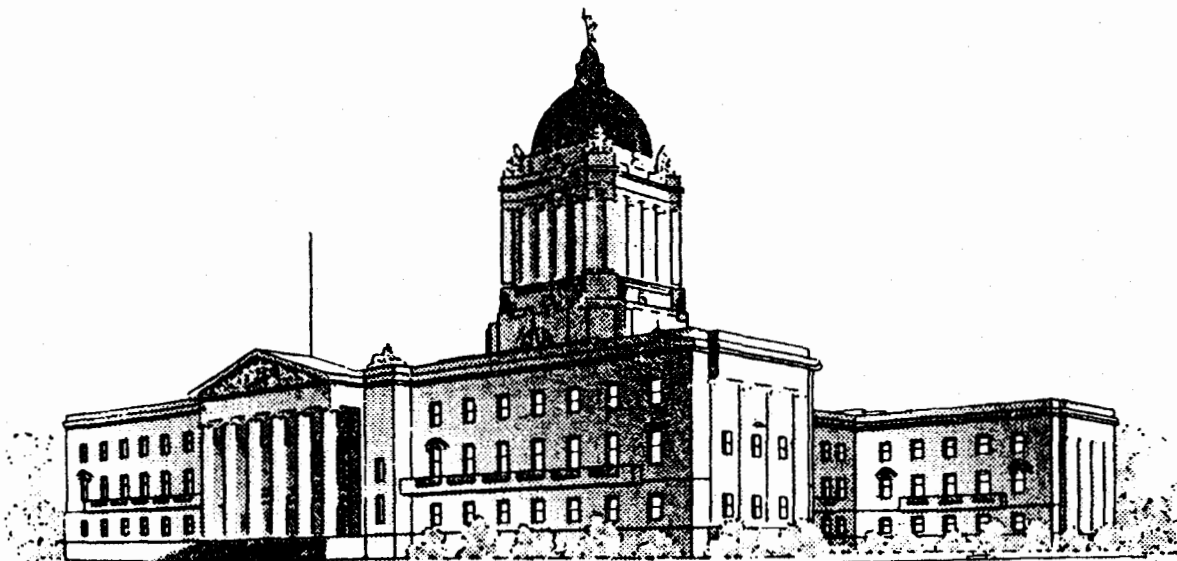




Second Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
Standing Committee
on
Law Amendments

Chairperson
Mr. David Newman
Constituency of Riel



MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA
THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LAW AMENDMENTS
Monday, June 3, 1996**

TIME – 7 p.m.

LOCATION – Winnipeg, Manitoba

CHAIRPERSON – Mr. David Newman (Riel)

ATTENDANCE - 10 – QUORUM - 6

Members of the Committee present:

Hon. Mrs. Mitchelson

Ms. Barrett, Messrs. Dyck, Laurendeau, Mackintosh, Martindale, Newman, Pitura, Radcliffe, Mrs. Render

APPEARING:

Mr. Gary Kowalski, MLA for The Maples

MATTERS UNDER DISCUSSION:

Bill 35–The Child and Family Services Amendment Act

Mr. Chairperson: Will the Standing Committee of Law Amendments please come to order.

This evening the committee will be considering Bill 35, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act.

To date, no persons have registered to speak to this bill. I will canvass the audience at this point to see if there are any persons in attendance wishing to make a presentation to Bill 35. Seeing none, is it the will of the committee to proceed with consideration of the bill? [agreed]

Does the minister responsible for the bill have an opening statement?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): I want to thank all members of the committee and indeed all members of the Legislative Assembly for

the speed in which we have been able to bring this bill to committee stage and ensure speedy passage before we rise on June 6. I endeavour to share with my honourable friends in the Legislature and both opposition parties the intent of the bill. We have kept it on purpose very narrow and very focused.

I think speedy passage before June 6 will allow the work to be done to ensure that child care centres and our schools, as they are in the process of what traditionally happens, and that is employing new staff for the beginning of the new school year, will have the opportunity to have access to a full list of those that have committed offences, sexual or physical, against children.

