the population, but in most sectors we have more than 4 percent of the jobs in Canada, whether it is railroad or air. We have a very good system, particularly in the road sector. Our rail sector, as we know, is undergoing a lot of discussion about the future. The word "rationalization" comes up quite regularly and we have had major discussion in terms of the future of the air industry. I think agreements struck by the

major carriers now would indicate there is probably greater strength in terms of the viability of that sector in the future.

I see nothing but opportunity for us in the transportation sector. I do see a lot of challenge in terms of dealing with the elements of change that we must address. We are in a global community, global marketplace and we cannot tell our people who are dealing in that environment that they have to pay costs if they cannot pay and still be competitive in terms of selling goods or services to other parts of the world.

I think both members of the two opposition parties are probably aware that this is Transportation Week. It is very fitting that we would do Transportation Estimates in Transportation Week, and the theme of Transportation Week is Intermodalism: The Perfect Fit. I guess the question is: What is the perfect fit in intermodalism? We certainly have a lot of intermodalism, have developed in the past number of years. It is not just intermodalism between road and rail. It is intermodalism between air, rail, road and water.

I have had discussions in the last couple of weeks with different members of both the rail sector and the road sector, and I would like to report the good news of that discussion. I have been told that there is such demand for movement of commodities on rail, there are not enough locomotives to meet the demand at this point in time. That is very encouraging news. I have also heard that there is such demand for movement of commodities by truck that they are having trouble finding enough drivers to meet the need.

That tells me two things. One is that the transportation sector has got some health in it; secondly, that the economy has some health in it, because goods are moving. That means, somebody is selling and somebody is buying. So hopefully, over the course of time, that does translate into more jobs throughout the economy.

Fundamentally, in the global economy net we now live in, any job of the future, and I dare say, most of the jobs presently must be justified on the ability of somebody who can afford to pay for

goods and services on the basis of what the wage is paid for that job. I think we have adjusted reasonably well in Canada, and we have seen some comments made last Friday by the federal minister, Doug Young, which would indicate he sees considerably more change in terms of the transportation sector of this country, in fact, rather drastic and sweeping change.

He is talking about heavy commercialization in activities now conducted by Transport Canada. It is a very sweeping statement. It does not have a lot of definition of what they mean in that context, but we will be ever vigilant that whatever they mean by commercialization in the overall activities of Transport Canada, it does not end up in an offload on the provincial government of Manitoba. There are certain longtime traditional activities that they have been involved in that they must continue.

I think that is all I would like to say at the outset to the Estimates. I see opportunity here. I am learning in this new role, and I am sure I will learn some more in the next few hours we spend on Estimates. Andy Horosko, my deputy, it will also be his first round in Highways and Transportation Estimates as the deputy.

So with that, I will let the opposition critics make a few comments, and then we will bring in staff and start.

**Madam Chairperson:** We will now have the customary reply by the critic for the official opposition, the honourable member for Transcona.

**Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona):** Madam Chairperson, it is my pleasure to take part in the Estimates once again for the Department of Highways and Transportation. I am not sure if this is the fifth or the sixth set of Estimates for this department that I have taken part in.

A lot of the comments that the minister makes will be obviously areas that I personally will be asking some questions on with respect to their impacts on Manitoba, dealing with the service portions as well as the jobs related to those particular industries or segments of our transportation sectors. There are also other areas that I will be asking questions on pertaining to the



maintenance program, the highways program as well.

The minister said that it is fitting that this happens to be the National Transportation Week. I think it is fitting that we are conducting our Transportation Estimates debate during this week because there have been so many changes that have taken place within the transportation sector since I came to this Legislature. I know that some of those changes had been initiated prior to my coming here and that they are still ongoing at this time. I make particular reference to some of the changes in the railway industry.

The minister referenced the fact that there were changes in the airline industries. That is true. There seems to have been a lull in the activities, in the battles that have been taking place over the last year, year and a half. I hope that there has been some stability returned to the airline industries and that we will see, as much as possible, a co-operative effort on the part of our Canadian flag carrier airlines, and our regional carriers as well, to meet the needs of the travelling public.

We hope that we can retain the jobs within the province in the airline industry, as well, without seeing further erosions of those jobs. Some of the questions that I will be asking of the minister will be under the policy section dealing with the PWA and the Air Canada debate that took place at the end of last summer and into the fall and also dealing with the monies that were coming forward to support Canadian Airlines. Also, we will be asking questions pertaining to Gemini and what is happening with the Gemini jobs in this province. We have heard some reports of what has taken place, but we would like some more details on that.

\* (1430)

The minister made reference to the fact that the railways are very busy now. That is my information, my understanding, as well. I know I try to keep contact with the railway industry every couple of weeks to find out what is happening internally there, to find out how the traffic is, how the business is, to find out if there are a number of trains moving. I am told, and have been told now for a few months, that the traffic is increasing

steadily and that there is a significant amount of traffic at this point to the point where, as the minister indicated, there is a shortage of locomotives. That is my information, my understanding, as well.

The unfortunate part of this whole process—and the railways have made a point of this over a number of years now—they have seen a flattening of their revenues. While their traffic level may be increasing, there is a flattening of their revenues, their return on their investment, even with this increase in business, and this is not allowing them to capitalize any of the programs or the changes that they want to bring about. That is unfortunate.

On our side of the House here, we think that is as a direct result of some of the impacts of the deregulated environment and the Free Trade Agreement, as well, putting our Canadian flag carrier railways in direct competition with U.S. class one railways. I think we can have some debate on that when we move into the policy portion of the Estimates. I know I have many questions on that aspect.

The minister made reference to the fact that there is a shortage of drivers in the trucking industry. I know that I have raised questions in this House before in reference to trucking-related issues dealing with owner-operator situations. I have asked for—and I know the department has gone through the process, and the deputy minister's predecessor, Mr. Hryhorczuk, was actively involved in the council of transport ministers' meetings, I believe it was, in setting up a program where we could bring in contract standards and have some protections or some assurances put in place on a national basis to protect owner-operators. I see advertisements. I get the trade papers for the trucking industry, and I see advertisements in the trucking newspapers regularly calling for owner-operators, people to get involved in the trucking industry.

It is no wonder there is a shortage of drivers out there. The traffic may have increased, but I think that the shortage in some part is due to the fact that we do not have any protections in place to protect some of the owner-operators, to encourage them

to, first off, to get into the trucking industry because there is a significant financial investment involved, but at the same time to keep them involved once they are there, to show them that they can make a half-decent living within the trucking industry.

There have to be some protections put in place for these people to allow them to stay in there so that they are not having a portion of their earnings withheld unnecessarily, or they are not being charged extra expenses with no explanation, or they are not having the Workers Compensation premiums charged against their earnings when it should not be taking place.

There are many issues that I have raised here in the past Estimates and in questions, as well. So if we need to look at the shortage of drivers, maybe that is the area we need to bring some legislation in.

The predecessor of this new Minister of Highways and Transportation has said that he will not interfere in that aspect of the owner-operators in their dealings with the carriers. He said that we have to wait for the lead of some other province, some larger province, preferably, to take the lead in bringing forward legislation to protect owner-operators and those who are employed as drivers within the trucking industry.

If something is not right from a principled point of view, I think we should be taking the necessary steps to make sure that there are protections put in place. I think that there are enough carriers out there who are responsible carriers who would look upon any initiative that the government might take with respect to legislation to protect owner-operators as the right thing to do. I would hope the carriers in this province would understand that you do not treat employees in a way that would cause them to leave the industry because it creates future hardships for that company, as well.

Any company worth their salt will look at wanting to do the right thing for their employees, to foster a good working relationship with any employees, whether they be unionized or nonunionized. We will be dealing with questions relating to that as we move into policy.

I have raised questions here with this minister relating to rail car shortages, and we will be dealing with some aspects of that as it relates not only to the export of our grain products but also in dealings with the Port of Churchill, because we have seen it has been an ongoing struggle.

I know the previous Minister of Highways and Transportation has said that this has been one of the major areas while he was minister in trying to resolve this issue, and I know previously, ministers have had similar problems in other governments, as well.

We were hopeful on this side that with the change of government during the federal election we would have seen some initiatives to allow for further export or enhanced exports through the Port of Churchill and to make some changes to increase the amount of exports. We are also looking for information relating to the potential for import-export traffic through Churchill, and I will be asking the minister questions relating to that, as well. I want to know what progress has been made on that.

We will have questions relating to VIA Rail because now the federal government is saying that they are looking at the elimination of all support funding. I just looked at a press release that was out from the Financial Post just this week, I believe it was yesterday, indicating that the federal government is now talking about eliminating all of what they call or reference the transportation subsidy, some \$1.6 billion.

Now, that was a blanket statement from what I can see. I do not know how we are going to maintain some of the services in this province, in particular to the remote communities, if we do not have some funding in place to support that, because I have travelled to the North many, many times and have talked with many of the people there. I have utilized every means of transportation available in the North when I was travelling there. I do not know how we are going to ask the people of the North, who are in large numbers essentially unemployed for the major part of the year, to pay more for the services that are there that allow them to come from their remote communities into the

larger centres for whatever reason, be it medical or otherwise. I do not know how the federal government anticipates they are going to meet the needs of the North and at the same time cut the funding support for those areas.

I am also going to be asking questions relating to the Winnipeg International Airport. There have been some changes taking place there with respect to the movement that had been initiated by the previous federal government, wherein they wanted to move away from federal government controlled and operated airports and move into the privately controlled commercial ventures, where we would put the airport operations into the hands of a private group.

I have had the opportunity to attend the first of what I believe will be annual Winnipeg Airport Authority meetings. As a result of those meetings, many questions came to mind. I had the chance to talk to some of the management people who were involved with the Winnipeg Airport Authority, and they have answered some of the questions, but not all of them.

I will be asking the minister some of those questions too, to find out from his department where we anticipate going with this change, what the policy is of this government and also what we can do to involve a more public participation with respect to the airport, so that this is not solely just placed into the hands of those who have specific business interests, but also to recognize the fact that we have some over 2 million passengers a year who use the airport, and that they too should have some representation on the Airport Authority board.

With those few comments, Madam Chairperson, I will conclude my opening comments at this time and look forward to the chance to ask questions on the specific sections of the Estimates.

**Madam Chairperson:** We will now have opening remarks from the critic for the second opposition party.

**Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (River Heights):** Madam Chair, the minister opened his remarks by indicating that this was his first time in Highways and Transportation Estimates, as it was the first

time for his deputy minister. I think I have now managed to be the critic of almost every department of this government at some time or other since I came here in 1986, but I must say this is the first time that I, too, have done Highways and Transportation.

\* (1440)

The particular interests which I have, clearly, are for the future of transportation in the province of Manitoba. Whether be it by air, be it by rail, or be it by road, I think that we must be concentrating on the network of communication in terms of transportation for the 21st Century. I think that that must be the thrust of our discussion and our debate. Therefore, like the critic for the New Democratic Party, I am very interested in what is happening with the airport and the future plans of the federal government and the participation of the provincial government because I too was at the Winnipeg Authority meeting, and it appears that there will be some representation of the province now, which is an improvement in the right direction, but I question whether there is still enough of the consuming public represented on this board. It still seems very business oriented. It is obviously a business board, but there must be a consumer input into that board, and it still is very small in number.

In addition, I am concerned about the operations of the Department of Highways and Transportation in and of itself. One of the things that struck me, and I want to get into some debate with the minister so I am alerting staff to that point, is the presentation of the Estimates. It is clear that we always have some changes. The expenditures are never identical to what they are in the first-published release of Estimates, but I have never seen a department in which the variance is quite as dramatic as this particular department. The original Estimates of Expenditure for 1993 and '94 as compared with the actual Estimates of Expenditure as produced in schedule 3 of the new book vary by 6.9 percent which is a very high variance. I think that it is worthy of some discussion and some debate as to what happened in the department during that year that would result in such changes in expenditures.

One small, granted, but Transportation Policy & Research actually spent 40 percent more than the original estimate indicated that it was going to spend. One spent 5.6 percent less; the rest all hovered around 5, 10, 7 percent. I think it is interesting to take a look at that and find out why it is that the Department of Highways seems so out of whack.

