



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

42 Elizabeth II

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 20, 1993

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Richard Macaire, Ada Macaire and Emile Macaire requesting the Manitoba Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) to consider conducting a plebiscite of Manitoba farmers as soon as possible on the issue of removing barley from the jurisdiction of the Canadian Wheat Board.

* * *

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Glenn Hosea, Phyllis Tolsma, Grace McConkey and others requesting that the Manitoba government consider increasing its funding to education so that the children of this province receive the quality education they deserve and need.

* * *

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Odette Sabourin, Robert Cooper, Tony Rodrigues and others requesting the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) consider restoring the Children's Dental Program to the level it was prior to the 1993-1994 budget.

Mr. Cliff Evans (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Jo-Anne Bolduc, Dale McKinnon, Mervin Young and others requesting the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) consider restoring the Children's Dental Program to the level it was prior to the 1993-94 budget.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Brenda Palmer, Doug Gray, Sandra Pearce and others requesting the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) consider restoring the Children's Dental Program to the level it was prior to the 1993-94 budget.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Ms. Wowchuk). It complies

with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules (by leave). Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [agreed]

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS the Canadian Wheat Board has played a vital role in the orderly marketing of Canadian wheat, barley and other grain products since its inception in 1935; and

WHEREAS the federal Minister of Agriculture is considering removing barley from the jurisdiction of the Wheat Board; and

WHEREAS this is another step towards dismantling the board; and

WHEREAS, as in the case with the removal of oats from the Wheat Board in 1989, there has been no consultation with the board of directors of the Wheat Board, with the 11-member advisory committee to the board or the producers themselves; and

WHEREAS the federal minister has said that there will be no plebiscite of farmers before the announcement is made.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Manitoba Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) to consider conducting a plebiscite of Manitoba farmers on this issue as soon as possible.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Chomiak). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [agreed]

Mr. Clerk: The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS Manitoba has the highest rate of child poverty in the country; and

WHEREAS over 55,000 children depend upon the Children's Dental Program; and

WHEREAS several studies have pointed out the cost savings of preventative and treatment health care programs such as the Children's Dental Program; and

WHEREAS the Children's Dental Program has been in effect for 17 years and has been recognized as extremely cost-effective and critical for many families in isolated communities; and

WHEREAS the provincial government did not consult the users of the program or the providers before announcing plans to eliminate 44 of the 49 dentists, nurses and assistants providing this service; and

WHEREAS preventative health care is an essential component of health care reform.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) consider restoring the Children's Dental Program to the level it was prior to the 1993-94 budget.

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Lathlin). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [agreed]

Mr. Clerk: The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS Manitoba has the highest rate of child poverty in the country; and

WHEREAS over 55,000 children depend upon the Children's Dental Program; and

WHEREAS several studies have pointed out the cost savings of preventative and treatment health care programs such as the Children's Dental Program; and

WHEREAS the Children's Dental Program has been in effect for 17 years and has been recognized as extremely cost-effective and critical for many families in isolated communities; and

WHEREAS the provincial government did not consult the users of the program or the providers before announcing plans to eliminate 44 of the 49

dentists, nurses and assistants providing this service; and

WHEREAS preventative health care is an essential component of health care reform.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) consider restoring the Children's Dental Program to the level it was prior to the 1993-94 budget.

* (1335)

* * *

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Clif Evans). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [agreed]

Mr. Clerk: The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS the Canadian Wheat Board has played a vital role in the orderly marketing of Canadian wheat, barley and other grain products since its inception in 1935; and

WHEREAS the federal Minister of Agriculture is considering removing barley from the jurisdiction of the Wheat Board; and

WHEREAS this is another step towards dismantling the board; and

WHEREAS, as in the case with the removal of oats from the Wheat Board in 1989, there has been no consultation with the board of directors of the Wheat Board, with the 11-member advisory committee to the board or the producers themselves; and

WHEREAS the federal minister has said that there will be no plebiscite of farmers before the announcement is made.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Manitoba Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) to consider conducting a plebiscite of Manitoba farmers on this issue as soon as possible.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Dewar). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and

complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [agreed]

Mr. Clerk: The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS Manitoba has the highest rate of child poverty in the country; and

WHEREAS over 55,000 children depend upon the Children's Dental Program; and

WHEREAS several studies have pointed out the cost savings of preventative and treatment health care programs such as the Children's Dental Program; and

WHEREAS the Children's Dental Program has been in effect for 17 years and has been recognized as extremely cost-effective and critical for many families in isolated communities; and

WHEREAS the provincial government did not consult the users of the program or the providers before announcing plans to eliminate 44 of the 49 dentists, nurses and assistants providing this service; and

WHEREAS preventative health care is an essential component of health care reform.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) consider restoring the Children's Dental Program to the level it was prior to the 1993-94 budget.

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Maloway). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [agreed]

Mr. Clerk: The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS Manitoba has the highest rate of child poverty in the country; and

WHEREAS over 55,000 children depend upon the Children's Dental Program; and

WHEREAS several studies have pointed out the cost savings of preventative and treatment health care programs such as the Children's Dental Program; and

WHEREAS the Children's Dental Program has been in effect for 17 years and has been recognized

as extremely cost-effective and critical for many families in isolated communities; and

WHEREAS the provincial government did not consult the users of the program or the providers before announcing plans to eliminate 44 of the 49 dentists, nurses and assistants providing this service; and

WHEREAS preventative health care is an essential component of health care reform.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) consider restoring the Children's Dental Program to the level it was prior to the 1993-94 budget.

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 Minnedosa Collegiate, fifty Grade 11 students, under the direction of Ms. Jean Taylor and Mr. Daniel Kiazzyk. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Student Social Allowances Program Elimination—Cost Benefits

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, on March 16 the government announced, among many other program cuts, the elimination of student social allowance. We asked the government on the cost-effectiveness of this issue. They stated in the House on March 17 that many of these young people would be able to finish their high school; they could remain at home with their parents, that others can have access to other support programs within the Department of Education and other sources.

Two months after the cut, we are already aware of estimates from the Winnipeg School Division No. 1, that some 500 of the students affected in that school division alone will not be able to complete their education and will not be able to complete their education and training program, Mr. Speaker,

contrary to advice given to this Chamber by the minister.

The school board has asked the government to reconsider, and I quote, their short-term cost-savings in terms of the long-term costs to our society.

I would like to ask the Premier whether they are going to consider the long-term costs of their short-term thinking on these budgets.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): We, like all provinces and provincial governments, think about the long-term impact of the things we do. We do not have the luxury of being in opposition where, from a position of irresponsibility, we just simply say, spend more, tax more, place a greater burden of deficit on the people and crush their opportunities and future by leaving that—[interjection] Mr. Speaker, the opposition obviously do not want to hear the answer.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, it is the first time the Premier has risen on this issue, and I am glad to say that he is trying to answer the question, because we asked him before on cost-benefit studies. What we are looking at is the short-term costs of a federal-provincial program, and the long-term cost implications. So if the Premier is now saying that they are considering in all their decisions the long-term implications of these programs, I would like the Premier to table that in the House so we can see the data that he utilized to cut this program.

Mr. Speaker, there are now 500 students who must withdraw from the program in the Winnipeg School Division No. 1. The City of Winnipeg has now written the province saying 850 of these people will now go onto municipal social assistance.

I would like to ask the Premier: How many people will have to go on social assistance, totally, in this program, through the cutbacks that are made by the province, and what have they really saved by denying education and training and increasing costs in social assistance in the province of Manitoba?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, nobody is being denied education and training. That remains freely available in our public school system throughout Manitoba to all Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, as I started to say earlier, we, like all provincial governments, have to look at the long-term implications of every decision we make. We do not have the luxury of those members in opposition, who, from a position of irresponsibility, say just simply spend more, spend more, spend

more. When we look, along with every other province in Canada, we find that no other province in Canada provides this kind of particular financial program.

The reason is that they say the education is provided free of charge. The opportunities are there for people to either take part-time work, or, as well, to seek the resources of others in their community, their families, the other support networks in their community, to ensure that they can continue to live while they go to school.

These are the things that are done by every single province in the country. We are acting in no different manner than any province in the country—New Democrat, Liberal or Conservative, they are all following exactly the same policy.

* (1340)

Funding Reinstatement

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the social assistance numbers in the city of Winnipeg—and this is not unique to Manitoba—have grown from some 7,000, when the election was called, to over 17,000 people in the city of Winnipeg alone.

Mr. Speaker, we are seeing the cost to the City of Winnipeg, which is cost-shared by this government and the federal government—and this government reminds us, and we agree, that there is only one taxpayer. The social assistance budget has grown to \$125 million from some \$55 million when the government was running for re-election, more than doubling the cost to the taxpayer.

Programs that get people off of social assistance have been pioneered in Manitoba. There have been education and training programs to get people off of social assistance. There have been work programs created in Manitoba, a program now that has been picked up by New Brunswick, and picked up very modestly on Dutch elm disease by this government.

Will the government now agree to reinstate this program and to also look at the City of Winnipeg's request that the existing students, while the government is re-evaluating this program—hopefully, they are—the existing students not be cut off of this program, halfway through their courses, halfway through their education, halfway through their training, and halfway through their attempts to

get jobs and opportunities and dignity in the province of Manitoba?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the member opposite does not do any research into what is happening elsewhere in the country, so I will inform him that in places like Toronto, there have been even higher increases in the numbers on social assistance.

Ontario has had huge increases under a New Democratic administration in the number of people on social assistance. That is a factor of what is happening in our economy, both a recession that lasted longer than most people expected it to, and a restructuring from an industrial economy to an information economy. Those are the reasons behind that, Mr. Speaker.

We, like everyone else, are doing whatever can be done within the bounds of what we have available to us from the people, the taxpayers, who work hard to earn the money that they entrust us with. Those are the circumstances that we face like every other province, and we make responsible decisions to ensure that we spend those dollars as wisely as we possibly can.

Adult Basic Education Programs Red River Community College

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative policy in education is to take from those who have the least and for whom there is no alternative. The list of such policy choices is getting longer. In 1991-92, at Red River Community College, adult basic enrollments were cut by 211. In 1992-93, they were cut by a further 271.

Yesterday I asked the minister for an estimate of the cut for this coming year and got no reply, so I am asking her again today: Will she tell us whether her grant to Red River Community College this year will increase or decrease the number of students in Adult Basic Education programs?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, as I said yesterday, many of these programs receive funding from the federal government and there has been a decrease in funding from the federal government that has affected the courses which are available at our community colleges.

However, I would remind the member, as well, that we do provide for Adult Basic Education in addition to programs at our community colleges

through our literacy programs and also in our high schools.

* (1345)

Program Reductions

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, will the minister explain why Red River Community College has chosen to cut Adult Basic Education at the St. Norbert Foundation and at Headingley, those other support networks that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) talked about, and will she tell us whether her department supports this policy of cutting such community-based programs?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, again, a number of decisions have been made, and I believe that other ministers may also be able to add to what will be occurring in some of those areas, but in terms of the college and the programs being offered specifically through the college, the answer does remain the same. The federal government has changed the way in which it is funding and where that funding will flow. The community colleges then have had to make decisions.

We continue to offer support for adults who wish to receive an education through our literacy programs and also through programs available in our high schools.

Alternative Programs

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, this minister funds those colleges. These are Manitoba citizens.

Will she tell us what alternatives there are for those students with families who next year will not be able to get that basic instruction which could set them on the path to enter high school which might give them the opportunity to find a job?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, again, yes, we do provide funding to our community colleges. However, the community colleges also have received funding which flowed from the federal government through the provincial government to not only fund tuition but also to underwrite the cost of courses.

Now the federal government has made a change in how it will be funding those programs. The community colleges are now able, Mr. Speaker, to negotiate directly with the federal government to see if it is possible to reinstate any of that funding directly

funded to the community colleges. That is one option. Because the colleges have moved to governance, that is a benefit, that they can make that negotiation themselves.

In addition, I have explained to the member the other kinds of programs which we do offer as a province, literacy programs, which are community-based, Mr. Speaker, which are offered at times of the day which are convenient to community members who would like to take part in them. We also offer programs within our high schools.

Bankruptcy Statistics Provincial Comparisons

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, today the consumer bankruptcy statistics were released for Canada. It shows that, in fact, for the nation as a whole, consumer bankruptcies from March to March, '92 to '93, have gone down 13.6 percent. In every other province, with the exception of P.E.I., the number has decreased significantly—28.1 percent, for example, in Nova Scotia; 14.6 percent in New Brunswick; 17.3 percent in Ontario; 28.5 percent in Saskatchewan.

Can the Premier (Mr. Filmon) explain why it has increased in the province of Manitoba by 4.5 percent?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, in terms of bankruptcies in total, I think the honourable Leader of the second opposition party is well aware when we talk about business bankruptcies that we have the second lowest rate in all of Canada, that the statistics over the last many months show that business bankruptcies—as an example, in March of 1993, this year, they declined by some 23.1 percent, the second-best performance in all of Canada.

Dealing with consumer bankruptcies, obviously, to take one month, again, selective statistics, there is not necessarily a fair and realistic comparison. I think we will see, as the year performs, how well Manitoba will fare, particularly when you look at the amount of additional disposable dollars being left in the hands of consumers in Manitoba.

The information we put on the record before, Mr. Speaker, in terms of what the Conference Board of Canada indicated, by freezing personal taxes, not increasing taxes for six budgets now, that over the next two years there will be significant more dollars

in the hands of consumers here in Manitoba, which obviously will impact their performance and reduce the number of bankruptcies.

* (1350)

Bankruptcy Statistics Provincial Comparisons

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the fact is that it shows three months of declining rates of bankruptcy in the province of Manitoba, while it is showing—or growth in bankruptcy in the province of Manitoba, where it is showing declines for other provinces across this nation.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Where were you in '92 when we were leading the nation in that statistic?

Mrs. Carstairs: Well, obviously the Minister of Finance would like to answer this question, so I will ask the Minister of Finance: How does he explain why Manitoba is in a trend which is not duplicated any other place in Canada? They are seeing downward spiralling; we are seeing upward spiralling in the number of bankruptcies.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, without accepting any of the preamble from the member, I question her, why, in 1992, when our trend was the most favourable compared to every other province in the nation, there was not one question with respect to bankruptcies?

So I can ask the very same question in reverse, Mr. Speaker, and again, the member now is starting to fall upon the same course of action by the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) in the selective statistics at the particular point in time, to try and give her an opportunity to ask that type of question. She has found one and she is going to ask it today.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, throughout all of 1992, we heard from this government that this was a terrible recession, that this was not quite the "D" word, but almost the "D" word, that this was tough economic times, and look how well Manitoba was doing.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have a situation in which every other province seems to be coming out of the recession, and we are not.

Will the Minister of Finance explain clearly to the members of this House why the other provinces are

seeing an improvement and we are seeing a downward slide?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I have not analyzed all the sectorial input that would be necessary to come to the final point, but again, I would refer the member to the Investment Dealers' Association, who were in Winnipeg yesterday and who had some of the strongest words of support for the course that we have been following over the course of the last four years. I would refer her to the Dominion Bond Rating Service in Montreal, and a report they have put out in the provinces.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, when one wants to look at the reports, the report cards, when one wants to look at the economic forecasts and when one wants to look into account, the support that we put into still maintaining our capital level of spending with a government and vis-à-vis across the land, I dare say that this province has been given the highest marks as any province in Canada with respect to its economic and fiscal plans.

