



Fifth Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(Hansard)

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	NDP
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	Liberal
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	NDP
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
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Liberal
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Liberal
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	NDP
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	PC
MACKINTOSH, Gord	St. Johns	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	NDP
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	PC
McCORMICK, Norma	Osborne	Liberal
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	PC
ORCHARD, Donald, Hon.	Pembina	PC
PALLISTER, Brian	Portage la Prairie	PC
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	PC
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	NDP
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
REID, Daryl	Transcona	NDP
REIMER, Jack	Niakwa	PC
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	PC
ROBINSON, Eric	Rupertsland	NDP
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ROSE, Bob	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	NDP
SCHELLENBERG, Harry	Rossmere	NDP
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	NDP
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	PC
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	PC
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	NDP

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, May 30, 1994

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

The Misericordia General Hospital Incorporation Act

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau). 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?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

The Petition of Misericordia General Hospital praying for the passing of an act to amend The Misericordia General Hospital Incorporation Act to permit the admission of persons as members of the corporation pursuant to its by-laws and to extend the authority of the executive committee of the directors of the corporation.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the First Quarter 1994 Report for the Manitoba Telephone System.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table Supplementary Information for Legislative Review for the 1994-95 Departmental Expenditure Estimates for the Department of Northern Affairs, the Manitoba Civil Service Commission and the Manitoba Employee Benefits and Other Payments.

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 Windsor Park Collegiate fifty Grade 9 students under the direction of Mrs. Sisco and Mrs. Karen Haluschak. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer).

Then, from the Constable Edward Finney School, we have fifty Grade 5 students under the direction of Ms. Lorraine Garnett. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Bristol Aerospace Limited Employment Statistics

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

The CF-5 was awarded to Manitoba in 1988, and the commitment from the federal government initially called for 56 planes to be retrofitted here in Manitoba. In the 1991 budget that was reduced to 46 planes; in the 1994 federal budget it was reduced to 36 planes.

There has already been a reduction of a hundred employees working at Bristol, and there is a great deal of concern at the plant and with people we talk to about the status of employment at the Bristol operation.

I would like to ask the Premier, what is the employment forecast for the Bristol operation relative to the work from the federal government and other work they may obtain?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is quite right in that defence cuts in general that are being made by the federal Liberal government and specific defence cuts with respect to the EH-101 and the CF-5 overhaul will dramatically affect firms in

Manitoba. The EH-101 probably involved a reduction of about 450 jobs that would have resulted from some \$360 million worth of work that would have been done in Manitoba under that program.

The CF-5 reductions ultimately, I believe, will result in probably more than 200 additional layoffs in Manitoba in the long term. These are very regrettable situations for Manitoba because I know that oftentimes for the last number of years I heard Liberal members in this House, including one who is now in Ottawa, make speeches about what a tragedy it was that our engineering and technical graduates could not find jobs in Manitoba, but this is direct impact and direct result of decisions from the new Liberal government that will in fact result in hundreds of jobs being lost for engineers and technical people in Manitoba.

*(1335)

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, there is quite a bit of concern at the plant about their immediate employment situation. On February 26, the Premier indicated there would be 400 jobs potentially lost at Bristol. The Premier is now saying it is down to 200 jobs. Word at the plant is that those jobs will be lost at the end of 1994.

The Premier used the term, in the longer term. I would like to know when the Premier expects the reductions to take place at the plant and whether we can confirm it—it is down from a projected 400 to 200 which is moving in the right direction—and whether there is any alternative work for the workers at that plant with alternative contracts that could be made available for keeping that workforce at the plant.

As I say, we have lost about a hundred people in the last five months, and it is crucial we keep people in that aerospace industry working here in Manitoba.

Mr. Filmon: My understanding is that the reductions that are attributable specifically to the CF-5 cutback are something in the range of 200 to 250 jobs, but that overall with some other reductions that are taking place as a result of just reduced defence spending in general in which Bristol would be a contractor in many cases, the

number of 400 will probably be met in the longer term.

Aerospace Industry Employment Creation Strategy

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): That will mean close to a 33 percent reduction in the workforce from November of 1993 to December of 1994, which is a massive decline in high-tech, high-paid skilled jobs in the province of Manitoba, with the Premier's numbers here today.

Are there any alternatives that the minister or the Premier (Mr. Filmon) is seeking with the federal government, alternative contracts, alternative work in either the private sector or in the public sector that will allow this workforce to be stabilized and to allow us to prevent these layoffs and reductions in the workforce?

Is there any work and discussion with the federal government and the federal minister, whom I know is also interested in keeping people working here in Manitoba? Can the Premier indicate what alternatives are available through the federal lead minister to keep this very, very important industry from losing one-third of its workforce in 14 months?

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, this government is extremely concerned about the federal Liberal decision to reduce the military expenditures in the aerospace industry. They were contacted when the initial announcement was made, and there have been discussions going on with departmental staff.

We have been working with the other aerospace people, as well, to try to shift to less dependency on the military activity, as has been in the past. There are programs in place that are working with all the aerospace industry in Manitoba, because it is extremely important to this province, and we will endeavour to do whatever we can to assure the jobs that are there and to offer new opportunities as it relates to that industry.

Health Sciences Centre Staff Reductions

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, from the very beginning of the government's so-called health reform, we have said that it is really more an exercise in slashing and cutting. We have now learned that at the Health Sciences Centre before the end of the year, 300 employees will be eligible for retirement and, quote: These people will be part of the government-required staff reductions necessary to reach budget requirements.

How does the minister reconcile these additional staff cuts at Health Sciences Centre with his new feel-good policy pronounced as recently as last week, when he said that it is a new feel-good approach to health care and we are not measuring the value of our system by the number of dollars that go into it?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, if that is the wording used, I would want to take that up with Hansard, because I think what I said was, what we have is a phased approach to the reform, to the renewal of our health care system, which I think is far superior to the one being advocated by the honourable member and his colleagues, which is the same approach being used in Ontario, the same approach being used in Saskatchewan and the one being used in B.C., which is hack and slash and burn and do not even bother to ask questions.