There is also an interesting issue with regard to staffing, and there may be a very reasonable explanation for this, but it seems to be a department in which staff more or less goes up and down like a yo-yo. If one looks at two years ago, the staffing level was almost equivalent to what it is going to be this year, but then there was a great influx of staff and the question has to be why that was in place at that particular point in time.

So, Madam Chairperson, with those few remarks, I would like to get into the question-and-answer session.

**Madam Chairperson:** Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber?

**Mr. Findlay:** Madam Chairperson, I would just like to introduce the staff who are currently with us: Andy Horosko, Deputy Minister, first time around—take it easy on him; Doug Struthers, Assistant Deputy Minister of Construction and Maintenance; Bill Dyck, Assistant Deputy Minister of Administrative Services; and John Hosang, Assistant Deputy Minister of Engineering and Technical Services and Planning and Design divisions.

**Madam Chairperson:** I would remind members of the committee that debate on the Minister's Salary, item 1.(a), is deferred until all other items in the Estimates of this department have been passed.

**Mr. Reid:** Madam Chairperson, I heard the minister's words with respect to his new deputy minister. I look at some of the changes that have taken place. I welcome his new deputy minister here and, of course, his staff who have been with the department for a long period of time.

Before we move into the full Estimates, I think it only fair and fitting that I take a few moments to recognize the services and the contributions of one

Dennis Schaefer, who had been with the minister's department for a fairly long period of time. I know Mr. Schaefer was here when I first came to the Legislature in 1990. I had many opportunities to talk with Mr. Schaefer with respect to policy discussions on different areas of transportation affecting Manitoba. He was always very co-operative and provided as much help as he possibly could in answering the questions that I had posed.

It is my understanding that Dennis Schaefer has now opted to take retirement from the department and from government service, and I think it only fitting that we recognize his services to the Department of Highways and Transportation and also to the public of Manitoba in trying to make sure that we have an effective and efficient Department of Highways and Transportation but also a transportation network within the province as well.

Maybe I should save this for later, but I will risk it anyway. It is my understanding that the new deputy minister has come to us from the province of Saskatchewan and moved first into the departments of Planning and Design and spent a period of time there. Can the minister just give me a bit of background on our new deputy minister so I have some understanding?

**Mr. Findlay:** Madam Chairperson, the member has given me his history, and he is getting older as I go down the list here, but the deputy was born in Beausejour, so he is a Manitoban come back to Manitoba. Along the way, he received a Bachelor and Masters in Engineering at the University of Saskatchewan. He worked for Chevron and Standard for two years, for the Saskatchewan provincial government for 17 years. He was on secondment to the National Academy of Sciences in Washington for two years, then joined the department in Manitoba here, the Department of Highways and Transportation, as the executive director of Planning and Design in 1992 and assumed responsibilities of deputy minister July of last year, just a little less than a year on the job.

**Mr. Reid:** Madam Chairperson, I appreciate that understanding of the deputy minister's work

history. As he has a great deal of experience, I take it, in all areas of transportation, I look forward to his input into these Estimates as well.

I believe, Madam Chairperson, am I correct, are we on section 1.(b) now, Executive Support?

**Madam Chairperson:** That is correct.

**Mr. Reid:** Can the minister tell me who his current staff are, how many political staff he has and their names, please?

**Mr. Findlay:** Madam Chairperson, two political staff, a special assistant, Jeff MacDonald, and executive assistant Monica Bazan.

**Mr. Reid:** Under this section, Executive Support, Activity Identification makes reference to reviews and directs needed changes to the existing organizational structure. Now, there have been some changes over the course of the last two years that have been taking place within the department; in particular, I reference 13 districts down to five regions. We see once again in this year's Estimates where there are staff impacts as a result of that reorganization of the department. Can the minister tell me, since this is the section that reviews the organizational structure, are there any further organizational structure changes that are anticipated, and will we see any more staff affected as a result of any of those changes? In other words, what is in the long-term plan for the department structure?

\* (1450)

**Mr. Findlay:** Madam Chairperson, we are not planning to replace the person who was in Planning and Design but will be amalgamating that position with Engineering and Technical Services. Other than that, there are no other changes expected.

**Mr. Reid:** The minister references Planning and Design. Can the minister tell me, is that coming out of the managerial section or will it be professional and technical staff that will be affected?

**Mr. Findlay:** Managerial.

**Madam Chairperson:** I do not believe your response was audible. Did you hear it? No.

**Mr. Findlay:** Managerial.

**Mr. Reid:** In the Salaries and Employee Benefits, while the staff levels have not altered, the SYs have not been altered, there have been changes in the Managerial and Professional/Technical dollar amounts. Is that related to merit increases for the employees that are holding those jobs?

**Mr. Findlay:** Yes, they are both general salary increases and merit increases.

**Mr. Reid:** One last question, then. It makes reference to the strategic program directions for the department that would be undertaken by the Executive Support. Can the minister tell me what strategic programs are currently under review by the department?

**Mr. Findlay:** Madam Chairperson, if everybody does not mind I will sit once in a while and stand once a while so nobody feels that they have to stand or sit.

We are at the beginning of a very strategic analysis of the department at this point in time.

**Mr. Reid:** Maybe the minister could elaborate on the term "strategic analysis of the department" then? What areas is he looking at within his department, what subdepartments are impacted? I know that there was some consideration being given as well to the rewrite of The Highway Traffic Act. It is my understanding that there was supposed to be some initiative coming forward this session. We have not seen it to this point by way of legislation, and I am just wondering if that is what he is referencing or are there some other changes taking place within other subdepartments as well?

**Mr. Findlay:** Madam Chairperson, I think all I can tell the member is there is a department-wide strategic planning process that is underway. If the member looks, he will find a similar exercise undertaken in Agriculture which ended up in a document being presented which laid out the strategic direction of the department as it saw its future over the next number of years, working particularly with the private sector.

With regard to The Highway Traffic Act, it has been in a state of rewrite for a period of time, and still remains in that position.

**Mr. Reid:** When can we expect to see that strategic plan document come out?

**Mr. Findlay:** It is a long process. There will be a fair bit of consultation in that process. One would not expect it before another year and a half is up.

**Mr. Reid:** Can the minister tell me, this strategic plan that he is working on, is that in reference to all segments of transportation in Manitoba, or is that only dealing with the internal department itself and the employees of the department?

**Mr. Findlay:** Madam Chairperson, this internal department strategic planning naturally has some implication on services provided to the broad transportation sector, but the planning exercise is his department.

**Mrs. Carstairs:** So that the staff are familiar with exactly what I am, in fact, using to compare because I know sometimes that is difficult, I am using the yellow book that was released last year which is The Detailed Estimate of Expenditure for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1994, as well as the one that was distributed by the minister just a week or so ago.

Beginning with this particular department, because here we have a 5.5 percent differential, in the Estimates as provided last year in the House this particular Executive Support Branch was planning on spending \$468,700 in total. It appears that they spent \$505,900 in total, the \$12,000 differential in Salaries and Employee Benefits and a \$25,000 differential in Other Expenditures. What was the cause for this 5.5 percent expenditure increase?

**Mr. Findlay:** Madam Chairperson, what we are dealing with here is a change in I guess we will call it recording process. Employee benefits, which were previously printed under Civil Service, have been moved from Civil Service appropriation to our appropriation. The adjustments occurred between last year's print and this year's print, so that what you see in this year is those employee benefits printed in last year and this year. The other variance is general salary increase. It is a change in method of recording employee benefits.

**Mrs. Carstairs:** So just to clarify, the additional \$12,000 in total salaries and employee benefits

would have been formerly found in the Civil Service Commission expenditure and is now seen in the Highways expenditure.

\* (1500)

**Mr. Findlay:** There is a combination of factors at play here. There are things like transportation, communication, supplies and services and other operating functions. Some are up. Managerial salary is down, and the Employee Benefits has appeared for the first time. So a combination of, in particular, the Managerial salary going down and the other expenses going up lead to the difference that the member sees.

**Mrs. Carstairs:** Well, let us put aside the staff and Employee Benefits for a moment. The Other Expenditures for this particular branch were supposed to have been \$64,500 according to the original Estimates figure. The Estimates figure as printed in this book was \$89,000.00. That is a difference of \$25,000 or 38 percent. Now that is a significant change.

What caused the expenditures for Transportation, Communication, Supplies and Services and Other Operating to go up by 38 percent between the publication of the Estimates for last year and when you obviously were preparing this Estimates book?

**Mr. Findlay:** Madam Chair, we will bring some detail back. They do not have the specifics on those, what the specific increases were caused by.

**Mrs. Carstairs:** Madam Chair, I am not trying to find a boogeyman. I am really just alerting the minister that there seems to be some percentages that are significant here that I do not have an explanation for that maybe he would like to have an explanation for when he is preparing his next set of Estimates.

I would like to move on to some other broader policy issues though. In terms of the infrastructure announced by the federal government, which the municipalities and the provincial government participated, were any of those monies found from the Department of Highways and Transportation, or was that all additional monies then filtered back to the Department of Highways and Transportation for expenditure purposes? Exactly how did that

work with respect to the Department of Highways, because a number of the infrastructure programs were Highways related?

**Mr. Findlay:** Of the announcements in the infrastructure program, none of the monies announced come out of our budget, nor are they funnelled through our budget in terms of expenditures that are on highways or road-related or bridge-related activities. Most of the infrastructure activities are not road or highway related, but any municipality that brings in streets or projects like that that were approved, it did not come through the Highways to budget, nor is it funnelled back through the Highways budget.

**Mrs. Carstairs:** So in fact there is no co-ordination going on by the Department of Highways and Transportation with respect to projects in the infrastructure program that would be highways related.

**Mr. Findlay:** I think the member is aware that somebody has been hired, Mr. Bruce Birdsell, to co-ordinate all the infrastructure activities, and we provide technical information or assistance as requested, but beyond that, that is our only involvement.

**Mrs. Carstairs:** Presumably, however, in coming up with a five-year plan for the department of future highway construction, it is imperative that you are aware of what the infrastructure program might do with respect to highways in the province of Manitoba. Is there an ongoing liaison between the infrastructure office, in essence, and the Department of Highways?

**Mr. Findlay:** I can assure the member that there is co-ordination between our department and the infrastructure office to be sure that projects that are funded there, we are not double-funding them in any fashion. This can occur certainly in grant-in-aid streets, where municipalities have made applications for grant-in-aid streets. We are vigilant to be sure that we do not give grant-in-aid streets on streets that they have received infrastructure money to upgrade.

So there is good co-ordination, and I think what you will see in the end is an overall improvement of a lot of the sewer, water and road-related

infrastructure in towns and villages, which will complement what we are doing. We never have enough money in the grant-in-aid area to satisfy all the demands or requests from cities, towns and villages.

**Mrs. Carstairs:** I thank the minister for that. That really was what I wanted to ensure—was that the proper communication was in fact taking place.

One of the other functions or activities identified by this particular branch, of course, is communications. I have recognized that they do not deal with their own communications because of the changes in the communication over the years.

On the 27th of May, this particular Department of Highways released not one, not two, not three, not four, not five, but six separate press releases. The paper chase is on, and I must say to you that it drives me crazy, not when just this department does it but when every department does it and feels that they have to take the first page of the press release and change one line of it and then off we go again.

Is there not some way in which we can better co-ordinate the press releases that go out from this government—and by the way, it was done by the previous government too; there is nothing new about this particular strategy—in order that we can save paper, that we can save staff time, that we can save the costs of mailing, so that we can bring more efficiency to communication strategy?

\* (1510)

**Mr. Findlay:** Madam Chairperson, the member might like to say we should streamline things and decrease paper, the reason for doing that was that there are five regions, and one press release is done for each region. So that the major release, which had an awful lot of projects in it, we knew that the local media people, the paper people, would not go through and pick out the projects relevant to their area. So we gave them the projects in region 1, region 2, region 3, region 4 and region 5, to help them go through it and find out the projects that are relevant to their area. So that is why it was done that way.

It was a pretty thick document done all as one, but by breaking it up into the different regions, it helped the people reporting to the public to understand that there were projects in there that related specifically to their area. So you can counter whether you should all do it as one for efficiency, or do it as separate ones so you improve the ability of public to find out what is in the major document pertaining to their area. I think it worked reasonably well, because I certainly had contact from one or two media people and they liked the way it was broken out. It was easier for them to find. They could find projects of relevance to their area without having to search through several pages of one document.