So I want to thank all colleagues in the Legislature for our ability to get this passed in a very timely way.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the minister. Does the critic from the official opposition have an opening statement?

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): I do not have an opening statement. However, I would concur with the minister that we are going to give speedy passage to this bill. However, we will have questions on various clauses of the bill.

Mr. Chairperson: The bill will be considered clause by clause. During consideration of the bill the title and the preamble are postponed until all other clauses have been considered in their proper order by the committee.

Clause 1–pass.

Clause 2 (1).

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): I am okay on that clause.

Mr. Chairperson: Clause 2 (1)–pass.

Clause 2 (2).

Mr. Mackintosh: I just have a series of questions for the minister and staff. I just want some assurance that the

definition of court in the amended legislation will indeed include all courts in Manitoba, all courts in Canada, whether at the provincial or under federal jurisdiction and the Supreme Court level.

Mrs. Mitchelson: The answer to that is yes. It will include all courts.

Mr. Chairperson: Clause 2(2)–pass; Clause 3–pass; Clause 4(1).

Mr. Mackintosh: Similar to the last question, has staff and the minister assured themselves that the definition of sexual exploitation, which I believe is used in the act itself, has a broad enough definition to include all forms of pedophilia? I do not see a problem with that, but I just want to know if that has been thoroughly canvassed. I would think that even exposing oneself to a child would be exploitation, but I just want to ensure that that definition of exploitation has been studied.

Mrs. Mitchelson: The example that my honourable friend cited would be an example of something that would be a Criminal Code offence, and we are assured, I think, pretty well assured, that it would include exploitation. Corruption of children, I think, is the definition, a word that has been provided to me, and we are reviewing all statutes presently, but we are fairly satisfied that it would be inclusive.

Mr. Mackintosh: A more difficult area, under 4(1), for example, one has to be found guilty or have pleaded guilty before triggering a response—a name on the registry. Now, where a person is neither found guilty nor pleaded guilty, I have some concerns because there may still be a pedophile there. For example, where there is plea bargaining, there is one issue—and it also relates to 19(6)—where there is plea bargaining, for example, where there is sexual interference, where the charge is laid and perhaps common assault, and sexual interference is dropped in the bargain, is someone still within the section?

Second of all, perhaps a Charter breach was found during the course of the trial, and acquittal followed as a result of that, as a remedy for the Charter breach, or third, even more common is where there is insufficient

evidence, just not proof beyond a reasonable doubt, but yet, in the mind of a reasonable observer, on a likelihood, there is a pedophile there. I am just wondering if those circumstances will result in at least the child abuse committee reviewing the circumstances, and second of all, more importantly though, will the court report on at least the likelihood of there being a pedophile here?

* (1910)

Mrs. Mitchelson: The Child Abuse Registry, as it exists today, when it deals with allegations of abuse by people who are in a position of trust, that process will not change. The child abuse committees from the agencies will still refer people to the registry if they are not convicted or if they do not plead guilty but if there is some suspicion that there has been a technicality or if there is some suspicion that abuse has happened. That will not change with this legislation, but what we are bringing into the act is many offences and convictions or guilty pleas under the criminal court system, under the Criminal Code, which is a federal responsibility.

Now, I believe that there are many issues, bigger issues at this point in time, than a quick amendment or a process—how am I trying to say this. I think there needs to be some public dialogue and discussion around that issue, the kind of dialogue that cannot take place today. Now, we are making further amendments to The Child and Family Services Act next spring as a result of our public consultation, and I think that piece of it could be included in that public dialogue, but I am not prepared right now.

I guess the reason we wanted to bring in very narrow amendments at this point in time was to ensure that we have a due process in place and that we caught those people immediately who had been convicted or had pled guilty, and that does not preclude us from looking at the bigger issue in trying to determine a process. The child abuse committees would not necessarily be the right process. Are you understanding what I am trying to say, or am I—what I am saying is if someone has not been convicted, it is under the Criminal Code. It is in the federal courts, and if due process has not been followed, I am not sure how they could be included at this point in time, but it does not preclude us from looking at that as we move to further amendments next year.