* (1340)

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, in light of that, can the minister explain why, in a letter to staff, the president of the Health Sciences Centre said, and I quote: I would suggest that it is clear to everyone that the major thrust of this exercise has been financial. Financial targets were set for us, and these were distributed amongst the teams with the bottom-line review being related to measuring our achievement against these dollar goals.

How does the minister explain that and those comments from the president of the Health Sciences Centre?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member has the same kind of access to the president of the Health Sciences Centre as I do. He can ask that question of the president of the Health Sciences Centre. The letter, or whatever it was the honourable member referred to, did discuss a bottom line, and the bottom line for this government is patient care at hospitals. I have said that many times and that remains the bottom line of this government. We will not accept any recommendation or any change that would have a negative impact on patient care in our hospitals.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, how can the minister explain this same letter? The president is saying: the anger and frustration generated, the likes of which I have never witnessed in my experience.

How can the minister explain his comments that they are not going to affect patient care when everyone knows in the system that patient care is affected and will be further affected by the government's plan to further cut staff and budgets at the hospitals?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, if there is anger and frustration, it is at the expressed support for renewal of our health system by honourable members opposite and then continuous badgering at every step of the way in our attempts to renew a sustainable and quality health care system.

The honourable member refers to documents I do not have in front of me. I can look at them, and that would be interesting to do.

I tell you, Mr. Speaker, as I said a few minutes ago, this government will not accept recommendations from Health Sciences Centre, or anywhere else, that would have a negative impact on patient care.

Economic Growth Government Forecast

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, on April 19, a little over a month ago and the day before the Finance minister tabled his budget in this House, I asked the Minister of Finance what assurances he could give Manitobans that he might actually accurately predict the rate of growth in this province, having

overestimated the rate of growth in the last five years.

The minister's answer, in part, stated when he was speaking about his, he claimed, very accurate projections and deficit projections and rate of growth, quote, I have had the opportunity to speak with the bond rating agencies, to speak with the underwriters, and I can tell you in this House, Mr. Speaker, that they highly regard the Province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, on Friday, the Canadian Bond Rating service downgraded both the guaranteed debenture and short-term credit rating of this province. This province was one of two of the six that they had assessed which was downgraded.

My question for the Minister of Finance: When did he last speak to the Canadian Bond Rating Agency? A month ago? Were they, in fact, highly regarding of this Minister of Finance, and what has changed?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Liberal Party for that question because, I think, as he knows, there are four traditional bond rating agencies, Standard and Poor's and Moody's, who some suggest are the more reputable and credible in some respects, but there is also the Dominion Bond Rating Service and the Canadian Bond Rating service.

Standard and Poor's and Moody's, I met with back in the beginning of March, Mr. Speaker, and they do speak very highly of the Province of Manitoba. We, throughout our term in office, have not been downgraded by Standard and Poor's and Moody's.

I do want to refer to the downgrading that occurred on Friday from the Canadian Bond Rating service because we, last week, received a briefing and notification from them that they were looking to downgrade us. That was without any inquiry of us, without any meeting with any of our staff, without any discussions whatsoever with our government.

I had a meeting with my senior officials, directed them to contact the agency on Friday morning, which they did at 10 a.m. They offered to provide additional information because there were

some inaccuracies in the draft report, offered to fly down and meet with the Canadian Bond Rating Agency. That offer was refused, Mr. Speaker, because they apparently had already made up their minds in terms of this particular issue, so they did not accept that. They indicated to us that they would be releasing their report and the results of it a week Friday, which is the upcoming Friday.

* (1345)

Throughout this whole process, obviously, I have some great deal of concern about the approach and what I consider unprofessional approach of the Canadian Bond Rating service, but overall, the true test, I want to conclude, of Manitoba's creditworthiness and what we have to pay for borrowing and so on is the public themselves. We continue to have no problem borrowing capital, and we continue to borrow at interest rates that are significantly below provinces that are rated higher than us, provinces like Ontario and Quebec.

So the true test—and we spoke with underwriters this morning, and they say Manitoba's product continues to trade well, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Edwards: It is very interesting, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance is now—it is like a moving target, this true test, because in the budget and in all the speeches, he points to one of the bond rating agencies as the great sign that we are doing okay. He picks one of the four that happens at that particular time to be looking favourably on us, but his true test is a moving target.

Now, Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question for the Minister of Finance: In the press release issued by the Canadian Bond Rating service, they specifically talk about the very high level of debt which this province is carrying, and they also talk about the rate of growth in the province, rate of economic growth.

My question is for the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker. He talks about inaccuracies. How can he assure those four bond rating agencies and the people of this province that his projection of rate of growth in this province might be accurate for the first time in six years? Why not only has he been

wrong in the last five years, but he has always overestimated growth? Perhaps that is why his credibility is lacking with the bond rating agencies.

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, as usual, the Leader of the Liberal Party stretches the truth to its absolute limits.

In terms of the positioning of Manitoba, what the Canadian Bond Rating service has done is they have downgraded us to the same level as the Dominion Bond Rating Service in Canada. They have downgraded us to the same level as the province of New Brunswick, and Manitoba from all four bond rating agencies is either ranked fourth or fifth best in all of Canada.

He refers to the report and the press release referring to economic growth, but when he has the opportunity to see the detailed report he will note that the two areas of greatest concern are the areas of transfer payments from Ottawa—and we know the position that is taken by the federal Liberal government when Mr. Martin talks about massive reductions in federal transfer payments—and it talks about the weakening of the Canadian dollar, and we see what has happened to the Canadian dollar since the federal Liberals were elected in Ottawa.