**Mrs. Carstairs:** I still have considerable concerns about the amount of paper that we disseminate from all three caucuses, I might add, to the people of the province of Manitoba and would hope that the minister would look at ways, quite frankly, to cut down on the paper chase as much as it is possible to do so for the purposes of the efficient use of taxpayers' dollars.

**Mr. Findlay:** I understand exactly what the member is saying, and I cannot disagree with what you are saying, but the other side of the coin is we often get asked, just tell us what is going, give us the specifics—and you try to serve two masters at the same time.

**Madam Chairperson:** Item 1.(b).

**Mr. Reid:** Just along that line too, I know this is the first time for both the minister and the critic for the Liberal party, but in past years, what we have had is the Capital Projects list booklet that would come out. It would be one booklet that would be provided to each of the critics, and then they in turn would take it back, and whichever one of the colleagues wanted to have a copy—and it would be done in our caucus rooms—we would be provided. I know we would do that for our rural colleagues to keep them aware. Is there any way that we can get a copy? Does the department now have copies, or have we done away with that past practice where we had the Capital Projects Listings provided to the critics?

In addition to that, the minister has provided in past years information relating to the contracts that had been let from his department pertaining to both the spring and the fall construction program. I am wondering if it would be also possible to get a list of those as well before we get to the portion dealing with Capital Expenditures.

**Mr. Findlay:** We will supply both at the next sitting, the spring project listings in one document and the successful bidders I guess is what the member wants on the various contracts.

**Mr. Reid:** I know that the department has gone to press releases spring and fall now. From what the minister is saying then, do we only have a spring Capital Projects List? We do not have one document showing what our projects are going to be for the complete construction year?

**Mr. Findlay:** The document we will provide will have both spring and fall. It will be one compilation for '94-95.

**Madam Chairperson:** Item 1.(b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$416,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$89,000—pass.

1.(c) Administrative Services.

**Mr. Reid:** Under Administrative Services it is my understanding that any freedom of information requests that come into the Department of Highways, I believe, would be handled by Administrative Services. Can the minister give me some indication on the number of inquiries that the department would have received over the past year?

**Mr. Findlay:** In '93-94 the department received seven applications for information under FOI and four applications were carried forward from the previous year. The disposition was that three applications were granted access, three applications were denied, three applications were partly denied and two applications were withdrawn. That makes a total of 11.

**Mr. Reid:** Can the minister give me some general reasons why we would exclude the release of any information to the public that might be requesting information from the Department of Highways,



and are any of those requests or inquiries related to the dust abatement program?

**Mr. Findlay:** Madam Chairperson, the member asked about any denials of FOI requests related to dust abatement, and there were none. Those that were denied were done on the basis of third-party confidentiality that had to do with somebody requesting what information was supplied from the medical profession with regard to conditions on a person's driver's licence, and we deem it appropriate not to release that information.

**Mr. Reid:** I thank the minister for that. In the previous section we talked a bit about The Highway Traffic Act rewrite and any legislation with the department, and I know we currently have Bill 5 before us which is, I guess we could characterize it as being housekeeping even if it has a component in there dealing with the Autopac 2000 changes.

\* (1520)

It almost leaves one with the impression, and I know the previous Minister of Highways had indicated that at least for two years now, from my recollection, we were going to have that rewrite coming to us. I know it is probably a very extensive piece of work trying to pull all that together, but it leaves one with the impression now that since we have this new bill before us that has a portion of the act that is being rewritten, it almost looks as if we are going to piece the act changes together.

Can the minister give me some indication when we can anticipate to see this change coming forward, and are there any segments of it that are being held up for various reasons of which I may not be aware that maybe he can indicate to us?

**Mr. Findlay:** Madam Chairperson, in order to facilitate what obviously had to be done for Autopac 2000, it was deemed appropriate to do the amendment we are doing, and Bill 5 accomplishes that objective, facilitates the introduction of Autopac 2000.

But the entire act in terms of its rewrite is a very large job and it will occur over the course of time. The member says it is a clip-and-paste kind of process. Maybe, but you have to do what is

urgently needed to be done on the broader picture. You cannot just rewrite it without a fair bit of input from a variety of players, and that process continues on, and we have done what we had to do for this session with regard to Autopac 2000.

**Mr. Reid:** I know we had a piece of legislation before us as well, and I believe this is the section that we can talk a bit about this. It was Bill 6 this time, I believe, dealing with the winter roads. That piece of legislation had been introduced in the last session.

Can the minister give me some indication on why we have had now two pieces of legislation which I believe are essentially dealing with the same subject, both of them now being withdrawn from the House, give me some indication on what the reasons were for withdrawal of both pieces of legislation?

**Mr. Findlay:** Yes, there was legislation introduced last year to deal with winter roads and the intent was to control speeds and weights on those roads. The minister at the time withdrew it because he wanted to have further discussion with the native bands that were involved with roads going across the land. I think it was a total of nine bands involved.

This year, certainly that discussion had gone on. We felt that there was some understanding of the two different points of view with the different bands, but this year, as we looked at trying to control speeds and weights on those roads, there is a simple question: Is there a major problem there that requires introduction of rules and regulations under the act? Really, there are not enough incidents or problems to cause us to have to implement the act on those roads in northern Manitoba.

I think the member and I had a discussion on this previously, and I said that I felt that these people in a lot of these communities are isolated 9, 10, 10.5 months a year. When the winter road goes in, they enjoy their freedom going between communities. They do not live in the same kind of world up there that we live in here. To implement all the rules and regulations and controls and restrictions of The Highway Traffic Act on those roads is an

unnecessary imposition on their lifestyle, in my mind.

I will not say that the issue of controlling speeds and weights on those roads should not be done, but I do not see that it is fair to implement all the other aspects of The Highway Traffic Act upon those people and those locations in Manitoba that live in an entirely different environment that we live in down here. For that reason I am not going to proceed with it this session, and whether it is proceeded with in the future remains to be seen.

**Mr. Reid:** I guess I should do this at the beginning of the Estimates. Throughout the whole document here we have—and I do not recall this from the last Estimates or the ones previous where we have made allowances for staff turnover. I know the department, I believe, used to do it internally, but we are now showing it in here where we have a fixed dollar value of staff turnover. It seems to vary throughout the department. I have not done any percentage calculations on it.

Is there a percentage calculation that the department has done based on the number of employees, the historical experience of the department on the subdepartments for staff turnovers? What criteria did they use for the calculation of the staff turnover dollar value?

**Mr. Findlay:** Madam Chairperson, the figure that the member will see for each department or each branch will vary, and it is based on the historical experience that each branch has had. It will vary—some will be high; some will be low—because simply just historically there has been little or no turnover or lots of turnover in other branches. So that is what is reflected there, the expectation that history will repeat itself branch by branch.

**Mr. Reid:** I appreciate that. Can the minister tell me—and this is one of the discussions we have had in past Estimates on more than one occasion, and the department seems to—there seems to be a fair amount of turnover in some of the subdepartments. Can the minister tell me, since we had some extensive discussion that is past, and the department we found out had from time to time been leaving certain jobs vacant and never filling those jobs, and when it came time for the

regionalization of the department, there were a fair number of jobs that had been vacant for a period of time. Do we have any vacancies under the Administrative Services?

So to make it easier I suppose on the minister and the staff, if there is any kind of a listing that he might have, because I am going to be asking this question in each of the subdepartments to find out where any existing vacancies may be, I am going to be asking that question throughout unless he has a list that he can provide.

**Mr. Findlay:** Madam Chairperson, with regard to Administrative Services, there are no vacant positions at this time.

I can tell the member that we will supply him a list of the vacancies in the different branches throughout the book for his understanding, but the actual position that will be vacant now versus three months from now versus nine months from now, that the positions vacant will change because the department does manage vacancies to try to respond to workloads that are currently here and anticipated workloads that might occur just down the road. So we will supply the list of the vacancies as they exist but recognize that the department does manage them to respond to workload that is expected.

**Mr. Reid:** I referenced the fact that there were vacancies because the previous Minister of Highways—I will use his term, “warm bodies” were laid off when we looked at the regionalization changes and the impacts upon the staffing levels. He made reference to the fact that, even though going back even two years, there were some 114, I think, jobs that were lost. He said—while that was the actual number of potential jobs that were there, there were only X number of “warm bodies” and the number was significantly lower. So that is why, since that point, I have been asking to find out about the number of vacancies because it was always curious to me why we would have jobs that were vacant and not being filled.

\* (1530)

We historically had been performing that work. I was interested to know what changes in the

operations were taking place that we would leave those jobs vacant for a period of time, and that they could then be counted as part of the job elimination program or in the total numbers that were being used. So that is why I am interested in the vacancies, and I know that the vacancies will change by department as people for whatever various reasons decide to leave or change their employment or transfers within departments. I understand that, but I am just interested in the numbers per subdepartment plus the overall total number and any historical comparisons the minister's department might have.

I have no further questions on this section.

**Mrs. Carstairs:** Madam Chairperson, again, I am trying to get some understanding of this. In the last Estimates or the Estimates filed last year, this particular branch was supposed to expend or expected to expend some \$536,000 on salaries, and it appears in the most recent book that they spent \$468,900 on salaries and yet there does not appear to be a staff reduction. So where is the explanation for that?

**Mr. Findlay:** I will have to ask the member to wait till next day. We do not have last year's numbers, and there has to be a logical explanation, but we do not have it right now. So if he can just hold off, we will bring back an understanding of those variances on every category, wherever they happen, for next time, so if there are any glitches, we will talk about it then.

**Mrs. Carstairs:** I thank the minister for that, because there are a number of glitches throughout the thing, and it just did not make any sense to me as I compared the Estimates I was given last year with the Estimates I received this year as to what the expenditures in this particular department were. For example, just to highlight for the minister again, the Other Expenditures in this area goes up 32 percent over what was indicated was going to be spent by this department just a year ago.

I want to just congratulate the department. As the minister knows, I have put in an FOI request recently, and I do not think that the individual who wanted the information is satisfied, but that is

absolutely no reflection on the staff and the willingness of them to sit down with my staff and provide them with the information. They were very straightforward and very giving of the information that they had at their disposal to give.

So if that is typical of the way FOI requests are handled by the Department of Highways, they are handled extremely well, and if the individual is not going to be satisfied because the information is not what the individual wants, I cannot do anything about that, nor can the department of highways.

I just wanted the minister to know that from someone requesting that information, the FOIs are handled very well by his department, and that is the only question I had, other than these inconsistencies which I will get an explanation for next time we sit.

**Madam Chairperson:** 1.(c) Administrative Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$476,700—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$162,300—pass.

1.(d) Financial Services.

**Mr. Reid:** In the last couple of Estimates I do not think I really understood the functioning of the Financial Services, and I would like to ask a few questions, because this I believe will provide the basis of some information. It might help me understand the effects of some of the boards and committees and whether or not we are moving towards self-sufficiency of some of those boards, financially I am talking.

The Financial Services subdepartment, in my understanding, takes care of the revenues for the department and keeps control of some of those revenues. Maybe I should just ask the minister the question, to provide me some explanation so I can better understand the functions of the Financial Services branch.

**Mr. Findlay:** The Financial Services branch provides central accounting, budgetary and financial reporting services to effectively support program delivery and ensure appropriate utilization of resources.

Activities include processing and monitoring of accounts payable and receivable, co-ordinating

preparation of the department's annual Estimates submission, as well as preparing quarterly cash flow projections and monthly expenditure reports. I would say it is an ongoing financial management process.

**Mr. Reid:** In this House, as members of the opposition we only see the year-end statements or the budget projections of the government. I take it then that the minister receives reports from this department pertaining to the expenditures and the revenues to ensure that the projections that the budget was based on are indeed coming to pass. Can the minister tell me, to this point, I know we are just a short time into the new budget year, but have there been any changes on the projections as the department sees it, both on expenditures and the revenues? I know in past years there were some deviations pertaining to weather and other factors that came into play, but does he anticipate any difficulties in any of the areas or any downturn in some of the, in particular, revenue generations?