Jury Duty Daily Per Diems

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, according to The Jury Act, every person who is summoned or who is selected for jury duty is eligible to receive a daily per diem and reimbursement for certain basic expenses. Recently an individual who was called for jury duty received a letter from the deputy sheriff, which I will table, stating that payment of daily fees for jury duty has been discontinued.

Will the Minister of Justice tell the House when The Jury Act was amended to eliminate this payment or when the regulations were changed to eliminate these payments?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, The Jury Act has not been amended. No change has been made.

In looking at the requirements of the Department of Justice in preparation for the budget, every single expenditure made by government was examined. As a matter of fact, the letter that the honourable member refers to has gone out in error. The issue of jury fees is still, as a matter of fact, being looked at. That decision has not been taken.

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, according to the information we have, individuals who are on jury duty now are not receiving per diems or

reimbursement for expenses that are under the regulation supposed to be being given.

Will the Minister of Justice tell the House today that not only is the letter in error, but the actual actions that his department is undertaking with regard to jurors is in error as well? Will he change that immediately?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, the letter to which the honourable member refers is in error. If any action is being taken pursuant to that letter that ought not to be taken, that will be addressed just as soon as we can to ensure that those who are presently serving as jurors will receive that to which they are entitled.

The Jury Act Amendments

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Justice today guarantee that any deliberations his department is undertaking with regard to cutting expenditures will not include rescinding or making changes to The Jury Act, so that people in Manitoba who have no choice but to undertake jury duty at an enormous expense to themselves will not suffer because this government has no economic—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

* (1355)

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): The matter raised by the honourable member is being looked at. There are people who serve on juries and, through their collective agreements or through their relationships with their employers, their wages continue. Those who—[interjection] Yes, many.

Those who do not enjoy that kind of relationship or protection from their employers are the ones that we would be most concerned about as we look at these issues. We see jury duty as a very noble public duty that citizens in our country provide for their fellow citizens. We do not want to see people punished by virtue of having to serve on a jury.

The issue is being looked at by my department and by the government. The honourable member seems not to understand that there are many people in our society who, through collective agreements, or whatever, with their employers, are indemnified for time spent away on jury duty. So those people

do not need jury fees, but others may well need that from the government.

Arni Thorsteinson

Property Holdings—Mortgage Payments

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Speaker, my question today is to the Minister of Housing.

Yesterday, the Minister of Housing stated, and I quote: We do not care whether Mr. Thorsteinson or anybody else makes money or does not make money.

Now, this was his reaction after sitting on the \$6-million debt that the PC Manitoba fundraiser has had now for three years.

I want to ask the minister: Why did the minister allow the head of the PC Manitoba Fund to collect over \$55,000 a month rental payments during this period when he was not making his mortgage payments?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Housing): Mr. Speaker, that occurred because it was the former NDP government that entered into the contract—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Speaker, surely the minister does not think that over \$663,000 a year is a minor sum of money.

When did this minister finally seize the rental payments?

Mr. Ernst: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated to my honourable friend yesterday, the situation occurred where, in this instance, CMHC is the guarantor of MHRC's mortgage. CMHC has a National Housing Act insurance fund which insures all kinds of mortgages, from single-family homes in Vancouver to apartment buildings in Winnipeg to all kinds of other housing properties across the whole country. That fund funds these situations.

So, Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is we take direction from that insurer. When that insurer tells us to act, we act, and that is exactly what we did.

Arni Thorsteinson

Property Holdings—Provincial Audit

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Speaker, clearly, the minister will never answer this question, and with that in mind—

Mr. Speaker: What is the question?

Mr. Maloway: Will the Premier agree to refer this issue to the Provincial Auditor so that we can get full and complete details on the transactions of this issue which this minister refuses to give to the public?

* (1400)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Firstly, I can assure the member opposite that everything that should have been done under the circumstances was done under the circumstances, and the Government of Canada, through CMHC, has taken possession of the building as its asset in response to the failure of the owner to pay.

Mr. Speaker, a legal process has to be followed. That legal process is set out in these matters, and the legal process was followed.

In addition to that, if there is any shortfall between the value of the property and the mortgages that were granted to it, that is not the responsibility of this administration. That is the responsibility of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) who, when he was Minister of Urban Affairs, signed the agreement to place those federal and provincial government monies in that building.

We have the asset; we followed the process; we followed the foreclosure procedure, and, if there is any shortfall, it is that person who—[interjection] No problem, no problem. You did not take enough security.

**Firearms Control
Acquisition Information**

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I rise to answer questions taken as notice by the Premier from the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) last Thursday, regarding access to information on firearms acquisition certificates.

The honourable member asked if information on FACs is available to police officers in Manitoba through access to the CPIC system. As I am sure the honourable member is aware, the CPIC system centre is a national system. The CPIC National Advisory Board determines what will and will not be allowed on the CPIC system.

We have struck a committee with representatives from my department who have been working with the federal government to adapt the CPIC system to allow restraining order and FAC information to be available directly to the police. This should be

accomplished by the end of this year. In the meantime, the police can obtain this information through the Law Enforcement Services division of my department.

The honourable member also asked what progress has been made to ensure that information that police require to perform their jobs is accessible through current available technology. My department is currently developing a court registry system for police to access this information 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We hope to have this system operational by midsummer.

The database will include information on restraining orders, nonmolestation orders, peace bonds, recognizance and probation orders. It will provide police with the capability of searching for the offender's name, conditions of the order, effective date of the order, and the names and/or addresses of the complainant, as well as any other conditions which may be relevant to noncommunication or firearms restrictions.

I can assure the House that this government is taking all possible steps to protect the women and children of Manitoba to the greatest extent possible. We remain committed to the policy of zero tolerance and are striving towards that goal, using all possible options.

Hemophiliacs HIV Compensation Package

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

I understand the minister has met with the Canadian Hemophilia Society this morning. It is a positive step, but we will ask the minister if he will take another step and make a commitment for a compensation package for these 25 patients who have contracted HIV through no fault. These families are asking desperately for help.

Can the minister, on a compassionate basis, make sure that these families are being taken care of?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, yes, my honourable friend is correct; I did meet with the Manitoba division of the Canadian Hemophilia Society today. I simply want to indicate to my honourable friend that we had a very wide-ranging and full discussion.

Mr. Speaker, to give my honourable friend the assurance he seeks, I can, because we are

currently and will continue to provide whatever supportive assistance we can, through my ministry and other government departments, to assist those unfortunate Manitobans who contracted AIDS through the provision of blood-clotting agents.

But, Mr. Speaker, I had to inform the members that the commitment or the position of the province had not changed since we took that position at a federal-provincial-territorial ministers meeting some three ago; however, Sir, I was able to indicate that we intend to have discussions around that issue this September at the annual ministers meeting.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Speaker, the Province of Nova Scotia has made a commitment for the compensation package. The Province of Quebec has done the same thing.

Can the Minister of Health tell us, why not make a similar commitment to make sure these patients and their families, who have no support system, should be protected because they have contracted disease by no fault of their own?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend is correct in that Nova Scotia, just prior to the election, indicated that they were undertaking negotiations. I do not think anyone has knowledge as to how those are proceeding. I was informed that Quebec has undertaken a similar initiative. I am unaware of the details of the Quebec proposal as we speak.

Mr. Speaker, the issue is not one in which I can currently change the position that I agreed to some two and a half years ago. To my knowledge, the other provinces that were present, with the exception of Nova Scotia, are awaiting a September meeting of ministers this fall.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Speaker, I will request the minister again. In the meantime, what are these patients supposed to do, and their families? They have no other support system. There are about 25 families who have to protect their families, and their time is very limited.

Can the minister tell this House, why not make some kind of compensation package available on the condition that the federal government will put some money to make sure these people are protected?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend might well know that the reason behind the provincial ministry's decision taken some three years ago, or two and a half years ago, was just that the federal government had provided, at the time,

the most substantial compensation package to hemophiliacs that was then in existence in any country.

Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend's suggestion that the provinces ought to move in collaboration with the federal government is an intriguing one. My honourable friend must also be aware that one of the conditions the federal government placed on their compensation package is that they then wash their hands of any further assistance. I am not certain, although my honourable friend makes a reasonable suggestion, that the federal government has any particular interest at this stage of the game.

Pharmacare Revisions

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, last year the provincial government fundamentally changed the Pharmacare program by no longer including in the formulae all drugs that were approved by the federal Department of Health and Welfare and the agency.

Given the significant effect that this is having on the public of Manitoba and senior citizens in particular, who have been hard hit by this government's budget, can the minister explain why he changed the system the way he did?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend, in his preamble, is not exactly being totally accurate. With regret I say that.

Mr. Speaker, yes, we made changes to the Pharmacare program. Those changes in terms of formulae and policy were on the advice of the Pharmacare Advisory Committee composed of professional pharmacists, physicians and others. We made those decisions to protect the integrity of being able to supply needed drug therapy to Manitobans. Despite the changes, our program remains amongst the most generous program in Canada to assist the citizens of this province.

It is significantly more generous, Sir, than provinces to the east and to the west of us who have made similar changes and the changes have made the programs in other provinces much less supportive of families in Manitoba and seniors in Manitoba who need some financial support in terms of maintenance of drug therapy.

Mr. Chomiak: Can the minister explain why the public was not consulted prior to these changes, and

why were these changes not put in place with a time frame that would allow for the changes to adequately work their way through the system so the public was aware of the significant effect that this change has had on the whole entire Pharmacare program?

Mr. Orchard: My honourable friend brings up the issue of notification. Is my honourable friend suggesting that the information package that was developed around the decisions recommended by the Pharmacare Advisory Committee should have been sent to every household in Manitoba? Because, Mr. Speaker, the package was significant and it was sent to pharmacists and others who have a direct interest in the program and a direct responsibility for service provision in the program.

Had I sent that out to all Manitobans, my honourable friend would have been standing on his hind legs complaining about waste of money.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

* (1410)

Mr. Chomiak: They may not care, Mr. Speaker, but the public certainly does.

Can the minister explain why the Registrar, at the last annual meeting of the pharmacists said, quote: No other event in the past year has caused as much controversy. In these times of fiscal restraint our predictions of chaos were ignored. Now, almost a year into the program, many physicians are either ignorant or contemptuous of the rules and the pharmacists are caught in the middle.

Can the minister explain why all the professionals in this field had to hear this at a public meeting last month?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I am quite intrigued with my honourable friend's—again I have to, with all due respect, conclude—inaccurate conclusion as to what he has just stated.

Sir, I had the privilege of speaking to the Canadian Pharmaceutical Association annual meeting this week, and I presented—and I want to thank the second opposition party for giving me the pair so I could be there, the official opposition chose not to do that.

I want to indicate to my honourable friend that the comment that consistently comes from pharmacists across Canada to me following my presentation is that they would find it refreshing to have the

openness of process in their province that we have in Manitoba.

One pharmacist in particular said, I just wish that we could get to meet with our Minister of Health. That comment, Sir, was from a pharmacist in the province of Ontario, not Manitoba.

Grain Transportation Proposal Method of Payment

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, during the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture last week, the minister said that he was concerned about transportation issues, and he is in favour of anything that will reduce farm costs. He believes branchline abandonment and other efficiency proposals will reduce farm costs.

He also said he has taken a position on the method of payment; however, farmers have not heard his position.

Can the Minister of Agriculture, today, state very clearly in this House his position on the method of payment? Is he standing with Manitoba farmers who are opposed to the change or is he supporting the method of payment as is?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): In case the member cannot read Hansard, I will tell her again what the answer was. I said that in 1989, I realized this was a significant issue. I formed a minister's advisory council with broad representation from the Pools, UGG, KAP, Union of Manitoba Municipalities, Mr. Speaker, and I continue to work with their information that they fed into me over a course of four years.

In case the member does not remember what she said in Estimates, and I will read from page 3042, May 17, 1993: "I believe, yes, farmers and the provinces are backed into a corner now where they have no choice"—this is the member for Swan River speaking—"but to accept changing the payment to the farmer because of the actions . . ." of the federal government. "It has to come."—as she refers to the method of payment being changed. She has now said that her official position is, the method of payment must be changed to the farmer, and I thank her for that.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, farmers are blackmailed and this minister will not stand up against Charlie Mayer on this.

How can the Minister of Agriculture support a change to the method of payment or acceleration of

rail line abandonment? How can he say this is going to save farmers money when a secret response by the National Transportation Agency analyzing the western grain transportation's efficiency, which I will table, indicates that changes, if implemented, will increase farmers' costs by \$500 million over the next eight years. It will not reduce farmers' costs.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, the member says the status quo should remain. I want to tell her what the status quo is, the status quo for the last 12 years that farmers' costs have doubled in terms of elevation costs, transportation costs to the shipper, costs on the Lakehead, terminal costs. Those costs have doubled, and the value of the commodity the farmer gets at the farm gate is cut in half.

She says that is acceptable, that should stay the way it is. It has happened in the last 12 years, but she says it should happen again in the next 12 years. So she says over the next 12 years farmers should have half the value of the farm gate they have today, and she says that is acceptable.

I do not dream of that. I say it is unacceptable and everybody from the farm gate on must reduce their costs so the farmer has a chance to survive. I do not concur with her that the status quo should remain in the future because the farmers will not survive with that approach.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, this is a report by the NTA, and I quote: Many of the efficiencies proposed are not workable if it is changed to pay the producer.

How can the minister say that this is going to improve things for farmers? The NTA is saying farmers are going to pay \$500 million more, not less.

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

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, that member wants to take a hysterical position. Four years ago, as I have told her, I set up a process—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I really think the use of the word "hysterical" is absolutely unacceptable. Certainly in the 1990s, I really wonder if the member would have used that if he had been referring to a male member of this House. I consider the word to be offensive and sexist, and I would ask you to have that member withdraw that word immediately.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I feel badly that the member has to rise on the guise of some phony point of order to make some—[interjection] The most hysterical member in this House for the last number of days has been the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton). I do not know what gender he falls into, but I think it defeats his argument.

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance's use of the word "hysterical" for the member for Thompson in order to, quite frankly, gloat over the inappropriate use of that word by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) is unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, "hysterical" is a word that is used almost inevitably in reference to women and only in reference to women. If the Minister of Agriculture did not mean it as a sexist comment, I urge him to stand in his place and to indicate it was not meant as such.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, if it is bothering anybody that I used the word, I would withdraw it.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the honourable Minister of Agriculture.

* * *

Mr. Findlay: In terms of this very difficult and broad question that is affecting grain growers in western Canada and Manitoba, we set up a process in '89, and I have listened very carefully to that process. It is people that are very well-trained in the issue, certainly expert on the issue. I will listen to their wisdom. I have continued to do that and will continue to do it.

I want to remind the House that the member has very clearly put it on the record. On May 17 she says it is time that the method of payment must be changed. I want to give her all the confidence in the world that we have gone through a very elaborate process to do it constructively for the province of Manitoba, as she now wants to have it done.

Civil Service Audit Implementation Committee Chairperson

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, this government received the civil service audit, which outlined serious concerns in the civil service on fair treatment of women and racism, to name two. Although there was an untimely death of the chair of the implementation committee, this minister has

had ample time to select another chair and to get a plan of action in place.