So the best thing he could do if he was genuinely interested in the good of Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, would be to talk to some of his federal colleagues.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Edwards: I touched a bit of a raw nerve over here, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the bond rating agencies have been the great predictors for this government, and now they are turning against the government after six years of inaccuracies.

My question for the Minister of Finance: The other agencies over time, of course, as time goes on, will be reviewing Manitoba's credit rating. He mentions Moody's. He mentions Standard and Poor's. He mentions the Dominion Bond Rating Service.

What assurances can he give the province, the members of this Legislature that, in fact, those three agencies are not going to do the same thing?

Is there any assurance? Is he going to be taking another trip to New York as he and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) did last year to try and shore up prospects for this province? What meetings has he had with the other bond rating agencies to ensure that they do not feel exactly the same as this bond rating agency which says, rating outlook, negative, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the Leader of the Liberal Party that bond rating agencies are not turning against the Province of Manitoba. I have confidence that, when the other bond rating agencies do their review which they do in conjunction with us—which, I believe, is the professional and appropriate thing to do—they will look at the statistics. They will look at, over the last six years, that the province with the lowest percentage of its deficit as a percentage of its gross domestic product in all of Canada is the province of Manitoba. Per capita deficits on an annual basis, Manitoba is consistently from the second to fourth lowest in all of Canada.

When you look at issues like that, when you look at the percentage of revenue that goes to service debt, only one province is used as a lower percentage than Manitoba to service debt, the province of British Columbia.

So when you look at what the facts are, Mr. Speaker, and you do the due diligence in terms of how Manitoba is positioned, particularly relative to every other province in Canada, I have the utmost confidence that those bond rating agencies will see all the good work that is being done here in Manitoba. It will be reflected in their assessment, unlike the cursory review that is being done by the Leader of the Liberal Party, not unlike the review done by the Canadian Bond Rating Agency.

* (1350)

Hog Industry Environmental Concerns

Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, three weeks ago, the LGD of Armstrong rescinded their previous resolution to support the proposed multihog operation in Chatfield. One of their main concerns and the concerns of the citizens in the community and in the Interlake is water quality.

Their concerns are that the size of this operation with the high capacity of water needed and used will seriously affect the water supply and quality in the area for the future.

My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. Has the minister, who has received a request from the community, instructed his department to review the magnitude of water needed and how this will affect the water supply in the area before approving any permits or licences for use?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, I think the member might or might not be aware that just two and a half, three weeks ago, this government—the Department of Agriculture, together with the Department of Rural Development, the Department of Environment and my department—came forward with regulations that are going to dictate how livestock operations are going to be run, and those regulations also deal with the quality of water and how you dispose of livestock waste.

The regulations, we have passed them. They are in effect. Municipalities have been notified, and that should address the concerns not only of the LGD of Armstrong, but of all municipalities.

Mr. Clif Evans: Mr. Speaker, I asked the minister about whether he has reviewed the use, the potential use, not the draft that they have proposed, which is only a draft.

This large operation, Mr. Speaker, lies in a very sensitive hydrogeological environment, and it has been recommended by this advisory board that this site not be considered due to serious potential runoff that will offset the quality of water.

Will the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) request his Minister of Environment to review this recommendation and do an impact study to assure the citizens and the communities that the future of rivers and the lake will be safe?

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, I can only repeat again that it is not proposed regulations. It is regulations that are in place that have been approved by the government. They are in place,

and they will be regulating how livestock operations operate. Till the present time when The Environment Act was passed, it excluded livestock operations because of the many concerns that were raised by municipalities, which had the authority to approve or disapprove any permits for hog operations or other livestock operations. There was pressure coming down on them to make decisions on these things. They were caught betwixt and between, and very often they tried to pass the responsibility onto the government to some degree, the various departments.

It is for that reason that this government decided that regulations should be brought forward, not proposed regulations, regulations that are in place right now, and municipalities should know that. If the member would avail himself and talk to the municipalities that have all received these regulations, he could see that his issue is dealt with.

Mr. Clif Evans: Mr. Speaker, again, people are concerned about the water quality and the future of the water for the Icelandic River, the Lake Winnipeg area, for the communities that these operations and the sties are around.

Will the First Minister request his Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) to initiate a complete environmental audit in this area, including the input of livestock producers, fishermen and concerned citizens?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the member has already been told that this government has brought in a new set of regulations, a set of regulations that did not exist before, for the evaluation of this type of operation so that all of the concerns with respect to water supply, with respect to sewage treatment, with respect to all of the potential for contamination, are being looked after by this new set of regulations.

They are one of the most comprehensive sets of regulations that has ever been put forward. We did it after considerable consultation, and it will address the problem.

* (1355)

Hog Industry Environmental Concerns

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, the health of rural communities does depend on the attraction of new industries that will diversify our economy. As the member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans) raised, there is the whole issue of the hog industry.

Mr. Speaker, as we move from smaller farm operations to large operations, government must provide leadership to achieve a balance between environment and economic interest.

My question to the minister: Has he asked his department to do an analysis of the size of operations, particularly large operations, as they relate to their sustainability and the growth of the rural community, and what is the comparison of these large operations to small operations in job creation?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, let me make it very clear to the honourable member and indeed to members of the House, we are talking about the possibility of creating between 8,000 and 9,000 jobs in the province of Manitoba over the next four or five years. The hog industry currently employs some 12,000 Manitobans and all reasons, international trade obligations, proposed changes to our feed grain policy à la the Crow benefit, mean that we have a golden opportunity to take advantage of this.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I do not know how many thousand tanks, underground storage facilities, we have in this province containing millions upon millions of litres of gasoline and diesel fuel. We manage to do that safely. We have environment protection to ensure that. That is why every operator that operates a facility has to dip his tank on a daily basis. Surely we can manage a much less toxic product like animal waste, which in many cases is a golden resource as a fertilizer, in a manner that is environmentally acceptable.