**Mr. Findlay:** At this stage, at this early part of this budget, there is no anticipated change in revenues or expenses from the current projections. The member is right, there is a quarterly report supplied by the department to the deputy and to Treasury Board. So it is a constant ongoing surveillance, more so by the deputy and Treasury Board than by myself particularly.

**Mr. Reid:** Then in dealing with that, since projections seem to be on track, I would be interested to know in looking under the revenue section for the Estimates of the province for the budget it indicates that the Highways and Transportation has certain segments of the department that generate revenues for the government, and it is my understanding that those revenues are then turned back into the general revenues for the province.

I would be interested to have a breakdown on some of the revenues that the department derives as part of its operation pertaining to the automobile and motor carrier licences and fees, to break those down into separates because they are both lumped together under the revenue heading. I would like to know motor carrier licence fees that are generated

and then the automobile as a separate component of that. If the minister has any other information pertaining to drivers' licences as well, a breakdown in any of the various categories of licences, I would be interested to see any of the information that he has pertaining to the revenues that would be generated for that. I know he may or may not have that information here today, and if he does not, then he can indicate and provide it at another opportunity, hopefully within the next short period of time.

**Mr. Findlay:** No, we do not have it now, but we will get a breakdown when we get to the DVL section and we have Mr. Coyle here who will be able to supply that information. When you talk about drivers' licences, are you referring to Classes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5? That is your breakdown? Okay.

**Mr. Reid:** Also, there are motor carrier licences and fees, as well, not just the driver's licence component, but I believe it is another section maybe of the Driver and Vehicle Licensing that I am seeking information on.

\* (1540)

I will be looking for information—and I guess I can ask that under Boards and Committees when they come before us—on the activities for the fees and the charges that they have, as well. I am just indicating ahead of time for the minister so that he can hopefully have the information available.

There was also a change in this under Financial Services, and it indicates here two and a half positions were eliminated due to regionalization. Can the minister indicate if these jobs were filled that were eliminated, and if they were, what happened with the people who were filling these jobs? Were they reassigned to other departments, other subdepartments of Highways, or were they laid off or moved to some other government service?

**Mr. Findlay:** Madam Chairperson, the two and a half positions, the people who were in those positions are currently working elsewhere in government, some in the department but all within government.

**Mr. Reid:** These people who were employed in the administrative support functions, it was my understanding that some of the activities in the subdepartments that were affected from the regionalization would be transferred into the regions themselves instead of transferring right out of the department. Is there a reason why the administrative support staff here that are affected were not transferred within the department to the regional activities?

**Mr. Findlay:** Madam Chairperson, the pre-audit function, in which these people are employed, was eliminated as a function because the pre-audit function was already being done in the region. So what essentially was happening was a duplication of the pre-audit process in Winnipeg that had already been done in the regions. So there was no opening to transfer them to the region because there were already people performing that pre-audit function in the region.

**Mr. Reid:** I do not fully understand that. I know that there were some departments throughout the course of the year, or subdepartments, that are audited, and I believe that there is an ongoing five-year program to do audits of all of the subdepartments. So I take it then that these people were no longer required as part of the audit process.

**Mr. Findlay:** Madam Chairperson, maybe the member does not understand the difference between the financial audit, which we are talking about here within the department, and the management audit, which is the five-year that he is referring to. The audit that these people were doing, as I said earlier, is currently done in the regions, and we do not need to do the audit again in the central office here. The five-year audit you refer to is a management audit. These are financial audits.

**Mr. Reid:** I thank the minister for that. There was some indication in the last Estimates, too, where we were looking at changing the method in which we paid suppliers for the goods and the services that they would provide to the department. Has that taken place? Are we now processing some of the payments through the regional offices to the

suppliers for whatever services or goods they are supplying, or is it still done under the main Financial Services department?

**Mr. Findlay:** Madam Chairperson, with regard to supplier payments, they are still all done by the Department of Finance. The paperwork will be done in the regional offices, but the eventual writing of the cheque will be done by the Department of Finance.

**Mr. Reid:** Correct me if I am wrong then. It was my understanding from the last Estimates that we were looking at, with the regionalization of the department, streamlining or making more efficient, I think were the terms that were used at the time, processing of payments to allow for the orderly processing of the operations. I thought at the time it was explained to me that they were going to move some of that processing into the regional offices and that some of the activities would be taking place there.

Now, I take it that the minister is saying to me that that is not going to occur, that they are going to continue to take place under the main department, the Financial Services department versus the regional offices, or is my understanding of what was explained last year wrong?

**Mr. Findlay:** Madam Chairperson, there is a difference between the processing of a claim and the issuing of the cheque. What I said earlier, the cheque will be issued, has been and will continue to be issued by the Department of Finance. What the department is doing is shifting some of the processing of that claim from head office to the regional office to streamline it somewhat so that the regional office has done the processing to allow the request for payment to go directly to Finance. There is less of that processing done in head office.

So it is the processing of the actual claim that will be streamlined, but the issuing of the cheque always has been and will continue to be done by the Department of Finance. The department's handling before it gets to that position is being streamlined with more of it being done in the regional office.

\* (1550)

**Mrs. Carstairs:** Madam Chairperson, I just have an information question about the pre-audit function that the minister alluded to. Certainly I can recognize that much of the processing should be done in the regions because that is where the work has been done and then obviously, clearly, it goes to the Department of Finance because nobody else issues a cheque except the Department of Finance.

What is entailed in this pre-audit function? Is that then the records of all transactions processed by that particular region audited so that it is ready for the overall departmental audit and the Provincial Auditor's audit?

**Mr. Findlay:** We are getting a better understanding as we go through the discussion. The convoluted world of paper track is not my strength. If a bill comes in, it goes to the region for processing. They will process it and then sign the appropriate appropriation, and it will move on to Finance for issuing of a cheque.

The Provincial Auditor does a pre-audit along the way. We used to do a pre-audit. We no longer do it because it is not necessary within head office. The member mentioned the Auditor and the Auditor does do a pre-audit.

**Mrs. Carstairs:** Well, if I can put it in simple terms, and as the minister knows, I was a teacher, as he was, by profession, and I just love to teach people. Is this now just an ongoing process of record keeping to make sure that if at any time an audit needs to be done there is accuracy in the region of the accounts?

**Mr. Findlay:** Well, Madam Chair, definitely there are good account records kept by the regions, so that if there is any reason to go back and investigate or check by the department or by the Auditor or the department of finance, there is a very clear record of whatever has taken place.

I would have to say, our financial accounting process is first class, there is no question about it.

**Mrs. Carstairs:** But it is fair to say that it is now more regionalized than it used to be in the past.

In terms of one of the expected results then, the timing and accurate customer invoicing, is that still

a function of this department or is that an oversight? It seems to me that from what the minister is saying that this is now being done primarily by the regions rather than this particular branch.

**Mr. Findlay:** Well, the member certainly has a good question. If most of the work is being done in the regions, why do we have Financial Services, is really what she is asking. Really, their job is to be sure that the regions are doing their job, a bit of overall management as the regions go through the process of learning the process that they must follow, how to manage it, to keep it running efficiently and effectively. So it is overall management I guess you would say over top the regions is still the role that is being played here.

**Mrs. Carstairs:** In line with that question then, is it the job of some of these technical people within this branch to be specifically assigned a region to ensure that that region is financially accountable, or is a mixed function of a number of the staff- persons? And how much travel is involved between these people and the individual regions?

**Mr. Findlay:** Madam Chairperson, the individuals have overall function responsibility not assigned to particular regions, and there is virtually no travel involved. It is a matter of paper trail and telephones and fax.

**Mrs. Carstairs:** Then perhaps the minister can explain then what the \$79,000 figure for accommodation is for.

**Mr. Findlay:** It is building rent accommodations, meaning building space rentals as opposed to person accommodations.

**Mrs. Carstairs:** So most of the communication then now that is taking place between Financial Services and the regional offices then is of the fax machine telephone variety.

**Mr. Reid:** One last question in this area. The departments, I know, in their annual reports have always made reference to the fact of the number of invoices that they process, and since we have a decrease in the number of people there now, could he give me an indication of the number of invoices we would have processed in '93-94? Would you have that information at this point?

**Mr. Findlay:** We do not have the number of invoices with us, but we will get it for next time and supply it.

**Madam Chairperson:** 1.(d) Financial Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$624,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$157,100—pass.

1.(e) Personnel Services.

**Mr. Reid:** Under Personnel Services it is my understanding in looking at the Supplementary Estimates that they take care of the competitions for the departmental vacancies. Can you tell me how many competitions that we have had for the vacancies over the course of the last year?

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

**Mr. Findlay:** We do not have the number of positions that were filled by competition, but I can assure the member that every position is filled by competition, with the exception of those where people come off of the re-employment list within government, but if they do not come off of the re-employment list, the position is filled by competition.

**Mr. Reid:** Then when the competitions are there, and I appreciate that the minister will bring back the information a little bit later, with the competitions that are filled from other than current government staff, whether they are within the department or other departments, who does the final selection? Is it the department managers there? Does that have to come right back to the minister for approval?

\* (1600)

**Mr. Findlay:** Mr. Acting Chairperson, the hiring decisions are made by department managers, usually the department managers in conjunction with Personnel Services, and the selection process will involve at least two people, in most cases three, and in some cases more people. As one staffperson said, positions filled in the North, usually you fill with a minimum of two staff doing the appropriate analysis and the decision making.

In positions down here, most often the selection process involves three or in some cases more staff people but involving department managers and

Personnel Services through the interview process, the selection process.

**Mr. Reid:** The reason I ask that question is that for at least two years now I have, and I am sure most members of this House would have had inquiries coming into their offices relating to jobs or people looking for jobs, and my office I am sure is no different from that, and what I have undertaken from time to time is to provide copies of the job bulletins that may be applicable to the experiences or the interests of the individuals that are seeking that type of work that come to talk to me.

I would send them copies or make available to them copies of the job bulletins or the notices. That is why I am inquiring as to how the selection process takes place and whether or not there are people that are preordained, can we say, for some of those jobs, or is there actually a true open process for any of those jobs that would be available. That was my reasoning for asking the questions. Maybe the minister wanted to comment on that.

**Mr. Findlay:** The member is taking a bulletin and making an individual looking for a job relative to that position, making it available to them so they can respond to the bulletined position. That is exactly the right thing to do. Nobody is preordained to a position. The competitions are there. If you are doing that, you are doing the right thing, making them aware of a chance to apply, like anybody else who will read that job description, have a chance to apply and go through the process, the selection process.

As one can appreciate, in certain jobs there can be 20, 30, 40, 60 applicants for a particular position. It is not uncommon in government. So the process has to be kept very clean. Everybody who is interested must apply through the regular process.

**Mr. Reid:** I was becoming a little discouraged because I have not seen too many of the people that have contacted me be successful in the applications that I know that they have put in to this point. In fact, none of them have been successful, so that is why I am inquiring on this aspect of it.

**Mr. Findlay:** Well, the member must take my comments before, just to reiterate them again, he may be surprised that somebody sent into the process has not been selected, but the numbers are there and it is a one chance in 20, or one chance in 30, particularly for general jobs. More highly technical jobs there are obviously less people applying, but my experience in a previous department was exactly that, a tremendous number of people applied for pretty well every position that comes along, so that is probably why you are not seeing success of the people.

Probably anybody who is in the process is a little frustrated at the fact that they may apply for five or six jobs in government and not win any one of them. It is maybe no reflection on them, it is just a reflection of the realities. There are a lot of good people out there and there are managers and Personnel Services who do the selection. Their job is to interview and review everybody and come up with what they deem is the best person for the job. So the competition is very tough.

**Mr. Reid:** Personnel Services, I believe, is responsible for training the little over 2,200 employees in the department. Can the minister give me an indication of some of the training programs that are undertaken by the department? Are they part of the Red River Community College programs, are they part of the Keewatin Community College or do we send staff to other training facilities? Do we do in-house training? Can the minister give me some indication on what the department undertakes with respect to that?

**Mr. Findlay:** The best answer to the member's question is all of the above. I can assure the member at different times and opportunities we do use all of the community colleges, Red River, Keewatin and Assiniboine. As well, we do in-house training and in certain instances consultants are used for training processes, so any and all of the vehicles of training are used.