Can the Minister responsible for the Civil Service tell this House, who is the chair of the implementation committee and when can we expect a plan of action?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister responsible for The Civil Service Act): Mr. Speaker, certainly the death of the former chair, a former minister in this House, Gerrie Hammond, made things somewhat difficult for the work of the committee, but the work of the committee has continued during the period since she passed away and the work of the committee continues.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): Good afternoon. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

This afternoon, this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255 will resume consideration of the Estimates of Education and Training. When the committee last sat, it had been considering item 1.(c)(1) on page 34 of the Estimates book. Shall the item pass?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, when we were last together we spoke extensively about the issue of surveys. There had been a request to look at the kind of surveys that the department sent out, so I would like to table today some surveys. The first

I would like to table a staff survey, staff referring to staff of a school. When this staff survey is done, when it is developed, it is also developed with the assistance of school staff itself, not simply by our own staff.

The second is a survey for school demographic information for students at risk, which is done by our Student Support branch. A third is a language development program survey. It is a parent questionnaire, a way for parents to take part in a survey. The next one is a teacher questionnaire for reading assessment Grade 4, teacher questionnaire reading assessment Grade 11, and a Grade 4 teacher survey results handout as well.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): I thank the minister for this, but could I just request which question these are supposed to answer? Were these from John, or were these ones from the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray)?

Mrs. Vodrey: They were in response to questions from the member for Crescentwood.

Ms. Friesen: Thank you because I had been asking for evidence of research reports in the post-secondary area. The minister had mentioned some, and I thought that there might be others.

We had also talked last time about some ACCESS—not surveys—but material that the department collected. I wonder if that was available.

Mrs. Vodrey: I understand the question that the member asked was some information regarding rural and urban students and their attendance at post-secondary educational institutions. In that one we are still compiling the data, and we would expect to have it for her by next week.

Ms. Friesen: Actually, it was ACCESS ones that I was mentioning. You had said that there were certain numbers that you compiled in ACCESS, vis-à-vis nonaboriginal students, and that you did not obviously have them with you, but that was something that was—it is too bad that we do not have Hansard on that yet; otherwise, I could—

An Honourable Member: Do you want Monday's Hansard?

Ms. Friesen: I do not know if it will be in there, but maybe I will borrow it, and we will look at it.

Mrs. Vodrey: Our recollection of that question was that we would be looking at that in detail when we reached that line.

Ms. Friesen: It is not crucial now. I just thought we were getting reports and business carried over.

* (1440)

I wanted to continue with the questions I was asking in the House which are about the Adult Basic Education policy, and I know the minister has talked about a study that she has underway. Yet, as I proceed to find out more about what is happening in Adult Basic Education at Red River and hence in the Winnipeg region, it seems more and more to me that it does follow that policy of taking from those who have the least and have no alternative. So I wonder if the minister, in view of the questions I asked her in the House, could perhaps elaborate on it.

Why are these cuts being made now when there is a policy document in process? It seems to me that, at the rate we are going, in two years from now there will be no Adult Basic Education at Red River Community College, certainly, if we continue cutting in the same proportions that you have over the past two years. Now that I see, with the two examples I gave of St. Norbert and Headingley, the essentially community-based programs that serve, I would guess, predominantly aboriginal population, it does again seem to me that another policy decision has been made there. So I am asking the minister: Why are these policy decisions being made in advance of the report?

Mrs. Vodrey: I have answered in the House a number of times some of the reasons for the changes in the funding. There has been a change in the way the federal government does provide its funding and also the federal government's commitment. With that change, that was a very significant factor in terms of what was available for programming and this federal government's reduction of direct purchases and the federal government's change of focus or, perhaps, an ongoing development of their focus in emphasis on supporting the skills training programs over the Adult Basic Education and the high school completion. So what we have had to deal with is the fact that the federal government has signalled its change and has changed the way it is funding and the kinds of programs that it had been willing to fund the old way.

So what we had to do was then look at the amount of money available, and when we looked at where the federal government was not able to continue

support, we had to look at if we could step in and completely take over what the federal government had withdrawn. So we are, in fact, very committed to improvements in the support and the delivery of Adult Basic Education over the long term, and we do recognize how important high school completion is, and we have made a number of short-term adjustments to match our level of program support but to do that within the realities of the fiscal situation of Manitoba.

So, as I said in the House earlier, we do attempt to offer for Manitobans first of all literacy programs as another type of support. The literacy programs would be in support of the basic education at the more basic levels, those people who needed readiness and skills training in terms of reading and numeracy. Then we also offer through our high schools continued programs within the individual's home division that individuals are able to attend.

So we did have to look at some fiscal realities and we also had to look at how we could continue to provide support, but the member is right too. We are in the process of continuing to develop our policy for Adult Basic Education, and I have spoken about that. I think it is important to look at the plan as an evolving one, as one which is continuing to be shaped. It is not one in which there is nothing being done and then we look for something to be done.

In terms of the development of this plan, as I said before, the next step is for the department to develop a framework for the basic education policy. We are looking through a review, and we are looking at the information that we have available.

With that, along with other relevant issues and recommendations that come from our other departmental initiatives such as legislative reform and our Distance Education Task Force, then we will be looking to further develop the policy and the actions in the area of Adult Basic Education.

So the part of the policy is an ongoing process of development, but we were also faced at the same time with the reality of a change in the funding by the federal government. So at this point, Red River Community College in particular—that is the one that we were speaking about earlier today—had to also make some decisions, but Red River Community College, now that it is board governed, is now able to approach the federal government and to negotiate directly with the federal government, with the Canada Employment and Immigration in

particular, who look at the skills training, to decide if perhaps they can in fact have some funds directed to the college under their new governance model.

So there are several issues at work at the same time, and that is, at this point, the information from the several fronts that are involved.

Ms. Friesen: Well, can we start at the back and work forward? The minister says that the federal government, that the colleges are now able to negotiate with the federal government for these types of programs should the colleges decide that that is what is significant, yet the minister on the other hand just said the federal government is moving to skill training and to the senior high school levels. So presumably, that policy is going to be no different in dealing with the college than it is with the government. So what is the point in arguing that? This college is going to have no greater success than the government would.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, one of the differences also that is at work here is that the federal government does not wish to go through the province at this time, wishes to negotiate and will have the opportunity now to negotiate directly through the colleges. They will also be able to negotiate whether or not they wish their students to be part of a fee-payer system which looks only at the tuition or whether or not they will in fact underwrite the real costs of the course.

Though the federal government has indicated that they wish to move towards more skills training, it is still possible for the community college to negotiate with the federal government and to look at how this kind of a course might be paid, how it might be paid for and how they might wish to underwrite it. In addition, the CEIC, or the Canada Employment and Immigration offices, may also approach the colleges where they determine that there is a need to negotiate directly with the colleges rather than through the provincial government.

So there is a two-way possibility in terms of whether or not these courses may still be made available, depending on the requirements that present themselves to the Canada Employment and Immigration offices. I should just say that the federal government does still have direct government-to-government purchases for skills training in areas such as apprenticeship.

That is not completely gone. However, with board governance, there is now the opportunity in some of

the other skills trainings or market-driven training courses for the community colleges to negotiate directly with CEIC. The feds are going, as I said, to more indirect and other training courses rather than Adult Basic Education. It has been the indication that we have had, but again, that is still open for negotiation.

* (1450)

Ms. Frlesen: Then what would propel Red River Community College to even initiate discussions for Adult Basic Education?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, well, one of the reasons that might prompt the colleges to speak directly to CEIC regarding funding in the area of Adult Basic Education would be first of all as a source of revenue. It would provide some revenue to the colleges, and they might also want to tie this to their mission.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. The committee will have to adjourn for just a few minutes. We are being called in for a formal vote in the Chamber.

* * *

The committee recessed at 2:52 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 3:27 p.m.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Shirley Rander): 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 Education and Training. When the committee last sat, it had been considering item 1.(c)(1) on page 34 of the Estimates book. Shall the item pass?

Ms. Frlesen: I was trying, before we were called away, to reconcile what seemed to me the irreconcilable, the minister's statement, on the one hand, that the federal government is withdrawing from Adult Basic Education in favour of skill training and high school education with her statement, on the other hand, that Red River was perfectly free to negotiate and indeed might have some success I gather, in her mind, in negotiating Adult Basic Education courses. I had asked what might propel Red River to do this and her answer was I believe the price, essentially. The federal government is not prepared to pay for courses.

* (1530)

I wonder if she could still answer the irreconcilable, why, on the one hand, they will not do it with governments and, on the other hand, she thinks they can do it with community colleges. Is there evidence from other jurisdictions where there has been community college negotiation with the federal government in the past year where they have moved to basic education courses? Is there any hope?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Acting Deputy Chairperson, as I left off in our discussion, there may be, in fact, some demand from Canada Employment on their side, because Canada Employment is able to make some decisions regarding the kinds of courses which they would like to offer. They do have, I am led to believe, some flexibility in how they would like to use their funds.

I understand that during 1993-94, Canada has indicated the funds will be decentralized to the individual Canada Employment Centres, who will then be able to sponsor students in existing training programs provided by the colleges or to fund project-based training.

With that ability now of the Canada Employment Centres to have some decision making around how that funding will flow, and with the colleges now on a governance model able to negotiate with Canada Employment directly, and this not having to come through government-to-government process which is somewhat more time consuming as well, then there certainly may be the opportunity and the desire on the part of Canada Employment to flow some training funds, depending on the demand that has been presented to the councillors, there.

The member asked about the colleges and why they might continue to be interested in this area. They may continue to be interested because their mission does encompass issues such as equity and access. They may decide then, if approached by CEIC, that they wish to offer the courses or they may approach CEIC in order to look at the demand.

In terms of the governance, just to speak to that side again, the purpose of governance is to strengthen the flexibility and the responsiveness of the colleges within the communities and the regions that they serve. They will look at the demand on their side. CEIC will look at the demand on their side.

CEIC is now able to determine how the funds will flow.

Ms. Friesen: CEIC is already decentralized. They already have those in this past year, that considerable flexibility. I do not quite see how the evidence the minister has put down so far would give us any expectation.

Where we have already decentralization and when we have had three years of consistent cutting at Red River Community College, where is the basis of evidence that would lead us to expect that there is going to be restitution made in that area of Adult Basic Education?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Acting Deputy Chairperson, the information we have from the colleges is that the president of Red River Community College is interested in sitting down with CEIC and having this discussion. It would be very difficult for me to speak for CEIC at this point. Although, again, from our side, I understand that there may be a willingness to sit down for some discussion.

In terms of the information that I have, it is information based on our own localized area, our own regional area and the will of the people in that area to have some discussion on this matter.

Ms. Friesen: Why do we see a policy coming from the community colleges of decreasing Adult Basic Education in the Red River College region and to some extent in the Brandon region out of Assiniboine Community College, but KCC has not diminished its Adult Basic Education?

We are seeing three different policies, different degrees of policies from the three community colleges. Now why is this?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed that the numbers may vary based on the number of programs which are funded, which have been funded by CEIC at the community colleges. Then, with that number of programs which are being funded and with the indication of the change in the way funds would be spent, then obviously it will be somewhat different for each of the colleges.

Ms. Friesen: Yes, but the point I am making is the relative change over a series of years. I am going from a high point in 1989 for just about every college to a rapid decrease of minus 211, minus 271. I cannot get from the minister what the projection is for next year at Red River Community College. A lesser decline at Assiniboine Community College

and no decline, in fact sort of an up-and-down line, at KCC.

What are the differences in those community college policies over the past two or three years and how does that reflect what policy the government has? Where does that fit with the study that the government is supposed to be doing on Adult Basic Education, and why are these decisions being made in advance of that study again?

Mrs. Vodrey: The federal government has indicated over a 10-year period that they would like to move to a strategy from direct purchase to indirect purchase. That, first of all, is the first matter which has affected how many of the courses may be available. Secondly, I am also informed that the federal government has indicated that there is a willingness on their part to speak directly to the colleges about some of these courses, and they will then look at the demand within their area.

They are prepared to negotiate with the colleges directly and not to proceed through the previous method of going through the provincial government. In terms of their withdrawal from the funding which came through the provincial government, the provincial government cannot continue to pick up where the federal government has made these changes, and also where the federal government has indicated that there is a willingness on their part to have some discussion with the community colleges directly.

* (1540)

Ms. Friesen: But I still do not see how it matters who is speaking to whom and through whom if the federal government is moving away from Adult Basic Education. I mean, that is the basic issue, is it not? Whether they are doing a whole changeover of variety of policies in 10 years, if their basic policy is to move away from Adult Education, why does it matter who is speaking to them?

Mrs. Vodrey: Let me clarify then in case there was any confusion around an answer that I gave earlier. The federal government has indicated that they will be moving away from this indirect purchase for the Adult Basic Education programs.

They will be maintaining a process of direct purchase through skills training programs, and so it is a matter of how the funding flows to the particular program.

So in the area of direct skills training, that will still flow through the provincial government,

government-to-government purchase. In the area of the Adult Basic Education, the federal government has indicated that it would like to work through the indirect purchase mechanism and that they are prepared to speak to the colleges directly about that particular type of program, not the skills training program, but the Adult Basic Education program.

Ms. Frlesen: So the federal government is not withdrawing from Adult Basic Education then?

Mrs. Vodrey: I cannot speak for the federal government in terms of their long-range plans. However, I can give you the information that has been indicated to us. The indication that has been given to us is that the federal government would be willing to enter into some discussions directly with the community colleges.

There may be a number of factors which would influence whether or not the federal government in each region would be interested in funding Adult Basic Education specifically.

However, as I have said, they have indicated that they are willing to speak to the colleges. In addition to that, I have explained that the president of Red River Community College has spoken about his interest in coming together with the feds to talk about this as well.

Ms. Frlesen: Thank you. There are quite a few other questions I would like to ask on that, but I think that other people want to ask questions, so I will leave it for now.

Mr. Plohman: I wanted to ask the minister about an area of policy that has just come into her department and, hopefully, she will have some of the information on it. That involves the Human Resource Opportunity Centre.

We will have an opportunity under Employment Enhancement to discuss this in more detail but, from a policy point of view, I want to ask the minister whether she has access or has read the analysis that was done by the Policy and Planning Branch I guess of the Executive Council—I am not sure, and perhaps she can clarify—a report that was done on November 5, '92, on the Human Resource Opportunity Program centres in the province.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

The report was done by, I believe, Prairie Partnership, but was done for Policy and Planning branch of Executive Council. I do not think it would have been done by the Department of Education at

that time because the minister was not responsible for this program, unless it was the Policy and Planning branch of the Department of Family Services.

In any event, I have a copy of the report. I want to know whether the minister has seen that report and analyzed it, had her staff analyze it since she has taken over responsibility for the Human Resource Opportunity Centres and programs.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, my department is in the process of reviewing that particular report, but, as the member knows, there has been a reorganization now of those programs. Those Employability Enhancement Programs have moved from the Department of Family Services into the Department of Education and Training. That does put those programs now within a spectrum of programs where we can look at a series of training kinds of programs for Manitobans. I have explained to the member on a number of occasions that we are now, through this reorganization in our department, looking at exactly what the areas of availability are and the areas of need are.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Well, the minister is a part of a cut to a program while she is busy re-evaluating the program, which seems like it is a backward process in terms of how things should be done. We had a very successful Human Resources Opportunity Program and centres in place in the province of Manitoba for many years, and the cuts have been made. Is the minister telling us now that she does not have valid reports or statistical information to support the cuts that were made?