The regulations that my colleague has referred to, the regulations that my Premier (Mr. Filmon) has referred to are now in place. They were not in place a month ago, and these give us the assurance

that we can, with confidence, look at this expansion in the hog industry.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, it was a simple question as to whether there was an analysis done, whether bigger is better.

Since we believe that the rural economy will benefit more from supporting smaller operations involving more people and will have less effect on water tables and on water pollution, I want to ask the government whether they will look at restricting the size of hog regulations to limit the pollution, potential conflicts and problems on water table and pollution of water.

Will the government look at whether or not this is a viable way to go?

Mr. Enns: Mr. Speaker, I have no problems with trying to determine the size of the operations. We will have large-, small- and medium-sized ones. There is a new development, the biotech barns that do not involve liquid manure at all, but are in loose housing barns. They will be of a smaller to medium-sized operation. We are encouraging that, but we are talking about competing in a global market.

We are talking, by the way, of competing with the very pleasant country of Denmark, which is a very pleasant community to visit, environmentally speaking. I think you can take all of Denmark and drop it into Lake Winnipeg and there would still be water around the edges. That little country produces more hogs than all of Canada—22 million hogs, and they do it in an environmentally acceptable way. That is the kind of competition that our market faces, and we will have to have the very best of facilities to enable us to produce that production.

Ms. Wowchuk: I am glad the minister raised the issue of Denmark, because Denmark does raise a lot of hogs and I want to ask this government if they will bring in as good regulations as they have in Denmark so we do not have to worry about pollution and that we have a supply of water that is not contaminated.

Mr. Enns: Mr. Speaker, I do acknowledge that we have just begun the Estimates of the Department of

Agriculture. I have not had the opportunity of personally presenting her with the new set of regulations, which are as the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) has indicated, among the best, not just in Canada but in the world. They specifically secure the safe production of hogs. They specifically refer to the concerns about ground water. They specifically refer to the handling of the by-product of manure.

Furthermore, we have, of course, the Farm Practices Board in place that, if an operator is not in compliance with these regulations, that operation can be shut down or severely fined or told that they have X number of days to change their method of production.

* (1400)

Municipal Social Assistance Regulations

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, last week in Family Services Estimates, I asked the Minister of Family Services if she agreed that people on social assistance should do volunteer work. The minister replied that she wholeheartedly agreed and gave some very good reasons as to the benefits of volunteering for these individuals, whether they are on municipal or provincial social assistance.

Regrettably the Town of Beausejour has terminated assistance for Les Landry due to his volunteer work on behalf of the Citizens Coalition on Gambling Directions. His appeal to the provincial appeal committee was dismissed.

I would like to ask the minister if she has reviewed the merits of this case and whether she is willing to intervene and to allow him to do volunteer work and not disallow his benefits as a result.

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, indeed, I was not informed of that ruling. I can certainly take a look into the matter and take that question under advisement.

I will reiterate, as a result of the conversation that we had in Estimates last week, that I think most people in Manitoba do feel much better about

themselves if they do have an opportunity to contribute in a positive manner to Manitoba's society.

Mr. Martindale: Can the minister tell us if she is concerned about municipalities recommending to individuals, as they did to Mr. Landry, that they relocate to a larger centre, since an overwhelmingly large number of municipal assistance cases are already a caseload of the City of Winnipeg? Is she concerned about the tax burden to the city of Winnipeg ratepayers, and has she communicated any concern on this to rural municipalities and towns?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, I thank my honourable friend for that question because it was just last year that we implemented a one-tier system of social assistance so that all municipalities indeed had to pay the same rates. So we are in support of ensuring that all municipalities accept their fair share of responsibility for municipal assistance.

Social Safety Net Reform Impact on Social Assistance

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Has the Minister of Family Services communicated her concern to the federal government about their so-called social policy reform, which in their budget of this year eliminated a number of reasons for being on unemployment insurance, the result of which is that 40,000 people are no longer eligible for UI, and the cost to Manitoba, according to this minister, is an additional \$2 million in social assistance expense? Has the minister communicated to the federal minister, and can she tell us what she said?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, we are interested in what total social safety net reform does mean and does mean to the federal government. I think we discussed at great length last week the issue around ensuring that the process is a process of true reform at the federal level and that it is not just going to be offloading onto the provinces responsibility that the federal government had in the past.

We are monitoring very closely. As I indicated last week quite clearly, we are waiting to see the federal government's vision of social safety net reform so that we have some understanding and some idea of what direction they are going to take so that we can respond.

Hog Industry Environmental Concerns

Ms. Norma McCormick (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture.

Yesterday we learned more about the continuing problems with hog operations in Manitoba's Interlake. Hog manure is being pumped into ditches. This presents a danger to other livestock operations as well as to surrounding residents. [interjection]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Agriculture is attempting to listen to the question, if nobody else is.

The honourable member for Osborne, with your question, please.

Ms. McCormick: The first two complaints concerning this dumping into ditches was not acted upon. The Department of Environment finally investigated a third and wrote letters confirming the validity of the dumping, when a complaint was made.

I would like to table these letters. They confirm that the Department of Environment and the hog operations involved knew there was a problem with the design and operation of the waste handling systems.

Can the Minister of Agriculture tell this House why the company has never been charged under The Environment Act regulations?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, as has already been indicated, specific regulations, that is, regulations that carry the weight of law, have just been promulgated by this government a short month ago. There were in place guidelines and suggestions, and it was deemed by myself as Minister of Agriculture, and by this government, that that was not good enough,

that there ought to be very specific regulations dealing with these matters. Those are now in place.

I will take the specific question from the honourable member as notice, but it may well have been, and I just want to make that very plain, that if these offences took place six months ago, a year ago, that they may well have not been covered by the regulations that at that point in time were yet not in place.