**Mr. Reid:** What type of training would we undertake for the employees where we had to use existing facilities, educational facilities? What type of training would we send our employees there for? Would it be the technical people for

upgrading, would it be other programs for people that are operating equipment, heavy equipment? Can the minister give me some idea of the types of training programs that are undertaken?

**Mr. Findlay:** Most of the training is done with technical staff, people that work as engineering aides, positions like that, the recent example is Red River where materials testing training was taken by some staff.

**Mr. Reid:** So this is an upgrading, a continual upgrading program that goes on within the department, I take it, for new materials as the minister's example, to use his example, that may be coming along, that the employees may not be familiar with or new techniques. It is also my understanding that the department receives and exchanges information with some U.S. Departments of Transport as well.

Would this be some of the undertakings that the department would do for training, some of the new techniques that maybe come in from other jurisdictions that we want our employees to be aware of?

\* (1610)

**Mr. Findlay:** I can assure the member the department uses the most cost-effective training vehicle that is available. We use the Transportation Association of Canada, who will give training courses at different locations across the country. In other cases the member, as mentioned, where there are individuals of people or associations in the United States that can supply the training that is appropriate on new techniques in a more cost-effective way, we will use them.

**Mr. Reid:** The minister referenced a few moments ago too the fact that there is some contract training that takes place, I guess tongue in cheek, we could always apply for grants under Workforce 2000 for some of the training programs. I am not sure if the minister's department has considered approaching the minister's colleague the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) for some of those monies, but maybe that would be an area that the department could access for some of the training. There does not seem to be any criteria, so I am sure that the



department could utilize some of those monies. I say that, of course, all tongue in cheek.

My other question relates to the contracts themselves. Can you give me an indication on the contract people that you bring in for training? Is that what the minister referenced when he said the Transport Association of Canada or U.S.-based associations? Are those the contract people you are referencing or are there others? How do we go about paying these people for the services that they perform? Does that come under the Personnel Services as well, and where is that shown in here?

**Mr. Findlay:** The process has got a lot of different aspects to it. It is fair to say the majority of the contracts are negotiated by the Civil Service Commission and then somebody is hired. We pay a fee for the people that take the course.

The Transportation Association of Canada probably in most cases will charge you per diem for training programs, and other contracts are done through Treasury Board, particularly if it is over \$10,000. The contract is negotiated and the decision is made through Treasury Board whether to accept or reject a particular contract, to do the particular training services that are part of the contract.

**Mr. Reid:** So, if the monies are coming under Treasury Board approval, then it would not show up under this appropriation for Highways and Transportation. Is that correct?

**Mr. Findlay:** Yes. The various expenditures will appear in the various portions of the different appropriations of our budget, wherever. If it is in engineering for services, it may end up in the regional areas. It will not be in the Financial Services; it will be in different parts of the budget where the expenditure will show up, where the actual employees work.

**Mr. Reid:** Can the minister, then, give me an indication of how I would—looking at the document here, under the subappropriation 15.1.(e)—determine where employee training would take place? There does not seem to be any section here that I could see that relates to any type of training, if we have any extensive programs or

training that you are undertaking in the subdepartments.

From my understanding of this book, it would not show up here, and how would I as a critic know to what extent training is taking place? Can you give me some idea of how I can understand that?

**Mr. Findlay:** For the member's knowledge we will supply next time a list of the training activities that took place last year, so he knows where they were and who was involved.

**Mr. Reid:** I thank the minister for that. I was happy to see in one of the recent publications of the Manitoba Heavy News, I guess it was the Annual Report for '94, where one of our professional engineers in the department had done an article with respect to Manitoba goes through smoother roads.

This young woman wrote it. She is obviously working for the department. Can the minister, because this is the segment that deals with the affirmative action programs too—and I know I asked this question last year, but I want to see if there has been any progress within the department itself. Can you give me a year-over-year comparison on the number of women that are working within the department in various functions, including the administrative functions, but also I am interested in the professional and technical activities, and also the managerial capacities?

For the other categories relating to First Nations' peoples, people with disabilities and visible minorities, if the minister maybe does not have the copy readily available, maybe he can provide a copy of that information for us, because I think that was the way it was handled last year.

\* (1620)

**Mr. Findlay:** I will give the member the March '93 percent of employees in each category and then the March '94. For females, March '93, it was 18.9 percent; this year it is 22.1 percent. Aboriginal category, last year was 4.7 percent; this year it is 5.56 percent. Disabled last year was 1.18 percent; this year it is 1.22 percent. Visible minorities, last year it was 1.05 percent; this year it is 1.12 percent. Particularly in the female category,

which the member was talking about, there is an increase of 3.3 percent year over year. So at this point there are 434 women employed in the department.

**Mr. Reid:** I thank the minister for the percentages. Maybe he can break that down into actual numbers for me in addition to the 434 women, if he has that number available there.

**Mr. Findlay:** The number of aboriginal employees is 108; the number of disabled employees, 24; and visible minorities, 22.

**Mr. Reid:** I thank the minister for that information. There appears to be some slight progress in some of the areas there. Do we have any other further activities ongoing to look at recruiting the appropriate people so that we can see a change away from what I believe has probably been essentially a white, male-dominated industry, and particularly because it is, I would sense, related to heavy industry? What activities do we have to indicate that we are making further steps in that direction?

**Mr. Findlay:** Personnel Services conducted 10 cross-cultural awareness workshops. It conducted nine workshops on affirmative action and 17 career-planning workshops at aboriginal schools.

**Mr. Reid:** I appreciate the information. I am trying to sensitize existing or current staff, but my question was relating to the activities where we have vacancies that are existing within the department on our staff turnover. What efforts are we undertaking to change the ratio that we have within the department to bring in people, whether it be First Nations, women, disabled or visible minorities to fill some of these jobs? Are we getting the number of qualified applicants coming forward that would allow us to choose from those areas, and are we able to pick or to select people for employment within those categories or those areas?

**Mr. Findlay:** The department has one person who is hired as an affirmative action co-ordinator whose job is to attempt to attract people in those various categories to apply for the positions. I am sure the member is aware that within government there is a point process applied for each applicant,

and there are additional points if you are a woman or if you are an aboriginal or any of the affirmative action categories.

I think the member was asking if there were enough people coming forward in those different categories that were qualified, and it is certainly always a challenge to find people that are qualified, but the hiring of the affirmative action co-ordinator, hopefully, will facilitate people that are qualified being aware and complying and being successful in the process.

As the member can see, our percentages are going up, albeit small, but going in the right direction.

**Mr. Reid:** Did I understand the minister clearly when he indicated that we now have an officer responsible for the affirmative action program? Is that a new individual or has that person been there for some period of time? If they were just hired recently, when were they hired?

**Mr. Findlay:** The affirmative action co-ordinator has been there for some time, more than three years.

\* (1630)

**Mr. Reid:** Just to go back to a few moments ago when we were talking about the education aspect of Personnel Services, because we contract out for some of the training, does the University of Manitoba Transport Institute, which has undertaken some studies for the department in the past—is it possible to utilize any of the facilities of this Transport Institute for some of the training activities that the department may need? I know they are struggling this time because the department over past budgets has cut back on some of the support, as has CN and the federal government. They are having some difficulties. I am wondering if there is any way that we can take some of our training component and maybe utilize the University of Manitoba Transport Institute to do some of that work for us.

**Mr. Findlay:** Mr. Acting Chairperson, the member asked about UMTI, the University of Manitoba Transport Institute. They are not really in the training business per se, the kind of training we want for our staff. They are more into doing

consulting contracts, research activities. We certainly used them in the research area, the consulting area; for instance, last year, we believe it is around \$15,000 was paid for logistics, educational course, and a training seminar that they did more with the industry than with the department.

The training you are talking about that the department is more involved in day to day is not the forte of UMTI, but certainly the research and the consulting area is.

(Madam Chairperson in the Chair)

**Mr. Reid:** I thank the minister for that. I will ask questions later on in the appropriate section dealing with the institute.

Personnel Services, I believe, also deals with grievances that might come forward within the department, and I believe to try and handle them internally within the department before they get out to the arbitration process or the mediation process. Can you tell me the number of grievances that we would have had within the department in the last year, '93-94, and are any of those currently moving towards arbitration, towards either mediation or arbitration?

**Mr. Findlay:** We do not have the exact number of grievances that have come forward to the department. We will supply the member with a number next sitting. We are not aware that any of those grievances that are in process are moving towards either arbitration or mediation, but we will supply the number next time.

**Mr. Reid:** I am going to raise this question because I have had the opportunity to take part in some training in the past myself. Does the department undertake to make any of their managers aware of or do they have them partake in training programs dealing with labour relations issues so that we do not move into the grievance or the arbitration-mediation process?

**Mr. Findlay:** Our managers take advantage of any Civil Service Commission training that occurs in that direction. In Civil Service Commission training, our managers take part in civil service training, in conflict management, and those sorts of items.

**Mr. Reid:** Can the minister tell me, since we have eliminated one position here under the Professional/Technical staff—it indicates in the Supplementary Estimates that it was due to consolidation of Human Resource Services. Can you explain what consolidation, was this position filled, and was this person redeployed into another segment of the department or other departments?

**Mr. Findlay:** There has been some consolidation of Human Resource Services between Highways, Natural Resources, and Energy and Mines. The person or the position that was being eliminated here, the person has retired.

**Mrs. Carstairs:** Madam Chair, I would like to go back to affirmative action for just a moment because it is not the numbers I am particularly interested in as where are those individuals placed within the department. Can the minister indicate how many women and members of other affirmative action programs are in administration?

**Mr. Findlay:** Madam Chairperson, we do not have the exact number that are in administration, but we will provide it. There are a fair number in the administration area, but we will supply the exact number next time.

**Mrs. Carstairs:** Staff is aware of what I want. I want to know how many are within the Managerial, Professional/Technical level as opposed to support staff, and how many of them and what percentage increase that represents year to year. It is also important in that figure to indicate the number of vacancies. I am not suggesting that people should be fired in order for administrative positions to be filled. So, if there had not been a lot of changes in administrative and managerial support, then presumably there would not be any change in the affirmative action numbers of people there as well. So that is the kind of data that I am looking forward to, and with that I am prepared to pass.

**Madam Chairperson:** Item 1.(e) Personnel Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$840,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$214,900—pass.

1.(f) Computer Services.

**Mr. Reid:** Under Computer Services we had some discussions on this in last Estimates. I will not spend too much time, but I am interested in the activities of the Computer Services in dealing with the departmental long-range systems plan. Maybe the minister can bring us up to date on what changes are anticipated, what plans, what long-range system changes are anticipated. Are they working on specific studies for the department at the current time? If so, what studies are they undertaking?

\* (1640)

**Mr. Findlay:** The member asks if we are doing any system changes and, yes, some long-range planning on some system changes. I will just give you a listing we have of system changes that are under development. The regionalization moving to an open system, the Bridge computer-aided drafting and design, electronic mail and upgrading the head office of computer-aided drafting and design, and electronic field data capture, and Autopac 2000. So it is a number of areas where the development is going on.

**Mr. Reid:** Are any of those costs transferred back to other departments? The minister referenced—

**Mr. Findlay:** Other departments of government?

**Mr. Reid:** Yes, because the minister referenced the fact that we are doing some work probably under the DDBL, possibly on behalf of Autopac. Are any of these costs transferred back to Autopac? Is there offsetting transfer of funds for some of this work?

**Mr. Findlay:** Madam Chairperson, there are our systems changes, so there are our costs. So what we talked about none of these are transferred back to other departments of government—our systems, our changes, our costs.

**Mr. Reid:** The past Minister of Highways in our discussions last year indicated that we bring in programs from other jurisdictions, other states or provinces that might have programs that would be applicable. When the minister referenced some of the computer-assisted programs that we have here, we brought these in from other jurisdictions, and have we purchased any upgrading of any equipment? I know there are some discussions in

this province in dealing with issues relating to Wang and the computer equipment. Are we purchasing any equipment from them for the computer services here?

**Mr. Findlay:** Madam Chairperson, we continue to upgrade our computer system. It has nothing to do with the Wang system that is used administratively here.

**Mr. Reid:** I take it by that statement that we are not utilizing any equipment from Wang or any of their services.

**Mr. Findlay:** The only connection to the Wang system is the deputy's office and my office as part of the government administration process, but the department is not involved in the Wang system.