Mrs. Vodrey: I know that the reductions were made and this particular reduction, as with reductions across all of government, were very difficult. They were extremely difficult decisions, and they were made with a great deal of difficulty but also, again, consideration and thinking. The member will know when he looks at the budget line, now that this has moved into the Department of Education and Training, we have made every effort to preserve some of the service which is available, and we certainly have looked at providing it in a number of places to make sure that this particular program does continue to exist.

Mr. Plohman: I know they were difficult, the question is were they arbitrary? Was there justification for the cuts, or was it simply a matter of finding it somewhere in an arbitrary decision without

any study or analysis to determine what should be a high priority and what should be a low priority?

Mrs. Vodrey: In looking at the decisions that have been made across all of government, they were made looking at ways to continue to preserve service to Manitobans and also to look at trying to manage the deficit and the debt that we have in Manitoba. That will not be a surprise to the member. In looking at that, we did look and maintain our commitment to a number of these services and to also a level of service, that these programs were not completely eliminated, that there is still a budget line which indicates support for these services.

Mr. Plohman: That would indicate, that last comment by the minister, that the minister is even less familiar with what is going on here in this area than I had hoped. Our critics were unable to get any definitive information from the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) on this area, because he said it had been transferred to the Department of Education and Training. Therefore, he is no longer responsible.

So we are going to have to give the minister notice that we need to have in-depth answers from this minister, who is now responsible, on this program, whether it was her analysis at the time or not or her recommendation or not at the time to have these programs cut. She will have to explain and defend them, because there is no other minister that is prepared to do it, and under the system we have, she is responsible.

* (1550)

Why I said I was concerned about the last comments was that the minister said we have maintained the service. So she is looking at an across-the-board viewpoint to it and saying, well, a 10 percent cut, we have maintained a considerable level of service. The point is that there is a certain area of the province that has been eliminated completely from service.

The minister on April 16 said that, and this is a quote in Hansard: "We are now looking at how we can best assist the people of the Parkland area . . ." They are the recipients of a cut that eliminates the program completely, not what the minister said about maintaining. So I ask what the justification for that kind of a cut was from that area. Was it an arbitrary cut or was it done after careful study and analysis? If so, I would like to hear from the minister

what study and analysis was done, if she is not familiar with the report that was done.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member's questions focused on service in general. He is now speaking about a specific area of the province, but his questions until this time have focused on the service in general and if it is being offered within this province. My answers have focused on the fact that we have been able to maintain service in this province in a number of areas.

I know when we get to that particular budget line, we will be able to talk very specifically about the human resource programs which remain available and also the centres which continue to be available. So, in that way, the answers have been to say that, yes, there has been a continued commitment, and there has been an effort to continue to address these needs across Manitoba.

The member wants to speak about the Parkland area in particular. In the Parkland area, as he knows, we have maintained in terms of Employability Enhancement Programs a single-parent job access program. We have also said that support from the Human Resources Opportunity Program will be provided on an itinerant basis from the Brandon area, but that there will still be at least a level of service which will be available to people of the Parkland area. So it has not cut that particular area off completely from the services of Employability Enhancement Programs.

In addition, I make the point again that I made when we spoke about the reorganization. We are looking at our reorganization and we want to, as we look at all of our programs and we organize them, and I have been using the term spectrum of programming, because it is a spectrum. It is a series of programs which involve, at one end, literacy programs, literacy being the community-based programs which do provide people with some basic skills, and it is available to them at generally various times of the day with a great deal of flexibility and support. So we provide, starting at that end, and then a series of programs through the spectrum right through to the skills training programs and our college-level programming.

I would like to stress, first of all, the picture across the province, that this service is not being withdrawn, has not been totally withdrawn. There has been an effort to, even in these difficult times,

make sure that there is at least a level of the service maintained. In the Parkland area, as I have said and will remind him again, the Single Parent Job Access Program does remain available, and we are looking at servicing the people of the Parkland from the Brandon office.

Mr. Plohman: We will see how this spectrum assists the people of the Parkland and other areas that have been cut. It is clear that that spectrum has not been in place, because the program was in place and served very well the people of the Parkland for over the last 20 years, as it has throughout the province. Does the minister have any justification for the cuts that were made on the basis of data and statistical information and evaluations that would support what her government has done with regard to this program? Does her Planning and Policy Development branch provide her with any of this kind of information that would justify what we have seen represented in her Estimates book in this area?

Mrs. Vodrey: The member is asking for some very detailed information on a particular Employability Enhancement Program in a particular part of Manitoba. That very specific type of question would best be answered when we actually reach that budget line, when we have all of the information available. I can tell him again that in this budgetary process, we did look carefully, and we had to make very difficult decisions. When I look at the service being offered from the Westman Human Resource Opportunity Program, their client assistance budget was slightly increased, and we will be watching their budget situation. We are looking for that to also assist in providing service to the Parkland.

He is also asking us specifically for statistics, and I am not sure whether he believes that is the only way a decision may be made, strictly based on statistics, or if he believes that perhaps, also, some of the discussion held within communities and also among service providers may also be of assistance in looking at how the service may be provided.

Mr. Plohman: Well, the minister is just waffling on the questions, because I just asked her about either statistical or any other supporting evidence that would justify the decisions made. So it was a broad question, not just based on statistical information.

If she feels that she is in a position to answer that from that point of view, I would certainly welcome it. The minister would have to admit, I would think, and

I would ask her if she would at this point, that there is no spectrum of services or continuum of services in this area available in the Parkland or any other area of the province at the present time. She has indicated she is going to be doing that by co-ordinating all of these services through the department. Will she admit that it does not exist at the present time?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the spectrum of service does exist. We are looking, however, through our integration of our department, which has really been quite extensive, at how we can now make sure that that is the most accessible to Manitobans.

There most certainly does exist—and I point to literacy programs specifically as a starting point, because a number of the individuals who may in fact wish to use the Human Resource Opportunity Program may be individuals who need assistance with a skill level or may be individuals who need assistance in re-entering also a program where they will have confidence to enter into the workforce.

We do have literacy programs around this province which look at trying to help individuals take advantage of additional types of training or a re-entry into the educational system. Also, we do have programs at our Parkland campus of Assiniboine Community College, which is at the other end of the spectrum. There is an extension centre in Neepawa which offers day and evening programs. We have agriculture and rural enterprise division, and that is planning to offer approximately 44 programs to 1,260 students in about 58 Manitoba communities. So there are a number of programs from both ends of the spectrum which are, in fact, available to assist people. In addition to that, we have made sure in the Parkland area and in Dauphin that the Single Parent Job Access Program has also remained.

I do believe that the spectrum of programming is available. As we look at the reorganization within my department, I look to make sure that there is the most accessible kinds of programming for Manitobans.

* (1600)

Mr. Plohman: The minister talks about a spectrum and then talks at the beginning with literacy and the other end of the spectrum, the community colleges. She mentions one program dealing with Single Parent Job Access, which now will not have access

to the program, the Human Resource Opportunity Centre in the Parkland region, so they are going to have to go to Brandon or somewhere else.

She talks about both ends of the spectrum. What we have seen though is the middle of the spectrum being lost. The continuum is gone, is ripped apart by the arbitrary decision to cut out of it a major program.

I wonder how the minister can talk about a continuum of services if, in the middle of that spectrum, a large part of it has been eliminated by way of the cuts that were made in at least one area of the province and the reductions in the other areas of the province. What justification can she have to do that prior to an evaluation to see how it fits into this so-called continuum of service? How can she justify a cut prior to the kind of evaluation that would see where this fits in and whether it is needed or not? Is the minister saying that it is not needed?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, if the member thinks back on the answers that I have given this afternoon, he will also know that I have spoken about the commitment from the Westman area of itinerant service into the Parkland area, so the area is not completely without service, and the people of the Parkland are not being asked in this way to completely go into the Westman area, into Brandon. They are looking at having itinerant people go from Westman into the Parkland area so that there is still some level of availability of that service. I do not think that can be overlooked.

So when we look at the continuum of service which is currently available, then we do look at literacy programming, we do look at Single Parent Job Access programming, we do look at the itinerant service being available for the Human Resources Opportunity Program, and we do look at the service available through the Parkland campus of Assiniboine Community College.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we could use the minister's argument and she could have all of the programs provided from Winnipeg. Is that satisfactory? Using that argument, she could have itinerant people coming out from Winnipeg to serve all the areas, if that is so satisfactory. It is absolutely ridiculous.

Mrs. Vodrey: Well, again, the member really does not seem to have understood. We have made sure that there is service to the Parkland area by Assiniboine Community College. We have also

arranged itinerant service for the Human Resources Opportunity Program into the Parkland area, so we are making every effort to make sure that there is an availability through what was a series of very difficult decisions, but we are making an attempt to make sure that there is an availability and there continues to be through the itinerant workers, and those workers are based out of Brandon. Again, I must point to the Parkland campus of Assiniboine Community College also.

Then I also point to the fact that the Single Parent Job Access program continues to be offered from the Parkland area and we look to, as we examine the service and the integration of service within my department, serve Manitobans as well as we are able with this continuum of service which is available.

Mr. Plohman: Is it the minister's position that the community colleges can offer the kind of programming that Human Resource Opportunity Centre was offering in the Parkland region and throughout the province? Is that what the minister is saying?

Mrs. Vodrey: The Parkland campus example was used, again, when we were discussing the continuum of service which is available, so I wanted the member to know that when we look at service from one end of the spectrum to the other, there is service available. We could go back over the list again.

Mr. Plohman: So what the minister is now saying is that it is an irrelevant argument to the issue about Human Resource Opportunity Centre. That is what I said in the first place. Do not give answers about other services. I want to know about this service. What is going to replace the service she has cut from the Parkland region, the Human Resource Opportunity Centre and the services that they were giving?

Mrs. Vodrey: The Human Resources Opportunity Program service has been reduced. The service will be available on an itinerant basis from Brandon. Therefore, there is still an availability for that service. In addition, Single Parent Job Access programs are still available. That has not been closed in the Parkland area. That is still available in the Parkland area. I add to those two areas which the member has been asking about two others, at either end of the spectrum of service, which are also available to the people of the Parkland area, so that the member

understands that at whatever entry level Manitobans and particularly Manitobans in the Parkland area might wish to enter into a program, there should be an availability, and we are looking to provide that availability within the Parklands area.

Mr. Plohman: Surely the minister is not serious about that when she talks about itinerant workers providing this service in the Parkland from Brandon. I mean, it reflects a lack of knowledge about the geographic size of this province and the features that make this very difficult and almost remote to Brandon. Riding Mountain Park in the middle ensures that the travel distance is almost doubled in terms of what it would be in a comparable distance on flat prairie.

I mean, it makes a great difference in terms of the distances involved. Anyone who has been through there knows that. If you are driving in the mountains you talk in terms of hours, you do not talk in terms of distance even. It is totally impractical.

Is the minister saying it is satisfactory to have single parents who are going to be referred for training to now be referred from the Parkland area, to leave their homes, uproot their kids and go to Brandon for this training? Is that practical?

Mrs. Vodrey: The member had asked for examples of a variety of service, and so what I have been providing him with in the past several answers that I have been giving him is a variety of service which we are providing through the Department of Education and Training.

Also when we look at the reorganization and the integration of these programs into our department, we are looking at strengthening the program complementarity. We would also like to have a better co-ordination of the continuum of programs. That is the objective of the reorganization.

As I have said all afternoon, the staff in the program of the Single Parent Job Access Program do remain in Dauphin, and they are looking after their active cases there. From the Human Resource Opportunity Programs they will be dealt with, and the clients will receive counselling and placement and follow-up services, and there will be an itinerant service which will come into the Parkland area.

When we look at the work experience programs from the Human Resource Opportunity Centres, those placements are being organized from the Westman region. However, we will look at the needs of the particular client, and where there would be

need for an itinerant service to follow up, then we will look at how to accommodate that.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The honourable member for Brandon—Dauphin.

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Actually, they are quite close together, about a 45-minute drive.

* (1610)

Mr. Plohman: It is interesting that the Liberal critic says, actually they are quite close together, about a 45-minute drive. Now there is another example of a person who does not know what is going on in rural Manitoba just like the minister here. We are not talking about adjacent communities. We are talking a couple of hours when you go through the Riding Mountain or around it, either way. It is totally ridiculous. [interjection] Yes, longer than 45 minutes. It is like three times 45 minutes, two and a half times.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister does not seem to be familiar with how the program works when she talks about the Single Parent Job Access. Does the minister realize that Single Parent Job Access refers people for their training, support counselling, and services to the Human Resources Opportunities Centres? Does the minister realize that?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, I do understand how these programs work. [interjection]

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. Could I ask the honourable member to wait till the minister has finished her answer before answering back.

Mr. Plohman: Certainly, I will be very pleased to do that.

I find it preposterous, though, that the minister says she understands, and she keeps talking about the program being maintained, Single Parent Job Access, but there is no place for them to go now in terms of the referrals.

Is the minister saying that she understands how the program works, that they are referred to the Human Resources Opportunity Centres? Where will they now be referred?

Mrs. Vodrey: Again, in terms of the service which would be offered then by the Human Resources Opportunity program, we have maintained an itinerant service. An itinerant service will be able to work with the Single Parent Job Access Program.

Mr. Plohman: Is the minister trying to say that there is somebody who is going to come out from

Brandon, and is going to serve the needs of the single parents who are attempting to break out of a cycle of poverty and social assistance and, in many cases, a lack of confidence in themselves, low self-esteem, attempting to break out of the cycle of despair and hopelessness, that they are going to get this kind of service from a travelling counsellor, who sees them—when?—once a month, once a week. What are we talking about here? It seems ridiculous.

Mrs. Vodrey: As I have said from the beginning, there are itinerant workers who will be coming to the Parkland area, and those counsellors will be able to work with the people of the Parkland area and, in particular, his concern to assist the Single Parent Job Access clients, and to act as a support. So we will look at how frequently the need is there, and we will be able to look at exactly what the needs are of the clients.

But I should also let him know that the Single Parent Job Access Program has developed a number of partnerships with community-based and private and public education and training programs in the community. They are also working together with this Single Parent Job Access Program to jointly develop and deliver training to meet the participant's need and also the local labour market conditions.

There are close links that are established with local employers throughout all regions of the province to facilitate program delivery and to promote the employment opportunities for the single parent job access trainees.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, where are the staff coming from and how are they going to be able to provide any degree of service if it is the same people that have been there servicing large areas of the province already up to now? Is the minister saying that they did not have a full load, there were great inefficiencies, too many staff and not enough work for them so now she is finally going to give them a full workload?

Mrs. Vodrey: First of all, I know that it is the responsibility of individual counsellors to organize their caseloads and to organize their time among their clients and how they will look to provide the best service that they are able to. I would say that those counsellors who are working now on an itinerant basis to the Parkland area will look at organizing their caseloads to providing the service

to make sure that they provide the service to the people of the Parkland area.