What is critical for me this year is to ensure those people who have been convicted, have pled guilty, are on the list.

Mr. Mackintosh: There is the old saying, well, he got off on a technicality, which, of course, usually means there has been an infringement of one's rights by the police, but if that occurs, where someone gets off on a so-called technicality breach, is the minister saying then that that individual will not be vetted through the child abuse committee to determine if that name should be on the registry?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I think I may have to correct a statement that I just made. If, in fact, a child that is abused by a third party is in need of protection under the new definition of abuse, that in fact can be processed through the child abuse committees. Does that clarify it?

Mr. Mackintosh: Is the minister then saying that one need not be found guilty or have pleaded guilty to an offence involving abuse of the child to get one's name on the registry?

Mrs. Mitchelson: That is correct.

Mr. Mackintosh: I am wondering if the minister and the staff can just have a second look at that section because 4.(1)(a) uses the words "a person, in a court in Manitoba, was found guilty of, or pleaded guilty to, an offence involving abuse of a child;" and whether that will preclude reporting on something otherwise.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, what we are seeing in the amendments is just Clause (a) that is being amended, but, if you look to the bill, there is a Clause (b) and a Clause (c) that talks about the person that has been found by a court, in a proceeding under this act, to have abused a child, or "(c) the agency child abuse committee is of the opinion that the person has abused a child." So with the expanded definition of abuse, those people will be picked up.

Mr. Mackintosh: My only concern is whether the wording in (a) "restricted" restricts the application of (c), and it is the opinion that that would not occur.

Mr. Chairperson: Honourable Minister, you are confirming what Mr. Mackintosh has said?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, I am confirming your comment.

Mr. Mackintosh: Perhaps, just while we are on this concern, if we can look at 19(6), as proposed, that is directing the court to report names of persons, and, because the court only appears to be directed to name someone where there is an offence involving abuse of the child, will that still require the court to send a name where the offence itself is not about the abuse of a child? I will restate.

Mr. Chairperson: Mr. Mackintosh again, for clarification.

Mr. Mackintosh: If someone is not found guilty, first of all, the court, I understand, need not send the name. Is that right?

Mrs. Mitchelson: That is correct.

* (1920)

Mr. Mackintosh: My second question then would be, how would a child abuse committee know of that individual if the court does not send the name? I am thinking here the circumstances would be where someone goes to trial and is found not guilty and, yet, there may well be a likelihood that this individual is a pedophile. It would appear in those circumstances the court does not have to send the name to the committee.

Mrs. Mitchelson: In the event that a third party was charged with the abuse of a child, they would have to be charged by the police, who could refer that name to the child abuse committee or the parent could refer that child to the child abuse committee. So there is not a requirement of the courts to do that.

Mr. Mackintosh: I am just wondering what reason the minister has for not requiring the court to report circumstances that it may believe amount to pedophilia.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, presently if in fact the police have suspicion of or there is a charge laid of abuse against a child, knowing that it is narrowly defined by a person in the position of trust, the police

automatically have to refer that issue to a Child and Family Services agency, and that happens at the present time for them to determine whether the child is in need of protection. Then the Child and Family Services agency can kick in the process of the child abuse committee. Now that the definition is expanded, that same process will still follow.

Mr. Mackintosh: I wonder if we might just complete the line of questioning, and then we can go through the sections. It may not have been the intention, but I think we are onto a train of thought here that may be worthwhile pursuing.

In 19(7) an onus is put on a peace officer there where the peace officer has information. It appears that a peace officer has no duty to search. Now, I am wondering what thinking went into restricting the mandate for the police officers just where they have information.

Mrs. Mitchelson: We have an amendment to this section as a result of some discussion with the Liberal Child and Family Services critic, and I will be proposing that amendment when we get to that section but, rather than saying has information, we will be striking that out and putting in, in the course of conducting an investigation or carrying out other duties obtains information.