**Mr. Reid:** I am looking at the appropriations here under Other Expenditures, and I see Hardware Rentals. Are we making any purchases of equipment, or is it not efficient for the department to undertake purchases? Is it more efficient to rent the equipment versus the outright purchase?

**Mr. Findlay:** Overall in the department as a whole there are some rentals, some purchases. What you see here is rentals more likely of mini computers; certainly in different branches of the department, personal computers will be purchased. Here you see rentals of mini computers, and elsewhere there are purchases of the personal computers. So there is a combination of both going on.

**Mrs. Carstairs:** There seem to be some staffing changes. They do not show up here, but it appears that, if one looks at the past history of Computer Services, there were, in fact, 23 Professional/Technical people and four administrative people. Now, that seems to have been changed to 21 professional people and six Administrative Support people.

Can the minister indicate why those changes were made and when they were made?

**Mr. Findlay:** What the member sees in front of her is 21 and six. I think she mentioned 23 and four. The numbers total the same. Exact detail of why the numbers are different we will bring back next day, but the total is still the same.

**Mrs. Carstairs:** The total is the same and has been the same consistently for a number of years. Both '92-93 and '93-94 Estimates books show that, in fact, there were 23 technical people and there were four Administrative Support people, and that seems to have changed.

Now, obviously, the functions of what those people did are different, and that is what I would like to know. I am prepared to pass this and wait for the information at the next session.

\* (1650)

**Mr. Findlay:** We will return with a better explanation as to the reasons next time.

**Madam Chairperson:** Item 1.(f) Computer Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,271,500—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$582,700—pass.

1.(g) Occupational Health and Safety.

**Mr. Reid:** Madam Chairperson, I have a number of questions here. We spent a bit of time on this section last time in the last Estimates, dealing with Department of Highways Occupational Health and Safety program for its employees. I am interested again in some of the statistical data that the minister would have and programs that the minister would have to ensure the employees' safety and the ongoing audits that they would have.

Can the minister indicate to me, since we have a fairly large employment level within the Department of Highways, what the number of workplace injuries were for the past year '93-94, and how many employees are currently on LTD, long-term disability?

**Mr. Findlay:** I will give the member three categories of numbers here. We will start with '91-92 year, then '92-93, then '93-94, so I will give him figures over three years. First will be injuries where no medical attention or lost time occurred. In '91-92 it was 97 incidents, 97 injuries with no medical attention; '92-93, 85; last year, '93-94, 49 incidents, no lost time, no medical attention. So there is an improvement there.

Under the category of injuries that involved medical attention, in '91-92, it was 92; '92-93, it is

103; and, in '93-94, it is 44. Again, a significant reduction in the number of injuries involving medical attention.

The Workers Compensation Board cost associated with those incidents in '91-92 was \$567,000; '92-93, it is \$494,000; and '93-94, it is \$297,000. So, again, a significant reduction in costs associated with Workers Compensation.

**Mr. Reid:** There appears to be a significant improvement in the number of workplace injuries requiring medical attention, which is a good sign. I am glad to see that. I take it from that, then, that there must be some programs that the department has undertaken not only to educate employees, but maybe has taken some audits then to look at improving the working conditions and the identification of workplace hazards.

Can the minister indicate what activities have been taking place in that regard, both with the education of employees, managers, and any audits?

**Mr. Findlay:** The department has had a very active training process under Occupational Health and Safety. There is an officer in each region. So the work of the various department managers, people involved in training and the Occupational Health and Safety officer is obviously paying dividends in terms of reducing the number of accidents, particularly those, as the member has mentioned, that require medical attention. So I think the member was looking for what action there is. There is significant action, and the results are apparent in the figures.

**Mr. Reid:** I am also interested in the types of injuries that the employees are sustaining. Where we still have injuries, what types of injuries are we seeing, and where we are seeing reductions, what type of injury, personal injuries for the human body are being reduced? Is it back injuries, is it hearing, is it eyes, is it hands? Can the minister give me some indication on where we are seeing some successes as far as reduction of personal injuries and the types of the injuries?

**Mr. Findlay:** We do have a record of the types of injuries. We do not have it with us today, and we

will bring it next time for the member's information.

**Mr. Reid:** Fine, I appreciate that. Can the minister indicate the number of light-duty positions we would have within the department? I take it that we do. Looking at the Objectives, it is to integrate and return injured employees back to work as quickly as possible, which, for any operation, should be one of the goals.

Do we have light-duty positions for employees and, if so, how many do we have? How do we accommodate the employees to get them back into work when they are willing and able to return to active employment?

**Mr. Findlay:** The department has managed the claims for 25 employees who have been injured on the job or who have personal health problems that require job modification and reassignment. Nine employees who received training are reassigned to alternate occupations. Seven employees' occupations were modified to meet their restrictions; five employees were able to return to normal duties following modified work programs. Three employees received pensions or alternate benefits, and one employee's claim is still active and a rehabilitation program is being developed.

**Madam Chairperson:** Order, please. The hour being 5 p.m. and time for private members' hour, committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

\* (1700)

## 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.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

**Mr. Speaker:** Private Members' Business, second readings, private bills. Are we proceeding with Bill 300? No. Are we proceeding with Bill 301? No.

Second reading, public bills. Are we proceeding with Bill 207? No. Are we proceeding with Bill 210? No.

## PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

### Res. 16—Friendship Centres

**Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson), that

WHEREAS Indian and Metis Friendship Centres have a long history of service in this province; and

WHEREAS 1993 was the International Year of the World's Indigenous People and the theme was "Indigenous People: a new partnership"; and

WHEREAS the federal government cut funding to Indian and Metis Friendship Centres in 1993; and

WHEREAS the provincial government withdrew all funding to Indian and Metis Friendship Centres in the 1993 provincial budget; and

WHEREAS these cuts resulted in the loss of jobs and services in friendship centres in Winnipeg, Selkirk and many other communities across the province; and

WHEREAS Indian and Metis Friendship Centres provide valuable services and programs, including counselling for families in crisis, educational programs, recreation and cultural programming, court assistance and counselling, assistance to the elderly, youth programming and many other services.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request the Premier to consider restoring funding to the Indian and Metis Friendship Centres of Manitoba.

Motion presented.

**Mr. Dewar:** Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure to rise today to speak on this particular resolution.

Last year in the provincial budget the Filmon government made a number of different cuts to different groups in this province, and one of the more insidious cuts, as far as I am concerned and members on this side of the House are concerned, is this government's 100 percent withdrawal of provincial funding to aboriginal Indian and Metis Friendship Centres here in this province of Manitoba.

It was always our contention that Indian and Metis Friendship Centres provide many, many services to both native and non-native individuals in our province, and we were extremely disappointed that the government took this action last year, considering, as you could go through the resolution itself, last year was the International Year of the World's Indigenous People. We find it incredibly ironic that the government chose at that time to make this attack upon Indian and Metis people in our province.

Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fact, I know there was a resolution brought forward by members opposite to recognize the year of the indigenous people, and we saw that as again quite ironic, considering that, instead of celebrating the contribution and the lives of the indigenous people here in the province, they simply cut a program which was very, very beneficial to both, as I mentioned before, native and non-native individuals here.

It is not only the provincial government. Last year the federal Conservative government cut funding by 10 percent. That was a funding cut to their core. They had three different sources of income. There was the core level of funding from the federal government. This was used to provide friendship centres with money for capital, certain positions within the organization, the director, the assistant to that director, and other staff, and the provincial government provided a grant through the Department of Family Services, which was used by friendship centres to hire counsellors and to provide programming to native and non-native individuals in communities throughout this province.

Mr. Speaker, last year, during the federal election, individuals who were running for election during that time, during that federal election, some Liberal candidates, and I want to make a quote here. An individual by the name of Dr. Jon Gerrard was at a meeting, a rally, a public rally in Portage, where he had the opportunity to raise the issue, and at that time, naturally enough he spoke about the great merits of the friendship centre movement. As a matter of fact, in quoting from a paper, he blames it on a mix of poor policies by the Canadian government. As well, an individual by the name of David Walker, I believe, gave a commitment to aboriginal, Metis people and to the friendship centre movement that he would enhance the program by enhancing the capital budget in terms of the capital budget of friendship centres.

Of course, since now they are in government, they have reneged on that promise. They have reneged on that promise, and it is quite sad for all of us to see that, where they campaigned on a certain position, and once in government, they follow the line brought forward by the federal Conservatives. As a matter of fact, they have not rescinded that cut, but they allowed the cut planned by the Conservative government to follow through. So, instead, this year again, friendship centres were attacked by the federal Liberal government. Again, it is another example of the Liberals as they campaign like New Democrats, and once they get into government, they quickly change their minds.

So that is clear that not only do the Conservatives not recognize the work of friendship centres, and that is pretty obvious by their blatant attack upon friendship centres and aboriginal people over the last number of years. My colleague the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) raised the issue of the government inaction on the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry just yesterday. Once again, we have got nothing but empty rhetoric from the Minister of Justice on this particular issue.

We held a little bit of hope, and I know that Metis people and aboriginal people held a little bit of hope, for the Liberal federal government to at

least try to reinstate some of these cuts, but, unfortunately, we are seeing the same thing, the same pattern once again from the Liberals.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, the cuts in Selkirk. Last year there was a loss of three individuals. Two of them dealt directly in counselling a wide variety of individuals in our community. They dealt with youth, with families in crisis. I know, I have letters here from the executive director of the Nova House in Selkirk, which is the women's shelter. She once again raised the issue of the importance of the friendship centre and questioned why the government would do such a thing.

\* (1710)

The friendship centres are recognized not only by groups such as Nova House and other service groups out there, but, for example, we have got the letter from the mayor of Selkirk: The friendship centres are well recognized throughout Manitoba. This is the case in Selkirk where again the mayor and council wrote a letter to the Premier, again asking him to reverse the decision, reverse the cuts and reverse the attack on friendship centres. Many other letters were written by groups from throughout the province, Mr. Speaker, and not only in Selkirk, who really question the government's commitment to aboriginal people and Metis people with this particular cut.

You can just go through the list within the WHEREASES in the resolution, where the families in crisis, as I mentioned, the work they have done with the individuals in Nova House, for example.

Educational programs. I know in the Selkirk Friendship Centre—I had the honour of working at the Selkirk Friendship Centre and serving on the board of directors of that particular organization. We used to have a counsellor there who would go into the school system to provide counselling directly with aboriginal youth, and I was speaking recently with the teacher of that particular school, and she mentions that her school and the students there really do miss this service because it was providing a very, very valuable service for young people within the Selkirk school or Lord Selkirk School Division.

Recreational and cultural programming. Again all these programs were cut because of the government's rescinding of this funding.

Court assistance and counselling. Here we have, again raised by my colleagues, the high level of problems that our youth are having with the court system and the legal system, and the friendship centres used to provide a service, a way to deal with the issue before it became a problem, before it actually had to be dealt with by the courts.

Assistance to the elderly. I know, again in Selkirk, that they used to provide counselling and support to our elders in our community. It is unfortunate now that because of the government's cuts it cannot be done.

Youth programming. We had a youth worker, and it was one of those individuals who lost her job. Her job was specifically to deal with the problems that youth encounter, whether drug or alcohol or many other problems, youth alienation.

We see the government's answers—boot camps. I know in the Selkirk Friendship Centre we used to sponsor a camp, and the camp was in the Victoria Beach area. It gave the opportunity every summer for individuals to leave their community and to go up to enjoy the activities associated with the camp. So there was a program out there that actually helped and dealt with aboriginal youth, but this government chose simply to cut it, again because it is our contention that they simply do not understand or have never been to a friendship centre. I really doubt if members opposite really do understand the fine work that friendship centres do in this province. It really was quite, quite shocking to us.

The other thing, of course, it was clearly a political move. Friendship centres are in NDP constituencies except the one that is in the constituency of Portage la Prairie: the member for Riverton, Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), Brandon, Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), up north, Thompson (Mr. Ashton), so on. Of course, the Liberals, since they hold no seats outside of the city and they hold no seats in northern Manitoba, have no friendship centres in their communities either. So it is pretty obvious that they have very little interest in



aboriginal issues, and when you consider what their federal counterparts have already done, you recognize that they are prepared as well not to stand up for the needs of Metis or aboriginal people in this community, in this province, Mr. Speaker.