Having worked in a field where I did have to organize a very large caseload on a regular basis I know that it is done and I know that you look at those people who are part of your caseload for a long time. You look at incoming people in your caseload and you look at those people who then move off your caseload. So I know that the counsellors will make every effort to organize their caseload as effectively as they can and also to deal with the itinerant needs of their clients, and we will see how it is that those can be most effectively managed, because the counsellors themselves may have a way in which they believe that they can best service the needs.

As the member may know, counsellors do operate in different ways. Some counsellors like to work in blocks of times. Other counsellors work with their clients better on an intermittent basis. So we will have to look at and those counsellors will look at how they will provide the service to their clients in those areas.

Mr. Plohman: So in other words the minister is saying she is centralizing the service in Brandon. Is that the minister's version of decentralization?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, as the member well knows that there were, again, and I go back over it again, a number of very difficult decisions and in the process of those difficult budget decisions we did make a very strong effort to certainly maintain service. In this particular area that we are now having the counsellors—yes, they will be working from the Brandon area, but they will work on an itinerant basis with their clients who are in the Parkland region.

Mr. Plohman: So, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister is saying that this reflects the government's and her, as part of this government, commitment to decentralization. This is the kind of decisions that we see. If the people are cynical about the government's commitment to decentralization, I guess this is one of the best examples we could point to about this government's commitment or lack of commitment to decentralization.

How does the minister reconcile that policy that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) has stated so loudly over the last couple of years, and her colleagues? How does she reconcile this decision with that policy?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the government policy of decentralization has been spoken about several times by my colleague the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach). It does fall within his area, and I know that during the process of his Estimates he will have some very strong figures which support this government's position on decentralization and the action on decentralization.

Certainly, the Department of Education and Training has also been doing their share in terms of supporting the decentralization initiative. Our record, I believe, is very good, and we will certainly be able to talk about that further as we reach other budget lines, if that is what the member would like.

However, the one centre, which the member has been speaking about, again, was part of a series of very difficult budget decisions in this particular fiscal year. However, we have made an effort to make sure that the service is still available, and we have spoken about the itinerant service available. We are not asking people to make the trip from the Parkland area into the Westman area. We are saying that we will make sure counsellors are the ones who are available on an itinerant basis.

As I have said also, counsellors will look at organizing their caseloads to do the best and most effective job with their clients that they are able to. That is the work of counsellors in the field.

Mr. Plohma: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am absolutely positive that the counsellors and the staff are going to do the very best to make an unworkable situation work, because they have no choice. I mean, they have a job to do and they are going to try and do it. That does not make it any easier and any more possible. It is up to the minister to determine and her senior management in this branch to ensure that there is a practical way of delivering these services, if she is committed to them.

Otherwise, say we are banning them, we cannot afford them. If that is the case, then say that, but do not try and make out it is the same service. It is clearly not. Has the minister added staff to provide this service to the Parkland?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, there has not been an addition of staff in the Westman area; however, as we have spoken about, I do believe that there will be an organization of caseload. I am concerned that the member is only speaking about

the negative view that he holds. He has not been able to look at any of the positives, which will be available and which we strongly believe will be available to the people of Manitoba under this reorganization.

We have spoken today about the kinds of areas of programming and services to people which will be reorganized within the Department of Education and Training to allow that access. In the past, this service of the Employability Enhancement Programs was offered in the Department of Family Services, and those clients did not always have the opportunity to know what the other programs were that were available within the Department of Education and Training.

Now, through the reorganization, we believe that it will be a much more efficient and accessible service for the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Plohma: I cannot even believe the minister believes what she is saying. This is so difficult for me to believe that the minister actually believes this is going to be a more efficient and a better service for the people of all areas of this province, when, in fact, if she has studied this report and has her staff studying the report, she would know that the report done by her own government, which should have been a basis for any decisions with regard to this program, says that the payback is \$16 for every \$1 spent on this program—\$16.

Is the minister going to design another method of delivery that is going to be more efficient than that, when there is a payback 16 times for every dollar spent? How can the minister say that seriously? It is in the recommendations and the review.

Surely, the minister has looked at this. Now she is in a position with her department, Planning and Policy Development group, to assess whether a mistake has been made, rather than talking about this continuum of service and all of the benefits that are going to accrue from counsellors running around from Brandon to try and serve the huge Parkland region of the province. I will show the minister a map, how large it is, so that she can get an understanding of how many communities are involved.

It is a very cumbersome area to govern, even as a region, never mind adding it to the Westman region. I want the minister to be able to retain some credibility in her statements here. Surely, she is not telling us, or did she not know there is this kind of payback done by her own report? Sixteen dollars

for every \$1—a very efficient and effective and humane delivery of service for single parents in the Parkland, for probationary referrals, for many other people, native people, who have no hope in many cases of getting out of a cycle of poverty and despair and becoming productive citizens. Where are they going to go now?

Mrs. Vodrey: The member is examining a report again not done by the Department of Education and Training. That report is a single area he would like to examine in isolation, and with that report he would like to just completely look at a very narrow focus. That is the focus that we have heard all afternoon and there has been, as I have explained to him now that the Employability Enhancement Programs have been moved into the Department of Education, a need to articulate many, many programs, not just to look at a single program in isolation.

Through this new reorganization of this particular division, we do believe that we will be able to meet the needs of Manitobans better, because we will provide stronger links between the skills development that they need and the economic development strategies of regions. We do believe that there will be a better co-ordination of the skills training incentives.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: A formal vote has been requested. This section of the Committee of Supply will now proceed to the Chamber for the formal vote. Thank you.

AGRICULTURE

Madam Chairperson (Louise Dacquay): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply is dealing with the Estimates for the Department of Agriculture.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Madam Chairperson, I rise on a matter of privilege and, in accordance with our rules, it will be followed by a motion and a referral to the House for consideration.

Madam Chairperson, it is with regret that I bring this matter forward, but it is not without precedent in this House as I shall explain in terms of the concern that I have, and members of our caucus have, about proceedings Monday night that relate to what we feel is the failure by the Chair to ensure the right of all members to speak. [interjection] For the Minister

of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger), this will be followed by a motion which is the appropriate way of dealing with such matters.

I would like to outline our concern in this regard. As I said it relates to proceedings Monday night during which we had moved a motion. I attempted to be recognized to speak at the time. It was very clear the government's intention was to speak the matter out until after ten o'clock, at which time no formal vote can be taken. It has to be referred to another day. Despite repeated attempts to be recognized, I was ignored.

I rose at that time on a point of order, an attempt to appeal once again to the clear tradition in this House of, in this case, allowing opposition members to be recognized at least as equally as government members.

I, Madam Chairperson, in attempting to appeal to the House had no success with the government, which not only did not support the matter of order, but also refused to even show the courtesy of allowing me to speak at that point in time.

For the purpose as a matter of privilege, I want to point out the sequence of events because our rules require this matter be raised in the committee of the House, not in the House itself, at the first opportunity.

I point out that this matter rose at 10:11 p.m. A recorded vote was requested. That recorded vote was held over to another day. Obviously, if there had been a change in terms of the ruling and I had been recognized, the concern would not have continued, but what happened was we came back into the House on a vote on the Tuesday, when we convened again to Committee of Supply.

At that point in time, since there was a vote in progress, it was not an appropriate time to raise the matter of privilege. The vote was taken. The committee adjourned, since it was past five o'clock.

This then is the first opportunity I have had, following the resolution of the point of order on the Monday, to rise on what I think is clearly a matter of privilege.

Madam Chairperson, this is not the first time that opposition members have raised the matter of privilege in regard to concerns about activities by the Chair. I refer, and some members of this House will recall Monday the 13th of December, 1982, in which the then-Leader of the Opposition Sterling Lyon rose on a matter of privilege in regard to a series of

proceedings that had involved accusations that the Speaker, at that point in time, had changed a ruling under pressure from government members.

At that point in time, I would point out that after hearing submissions from a number of individuals in the House at the time, such as Roland Penner, Brian Ransom and Andy Anstett, Sterling Lyon, the decision of the Chair at that time was to accept the motion, put it to consideration by the House and indeed a vote was taken on the motion. The motion at that time was to express lack of confidence in the presiding officer. That is indeed the most appropriate way to deal with a concern related to this matter.

I would just note in speaking that Sterling Lyon was very eloquent in talking about the need for the House and for officers of the House to respect, not only the role of the majority, but also the rights of the minority, in this particular case, the opposition party, and was very clear in terms of his concern about what he perceived and what opposition members at the time perceived to be a clear case of lack of fairness being shown to the opposition and concern that there was an impact on the Speaker because of interventions by members of the government at the time.

My concern, Madam Chairperson, is indeed very much similar. I point out that in looking at the role of the Speaker, in Beauchesne, Citation 168, the Speaker's office in particular, it is indicated very clearly the need for impartiality of the Speaker. Indeed, there are various citations. I have mentioned Citation 168, which makes it very clear that the office of Speaker in the House of Commons, which also applies to the Legislature, the key elements, the chief characteristics are authority and impartiality.

Indeed, if one also looks at Beauchesne, in the House of Commons, the tradition is very clear in terms of Deputy Speaker, that similar powers and responsibilities are vested in the Deputy Speaker. While there are some differences in practice between participation, for example, of the Deputy Speaker in debates and in caucus affairs between the House of Commons, where there is generally limited involvement in political party functions by the Deputy Speaker, and limited involvement in debate; in this House, despite the fact that Deputy Speakers have traditionally participated in party functions and in debate, the requirement of impartiality of the

Deputy Speaker, as indeed of the committee Chairs, is fairly clearly established by precedent.

* (1430)

That is indeed our concern in this particular case. I would say that if one looks again at Beauchesne, it is unfortunate that we have to take the time of this committee, and indeed we will have to take the time of the House, when this matter is referred to the committee, as it will appropriately be done, that we deal with this matter. In fact, Beauchesne Citation 760 refers to a specific Speaker's ruling in which the Speaker felt it necessary to write to Chairs of committee at the time in regard to matters that were raised in terms of privilege and grievance related specifically to proceedings in committee.

It is unfortunate this has to be raised in this particular manner. Well, Madam Chairperson, I feel, though, regret that we have to raise this particular matter. I feel that it was very clear on Monday that the question of impartiality and partiality became very apparent. I am very concerned, not only in terms of what happened, in terms of the failure, as I have indicated, to ensure the ability of opposition members to speak, but also the fact that it was so clearly tied into the concern of the government to avoid a vote at a particular point in time.

Madam Chairperson, indeed, that is very much in keeping with the precedent established in 1982, where the matter was accepted for disposition by the House, and a vote was taken by the House on the matter of privilege moved by Sterling Lyon. Our concern is a serious one. This is not just a matter of simple procedure; it is a matter of privilege.

What can be considered more fundamental in this House than the ability of a member, regardless of their political affiliation—I want to emphasize that, regardless of their political affiliation—to be able to participate fairly and equally in the debates of this House and to be able to have the assurance that the Chair shall not be partial and shall not be influenced to be partial? My concern in this particular matter relates both to the element of being partial and the element of the pressure on the Chairs to be partial. That is why I really believe there is no question, as was clearly established in the precedent of 1982, that this is a matter of privilege.

The way to deal with this, Madam Chairperson, is to have this matter referred to the House. That indeed will be part of my motion. In fact, that is very clear in Beauchesne's Citations 822, 825 and 894

that such matters have to be referred to the House. I would suggest that it be referred to the House immediately, certainly today at the adjournment of the Committee of Supply. But the Chair may wish to consider referring this matter immediately to the House so that we can deal with it in the House.

It is indeed with regret, given the circumstances which we feel on our side were clear evidence of partiality and attempts—I am not just talking here about the Chair—but in terms of the government to influence the Chair to be partial in terms of recognition of members, as is proven by the fact that three Conservative members were recognized in a row despite the fact—and I want to refer to this in terms of the discussions that took place on the point of order—that I had made it very clear that I intended to speak. I had signalled from my seat repeatedly from the beginning. In fact, I ended up with the Clerk of the House and the Page in the House coming over at the point in time because I was so visibly signalling the Chair and, at that particular point in time, making it very clear that I was trying to make sure that I had the opportunity to speak.

In fact, after the second Conservative speaker was recognized in a row, I made it very clear from my seat that I wished to be recognized, and recalling again that we are now in a situation in the House where we can speak from our seat and the way to signal in a committee, where one is able to signal in one's seat, is by indicating with one's hands, which I did on repeated occasions. Then after having risen on a third occasion—and recalling this is Committee of Supply, and that, for example, the member for Portage (Mr. Pallister) could have given up the floor and could have spoken at another point in time without losing his place to speak.

Those were very clear attempts, Madam Chairperson, and I feel there was a deliberate attempt by the government to prevent me from speaking because of concern that a vote might be taken on the resolution that was before the House on the Minister's Salary, and that that vote might be taken before ten o'clock, recognizing that the vote, if it was called after ten o'clock, would be referred to a subsequent day.

This is a very serious matter, and it is with regret that I move that this committee express its concern that the Deputy Speaker in Committee of Supply on Monday, May 17, 1993, showed bias in failing to ensure the right of all members to speak, and that

this matter be reported to the House for consideration.

Madam Chairperson: In accordance with Beauchesne's Citation 107, this committee has no power to deal with a matter of privilege. Such matters can only be dealt with by the House itself on receiving a report from the committee. Therefore, I am prepared to entertain a motion to report the matter of privilege to the House.

Point of Order

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): On a point of order, yes, I fully understand that ultimately this point of privilege may have to be referred to the House. I have no trouble with that, but, Madam Chairperson, certainly the Rules of the House, when a member rises on a matter of privilege, other parties are given an opportunity to make representation. If the member is saying that has to be done in the House as compared to being done now, then I did not take the interpretation of Section 107 of Beauchesne to mean that we were prevented from making our representation as other parties at this point in time.

Mr. Ashton: On the same point of order to the government House leader, indeed all the parties and all members wishing to make representation on the matter of privilege will be able to do so upon the report of the committee. The Committee of—

Madam Chairperson: No. Order, please. On the point of order, I was about to read the motion to the committee. That motion is debatable and indeed all parties in the House will have an opportunity to speak to that motion once the motion has been read into the record in this Committee of Supply.

Madam Chairperson: The motion before the committee is that this committee express its concern that the Deputy Speaker in Committee of Supply on Monday, May 17, 1993, showed bias in failing to ensure the right of all members to speak and that the matter be reported to the House for consideration.

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Madam Chairperson, a matter of privilege is a very serious nature, and I think that none of us in this Chamber should take it in a frivolous way whatsoever. The member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) has indicated that he

believes that his rights as a member of this Chamber have been violated.

* (1440)

I have been in this Chamber since 1986. When I came to this Chamber in 1986, I was a lone member. My experience at Estimates was quite different than what has been related by the Finance minister in his response to the member for Thompson's point of order on page 3111 of Hansard. At no time have I ever experienced anything except a rotation between members of this Chamber, even when I did not have official party status. It was clear that a member of the government would be recognized, or a member of the official opposition would be recognized, but so, too, was a member of a third party, even though that third party had no status.

So to recognize in the Estimates process in Committee of Supply, one, two and three representatives of one political party when it is clear that other political parties want to make representation, I think, quite frankly, is in violation of the rules of this House. I think that as a matter of privilege there is a legitimate matter of privilege here, and I would recommend that it go speedily to the Chamber.