Mr. Mackintosh: Again, no onus is put on the peace officer to search out information. Is that because it is just too onerous? In other words, I am concerned about offences that are in the past and that this not only be prospective legislation but that all known pedophiles in Manitoba will be reported. There may be records, police records, for example, where there can be diligence searches made and reporting done accordingly.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Those lists are presently available in the Department of Justice. There is a list of convicted sex offenders against children. So it is not, I do not believe, incumbent upon the police force, but I think those kinds of lists would be provided to us to include in the Child Abuse Registry.

Mr. Mackintosh: I suppose then that that would only be voluntary because the legislation did not require that list to be made available?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I will distribute the amendment right now for committee members and I would ask—I am sorry, my staff did not quite hear the question, if I could ask my honourable friend to repeat it.

* (1930)

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, the reporting of the names from a list in the Department of Justice is not mandated by the bill, it appears. It would only be a matter of protocol. I am wondering if—I do not know if it is necessary to have an amendment for that because it is a one-time issue only, but if the minister would undertake that that protocol would be followed and that that list will be made available for the registry purposes.

Mrs. Mitchelson: That protocol is in place, and we have been in consultation with the Department of Justice around the amendments to this legislation. That information will be provided to us for the registry.

Mr. Mackintosh: In 19(7)(a) information from a court outside Manitoba is to be made available. When you compare (a) to (b) it is apparent that any pedophile convicted outside Manitoba prior to the coming into force of the subsection would not be included. I am wondering why that is?

Mrs. Mitchelson: We will not have an inventory as a result of this legislation of every conviction right across the country, but, in fact, if there is information known that a known pedophile or abuser of a child is coming to Manitoba, that information must be provided to the director of child welfare, so that person can be included on the Child Abuse Registry.

Mr. Mackintosh: If I suggested that (a) was amended to say, in a court outside Manitoba either before or after coming into force of this subsection, that would make sure that people convicted outside of Manitoba today are included in the registry. Is my understanding correct?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Subsection (a) speaks to in a court outside of Manitoba, and this is prior to Royal Assent and hereinafter. Subsection (b) speaks to prior to the coming into force of the subsection because the courts will report those automatically after Royal Assent.

Mr. Mackintosh: In other words, (b) does not restrict (a). Is that the minister's understanding?

Mrs. Mitchelson: That is my understanding.

Mr. Mackintosh: One final question, in 19(8), offences can be excluded from the application of this section by regulation, and every time I see that, I get the willies. There is this tendency, despite political stripe, of moving to more and more government by cabinet.

There is a real concern about that, and I am wondering what was intended, what was envisioned? What kind of offence would be excluded?

Mrs. Mitchelson: This is to ensure that all offences under the Criminal Code that involve children would be included if they were convicted or pled guilty, would be included on the Child Abuse Registry unless, by regulation, we exempted them. Of course, we would then be subject to criticism based on what we did exclude. But, rather than putting a list in, we determined that the best thing to do would be to take the Criminal Code offences that involved children and include them.

Now, can I indicate to you that there is some discussion—and I will be honest with the kinds of things we might be looking at excluding. One of them might be, for instance, if in fact a child in the schoolyard got into a fight and beat up another child in the schoolyard, you know, as a 14-year-old and a 13-year-old, would we want to, if that 14-year-old was convicted, include them on the Child Abuse Registry? I think we have to think seriously about whether we would really want that to happen. That might be an instance for exclusion, but I certainly would want the 14-year-old pimp to be included on the registry.

Mr. Mackintosh: I would think, though, that the requirement of exploitation in the definition of abuse, though, would deal with that issue.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, exploitation is one instance, but also physical abuse is another instance where we would include people on physical injury on the Child Abuse Registry. So, if there was physical injury as a result of two teenagers fighting in the schoolyard, I am not sure that is the kind of instance. I mean, what we are looking at is getting at those third parties that are sexually exploiting or using children, and in the cases of

physical abuse where we believe that needs to be included. So that is one instance, and we may argue about that. I would like to hear my honourable friend's comments around, sort of, the schoolyard interaction or a fight that might occur, and hear his comments on what he feels about that kind of activity being included or that kind of person being included on the registry.