What this resolution will do—and I know that all my colleagues on both sides of the House will support this resolution, Mr. Speaker, because it is right, and it is just. We know that deep down we are all committed to doing what is right for the people of Manitoba. I know we will get the support of the Liberals on this one. They will have to, of course, unfortunately—I am sure they will support us, but they will be running contrary to the position of their federal counterparts.

I think we will ask of you to stand up for aboriginal, Metis people in the province. It is unfortunate that the federal Liberals will not do it, but we are hoping for them. This is their opportunity for them to do it by supporting this resolution, Mr. Speaker.

So, with those few brief comments, I look forward for the quick passage of this particular resolution so that the friendship centres in Manitoba can continue the fine work, the fine tradition of that particular movement. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupertsland):** Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honour to second the resolution that is come before the floor of the Legislature.

Friendship centres have played a meaningful role in this province for a number of years, as some members may not be aware of in this House. The first friendship centre to go up in Canada was in 1958 here in the city of Winnipeg, and we are all very proud of that in Manitoba that the first friendship centre was established here. It was located at 276 Donald Street with very limited resources. The executive director at that time was a lady by the name of Joan Adams, and the original concept of the friendship centre movement was to assist migrating native peoples adjust to urban environments as they moved from their reserves and also from their native communities, and adjust, in their eyes and in their thoughts at that time, was

to hopefully have a better life for themselves and for their children as they moved into areas like Winnipeg.

Over the years we have seen the friendship centre movement evolve into 11 friendship centres plus satellite operations throughout the province of Manitoba. Nationally, at one point, we had 111 friendship centres located in different urban communities throughout Canada. Today we have roughly 66 friendship centres located in small towns and cities across Canada.

As my colleague who moved the resolution indicated, it was created with the thought in mind of bridging the gap of communication that does exist, and we are all very aware of, among native and non-native people. Even though terminology has somewhat changed over the years, that we are now referred to as aboriginal people, the friendship centres played a meaningful role in the city of Winnipeg and, indeed, other locations throughout Canada in trying to create a better understanding between native people and non-native people, and really the work started from there for the aboriginal advancement of people throughout Canada.

Some members will know, as well, in the city of Winnipeg, in the late '50s, the early '60s, when people could no longer maintain a living off the land and particularly in northern Manitoba where I am more familiar with, and as they moved to Winnipeg hopefully to provide a better future for their children, we saw people moving into Winnipeg, and unfortunately, some of the expectations they had did not come to full reality. Consequently, many of our people wound up in worse condition than they were in as they left their reserves.

An example I would like to give you, and some people in this House may remember where the Slaw Rebchuk Bridge is now on Salter Street, around the track area there, there used to be called a shantytown. That is where the first people of this country, and migrating aboriginal people from this province moved into, congregated in that area. This little village was nothing more than tarpaper shacks, in some cases, plastic dwellings where our

people lived in, and our people with the thought in mind, thought they were going into a better environment, but the result was not that, of course.

I remember stories that have been relayed to me in recent months about people who are now in a little better condition than they were back then, of having to fight off house rats that were as big as cats in order to allow their children a good sleep so they would be in good shape the next morning to go to school.

The friendship centre, about that time, came about to provide the service of counselling and referral. Soon the situation of the aboriginal people and the First Nations of this country started to change, as the friendship centre was able to advocate on behalf of migrating aboriginal people to the various levels of government, the need and the poor conditions that our people had to live in and soon governments came to that understanding and governments were a little more willing to be helpful.

\* (1720)

We have to remind ourselves that alcoholism—as our people left their reserves and in 1960 when First Nations' people across this country were given the right to vote and for the first time in history were acknowledged as human beings and for the first time acknowledged as citizens of Canada, our people were then allowed to be in drinking establishments and alcoholism started taking its toll on our people. Legally, First Nations' people have only been given the right to vote in the last 34 years and the right to be recognized as Canadians in that same period of time.

Alcoholism took its toll on First Nations' people when they first wound up in the cities like Winnipeg, but it was through the efforts of the friendship centres that played an instrumental role in being able to advocate and to assist these people and some of our people were able to sober up as a result.

From the friendship centre movement evolved the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood and the Manitoba Metis Federation between 1967 and 1969, to enable aboriginal people a better voice,

more possibilities and brighter futures for our people.

We will also take note that over half of Canada's treaty and Status Indians live off their home communities, live off reserves. In Manitoba, about 40 percent of the total treaty and Status Indians live off reserves and are in urban environments in Winnipeg and in Brandon, Dauphin, Flin Flon, in urban areas of Manitoba. The friendship centres have continued to play a role in assisting people adjust to an urban environment over the years. I think we should all take into consideration that the meaningful role the friendship centres have played over the years certainly has facilitated the advancement of First Nations' people and Metis people in this province.

I want to mention as well that the National Association of Friendship Centres recently met in Winnipeg to talk about self-government initiatives with respect to off-reserve aboriginal people. I think that there is room, and I would ask members of this House to look at themselves and to have a look at the aboriginal people.

Friendship centres have indeed played a meaningful role in the advancement of all aboriginal people, including myself and the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), because when we first arrived in this big jungle that we know as Winnipeg and other major urban centres like this we at least had a place to go in order for us to find our way off the streets. It was friendship centres that assisted us by providing us proper direction to appropriate resources to help us deal with some of the issues that we wound up with after moving to areas like Winnipeg and elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge members of this House to show some respect to aboriginal people, all of us collectively, and support the resolution that has been introduced by my colleague the honourable member for Selkirk. I would like to conclude by saying that friendship centres have been around the longest. They have a proven track record, and no matter what happens, they will be there in the time to come. I think that we should all stand together in this House to support a very

worthy and a very meaningful movement, the friendship centre movement. I think that is worthy of the support of all members of this House, for it has saved a lot of lives, taken a lot of people off the streets.

With those few words, Mr. Speaker, I would to thank you and members of this House for allowing me to speak on this resolution.

**Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister responsible for Native Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, today's debate on this very important issue is one of those rare moments in this Chamber, I think, during private members' hour where we get to speak about an issue of great importance and to have a fair and reasonable exchange of views on circumstance while at the same time recognizing the importance of an organization such as the friendship centres.

I quite enjoyed the remarks of both speakers from the New Democratic Party, particularly the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson). His commentary on the history of the friendship centres, its development in Winnipeg, I think, was one that reminds us again of a great deal of the work that has gone over the past number of years in the aboriginal community in Winnipeg and in Manitoba, dealing with the involvement and creation of opportunities for aboriginal people as they entered, as he described it, the jungle, I believe, of Winnipeg and other urban centres of our province.

Mr. Speaker, my own involvement with friendship centres—members opposite may be somewhat surprised at this information—but when I was an assistant to one of Manitoba's Members of Parliament, the Honourable Jake Epp, M.P. for Provencher and the national Minister of Health and Welfare, one of the projects that I worked on in that particular period was the establishment of a friendship centre in the community of Powerview.

I remember at that particular time that the federal department that was responsible for funding the creation of new centres was in the process of closing down its funding for new centres. I travelled down to Ottawa on behalf of my boss, Mr. Epp, and I met with my equivalent from the minister of Indian and northern affairs

office. Over a breakfast one day we managed to work an arrangement where we were able to secure some start-up funds for that particular centre in Powerview, which I believe was an offshoot or tagged on and became an offshoot of the Selkirk Friendship Centre. Certainly, one of the reasons I pursued that was because of the work that I had witnessed take place in Selkirk and other communities and the need for that particular centre.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that, when this government made its decision a year ago in a budget of the last fiscal year to remove funding for friendship centres, it was done with great regret, and it was one of those very difficult decisions that all governments across Canada are having to make. I do not say that with great pride. No one takes pride in having to make difficult decisions that affect organizations that have delivered a service in their communities over the last number of years.

There is no doubt, and we have been through this debate many times in this House about the fiscal situation that faces not only Manitoba, but all provinces in Canada, our federal government to an even greater degree as they struggle with one-third of their budget now going for debt financing. We in Manitoba are somewhere around 12 percent of our budget. Certainly, most countries in the western world, to a greater or lesser extent, are struggling with those same difficulties.

\* (1730)

One criticism I do offer to the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) in his remarks is it is very easy to rise in this House and to call for increased funding or funding for a particular organization. It is another to offer the ministers and the Treasury bench alternatives as to where we can find those particular dollars that are realistic. Mr. Speaker, it is always easy to spout off a quick political comment about a particular grant or program that may sound good for the 30-second clip on television, but if members opposite would study the budget books of this province over the last number of years, what they will find is virtually every department of government outside of Health,

Family Services and Education has been giving up portions of their budgets to go into certain parts of those departments whose increase has been well above the rates of inflation and well above, quite frankly, what the province can continue to sustain, particularly health care.

I say this to members in the gallery who may have an interest in this, because they do not have the opportunity to read through those budget books, but on the first budget, of which I voted as a member of this House in 1988, this Legislature voted the sum of \$1.3 billion for health care. This year, we voted the sum of almost \$2 billion.

That is an increase in six years of over 50 percent in our funding to health care, and yet our population has not increased by that amount. The true demand for services has not increased by way of an aging population, and yet the draw is there. Members opposite, particularly the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), day after day in this House gets up and asks for more. The point is, choices have to be made.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I say very clearly to the members opposite, they can throw out some of the Workforce 2000 grants, the training programs that went there, but I am sure if they added up some of those differences, they would be nowhere near what they are asking for in other areas of expenditure. Their math is indeed very faulty on many occasions, and if one is to have a realistic discussion of these issues, I think you have to be able to add one and one and get two, and that seems to be a deficiency from some members of this House from time to time.

Mr. Speaker, having said that, I must say that as Minister of Northern Affairs and of Native Affairs, and indeed colleagues such as the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) have recognized that the role of the friendship centres in our province is a very valid one. We have started a process. I as minister last—I believe it was in December, where I had my first meeting with the Association of Friendship Centres. It was a rather large gathering. We had a very frank discussion on the roles of friendship centres and the opportunities that they provided and ways in which

we as a provincial government could find additional sources to be able to assist them in their work and provide funding to them. We had a very good exchange of views. I know members opposite may not be interested in this part, in this discussion—except for the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson), of course—but there was a very, very good exchange of views.

One of the suggestions that I made, and again it is one of the opportunities that difficult times offer to us, was that if we could find areas where the friendship centres could deliver services that the Province of Manitoba was currently delivering, and if they could do them in a more efficient and economical way, we were interested as a government. We were—

**Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington):** That is nonsense, and you know it.

**Mr. Praznik:** Well, the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett)—and I would like to put that on the record—says this is nonsense. But that is exactly the type of approach that government took in the past with the Manitoba Metis Federation and the provision of housing services, where we as a government contracted out as a provincial government the delivery of housing programming to the Manitoba Metis Federation, and they deliver it, in my opinion at least, more efficiently and at lesser cost than what we could do through our own provincial bureaucracy. That has proven to be a great success.

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

The member for Wellington says it is not possible, but it is possible. It is being done every day by Manitoba Metis Housing. Perhaps the member for Wellington is really saying we want to have it done by MGEU members as opposed to members of the Manitoba Metis Federation. Perhaps that is her position, and she will have an opportunity to put that on the record in the debates.

#### Point of Order

**Ms. Barrett:** Mr. Acting Speaker, I would like to call the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik)

to order on relevance. We are discussing the issue of Indian and Metis Friendship Centres, not—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Sveinson):** Order, please. The honourable member for Wellington does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Praznik:** I notice whenever members of this side get talking of some alternative ways of doing things, the members in the NDP say they are not relevant. Mr. Acting Speaker, this is highly relevant because we have had some very good discussions. In fact, I want to indicate very clearly to the members of the New Democratic Party that one area we are working on actively now with the Manitoba Association of Friendship Centres is developing a plan in our whole area of the reform of social services.

I am very much convinced as a minister—and perhaps I am putting myself a little bit out front on this, but I very much believe that the friendship centres, and I point out to honourable members last winter in my tour of the North as Northern Affairs minister, I managed to drop into a number of friendship centres and spent some time getting a sense of what they do. I am very much of the belief that the friendship centres can be a very effective delivery mechanism in the reform of our social welfare programs.