Ms. McCormick: Mr. Speaker, the contravention was of Section 3 Part 1 of the livestock production operations act, which was in force at this time. Since then, the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) has had the opportunity to see a videotape of dumping of untreated hog sewage.

Did the Minister of Environment bring this video to the attention of the Ministers of Agriculture, Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) and Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger)?

Mr. Enns: Mr. Speaker, I will not accept any of the premises indicated by the honourable member. I will certainly take the question as notice on behalf of the Minister of Environment.

Yet again, let me clearly state the changed circumstances. A future complaint of this kind now has an official board to appear before, namely, the Farm Practices Board, who have as their guideline and for their direction specific regulations for which to make judgments on. That board, quite frankly, as I have stated on several occasions, has the authority, as a quasi-judicial board, to impose very immediate and drastic restrictions on an operator that is not in compliance with the regulations. It can shut down the operator. It can fine the operator, or it can cause him to cease operations until the facility is modified in such a manner that the operation would be in compliance with the new regulation. I think that it should be understood that these regulations are only now coming into effect.

Ms. McCormick: A final question to the Minister of Agriculture: Can the minister confirm then that appropriate resources will be in place to enforce the regulations which are in fact being developed?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Acting Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, as Acting Minister of Environment, I would say to the member for Osborne that she should be well aware that in enforcement of any regulations or legislation, obviously, discussions take place.

The member should be well aware that just herself, in terms of occupational safety and health, that she contacted Workplace Safety and Health on at least two occasions asking that orders be extended or negotiations take place to deal with particular matters, for there to be some time for that to be properly implemented.

So I will take her question as notice on behalf of the minister.

Point of Order

Ms. McCormick: I would ask this minister to place before the record some documentation which indicates that I have ever asked for an extension of a Workplace Safety and Health order.

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

Judicial System—The Pas Staffing Reductions

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for The Pas has great difficulty in standing up with his broken ankle. We all know that.

Now, the honourable member for The Pas, who has the floor.

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Mr. Speaker, my questions are directed to the Minister of Justice.

We have been listening to this minister for the past few weeks giving big speeches and refusing to answer our questions and our attempts to get her to table a plan of action or a position on young offenders and the huge backlog in the court system.

I would like to ask the minister if she could explain to this House why she is now cutting one of the six employees at The Pas correctional court which is, by the way, the fourth busiest regional court in the province.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I totally reject everything in the preamble the member said. I have put forward for Manitobans a very complete plan. In fact, we have gone beyond the plan, and as the throne speech indicated, we will be introducing legislation to amend The Highway Traffic Act. We are looking at a gun amnesty.

So the member is absolutely wrong. The people of Manitoba know he is wrong, and they know that, in fact, we have put forward a plan and also a plan for the Young Offenders Act which we have not heard yet from the members opposite.

In terms of very specific staffing issues, the member knows we will be beginning the Estimates of the Department of Justice this afternoon, and I will be glad to discuss in detail the issues relating to corrections.

* (1410)

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Speaker, unlike those judges, this employee who is being laid off this Friday will not be sharing the one-million-dollar program with other laid-off employees.

In view of the serious backlog in the system, Mr. Speaker, will this minister immediately put the cut on hold and not lay off the employee this Friday as she has planned?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, again, I would like to deal with the issue of any backlogs which the member continues to speak about. We are certainly doing far better than the NDP did when they were in government. They had backlogs of 10 months and did not even want to talk about it.

We are dealing with due process, and we are dealing in our courts. The two courts that provide us with concern are the Domestic Violence Court, and in that court we are down to a period of approximately four and a half months, approximately five months. In the youth court, we have continued to reduce any backlog, but we recognize that there is certainly a requirement for due process.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Speaker, given that this employee apparently does the filing and computer entry of over 90 percent of common offence

notices, will the minister take into consideration the fact that northerners also need to access a justice system that works, the horrendous backlog in the system and the jobless rate of northern Manitoba? Will the minister reconsider her decision and put the layoff on hold?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, the theatrics in the words are absolutely amazing to me.

The member should know, and let me also reassure Manitobans who are listening, of our commitment to a justice system across Manitoba, and that includes northern Manitoba. It also includes all other parts of Manitoba.

As we look at the staffing requirements across Manitoba, especially with some of the changed improvements which we are introducing, then we will have to look at what our needs are and whether or not those needs have changed.

Crisis Shelters Allowable Stay

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, in the Pedlar report tabled in the House in August 1991, one of the recommendations is that Manitoba Family Services and income security increased the initial allowable stay for a woman at a shelter to 30 days from the current 10 days.

I would like to ask the Minister of Family Services to explain to the House today why that recommendation has not been acted upon.

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, indeed, we had the opportunity to discuss that last week during my Estimates. I indicated that the length of time of stay is 10 days, but if indeed a woman needs protection for a longer period of time because supports are not in place outside of the shelter system, that that extension is given automatically. In some cases, 30 days is not long enough. In those cases, we provide the opportunity for that woman to stay until there is assurance that she will be protected as she moves out into the community.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

NONPOLITICAL STATEMENTS

Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses Awards

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): I wonder if I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable First Minister have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring the congratulations of this Assembly to a number of individuals who were honoured at the awards luncheon of the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses last Friday.

These four nurses were given professional excellence awards in nursing. They are, firstly: Anne Russell, who received the professional nursing award of excellence in the clinical category. She is a nurse at the Health Sciences Centre, an HIV clinical nurse at the Health Sciences Centre; secondly, Marilynne Hogg, who received the professional nursing award of excellence in the education category. She has been the course leader at the University of Manitoba collaborative baccalaureate program proposal in Health Sciences. The third individual, Lois McMurchy, received the professional nursing award of excellence in the category of administration. She is the director of patient resident services at The Pas Health Complex. Fourthly, Sue Hicks, who received from the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses, the outstanding achievement award. Ms. Hicks is the Assistant Deputy Minister of Community and Mental Health Services for Manitoba Health.