Mr. Mackintosh: Certainly, I do not think that is the intent of the legislation to include that kind of a circumstance. But I am wondering then if in 19(8) we talk about excluding offences, does the word "offence" there mean the particular case, a particular circumstance, rather than a type of offence under the Criminal Code. I mean, is it the intention to have a regulation saying that we are excluding simple assaults, common assault, or is it the intention of the regulation to say Mr. X and little Y?

Mrs. Mitchelson: It is the first instance where maybe common assault might be an offence that is excluded from the registry.

Mr. Mackintosh: Is it the intention of the minister to immediately construct such a regulation, or will that be done over time?

Mrs. Mitchelson: It will be done as quickly as possible, expeditiously.

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, then, what is the intention of the minister? What offences is the minister contemplating putting on that regulation?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, common assault is the one and only that we are looking at this time. Certainly any conviction or guilty plea of any type of sexual activity with minors would automatically be included, and common assault is the only one I am aware of right at this point in time that we would be contemplating.

* (1940)

Mr. Mackintosh: I have to think this through then, because, for example, I am aware of one circumstance of a sex offender, a pedophile, who was charged with sexual interference and assault, there was a plea bargain, and a guilty plea entered only on the assault. Would that result

in that individual not being named, or does part (c) and the other provisions still allow for the reporting of that individual?

Mrs. Mitchelson: As a result of the requirement for the police to report to Child and Family Service agencies, those that are charged in order that the agency may determine whether that child is in need of protection, that information would be provided and the committee process at the agency level would kick in.

Mr. Mackintosh: One kind of general question that just came to mind, the sexual offender notification committee has a role obviously in receiving information about sex offenders, and then they decide whether the person is of high enough risk that there should be notification, limited or otherwise, to the community. I am wondering if the minister sees a role for the notification committee at all, whether under 19(7) or otherwise?

Mrs. Mitchelson: The police are already part of the community notification committee, so they would be obligated if they had information to report to the director of Child and Family Services any case that came to their attention.

Mr. Chairperson: Do you want to ask the question in relation to this 4(1), or should we move ahead and pass it?

Mr. Martindale: The Child and Family Services Act, Section 19.1 says: "Subject to subsection (3), each agency shall, in accordance with the regulations, establish a child abuse committee to review cases of suspected abuse of a child."

The reason I refer to that is that in Section 4 of this bill, 4(1) and 4(2), each clause actually starts with "the agency." I would like to ask the minister how many Child and Family Services agencies in Manitoba do not have a child abuse committee?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I am told that all mandated agencies have child abuse committees with the exception of Churchill, Health and Anishinaabe and Jewish Child and Family Services which uses the Winnipeg Child and Family Services agency child abuse committee.

We have a quality assurance team or a team of people that are in Anishinaabe presently working with them, and one of the issues they are dealing with is the lack of a child abuse committee.

Mr. Martindale: The reason I ask is that it seems to me that if there is not a child abuse committee, that the existing sections of the act and the amendments are of no force or effect if the committee does not exist or if the committee is not meeting, and therefore names are not being submitted to the provincial Child Abuse Registry. I think that is a pretty serious omission, because people could be accused or convicted of crimes against children and the names are probably not being forwarded to the provincial registry.

I guess I would also like to know what the minister is doing about this problem, because the act says that Child and Family Services agencies shall have a child abuse committee.

Mrs. Mitchelson: My honourable friend will recall that we have just done a restructure in the branch, The Child and Family Services branch, and we have appointed a director of compliance that will be working very aggressively with the agencies to ensure that they are following standards that are set down by the branch and that they are complying with the act.

We thought it was critical that we focus on compliance and ensure that those who are mandated to do the job on behalf of government of protecting children are following the laws and the standards. So it has been a restructure. There is a director of compliance who has been appointed, and it is one of the tasks that she is already undertaking.