Mr. Manness: I want to indicate that I could not be in further disagreement with the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) and, indeed, the House leader for the New Democratic Party (Mr. Ashton).

Madam Chairperson, I take seriously also the motion brought forward and, indeed, the preamble leading to the motion by the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton). I do not feel for one second that he does not personally feel aggrieved with respect to events of the other night.

But I must protest, as I said just briefly the other evening, that having been in this House since 1981, and certainly since 1988 having been at the head of the table at various committee hearings, either defending bills of the government and/or being at Standing Committee of Public Accounts and watching the Chairs of the moment conduct their affairs and their responsibilities, I am always mindful that there has always been a note pad beside and quite often a pencil in hand which has recorded names as they come forward, put down in order

without reference to parties, because we are all equal members at these committees.

Now in the House it is a different matter. In the House on Budget Debate, and certainly on throne speech debate, it is a different matter. The convention always has been, government, opposition; government, opposition, not by rule, certainly not by rules because I have scanned the rule books and have never seen it, but by convention.

But in committee we are all equal members. As a matter of fact, quite often members on the government side will be the people who will be the strongest critics of their own ministers, and they are not government members. They are members in their own right of this Legislature.

So there is no such thing as government opposition in committee. It does not exist in rules; it does not exist in convention. It does not exist.

The member may find fault, and I have not discussed this with my colleague the Chair of Committees, indeed the Deputy Speaker, but I remember what happened the other night. As soon as the member moved the motion, I saw it coming, I hit my fist on the table with some false bravado, and I know there were two members from this side that stood. I know the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) and myself stood at the same time. I sensed the Chair seeing that also, that under the rules—not under the rules, under convention, under convention sense, there were two members on her list that were going to speak first.

That is ultimately what happened. I can understand how the member was exercised that night; I saw him. But what happened after that, when their third member stood here, that member, and I do not know whether I can say that, was not in the House when the third member on this side stood to speak.

An Honourable Member: He was here.

Mr. Manness: No. He was not in his chair. I saw it. I was sitting here all night. I saw it.

Madam Chairperson, this is obviously an important issue, and I take it very seriously also. Of course, you are in no position to defend yourself. I mean the rules of the House do not allow for that, and we have a motion of privilege in front of us. I say, yes, if whatever the process is that we deal with this particular motion, obviously, it has to be followed by our rules, but I certainly say the member

was not denied his right to speak. We are still in Agriculture Estimates. We are still in the same Estimates Thursday that we were in Monday night. We were in the same Estimates. Nothing has changed.

So I make my point. There is no convention, No. 1. I say the member does not have a prima facie case. I call into question even the interpretation under 107 whether indeed we are talking about the privileges, individual of members, and we are talking about committees, because I would question whether or not he has not had the right to bring that as a member right to the floor of the House. I would say, therefore, he has moved; he has missed that opportunity; but certainly he does not have a prima facie case.

Mr. Ashton: I will save further comments for when this matter is raised in the House, but I do take offence at the comments from the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness).

The Minister of Finance should review what happened, should also review my comments in terms of the fact that I expressed concern in terms of partial decisions that were made and also influence in terms of partial decisions. I would appreciate it if the Minister of Finance would address that question as well, using the same precedent that was used in 1982 by Sterling Lyon. In fact, he may recall that. He was a member of this House at the time.

Quite frankly, the minister would do well to reflect on the events at the time, and other members of the House at the time would also do well to reflect on the particular motion that has been moved, which is certainly not the same motion that was moved under similar circumstances in 1982.

Perhaps, instead of attempting to suggest that I was somehow absent, which is not true—it is recorded in Hansard that I rose; the matter was dealt with initially at that time at 10:11 on the third occasion—the Minister of Finance should be careful with reflecting on the facts.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) should also recognize, and I want to place this very clearly on the record, and I have chaired committees, that there has never been in any committee any formal or informal recognition in terms of speaking list as the Minister of Finance in error talked about on Monday, or as he has again referred to in this House. Perhaps the Minister of Finance should

recall that, in terms of the normal procedures, the Leader of the Liberal Party is quite correct; and, beyond the question of recognition, the real question in dealing with this matter is the question of partiality. It is something that I think needs to be dealt with in the House, not only in the context of the actions of the Chair because that, indeed, would not be a fair recognition of what had happened at the time, but also the actions of government members.

Perhaps the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) at that point in time would like to indicate whether there was any attempt on behalf of government members to influence the recognition of members in this House by the Chair to prevent a vote from taking place before ten o'clock. It is very clear on the basis of the events that the government itself had one agenda, and the government's agenda was to prevent a vote. In doing so, it wished to prevent the possibility that I as a member might rise, having been recognized, and call for an immediate vote on the question.

The ironic thing is, Madam Chairperson, I wanted to rise on the motion, not to call an immediate vote, but to respond to some of the comments that had been made by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) at that particular time. But I think that we should deal with this matter in the House in the context not only of the actions of the Chair on that particular day, but also of government members and the very serious questions raised about partiality of the Chair and the degree to which government members feel that they can go and talk to the Chair at any time and attempt to influence the decision of this or any other Chair in this committee. That is the root of this matter of privilege.

Thank you.

* (1450)

Madam Chairperson: Is the committee ready for the question? The question before the committee is: Shall the motion be referred to the the House?

All those in favour, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Chairperson: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Madam Chairperson: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

Point of Order

Mr. Ashton: On a point of order, Madam Chairperson, is the ruling of the Chair that the motion requires a vote, and that no matter of privilege will be reported unless there is a vote in favour of the particular motion?

Madam Chairperson: Absolutely. The committee must adopt the motion. That is the correct interpretation by this Chair as advised by the Clerk.

* * *

Mr. Ashton: I would ask for a recorded vote.

Madam Chairperson: A recorded vote has been requested. Call in the members.

The question before the committee is that the matter of privilege be reported to the House for consideration. All those in favour of the motion, please rise.

A COUNTED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas 22, Nays 27.

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. The motion is accordingly defeated.

The question before the committee is that the Minister's Salary be reduced to \$10,300 because of the Minister of Agriculture's (Mr. Findlay) refusal to stand with Manitoba farmers who are opposed to the recommendations in the Carter report, and the minister's refusal to lobby the federal government to hold a plebiscite on how barley should be sold to the United States. Is the committee ready for the question?

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Chairperson, I wish to speak on this. I had intended to speak on this on Monday night. It is unfortunate we have had to spend so much time in committee the last period of time to even get to the point where we are available to participate in this debate.

The reason I rose on Monday night was to respond to the comments made by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) in his half-hour filibuster on the motion moved by the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) and respond to some of the inaccurate comments that the Minister of Finance and the subsequent Tory speakers put on the record in their desperate attempt to filibuster a resolution before this committee.

The bottom line is this government's arrogance in dealing with motions and members of the opposition

and concerns expressed by Manitobans could not be more clear than it was expressed on Monday night. One of the reasons indeed, as the Minister of Finance said, that I was frustrated on Monday night was being unable to be recognized in time—

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. I would remind the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) that debate is to be relevant to the motion. The motion before the committee is: Shall the Minister's Salary be reduced to \$10,300?

Mr. Ashton: Madam Chairperson, I am talking about the debate on Monday night. I am indeed referring to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and his comments that took place on Monday night, and what could be more relevant than trying to correct the inaccurate information that was put on the record by the Minister of Finance on Monday night.

I find it incredible that this government is so sensitive when a member of the opposition, in this case, the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), raises an issue that is being recognized as a significant issue by many Manitoba farmers, and raises it repeatedly in the House, has to deal with the kind of response that we saw again today from the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay). We saw it on Monday night when she had to get to the point of moving a reduction in the Minister's Salary because of the fact the Minister of Agriculture will not deal with the concerns expressed by Manitoba farmers.

I want to respond to the comments put on the record by the Minister of Finance. He said that the government was not going to be steamrolled into taking a position on this particular issue. Madam Chairperson, they were not going to be steamrolled into taking a position on this issue? I mean, is it not legitimate for farmers or for members of the opposition to ask them to have a stand on this particular issue, what they feel in terms of the Carter report, the recommendations?

Is it not legitimate in this case for the member for Swan River, who in the motion which reduced the Minister's Salary, tied it specifically to the fact that many Manitoba farmers are seeking what, a plebiscite? What is a plebiscite? It is an opportunity for them to express their opinions. It is not a referendum. It is not binding, and this government I found went to incredible lengths to say that they

were not going to be forced into a position and they were not going to have a plebiscite.

I heard comments from the Minister of Finance talking about what is being talked about—and barley supported in southern areas of the province. Well, indeed, perhaps it is. Indeed, but the Minister of Finance should have a broader perspective than talking just about one part of the province in terms of farmers.

I noticed again, the question came up about the plebiscite when the member for Swan River raised it as to who might vote in the plebiscite. There were some comments about the real farmers voting and some concern that others might be included in the plebiscite process that somehow were not real farmers. Madam Chairperson, I would like the members to explain what they mean by that.

How do you define what a real farmer is over there? Do you have to live in a certain region of the province? The Minister of Finance talked about the South. Do you have to produce a certain amount of barley? Do you have to produce a certain amount of any particular grain? I mean is that the concern? Is it a geographic one? Do you have to vote the right way?

I mean, you know, I hate to raise this but we have heard that before in this House, that if you happen to be from a certain area of the province—and the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) talks about, you did not vote the right way. I mean, is that the concern in this particular case? Perhaps when we talk in terms of the Parkland, for example, constituencies we represent, that perhaps some people might not agree with some of the recommendations in terms of the handling of barley. Is that the concern?

I found it interesting, Madam Chairperson, in their desperation to filibuster this resolution, and in their lack of preparedness, we probably got some more forthrightness and candor from these members than we might do if they were carefully scripted. I would say, it would be interesting for Manitobans to read through the comments that took place, and I will leave out the member for Emerson's (Mr. Penner) talk about letting my people go. I give him credit, he was the most inventive. When we start getting into these biblical visions of the member, of letting my

people go, I was not quite sure who he was referring to in terms of "my people."

You know, the barley producers of this province, Madam Chairperson, what I found particularly incredible is that he went into a lecture about the evils of interfering in the market process. Of course, some of us sat there and we thought, wait a second! Is this not the same member that only a few weeks ago in the House was getting up on the sugar beet industry and asking that we have—oh, my God!—Interference in the market process for sugar beet producers, a program put in place? We know that Conservatives are not necessarily known to be consistent and I think this debate has proved it.

* (1530)

The bottom line is this resolution is clear. This resolution, and it is the only way we can get the message across to the Minister of Agriculture, is that the member for Swan River, our caucus, in consultation with many farmers, have expressed concern about this issue. The Minister of Agriculture knows a significant number of farmers have expressed concern about the issue. Even he would not question that. I know that to be a fact.

The bottom line is, Madam Chairperson, we have suggested in the House there be a plebiscite on the issue and there be an opportunity for farmers who are directly affected by this to discuss this particular matter.

It is not a question, as the government put it, of change or no change. We need no lectures from this government on change. I mean, the Conservative Party is not known as exactly the party that has dealt with change over the years—Progressive Conservative. We see that time in, time out; we see from all members from the opposition. They forget which decade we are in repeatedly when they talk about social issues and economic issues. Madam Chairperson, let us not have any lectures about change from this caucus.

The bottom line is, this is a very straightforward issue. We did not need to get into what happened Monday night. If the government had been willing at that time to listen to the debate on the motion—

An Honourable Member: Why did you move the motion?

Mr. Ashton: We moved the motion because we wanted to express the concerns of the farmers who have called for a plebiscite, and our position as a party supporting that call. We did not need to get into

what subsequently happened. We did not need a filibuster. All I wanted to do as a member of this House on Monday night was do what I am doing now, which is to respond to some of the comments which I quite frankly found close to offensive in some cases, particularly the Minister of Finance's (Mr. Manness) comments about geographic region and the rest.

Perhaps there are farmers in certain areas of the province that do support the recommendations. Perhaps there are some that oppose. That is the democratic process. That is the point, Madam Chairperson. Let them speak through a plebiscite. Let us have some indication from the government where it is going, because I think that is important, to take a position. I mean, let us not forget, in this case, they are not only not taking a position, they are not allowing farmers to express their concerns through a plebiscite. That is a legitimate issue.

I find it unfortunate that it had to come up in terms of this motion. I know the member for Swan River (Mrs. Wowchuk) would have preferred a motion that would have withheld the Minister's Salary until such time as he authorized the plebiscite and took a stand, but that is not allowed under our rules. That would, I think, have been a clearer way of sending the message, but the only way that we had is the traditional way in this House on a motion to reduce a line item, and we did not want to take away from other line items in the Department of Agriculture. It was not, most definitely not, for members opposite who called it character assassination, aimed directly at the person of the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) in any way, shape or form.

It is the traditional way, and I do believe the minister may recall other times when such resolutions were made by members of that party when they were in opposition. It was not a personal attack on the minister. It was a question of policy. It was the only item we could reduce in the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture that would not affect farmers directly. Quite frankly, it would have been unnecessary if the minister had supported the call for a plebiscite and if the minister would take a stand on this very vital issue to the many farmers who are affected by it.

So those were the things that I would have said on Monday night. I am glad I finally got the opportunity here on Thursday afternoon to raise it, and I hope, Madam Chairperson, that the members of the government next time, on issues such as this,

will not be so defensive, will not be so fearful of taking a stand, will not be so fearful of the concerns of Manitoba farmers, will not be so fearful of the concerns we are expressing as members of the opposition on their behalf in this House, and will allow proper debate on these issues and indeed at some point in time perhaps will listen, and listen to Manitoba farmers through a plebiscite, as we have called for in this House and as we are calling for in this resolution.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Chairperson, when we were close to finishing the Estimates, when we were into the Minister's Salary, there were many concerns that we had, concerns that had been raised through the Estimates period, through Question Period that I and members of my caucus and farmers did not feel were being addressed adequately. For that reason, we brought in a motion signifying that we were not happy with some of the answers.

Indeed, as the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) just indicated, the motion could have been much stronger. The members from government will remember when they were in opposition and they brought in resolutions such as reducing the Minister's Salary to a bucket of asphalt, I think. There were motions like that that came from the other side. We could have done that.

In fact, the member for Thompson also indicated that the suggestion I was making was that perhaps we could withhold the Minister's Salary until such time as he stood by farmers. That was the suggestion that I made, but that would not have been in order.

We just wanted to send a message that we were not happy with the answers we were getting, and we were disappointed with the position the minister had taken on a few issues. That was the reason for bringing in the motion. A motion that is, as I understand, quite traditional if you want to send a message to government on their position.

Madam Chairperson, farmers are not happy with the proposed changes to the barley—the removal of barley from the Wheat Board.

An Honourable Member: Nobody is talking about removing barley.

Ms. Wowchuk: The member says nobody is talking about removing barley from the Wheat Board. The proposal is to move to a continental market, to

weaken the Wheat Board, and that is the concern. It is a move to open up a continental market and this, farmers feel, will tremendously weaken the Wheat Board, and it will cause a lot of unfairness. All farmers will not be treated equally.