We are very pleased to join along with their peers and colleagues in congratulating each one of these worthy recipients.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable Leader of the official opposition have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): I would like to join with the Premier in recognition of the awards that were granted last week at the MARN Convention: Anne Russell, Marilynne Hogg, Lois McMurchy and Sue Hicks. We want to

congratulate all four individuals for the awards that they received.

We on this side had the opportunity to attend parts of the convention and were very impressed with the—not only at the convention but before the convention we were very impressed with the proposals the MARN organization was making on behalf of making our Manitoba health care system a better system. We were very impressed with some of their ideas, some of their thoughts, some of the ways in which we can enhance the role of nurses to be both cost-effective and health-effective in our Manitoba communities.

We believe that MARN and MONA—or the Nurses' Union and a lot of other nurses throughout our communities have a lot of good ideas and a lot of outstanding members providing service to Manitobans. They have been going through a pretty tough time lately, and we want to congratulate the four recipients and the whole MARN organization and nurses and nursing profession in general on the tremendous job they do on behalf of all of us every day of the week, every day of the year, and want to add those words to the Premier's here this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable Leader of the second opposition party have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Liberal Party I want to join with the comments of the Leader of the Opposition as well as the Premier in recognizing the enormous contribution that nurses generally make in this province but also singling out this year the four recipients of the Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses awards.

I was privileged to be at the awards luncheon last week, Mr. Speaker, and want to personally add our congratulations to Ms. Russell, Ms. Hogg, Ms. McMurchy and Ms. Hicks for receiving those awards.

I want to just add, in addition to joining with the comments of the other two earlier speakers, I had the chance to speak to at least two of those recipients prior to the lunch. What struck me was that they were very clear and very quick to point

out that they felt this award could have gone to many, many others in addition to themselves. They felt that it was the result of many who had worked on the teams and the things that they had been involved in.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that perhaps exemplifies, in the truest sense, the nursing profession, working as a team, as a partner in an overall cause. These individuals were, of course, very grateful for the award but also were very humble in their acceptance of it, recognizing that it was a larger contribution and a larger effort which had led to the achievements made.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, we all in this House I think recognize the very, very substantial and continuing contribution that nurses make to our society in so many ways and in particular to our health care system. We have differences amongst the parties about what role certain sectors of the health care sector should play and the extent of that role, but there is no disagreement in this House over the extensive contribution that all nurses make in this province. This is an appropriate time, I think, to put that on the record. We all, in all parties, look forward to an increasing role being played by nurses as we search to have this health care system not only survive but be enhanced for the benefit of our citizens.

* (1420)

Aga Khan Foundation Partnership Walk

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

Ms. Norma McCormick (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, yesterday at The Forks the Aga Khan Foundation sponsored its 10th annual Partnership Walk. In excess of \$30,000 was raised in support of the development of self-employment initiatives in the Third World.

Mr. Speaker, women perform 66 percent of the world's labour but receive only 10 percent of the income generated by their efforts. Women produce 50 percent of the world's food but own only 1 percent of the world's property.

I would ask other members in joining me in congratulating the Aga Khan Foundation, the local organizers and its volunteers, and the walkers who participated in this event.

Committee Changes

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: the member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) for the member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings); the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson) for the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns).

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs).

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

House Business

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, House leaders have again discussed adjustments to the Estimates. I am sorry, my voice is a little difficult. Would you please canvass the House to determine if there is unanimous consent for the following: (1) to set aside the Estimates of the Departments of Industry, Trade and Tourism, and Environment; (2) on completion of the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training, to resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture; and (3) to resume consideration of the Estimates set aside in the order mentioned on completion of the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture?

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave to set aside the Estimates of the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism and the Department of Environment? Is there leave to set that aside?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): For clarification, no, I was under

the impression that we would be dealing with Education, and then it was going to be followed either by Industry and Trade, but it was not going to be Agriculture.

Mr. Speaker: I believe that is the third leave that he is requesting, that after the completion of Estimates—

Mr. Ernst: Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, a couple of minutes recess might resolve this issue, if I could meet with the other two House leaders.

Mr. Speaker: We do not have to recess. I will ask the three House leaders just to meet on the side, and we will just look at each other.

Mr. Ernst: Mr. Speaker, we have again discussed adjustments to the Estimates sequence. Would you please canvass the House to determine if there is unanimous consent for the following: to set aside the Estimates of the Departments of Industry, Trade and Tourism and Environment on completion of the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training, to resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture, such consideration not to occur before 9:15 p.m. this evening and leave be granted should they wish to start after 10 p.m. and, three, to resume consideration of the Estimates set aside in the order mentioned on completion of the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave to allow what the honourable government House leader has just proposed to us? Everybody understand? Everybody does understand, all right? So there is leave. That has been done.

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

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

River (Mrs. Dacquay) in the Chair for the Department of Justice.

**COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY
(Concurrent Sections)**

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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

When the committee last sat it had been considering item 6.(a)(1)(a) on page 44 of the Estimates book. Shall the item pass?

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I wanted to ask the minister whether he has had a response to his letter of regret and dismay to the universities' boards of governors at Manitoba and Brandon about the student services fee.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): No.

Ms. Friesen: How long does the minister intend to wait for a reply, and what action is he considering?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that is not for public disclosure at this time. We are again monitoring the situation closely, bearing in mind a number of points, not the least of which is an issue that the member brought to our attention when we were in Estimates last evening when the member, I sensed, was being critical—I may be wrong—but I sensed was being critical as she used the word "clawback" with respect to the 1992-93 fiscal year.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I digress only for a second to tell you that I have a letter I would like to table, specifically to the MLA for Wolseley, laying out the historic perspective of that decision.