* (1950)

Mr. Martindale: So is it one of the tasks of the director of compliance to ensure that a child abuse committee will be set up in those agencies?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Absolutely that they will be set up, and they will be functioning.

Mr. Martindale: Thank you, and you can be sure that I will follow up to see that that was done.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Chair, from my reading of the section in The Child and Family Services Act that the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) was referring to, it appears that this section was put into the statutes of Manitoba in 1989-90.

I am wondering if the minister can explain why if this was put in at that point, it is six years later, and some agencies still do not have a committee, if I am reading the legislation correctly.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I am informed that in the instance of Churchill Health, because it is such a small community, that they do have access to the Norman Region child abuse committee out of Thompson and that they utilize that rather than having their own committee. We will be ensuring that that is functioning and working in a proper fashion as the result of the stronger focus on compliance.

The other area, of course, is Anishinaabe, and there has been much controversy around the agency and some of the bands that are part of Anishinaabe Child and Family Services. One of the reasons that we have a team of people in that agency—it is a very serious issue. We have had some serious issues around that agency, and we are wanting to work as aggressively as possible with them to ensure that those who are working in the child and family services system in that agency have the tools and the skills and the ability to deliver quality child and family services, an issue that I am extremely concerned about.

We will determine in the very near future whether the agency has the ability to deliver the service and protect children. If not, there might have to be alternate steps that are taken, but I want to assure my honourable friend that it is a major issue for me, and we will strive to ensure that compliance does happen.

Mr. Chairperson: Clause 4(1)—pass; Clause 4(2)—pass.

Now, with respect to Clause 4(3), there is an amendment.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I move

THAT the proposed subsection 19(7), as set out in subsection 4(3) of the bill, be amended in the part preceding clause (a) by striking out “has information” and substituting “, in the course of conducting an investigation or carrying out other duties, obtains information”.

[French version]

Il est proposé que le paragraphe 19(7), énoncé au paragraphe 4(3) du projet de loi, soit amendé par substitution, à “L'agent de la paix qui possède des renseignements” de “L'agent de la paix qui, dans le cadre de ses fonctions, notamment la tenue d'une enquête, obtient des renseignements”.

I move it in both English and French.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay, it is so moved by the honourable minister. Any discussion on the amendment?

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, I just want to know what is behind it. Is it to clearly limit the requirement to report by a police officer only from information obtained in the course of duties, in other words, to specifically exclude information that comes to a peace officer through, say, personal dealings with individuals?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, the intent of the amendment is clearly to ensure that we do not require the police to go back to the turn of the century and go through a very vigorous and administrative process that would take them off of their duties on the streets but in fact to ensure that where they have information or in the course of investigating they have information that that information shall be brought forward.

The lists of convicted offenders are available to us through the Department of Justice and, rather than having the police force go through that process and that exercise, we will obtain those names. If they have information or they are aware on an individual basis or as the result of an investigation they are undertaking, they will be required to report that to the director.

Mr. Chairperson: Amendment—pass; Clause 4(3) as amended—pass; Clause 5—pass; Clause 6—pass; Clause 7—pass. Preamble.

Mr. Mackintosh: Can the minister tell the committee what outreach the Child Abuse Registry engages in to let people know of its existence.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, in the past I am told that agencies have done some local communication within their own communities. I think as a result of the amendments and the highlighting of the expansion of the definition of abuse under the amendments in the process that there will be greater public awareness, but we are meeting presently with the court system, with the police system, with the Department of Justice and with agencies to look at the regulations and the enactment of the amendments.

My honourable friend raises a good question. I honestly believe that as many people that do know the abuse registry is there, or the more the better, because I think it only serves to protect our children better when we have full and factual information and that everyone that is hiring or working with children has the ability to ensure that they are not putting children at undue risk as the result of hiring or engaging, even on a volunteer basis, those people in our community that will be entrusted with the service and communication with children.