I believe they can reach out to a client base, that they can work with that client base more effectively than any provincial government office can ever work with that base. I think they can be more effective in the use of public dollars in support of social allowance recipients, finding jobs for them to do and work for them to do whether it be in the community or it be in the regular labour force.

We have had meetings over the last number of months. We have begun a process where my Department of Northern Affairs and Native Affairs and the Department of Family Services is working with the Manitoba Association of Friendship Centres to develop a proposal that we intend to work into the whole reform process on social allowances. I think, Mr. Acting Speaker, this will

provide the friendship centres with an opportunity to have a new source of revenue, while at the same time deliver services more effectively to their constituency base and people of this province than we as a provincial government will ever be able to do.

I make this commitment as minister, and my colleague the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson), want to develop this kind of program. Really, it is interesting when we got into some discussions last winter, kind of in our open discussion and where we have had some now with the executive of the association, that the opportunities to provide people with meaningful activity and work in their life, meaningful training in a setting that fits those people and makes them comfortable, is there with the friendship centres more than any other mechanism and certainly any bureaucracy governments can develop.

So we are very, very much committed to working with them. I say to honourable members opposite that I hope, quite frankly, that through this program, through the development of this joint effort and maybe several others that we can find—because my offer to them was a very open one. Let us find areas where we can hire them as delivery agents which gives them a source of revenue and ultimately provides more efficient delivery and better delivery of services to our clients and our citizens. We can find them. We are prepared to make those commitments just as we have done with the Manitoba Metis Federation with the Housing Corporation.

Although it may not be ideal, it may not be the unconditional grants that used to come, we recognize that there is a valid role to play within the financial constraints with which we have to live, not the kind of imaginary land in which our friends in the New Democratic Party in opposition are in, although in government they are doing the same thing. We want to find ways of working with the friendship centres to put more dollars in so they can deliver the service.

One comment that was made to me by some involved with the friendship centres is they have access to a host of people now who are looking for

things to do, and they have work that can be matched to those people, work in the friendship centres. It is making that match and providing the mechanisms that allow that to happen, because the public in Manitoba is spending a lot of money now—I am talking in the area of social allowance—for people whom we pay to be at home while there is work to be done in the community which the friendship centres can organize and know about. It is our responsibility to match that and allow the friendship centres to be a vehicle.

\* (1740)

My question for members of the New Democratic Party: Are they going to allow those types of things to happen, or are they going to rise in this House day after day and oppose that kind of innovation because it might offend some other principle on which they base their view of social allowance?

So time will tell if that is where we want to go. Mr. Acting Speaker, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to address this matter. It is a very interesting debate, and again my compliments to the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) for a very interesting discussion on this matter and history of friendship centres.

**Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, I will certainly provide the opportunity for the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) to add his contributions to this resolution, but I welcome the opportunity of speaking very briefly to the resolution put before the Chamber by the member for Lakeside, and seconded by the honourable member for Rupertsland—

**An Honourable Member: Selkirk.**

**Mr. Enns:** Selkirk—I thank the honourable member for the resolution.

Quite frankly, it is my contention, my belief that we spend inordinate time on several central issues in this Chamber and do not find the time to speak specifically to the issues that address—I do not know what the exact percentage is, but it has to be up around 10, 11, 12 percent of the population of our province of Manitoba who are being addressed

in this resolution, and we speak of aboriginal First Nations, Metis matters.

I would like my colleague the Minister of Northern Affairs, the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik)—I want to be careful not to get too far ahead of the government that I am part of. I appreciate that this is private members' hour, and, as such, all of us should be free to speak as private members or as MLAs. I am well cognizant of the fact that it is difficult for a minister to ever do that in this Chamber or indeed outside of the Chamber, and I am part of the government that is currently responsible for civic affairs in the province of Manitoba.

I share, and I want to speak in support of the resolution. I believe genuinely that the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) and the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) bring to the attention of all members, a program, an issue of considerable importance to the aboriginal community in Manitoba, and it is deserving of our attention.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I want to be very careful of how I say the next few things that I feel very strongly about—the members of my own cabinet and caucus are aware of that—because I certainly do not wish to say that to in any way offend the honourable member for Rupertsland or any of my First Nations brothers and sisters in the province.

I want to choose to single out a little bit in this resolution, because the resolution affords me the opportunity to do so, that in my judgment, over the years, it is particularly the Metis community that has, quite frankly, not the kind of support, not the kind of political clout that the First Nations people have, and that is not to say that things are well for the First Nations people.

I am well aware that there are serious discussions going on right now between the federal authorities about the devolution of authority, the power, maybe the eventual elimination of the federal Department of Indian Affairs, that massive bureaucracy, and the kind of work that Grand Chief Phil Fontaine is engaged in on behalf of the First Nations people in bringing about the transfer of those funds to more directly come under the

control and under the direction of the First Nations people in their move towards self-government. That is occurring as we speak.

It has been my observation and, quite frankly, not just in the Chamber and in the councils of government, but certainly of course in my own constituency of Lakeside, where I am privileged to have some substantial and significant Metis communities of St. Laurent, St. Ambroise, St. Eustache. It has always been a deeply held feeling that I have had that in many ways the programming dollars, the assistance programs are considerably more difficult for the Metis community to access because of their status in this country.

I see in the resolution brought before us, and I am aware that there is a coming together in the friendship centre organizations, that the definition is not that finite. There are people, there are friendship centres that cater and are supported by and are utilized by many people whom we classify as Metis as well as First Nations people. But the funding cutback, in my judgment, impacts more severely on those who are principally of the Metis community, simply because they do not have the federal government to fall back on. They do not have the current levels of federal monies in support of their program.

Mr. Acting Speaker, allow me simply to put those few comments on the record. I will lend my support to the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson), to my friend the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Praznik) in the discussions on this matter as we prepare and look forward to coming budgets. I believe that I genuinely feel that, among the many dollars that governments have to spend, both federal and provincial, surely we can prioritize. We can look hard at where we are spending some dollars.

There are some suggestions coming forward from members opposite who challenge us as we challenge them. There may not necessarily be more dollars available in the overall pie, but I think we ought to challenge ourselves as to how we can best spend those dollars. Where possible, in fact, we should go the extra mile to ensure that when we

have organizations like we have in this instance, established friendship centres that just did not come about yesterday or the day after—they have been established over a period of years, and we just heard pretty good statements of the kind of service they provide and the need for them, and most of us understand that. Then we should, in all seriousness, apply ourselves to finding the necessary funds to ensure that they continue to provide that very critical service that they provide.

It is indeed a very difficult situation for our brothers and sisters of the First Nations or of the Metis community, more so even for the First Nations in this instance. They leave, very often, remote locations in and about different parts of Manitoba and find themselves in urban centres, most of them in the city of Winnipeg, but not just exclusive to the city of Winnipeg—Selkirk and other centres or wherever they occur, in Brandon, and then come to grips with that kind of a lifestyle, that kind of an environment. I, for one, can understand the comfort, the assistance, the help that they provide to our aboriginal community and will do what I can in support of the principle of this resolution.

I do not ask the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) to take umbrage at the resolution because he happens to be part of the group that is now the federal government, but he is first and foremost a provincial politician who has to stand up and speak for the concerns of residents of Manitoba and our aboriginal community are very much that. They are a significant percentage of the population of Manitoba and deserve our attention.

Thank you very much, Mr. Acting Speaker.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Acting Speaker, it is with pleasure that I can stand up and comment on the resolution.

To start off with, the principles of the resolution and the message, at least in part, that the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar)—not entirely, because I do disagree with a number of the things that the member for Selkirk has put on the record this evening. The principle of the resolution is something which I am sure we could support as a Liberal caucus.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I have had the opportunity in the last six years to meet with different individuals that have volunteered, that have been paid to operate and to run and to organize a number of different friendship centres. Through that I think you get a better appreciation in terms of the commitment that is there to help out, as the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) has pointed out, a significant portion of Manitoba's population, because there is a need to assist in terms of where we can to help individuals.

\* (1750)

In the area that I represent, we have Gilbert Park. Gilbert Park is predominantly aboriginal, made up of Metis and Indian—and it is predominantly, not entirely, Mr. Acting Speaker. I look at the sorts of things, the services that the friendship centres provide for the aboriginal people. As members were speaking, and particularly the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) was speaking on the resolution, I was trying to do a comparison in terms of the friendship centres to what we have been able to do in the Gilbert Park area, where we have gotten a resource centre built into the community. Some of the things that we are hoping to bring into the resource centre really and truly are very reflective of the sorts of things that are being done in the friendship centres, I would imagine, throughout the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we see that there is a need for that financial assistance. Yes, it would be nice to be able to provide that assistance. Hopefully, we will see the federal government looking at its priorities and, hopefully, be able to find the resources to be able to reinstate some of the funding cuts that the previous administration had made. Hopefully, we will see some form of reinstatement of funds from the provincial government. With the experience, the first-hand experience that I have had in dealing with the Gilbert Park resource centre and the benefits of that particular resource centre and what it does for the individuals that live in that community, because many of them are there in transition also, coming from a reserve into a major urban centre, the support services that are given out, I believe, really and truly assist those individuals.

If the resource centre did not come into being, Mr. Acting Speaker, I do not believe that the level of participation in terms of bettering that very significant portion of the population would be as enhanced, if you will. That is, when I look at the friendship centres today, the friendship centres enhance the opportunities of the aboriginal community, if you will, to better the lifestyle of many individuals from within that community.

I have seen direct benefits, as I say, in discussions that I have had with both the volunteers and workers; and, reflecting in terms of the riding that I represent, and a good portion of that riding being that of Gilbert Park, I have seen first-hand some of those benefits.

You know, Mr. Acting Speaker, one could comment, I guess, at length on them. It is, in fact, pointed out quite well in the last WHEREAS in terms of some of those benefits, and I concur especially with that particular WHEREAS.

For that reason I believe that it is encouraging to see resolutions of this nature come before us because it is always valuable to get some of the insights that have been expressed from different members and share some of the concerns that the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) says, where as a private member it would be nice to be able to comment without having to worry about the discipline of a political party.

I do believe that there is a consensus, Mr. Acting Speaker, that no one calls into question, at least I would hope that no one would call into question, the benefits of having friendship centres. There might be some differential opinion in terms of how they might be financially assisted.

Hopefully, whatever political stripe is in the government's chair will acknowledge that what has to be first and foremost on the minds of elected officials, that we recognize the importance, that we do what we can to enhance the friendship centres, to ensure that we are not doing something that in a long term is going to be to the detriment of what is a very valuable resource in just the sheer number of individuals that commit so much of their time and effort trying to make that very important and



significant percentage of our population more a part of society as a whole.

With those few words, Mr. Acting Speaker, as I say, we do not have any problem in terms of supporting the principle of this resolution.

**Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services):** Mr. Acting Speaker, I rise today to put my comments on the record and indicate very much my support for the work that friendship centres do right throughout the width and the breadth of our province.

I have had, over the last number of years since I have been in government, before in my last responsibility as the Minister responsible for the Status of Women and now in the Department of Family Services, the opportunity to meet with many women from our aboriginal community from north to south, Mr. Acting Speaker, and, also, now in my new responsibility for Family Services, the opportunity to meet with members of the friendship centres, along with my colleague the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Praznik) who, I believe, has established a very positive ongoing dialogue to see how we can work as a government in partnership with the friendship centres and focus on initiatives that will be of major benefit to those in our Metis and Status communities.

I want to echo my support for the concept of what friendship centres do for those whom they serve and what benefits there are to the community

at large as a result of some of the ongoing activities.

We have indicated as a government that during very difficult economic times, what we want to do is use our dollars very wisely and focus on areas that we believe change may need to happen. How can we use the dollars? How can we look at programs that are ongoing, evaluate those programs, enhance those ones that are working well and refocus resources around programs that might need to be changed.

No longer can a government of any political stripe have the luxury of leaving programs in place that have not been evaluated and have not, in all instances—sometimes have been in place for 20 years with no evaluative mechanism in place, and when dollars are flowing freely and governments have the opportunity because of additional resources to make decisions to add on new programs that is well and good, but today we know the economic reality is that there are no new dollars and the dollars that we do have—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Sveinson):** Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable Minister of Family Services will have 13 minutes remaining.

The hour now being six o'clock, the House is now adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 7, 1994

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