This government chooses not to listen to farmers, because the majority of Manitoba farmers have said that they do not want to move toward a continental market. That is the position of the majority of the farmers. Farmers have asked that a plebiscite be held. They have lobbied the federal government on this matter, but from what we have heard, when there was the committee hearing on this, they were not able to get that request, they were not able to get a plebiscite from the federal government.

The farmers in Manitoba have asked—

An Honourable Member: You have heard, and you have heard rumours.

Ms. Wowchuk: The member says, rumours. It was very clearly stated by people who were on that committee. People were not allowed to make representation at that committee hearing.

Madam Chairperson, all we are asking is that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) have a plebiscite here in Manitoba so that farmers could be heard. He is not doing that.

There are other issues that farmers are concerned about. Farmers are concerned about this minister's lack of position on the method of payment. The minister has not taken a position.

The minister referred this afternoon to my answer in Hansard, and it is right here. I said, yes, farmers are being blackmailed. Farmers are being pushed into the corner.

I have said blackmailed many times in this House and the minister knows full well that I oppose the change to the method of payment, but he has not taken a position. I have stated very clearly that I am opposed to it because I do not think it will be fair to farmers. He looks at one quotation in Hansard where I have said, there is not going to be a choice because he will not stand up to the federal government and take Manitoba's position there that Manitoba farmers do not want a change in method of payment.

Other governments have. The Saskatchewan government has taken that position. If he would stand with the Saskatchewan government and stand up to Charlie Mayer and the federal

government, farmers might have a chance in this to retain the method of payment, but he will not take a position. He hides behind his advisory committee and says that they will make the decision. He will not listen to the farmers. There is nothing that he will stand up for for farmers. That was the reason.

The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) accuses me of getting hysterical about this issue. Quite frankly, I do not think that I have gotten hysterical about it. I am quite calm about this, and I have never taken attack from the minister personally. There are many times when I could, maybe, use words such as hysterical. I choose not to. I think we should respect one another for it.

The point of all of this is that this minister will not take a position, will not stand with farmers on the whole issue of the continental market. He will not make his position known. He says he has taken a position on the method of payment, but he has not. Farmers have asked him, come out to meetings, talk to us about the method of payment, tell us how you are going to lobby the federal government. He has not done that.

* (1540)

He has not taken a position on barley. He continues to say that he is going to look at studies. Well, when we look at studies that have come forward, and the one I referred to today, the response from the National Transportation Agency of Canada says, if we move towards changing the method of payment and introducing all of these efficiencies that he talks about that are going to be so good for farmers, farmers' costs are going to go up \$500 million over the next eight years.

How can he say he is standing up for farmers, that it is going to be better for farmers, we are going to have better prices at the farm gate, when the National Transportation Agency themselves say that these kinds of changes are going to only increase farm costs? There is not going to be a benefit. Farmers are going to pay out more.

Who is going to benefit from this? The minister saw these studies, but yet he has never made it clear that these kinds of changes are going to make things worse for farmers.

An Honourable Member: What do farm organizations say?

Ms. Wowchuk: The member talks about farm organizations. Yes, farm organizations have taken a position and farmers have taken a position. He

should go out there and listen to farmers, all farmers. Farmers have taken a position. Public meetings were held across the province last year—manipulated, controlled meetings that tried to give farmers unfair, inaccurate information, trying to persuade farmers that the method of payment should be changed and it would be to their benefit.

The number of farmers who wanted the method of payment to stay the same was greater than those who wanted it changed, but yet the government, both federal and provincial, have refused to listen to those numbers.

Madam Chairperson, those are the reasons that we are concerned with the lack of action by this Minister of Agriculture. He has not taken a position and he will not stand up for farmers on these issues.

The member continues to refer to the Farmers Union. The Farmers Union has taken a position. They have taken a very clear position that they are opposed to change in the method of payment. They have come out, and they are farmers, and they are people, and they have a right to their say just as everybody else does. But I guess they are the wrong class of people. The Premier (Mr. Filmon) talked about classes of people. Perhaps that is a class of people that their voice should not count. You know, as government representatives, you should listen to all people, not only those that you choose to listen to. The Farmers Union is a credible group of people who have ideas as well, and you should not discredit their views just because you may not believe in all of them. You should listen to all people; they have the right to have a say.

That is why we are asking that there be a plebiscite, that all people, all producers, have input into this matter. If the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) is so sure that he is going to win on this one and those that are in favour of the method of these changes will go his way, then he should not oppose a plebiscite. [interjection] That is right, they have not taken a position either. Is that what you are telling me? [interjection]

The minister wants us to take sides. The real issue here is the method of payment and how things are going to change in this country if the method of payment changes to pay the producer. What is going to happen to services in rural communities? What is going to happen to the transportation lines? What is going to happen to the patterns of agriculture? The minister continues to talk about

change, and he wants the best return at the farm gate. We have not had one point here telling us that the farm gate price is going to improve. This study tells us that farmers are going to pay more money, but the minister chooses to ignore it.

The same thing applies to the barley situation, Madam Chairperson. Farmers are telling us, the majority of farm groups are saying that changing to a continental market will do nothing to the return for the farmer. Farmers will grow more barley, but they will sell it for a lower price. The minister shakes his head, but the studies are telling us that, that farmers will not be the winners in this. All we ask is that the minister give the farmers the opportunity to have a say. That is all we want from this.

I do not know what happened the other night, why we were so afraid to go forward. There was a motion put on the floor to end the Agriculture Estimates, and as we looked at this, as I looked back at some of the older years back at Estimates, there did not seem to be a problem with voting on the Minister's Salary. I do not know why there was such a big to-do about it the other night. We could have finished the Estimates. We were basically trying to make a point of the fact, to send the minister a message to listen more to the views of Manitoba farmers, because we do not believe he is listening to those views, Madam Chairperson. [interjection]

Madam Chairperson, the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) talks about letting his people go. That is a really interesting comment. I think what we have to be thinking about and what government has to be thinking about is what is fair for all people. The minister talks about change, but we have to look at each change that can be influenced by government. We have to look at the implications of that change and how is the whole picture of agriculture going to change. Is it going to be fair for everyone? Will everybody benefit from this change, or is it just going to be a small group of people that are going to get the benefit of it?

We want fairness for all people. We should not have policies that are going to benefit a small group of people, but other people not have any benefit from it. By changing the system, and I go back to the issue of the Wheat Board, the member has said that this is not going to weaken the Wheat Board and we

are not taking anything away from the Wheat Board, but it will weaken it.

The other point is that those farmers who choose to sell into the United States right now have that opportunity. There is no need to go to a continental market. The farmers have the opportunity; they have been going. You can take a truck and go and sell into the United States right now. So why do you have to change, go to a continental market?

We have to look at a fair return for all farmers. The changes that the minister is proposing, these changes, changing to a continental market will be better for farmers, we on this side of the House do not agree with him. We believe that this is going to hurt the farming community. They will be growing more for less money, and what is the point? What is the point of growing more if you are not going to get a fair return at the farm gate? [interjection]

The minister says he would like change, but what will be the benefit of the change? Who will— [interjection] The minister talks about opportunities, and those opportunities are there now. There is no need to move to a continental market.

We talked about the Wheat Board, and he had talked about the Wheat Board having to make some changes. The Wheat Board has made some changes. They had increased their sales. They are prepared to look at how they can sell more into the United States, but there is no need to just tie ourselves up to that market. There are markets all over the world. There is no need to just open up a continental market and tie only to that one.

We talked the other day about all the increasing markets, the opportunities in Russia with the changes that are going on there. We have to look at all of those. We have the opportunities to sell into all of those markets. We should. The Wheat Board has been doing a very good job and treating all people fairly, and the profits that they make go back to the farmers. That is the important thing. We have a pooling system, and farmers get a fair return for what they grow. That is what we have to continue to have.

* (1550)

I just want to emphasize the reason for moving the motion on lowering the Minister's Salary was to send a message on behalf of farmers that farmers are not happy with his lack of position on both the barley issue and on the method of payment. We

chose the barley issue because that is one that they have requested a plebiscite on.

The minister, as I say, should not have taken such great offence, or nor should his colleagues have taken such great offence to a move to reduce the Minister's Salary because it is something that is done traditionally. I am sure that if we look back through the records, each one of those members at some point, and I would not be surprised if maybe the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), when he was in opposition, at some point moved a reduction of the Minister's Salary, and that is nothing to take such offence to. We did not ask for the elimination of the salary. We asked for a reduction of a salary as a signal that this is what we were looking at, but there are serious concerns in the farming community.

The two of them that cause us the greatest concern right now is the lack of position by this minister on the whole issue of barley. He says he continues to study the matter and will not take a position. He has to take a position so that farmers know where he is going. He has not taken a position on the method of payment. He implies that I have taken a position, when I said that we were backed into the corner. Yes, I believe farmers are being backed into the corner by the decisions of this federal government. This Minister of Agriculture is not standing up and lobbying the federal government to delay or review what they are doing with the method of payment.

He is not listening to Manitoba farmers when they say that they do not want the change or he may be listening. He is not speaking out for them. He is not sending that message to Ottawa to tell them that this is not a good move for Manitoba farmers. That is basically the concern we have.

The member across the way names Ken Sigurdson. Well, I want to tell the member that, yes, Ken Sigurdson is a resident of my constituency. He is a very successful farmer and has some—

An Honourable Member: And campaign manager.

Ms. Wowchuk: In fact, no, he is not my campaign manager. He is a very successful farmer, and I think the reason the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) dislikes him so much is the fact that he belongs to the Farmers Union.

Point of Order

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): The honourable member for Swan River says that I dislike Ken Sigurdson. I have a great deal of respect for Ken Sigurdson and happen to like the man. I think he is a good friend and has been a good colleague in debate on the agricultural issues, so I take offence to the honourable member for Swan River telling members of this House that I dislike Ken Sigurdson. That is simply not true.

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable member for Emerson did not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Ms. Wowchuk: The member has—[interjection] We are having a discussion on Ken Sigurdson. The member says he knows Ken Sigurdson. From the remarks he was making from his chair, I assumed that they were not positive remarks and that is why I assumed he disliked him.

I want to say that I think Ken Sigurdson is a very credible person, and if the member for Emerson says he knows him and respects him, I appreciate that, because every person is entitled to their views. [interjection] That is right. The member says we do not have to agree on it. We each as individuals have a right to our opinion and I respect those farmers who belong to different farm organizations. I respect their view. I think it is only fair that we all respect the views of one Ken Sigurdson, who may have different views from the member for Emerson.

Whether we hear comments about the Farmers Union, the Farmers Union has some very good ideas about what should be happening and so does KAP and so do other groups. I think that the minister and his caucus should listen to the comments of all of those people and from there hear the views of all Manitobans.

Madam Chairperson, these are serious issues, and some of the members may not take Agriculture as seriously as other members do. I know the Minister of Agriculture does take the whole agricultural industry very seriously. It is a very important part of our economy. That is why it is very important that we look at what changes are happening and evaluate whether the changes that

are coming about will have a negative or positive effect on our industry.

In my opinion, some of the changes that are being proposed right now will have a negative impact in particular parts of the province. Other members have different opinions, but we have to look at what is best. Right now it is the opinion of a large portion of Manitoba farmers, farm organizations—large numbers of farmers, the farm groups in Manitoba spoke out against the recommendations in the Carter report, and the members across the way are well aware of that, that the Keystone Agricultural Producers, the Farmers Union, Pools and other organizations disagreed with the recommendations of the Carter report.

They do not believe that they will be beneficial to the farm producers, and they want a chance to have input. Nor do they agree with the proposals. Not all farm organizations agree with the proposals. The majority of Manitoba farmers at those public hearings did not agree with the proposal to change the method of payment. Those things have to be reconsidered very carefully because they are going to change the pattern of agriculture in this country.

All we are asking is that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) listen to those farmers and take the best possible position he can and state very clearly to the farmers where he is on these matters so that they will know in what direction he is going. He has not stated clearly where he is on either of those issues. That is the concern that we have raised with this government. Thank you very much.

Madam Chairperson: Is the House ready for the question?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Chairperson, I would like a few moments to comment on what the member just put on the record. I take great offence to her position that her position is the only position.

There are many farm organizations and many farmers that have expressed opinions, and they are on both sides of the issue. They are in between the two poles on all those issues. The member says that only her position, only the people who have spoken to her should be listened to. I beg her to have a broader way of looking at things.

She says that I do not listen to farmers. She has repeated that about 10 times in the last 40 minutes. I have told her that the position we took in 1989 was absolutely to listen to farmers. That is why we

appointed the advisory committee which had representation from Keystone Agricultural Producers, from Manitoba Pool, from UGG, another co-operative in Manitoba, from the Union of Manitoba Municipalities. The leadership of those organizations I would have to believe will do on that issue as they have on every other issue—listen to their constituencies, all the farmers that they represent. I have asked them to analyze the issue and make recommendations on how to handle it as the challenges came forward, and the challenges have been many.

* (1600)

Alberta has wanted to do something by themselves. Alberta Pool has proposed doing something by themselves. Canadian Wheat Board has proposed a change to the pooling system. Through that process, we have evolved a lot of information, a lot of statistics to help in the debates that have gone on so far and the debates that will come in the future.

So, Madam Chairperson, I think the member would be well advised to listen to the people that these various organizations represent and listen to what they have said and are going to be saying in the future.

The member says, implications of change, is it going to affect small groups or is it going to benefit larger groups? I would like her to pay attention to the barley round table which consisted of some 19 people. She says people opposed the process. They opposed the Carter report. They opposed the conclusions, but I want to remind her that a press release came out signed by 11 of the 19 people saying, and I will read directly, 11 out of the 19 people on the barley task force said that they did endorse the process to examine the potential of marketing Canadian barley in North America. They said that Mr. Carter, Dr. Carter, did an admirable job of addressing their questions—11 out of the 19. That is a majority in my mind.

She refuses to recognize that. She says she is interested in the highest value at the farm gate. I am absolutely interested in that, and I have repeated that many times. I would like her to be aware of some more information which I am sure she will refuse to read, but if she wants it, I will give her a copy of it.

I will read from this analysis that came to my attention today, talking about the Andy Schmidt [phonetic] study, the one commissioned by the Pool,

which is designed to take the opposite position to what she says the Carter report says. Andy Schmidt's report concluded that the Wheat Board is the best system for selling.

These are statistics. I am not saying I agree with them, I condone them, but this is somebody's analysis and she should take these into account. The study, meaning the Schmidt study, shows that over the last 10 years the Minneapolis price in Canadian dollars for U.S. feed barley has been on average \$5.87 per tonne above the Wheat Board's final price for No. 1 Canada western feed barley basis Thunder Bay. That is an analysis they took out of the Schmidt study.

They go on further to say, if they also factor in the Wheat Board deficits in the same years, that the U.S. prices are actually \$11.19 per tonne higher or 24 cents per bushel higher than what the Wheat Board returned to the farmers. Now if that is true, that is very serious information. It reflects that the farmers are not getting full value at the farm gate.

I say, as I told her the other day, this whole issue is not black and white because one economist does this study and shows this, the next economist does a study and shows this, and then they do analyses of each other and you get all kinds of different conclusions. So it is not black and white.

I think it is imperative that we look at what is in front of us as information and try to determine how we can maximize the return at the farm gate and maximize a penetration of the market. So the member talks about us concentrating only on the U.S. market. That is absolutely false.