As I can recall from the other night when the member was, I sensed at least, chastising the government for having made a commitment through the Universities Grants Commission, and then attacking unexpended funds around that commitment, today we find ourselves virtually in the same position.

The Universities Grants Commission, which is and has been practicing autonomy to a large degree for many years now, without my knowledge, sent letters to the universities dated April 20, at which time it was pointed out to the universities what they could expect as their allocation, given the global funding announcement that was part of the Estimates package tabled by the Minister of Finance.

Now, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I fully expected that universities would live within the spirit of the 5 percent cap, because the letter, of course, that went out accompanying that notice of allocation was pretty specific dealing with the caps.

I never believed in my wildest dreams until student representatives came to see me shortly thereafter, that universities were contemplating putting forward a service fee charge. Furthermore, I indicated that my—I will not say disbelief, but my dismay that universities may be contemplating this and quickly called the Universities Grants Commission to ascertain what powers that I had, and more important than powers, what was the history associated with this.

I have spoken to a university president. I have spoken to students. I have spoken to staff. I have what would appear to be some conflicting information as to how long standing the discussion around this issue has been, particularly located at the board of governors.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I still, though, was guided by the fact that the allocations had gone out on April 20 to the universities. So this was my dilemma. They had been notified. They had completed their budgeting, in essence, and then we are asked to intervene. That is where we are today. I have sent a strongly worded letter. It invites response. It certainly lays out a very strong condemnation at what the universities have done and certainly has an underlying threat that obviously we will very much take this into account another year.

The question before us all is: Do we unilaterally withhold funds, break again a commitment of April 20, Mr. Deputy Chairperson? I would ask for some indication from the Higher Education critic

of the NDP as to what path she senses the government should follow. I would welcome her recommendation.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chair, my question to the minister was: How long was he going to wait for a response from the universities?

* (1440)

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that may very well be the question, but I am asking the member, too, as to what side of the issue she wants to be on this, bearing in mind that we are one of the few universities in Canada, I am led to believe, that has put caps into place.

I guess the point I am trying to make is that certainly we are aware that there are variations of caps in other jurisdictions, but when it comes to the—some of them are 7 percent, 10 percent in nature, of level, and ours has been the lowest in the country. I sense that was supported, certainly by the student body. I cannot remember the opposition parties taking a view on it one way or the other. I guess it is your right in opposition not to do that.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, again to the question, as indicated by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), we are expecting a response to the letter, and yet certainly my letter did not dictate that there had to be one. Whether one is forthcoming or not, it is too soon to say.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chair, it is not the lowest in the country by any means, since Quebec for a number of years had a freeze on student fees.

I wanted to ask the minister—and he is right to bring in the issue of the clawback, because I was also looking at this as an issue both of process and of government policy. In this case, what the minister has chosen to do is to go directly to the university boards of governors. In the issue of the clawback, as I was asking in an earlier session, then the minister went through the Universities Grants Commission. I am looking for essentially lines of authority here and how the minister looks at the Universities Grants Commission, how he looks at the board of governors and his representatives on the board of governors.

Has he, for example, ever discussed this separately with his members of the boards of governors? Does he ever meet with his members of the boards of governors? Given that the government does appoint a considerable number of members to those boards, were they for some reason not aware of the government's policy statements that the cap was to be 5 percent? It is a matter of both process and direction at this stage.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, obviously, they were not. I do, yes, and I have met with the government appointees to the universities. I did so upon receiving this responsibility. We talked about a number of issues, fee caps being one of them, but certainly we did not talk about whether or not universities in the past or in the future would be considering supplementary fees, called in this case student support service fees, or whatever term has been put to them. I can say, yes, I have discussed a number of issues with them, but obviously I did not discuss this one because I did not see it raising its head.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chair, the minister is aware, I assume, that it is the finance committee of the boards on which represented government appointees do sit which have raised this issue. In fact the boards, certainly in the case of the University of Manitoba, have voted unanimously for these student service fees, that is with the exception of the student members of the board.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member obviously then has information we do not have. I asked a representative of the Universities Grants Commission whether or not we have minutes. Obviously, we have minutes dealing with motions, but we have no idea to know, other than that the motion was passed, whether or not it was unanimously supported by everybody but student reps. Certainly the minutes would not reflect that, so the member obviously has information unknown to me.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chair, does the minister see any role for the Universities Grants Commission in this issue that needs to be resolved with the universities?

Mr. Manness: I have asked for historical information from the Universities Grants Commission. I have asked for comparatives across Canada. I have asked to know what caps are in place elsewhere.

The member talks about Quebec and supposedly its caps that have been in place. I would sense what she was talking about were caps that were either at zero percent or at a very low rate of inflation. I am well aware that, for instance, McGill had supplementary fees in '93-94 in the range, depending on faculty, \$486 to \$588. I am well aware Queen's has also—pardon me. Those were Queen's range. The McGill range was \$369 to \$723; Dalhousie \$201 to \$261; Saskatchewan maintained at \$75; Alberta at \$350; British Columbia from \$169 to \$176. That is information that I have asked the Universities Grants Commission to provide as we try and work our way through this process.

I can tell the member as I have told the students, I was terribly dismayed, upset and had I known this before the letters went out, with respect to allocation, in a year and a time when the grants are down as the member knows, I would have been extremely forceful. Right now the government though is trying to bring forward all the information it can to decide where we go from here.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chair, the role of the Grants Commission then is really as a provider of information and adviser to the minister at this stage rather than as the arm's-length go-between between the universities. The minister is dealing directly with the university boards on this.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, if you are talking this, you are talking about this issue.

Ms. Friesen: Yes.

Mr. Manness: Oh, well, this issue, again, represents a whole new era and a new area for all of us. The Universities Grants Commission has not experienced having to deal with this issue before and probably has not been quite so much in the middle of an issue as this one in the past.

I am sure last year, when the first time we put into place a cap, we knew that we would have to give direct effect to that policy, that the Universities Grants Commission in itself, if it were to issue that edict, would need strong government support, and it was given that.