So I want to indicate to my honourable friend that any suggestions that he may have I would look at very favourably, or any member of the Legislature. I think it is important and critical that we do highlight that Manitoba is one of the few provinces that does have a Child Abuse Registry, and there should be broad public understanding and knowledge that registry does exist and those that are hiring children or working with children have all of the information required so that they can check the list to find out whether in fact there is a name on the registry.

* (2000)

Mr. Mackintosh: Is the minister assured that every child care centre and every educational authority in the province is aware of the existence of the Child Abuse Registry?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes. I do know in the case of child care centres and homes they are required to check the Abuse Registry when hiring staff.

Mr. Mackintosh: Is that requirement legislated or simply protocol?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I believe it is, I am told, in regulation, but we will check that, and I will get back to my honourable friend on that.

Mr. Mackintosh: Also, if the minister can tell now or else advise me whether the requirement extends to the hiring or the retaining of volunteers and not just paid employees?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I am told that for daycare centres all people that are engaged in the care of children have to be checked through the registry, whether they be volunteers or paid employees.

Mr. Mackintosh: I understand that another related check is the criminal records check, and that is, I understand, done in the case of employers but is rarely done in the case of volunteers. Is my understanding correct?

Mrs. Mitchelson: We will have to get back to my honourable friend on that. I cannot give you a definite response.

Mr. Mackintosh: I am sure the minister sees the need, of course, for checks from both lists for both volunteers and for employees because to the vulnerable person and to the parent it makes no difference if it was a volunteer or employer, and I am concerned that the same standards apply to both. I wonder if the minister just could assure herself of that and, if she could get back to this side, it would be appreciated.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Absolutely.

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable minister responded affirmatively.

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): Just from the discussion I think that we have to be careful in talking about this Child Abuse Registry, that it is a catchall, that regardless, whether we have volunteers, every baseball coach, every teacher, every daycare worker, every person who, we assume, will have contact with children is checked through that Child Abuse Registry. Parents, the communities still have to be vigilant to protect our

children, and although having a Child Abuse Registry is a wonderful thing to have in Manitoba, we should not be lulled into a feeling that, therefore, nothing could happen to our children. I think we have to be vigilant about that, that to think this is going to end all incidents of child abuse by pedophiles who are out in our community—it is just one more tool in our arsenal to use against these people. But I think from the discussion we have to be very careful not to assume that it is going to be perfect.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I thank my honourable friend for those comments. Yes, there is a responsibility on parents, and I do know that in the school system children are cautioned and I think they have to be cautioned again. We can never take anything for granted, that children will never fall victims of abuse, whether it be by someone they know or a total stranger, and it is important that parents do educate their children in the way to conduct themselves and deal with strangers and also with those that are in a position of trust, that can sometimes be responsible for abuse.

So I thank my honourable friend for those comments because, as he said, this is only a tool, one more tool in the whole picture, and we can never take for granted that any one bit of information that is gathered is the be all and the end all.

Mr. Mackintosh: I would just add that I think there is a very valid argument, that when there is a Child Abuse

Registry and criminal records checks available and sexual offender notification committee, one must even be more vigilant because one can begin to rely and think that someone else is going to do the job for them and that everything is comprehensive with those three reporting mechanisms. In fact, a false sense of security could be created by such mechanisms, so I would urge the minister to always consider the role of Child and Family Services and getting across to Manitobans and indeed a public campaign on child abuse, reporting it, what to do.

I would urge that there be parenting skills programming in this province, particularly in light of the government's new bill, and that parenting skills on a comprehensive basis that is culturally effective throughout Manitoba should be the partner of such legislation, if not, indeed, an enhancement of services to family, not a withdrawal of services.

I will leave those remarks for the record. I think they are relevant to the bill.

Mr. Chairperson: Preamble—pass; Title—pass. Bill as amended be reported—pass.

The time is now 8:08 p.m. What is the will of the committee, to adjourn? [agreed]

COMMITTEE ROSE AT: 8:08 p.m.