I told her in Estimates that the amount of western Canadian barley that has gone to the U.S. varies from 2 to 8 percent, 50 percent is fed here, and there are other markets like Japan and Saudi Arabia which are very large markets for western Canadian barley.

So, Madam Chairperson, these are controversial issues. We all fully realize that. I take exception to her saying I do not listen to farmers because clearly I do. We may listen to different groups of farmers more than other groups, and people have a right to have different opinions. Just because she does not agree with the majority of farmers which, I believe, are saying the things that I have just reflected, that does not mean that I am a bad minister.

I will tell her I do not take offence to her motion. Yes, it is a traditional motion. I take no offence to it.

This is the first time I have risen since the motion was put. We will agree to disagree on certain things, but please do not say that because certain people tell you it is black, it is black or somebody will say it is white, it is white, do not ignore all the other information that is coming out.

I am not going to say what is right or wrong on the barley issue because every time you turn around, there are more statistics flowing out, more information. The big question is: What is right?

I have told her I have written to the Wheat Board. I have asked them to give me some reason to have greater confidence that they have done the best job possible. They have written back and said, there are ways in which we can improve the way we do business, and that is good because no matter what was done in the past, there is always a better way. That is called progress; that is called adapting to change.

The member must reflect on some of the things she said in Estimates and the questions she has asked in this House. She is always opposed to addressing change. Everything she says is opposed to addressing. She will not accept that there might be anything positive. She always says change is negative. If she looks back in history, in Agriculture, we have only progressed because we have been able to adapt and accept change. Change is going to happen whether that member wants it to happen or not. It is going to happen.

She says Russia is a good market. Well, a market that cannot pay is questionable. Yes, they can consume it, but can they pay? No, there is difficulty.

Things have changed, and we have to adapt, but the member should reflect on what she says over and over again. I say, her comments are in Hansard very clearly. Maybe it was a momentary lapse, but they are there. She says the time has come. I will read the whole paragraph: "I believe, yes, farmers and provinces are backed into a corner now where they have no choice but to accept changing the payment to the farmer . . ."—that is pretty clear—" . . . because of the actions that the federal government has taken."—also very clear. Then the next sentence: "It has to come."—a sentence all by itself: "It has to come."

She paused in the House. She said that with conviction. Change, it has to come. That was a momentary pause when she really gave us what she

felt, and it is an important statement. She says: "The minister did not take a position prior to that."

Now I am not sure what she was referring to by "that," but I said I took a position of listening to farmers, broadly, carefully, and we used a process in order to do that. The member, I guess, will refuse to accept that, but I think I will stand by what we have done in terms of process.

I think, in the final analysis, however decisions will unfold on this issue and other issues, we are well positioned to defend the interests of the vast majority of farmers in Manitoba. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Madam Chairperson, I want to take this occasion just to very briefly approach the Department of Agriculture and the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) on an issue that I believe is of import and will be of considerable import in the future.

Madam Chair and members of the committee, the taxpayers in Canada spend some \$6 billion in agricultural support, one kind or another—GRIP, NISA, Crow freight subsidies. It is inconceivable, and we should not delude our farm community, that that will be there forever. In fact, I think the debate that the minister and the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) were just engaged in indicates that that is changing. Finance Minister Mazankowski of the country has sent the very deliberate signal in his last budget that that is changing.

There are reasons other than just the very serious budgetary reasons why those have to change. Our Minister of Agriculture has been I think very forward, very direct, in the comments that he has made to farm communities in the last year with respect to the long-term futures of such programs like GRIP that commits this province and the taxpayers of this province to some \$50 million-plus in direct support.

* (1610)

We recognize and we have to recognize in the farm community that when the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer), all the problems in our social programs they are faced with, that will be subject to scrutiny and likely to considerable downsizing. I think the Minister of Agriculture has served our farmers well by not leading them to believe that a program like GRIP was there forever. I believe we

are getting the same message from the federal government.

Madam Chairperson, as Minister of Natural Resources I simply want to take this occasion to encourage those involved, both on the opposition side and in government side, that have the welfare of rural Manitoba at heart, that there are alternatives that can and should, in my judgment, be considered, alternatives that do several things.

First of all, make support to rural Manitoba, to farmers, to cereal grain crop producers, less attackable in the international market field. I am referring to the kind of pressures that ministers of Agriculture come under when they discuss the levelling of the playing field, when we discuss and we attack the subsidies paid by American farmers to their grain producers or by European farmers to their grain producers, and we try to take out these distortions that these kinds of subsidies put into the marketplace out of the sale of cereal grain. That is a serious consideration for Canada, because we are a junior player in that field, and we have paid the price.

Secondly, that kind of direction for a more equitable marketing structure is something that we cannot control just within our boundaries here in Manitoba. They are inevitable. They will come to us, and we are being signaled by people like Trade Minister Wilson and others that are engaged in these discussions, international discussions. I hold out to you in these few minutes, and want to put on the record, in a manner that is so compatible with today's concerns, environmental concerns. We talk about different kinds of green plans, green plans that apply to our natural landscape, green plans that should and could apply to rural Manitoba in the agricultural field, and we in Manitoba have a tremendous opportunity.

We have led in this field, initially in the minister's own backyard with a help program, for instance, which helped provide some dollars to set aside land in an environmentally friendly way, environmentally friendly to the landscape in terms of soil erosion, in terms of water erosion, in terms of wind erosion, in terms of, from my perspective, wildlife, you know, protection and the protection of habitat.

We have expanded that by moving into the North American Waterfowl Management program that now encompasses, I do not know how many, but a host of the southwestern part of the province's

municipalities that has targeted that internationally famous pothole country: Shoal Lake, Minnedosa, Virden and Killamey. We are putting into rural Manitoba and into farmers' hands upwards to \$8 million, \$9 million a year. What should be particularly attractive to this Assembly, we are doing that by putting up one of our dollars to every seven or eight dollars that we get from other sources. A lot of them come from our American friends.

I do not care where they come from, but they are doing two things, they are making our landscape more environmentally friendly, greener. They are doing things for our long-term soil problems. Again, as Minister of Natural Resources, they are helping to re-establish and maintain badly needed wildlife stocks.

I am suggesting to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), on his Minister's Salary, that we have a time frame over the next two years as we look at how we manage and the kind of pressures that we may get from the federal treasury with respect to their continued commitment to that \$6 billion of current agricultural subsidies, that we shift some of that—and I will be very candid with it, just as we had to be because of our budgetary situation. We were very candid with our VLT lottery funds. We made that commitment and everybody in this caucus and, I think, most Manitobans agree with it, that a bulk of that goes to reduce the No. 1 problem that we all face, budgetary problems, deficit reduction.

We have said, and kept our commitment that some of it will go to economic development in rural Manitoba. I was very pleased that the government that I am part of chose to transmit directly some of it to the legitimate concerns that the municipalities, local governments had and we are rebating and we are funding some of that for them to use in a relatively unconditional way.

I am suggesting to my colleague the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay)—but I take this occasion because it takes the kind of understanding and co-operation from members opposite to make this a policy that gets that kind of general acclaim. If and when that downsizing of the current level of agricultural subsidies takes place, that we transfer some of that, a good portion of it—if we took \$1 billion, \$2 billion of that, to Manitoba it would mean a \$100 million program that we could provide to farmers, to rural people in Manitoba to farm in an

environmentally more friendly way, zero till, delayed harvest of forage.

Programs that put cash money, just as we are doing in the North American Waterfowl program, \$10, \$15, \$20 an acre if need be on long-term leases that puts these kinds of monies back into rural Manitoba, that could do so much for our natural environment.

It is inconceivable to me that both the federal government or the provincial government would back away totally from that commitment to rural Manitoba that is currently there in outright subsidization of growing wheat, barley, and oats that is essentially the GRIP program as we know it.

That kind of subsidy is under constant and growing attack because of the international obligations that we are under. There are heads thinking that we ought to think about transferring some of those subsidies and pay them in a different way, in an environmental way under a green plan which then all of a sudden becomes acceptable, or at least not attackable by our international trading partners. The result would be the same as the farmers in the southwestern part of Manitoba are getting, there are still millions of dollars coming back into rural Manitoba.

So I leave those few comments on the record, because I think they are worthwhile pursuing, they are long-term objectives, but we are on some notice in the agricultural community, and I think the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) has not shied away from speaking about this himself, that there will come a day when the current agricultural support programs may not be in place. Just as he and the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) are currently debating the very real fact that the transportation subsidies currently in place are not there for all day, and we have to come to grips with how that will be changed. We do our farmers, we do our rural constituents, no favour if we simply refuse to accept new and innovative ways of doing it. What we want to do is to maximize those opportunities open to us when this change takes place.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Madam Chairperson: Is the committee ready for the question?

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chair, I would just like to ask the minister a couple of questions on his comments if that is okay at this point.

The minister outlined the people on his advisory committee, and earlier on the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) made several references to the Farmers Union. I wonder if the minister has representation from the Farmers Union on his committee, and if he has, who that person is. If he has not, why is that committee not represented on his advisory committee?

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chair, in terms of determining membership, Keystone Agricultural Producers has roughly 12,000 members in Manitoba. The Union of Manitoba Municipalities covers all of agricultural Manitoba. University of Manitoba has the Faculty of Agriculture which is "the" Faculty of Agriculture for the province of Manitoba.

She is talking about the National Farmers Union. They have about 565 members, so it is relatively small in membership. Everybody who is a National Farmers Union member has a clear opportunity to be a member of Keystone Agricultural Producers, and I would have to think many of them are. But Keystone is the general farm organization that represents all Manitoba farmers, and the membership is made up of farmers representing different commodity groups through KAP and Union of Manitoba Municipalities, University of Manitoba Faculty of Agriculture, and that is the representation. She says why not National Farmers Union? Two reasons: very small membership; secondly, they have equal opportunity with every other farmer to be members of Keystone Agricultural Producers.

* (1620)

Ms. Wowchuk: I find that interesting because there are farmers who choose not to—the minister says they have the opportunity to belong to Keystone Agricultural Producers, but they choose not to be the members of that organization. I guess my feeling is that if we want to hear the views of all producers and people who have varying opinions, I would think that the minister would want people from all views on his advisory committee. That is what I was looking at to see whether there was, and if there was not, why? The minister has given his answer. I think on an advisory committee it would be useful to have broader representation, people who may have different views, to get a broader representation of all farmers.

Mr. Findlay: For the member's information, I will tell her that I have met with National Farmers Union. About once a year they request a meeting. We meet.

We talk about many issues. Clearly, the transportation issue is obviously on the agenda every time.

Last November, a discussion document was agreed to at a meeting in Toronto of all ministers of agriculture. I brought that discussion paper back and I invited in a broad cross-section of farm organizations. I would say there were 40 people in the room when I explained the document that had been synthesized at the ministers of agriculture meeting.

The National Farmers Union was invited along with every farm organization, whether they were in grain or they were not in grain, to be at that meeting and to have an understanding of the discussion document. I asked them all to comment on it, to give me input on the discussion paper and they did. So they have been involved in a variety of ways, the National Farmers Union along with many other farm organizations, in an ongoing process.

So I reflect, we listen, we listen, we listen. I think Manitoba is well positioned in understanding the issue to deal with challenges that we have faced and obviously we are going to face on that issue in the months ahead.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, I only have one more question on this. The minister talked about the barley committee and the vote being 11 to 19, that the majority did vote in favour of the report, but will the minister admit that there were people on that committee who spoke publicly about their dissatisfaction of the way the committee operated?

I was at a meeting where I heard people say that they did not believe that the report reflected their views and they did not believe that the process of the committee reflected their views. I am not sure whether it was the 11 that voted in favour of the report or those who chose to vote against it, but is the minister aware that those people who were on the committee were not happy with the process and that it did not reflect their views and in some cases they did not have real opportunity to have input into the committee?

Mr. Findlay: I was not present at the committee meeting, so I can only comment on what I have been told. I have been told that of the 19 people, the 11 that I referred to and the others that she refers to, all 19 people had one or two meetings. They decided they wanted to hire a consultant. They put out a proposal call. Everybody, the 19 members were

there when they determined the terms of reference for that study that was to be done.

They all agreed that Dr. Carter was the person to do the study. They were all asked to give input, information for him to use. Then he put out the report. That is my understanding of the process and I do not think she is fully right in saying the other people did not have their chance for input.

They were part of the process to establish the terms of reference. They were there as part of the process to determine the successful consultant to be used and they had opportunity to feed information into that consultant. That is my understanding and yes, they disagreed with the end result.

They were very clearly there at the front of the process and at the end, five or six groups said they did not want to be associated with it and 11 said, as I reflected, they concurred with the process, they agreed to the conclusions and now we are getting all kinds of analyses of reports by opposite sides.

I said to her the other day, I have nervousness about assumptions and conclusions because I do not think they are as definitive as each study would have them be. To say where the black and the white is in this whole issue is very difficult, but constant reflection on my behalf is, what process gives the farmer the best return at the farm gate and maximizes their access to markets. It is clearly the only principle I will make decisions on and this issue—I want all farmers to have a chance to understand that.

The Wheat Board has indicated that they are going to make a greater effort to have farmers understand the marketing process that the Wheat Board is involved in, and I think that is crucial because I do not think farmers have understood over the years how the Wheat Board has functioned and operated, and I think farmers have a right to know that so that they have the level of confidence they need in their marketing agency.

Ms. Wowchuk: I was just making the point of what I had heard at the press conference where there were groups who were not happy with the process. There are people who have disassociated themselves from the report right now.

The minister said his goal is to get the best return at the farm gate, and I hope that by working together and by working with farmers, we can come up with some way that we will see a better return for farmers

and more prosperity in the rural communities than we have seen over the last few years.

Madam Chairperson: Is the committee ready for the question? The question before the committee is should the Minister's Salary be reduced to \$10,300.

All those in favour of the question, please say *yea*.

Some Honourable Members: *Yea*.

Madam Chairperson: All those opposed, please say *nay*.

Some Honourable Members: *Nay*.

Madam Chairperson: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

Ms. Wowchuk: Yeas and Nays, Madam Chairperson.

Madam Chairperson: A formal vote has been requested.

Call in the members.

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. The question before committee is the motion of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) that the Minister's Salary be reduced to \$10,300.

A COUNTED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas 18, Nays 30.

Madam Chairperson: The motion is accordingly defeated.

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

An Honourable Member: On division.

Madam Chairperson: On division.

Item 1.(a) is accordingly passed.

Resolution 3.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,818,300 for Agriculture, Administration and Finance, for the

fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1994—pass.

This concludes the Estimates for the Department of Agriculture.

Mr. Manness: Let us call in the Speaker, Madam Chair. I would like to make an announcement at that time. Then there might be a willingness, I suppose, to call it six o'clock.

Madam Chairperson: Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Committee Report

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairperson of Committees): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted a certain resolution, directs me to report the same 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.

House Business

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make an announcement dealing with House business for next Tuesday. I would ask leave of the House that we sit Monday hours on Tuesday so that indeed Estimates would be considered at 8 p.m. in the evening.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to consider next Tuesday as a Monday, Monday sitting hours? [agreed]

Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock? [agreed]

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Friday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 20, 1993

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