This is kind of a side turn on that particular whole area. We have never encountered it before, collectively, either the Grants Commission or the government, and we are just trying to find the best way to deal with it at this point.

Ms. Friesen: The Roblin commission suggested that fees be frozen while the government looked at the whole issue and the universities looked at the whole issue of differential fees across faculties. Given that recommendation, a very clear recommendation on the part of Roblin, why did the minister choose to take the route of the 5 percent cap?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, two reasons. Firstly, we are well aware of the diminishing level of global funding. Secondly, with respect to differential fees, we sensed that there was no way the university could give meaningful input on their own to working towards those differentials.

The Universities Grants Commission and, in this case, the government, were not in a position to impose. We sensed that we needed another year to really give effect to this recommendation if we were to support it. Of course, again we will be giving greater detail with respect to that recommendation in the not too distant future.

Ms. Friesen: Given the addition of, let us say for the moment, the 5 percent rather than the 7.5 percent increase, if we look at a 5 percent increase in fees this year, can the minister tell me what proportion of university expenditures globally in the province will be provided by student fees?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, right today tuition fees represent 23.3 percent, University of Manitoba; 36.1 percent, University of Winnipeg; 22.6 percent, Brandon University; and 22.8 percent for St. Boniface university. If we were to weight all of those factors, I am pretty sure we would be in the realm of around 25 percent.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chair, the minister is aware, we talked last time about the Smith report. The Smith report recommended as a national goal that universities move to a 25 percent figure of expenditures, that is, of fees as a proportion of university expenditures.

Manitoba seems to have reached that. The minister is looking now at another year of debate and discussion to presumably move to differential levels. What does the minister anticipate the highest level will be?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I cannot speculate. I am sorry, I am not close enough to the actual fees in place right now, tuitions in place right now, to speculate on that whole issue.

Ms. Friesen: I wanted to go back to some of the recommendations of the Roblin commission—we are still more or less on the UGC line I think—and look at the recommendations about transparency and making oneself understood and available to the community. The minister had expressed earlier some concerns about the diminishing role, as he sees it, of the university in responding to the needs of small business in Manitoba. I wonder if he would like to add to that statement and give us some other ideas of where the government is looking for universities to respond to the community. Where does the minister see the gaps?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I think I made my statements the other night. I have just come back from a conference, the first ever consultative conference on education in Montreal. Many of the same questions were being asked and the challenges thrown out to universities as to how they better related with the community fully defined. I heard the same generalities there that I have heard over and over and over again. I do not probably have an awful lot to add to the broad goals that strategic plans and missions that were ever fully contemplated by universities, and to me they have addressed these issues for generations. Probably nothing has changed.

Ms. Friesen: I am sorry, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. I think the minister ended up with “nothing has changed.” So either they were doing things well some years ago, and now they are not. I am not

sure what the minister meant by “nothing has changed.”

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am saying that in the eyes of those who are involved, actively involved on a day-to-day basis or on a supervisory basis or on a board level basis or on an administrative basis, the role of the university, when I listened to people over the weekend try and more clearly define what a university should be doing today in the context of the world moving into the next generation, I did not hear mission goals or strategic plans or goals stated in the terms any different than I did 20 or 30 years ago when I was in attendance myself at university.

Ms. Friesen: What does the minister think that the universities are missing in their long-range planning? All three universities have long-range plans in process. What does the minister think is missing?

You see, I also spent the weekend at a conference, the Manitoba Medical Association, and I would say a full 30 percent of the several hundred people there had some connection with universities, whether it was community health workers, whether it was the people in the northern medical unit, whether it was northern trained nurses, whether it was physiotherapists who were in active participation in remote communities around the province, or people who were giving a variety of research perspectives on genetics in northern communities, for example.

I thought to myself of the minister's comments on the failures of the university to meet the needs of some of the areas that he saw in small business. It seemed to me that that was one perspective, but that there were many other broader perspectives about the role of the universities in general in the community and the way in which they have made, continue to make, desire to make much greater contributions to the standard of living, to the future of research into the nature of communities right across Manitoba.

The minister's words rang in my ears as I sat at that conference and watched speaker after speaker, profession after profession, from community health workers to geneticists, talk about Manitoba

and Manitoba-based research, the future of Manitoba, the impact of their work on Manitoba, the needs of northern Manitoba, the needs of aboriginal communities in the South. So I am wondering, I am trying to get a sense of where the minister sees the gaps are.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, again, I will not engage myself in that debate. I stated, what we were discussing the other night was how it was universities could reach out in greater detail to the community, in greater fashion to the community, and what could they do to again show the larger community that they are vital, that they have an incredibly important role to play, and that they will make the changes if they play even a greater role of importance. I narrowed in on one area where I thought they could respond.

What the member talks about now are very general statements. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I do not have a lot of time on general statements, because we can generalize everything to the end of time and say, well, why change? Where we are at is fine. Everything that we have been doing is proper.

* (1500)

I was encouraged by 500 delegates, almost all who came from the formal education community on the weekend, as one Minister of Education, to become an advocate for the status quo and not a critic. I am not a critic. I do not want to be a critic, but I am not going to stand up and say that everything we have is fine in all dimensions when I know that there are some revitalizations needed. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I will not expand beyond that.

Ms. Friesen: Well, it does not leave us much to go on, a minister who wants to see universities fulfilling a more expansive and community function. I do not think there is anybody in the universities who would disagree with him, that universities should fulfill the needs of their community, should go out to meet them. I am looking for some indication here of what the minister believes should be done, because I think that is one of the difficulties people have with the

Roblin commission, that that direction was clearly seen as a criticism of universities.

I think people are prepared to accept criticism, but it needs to be more specific. What exactly is being done appropriately, and what needs to be done? The minister has given us one area. The Roblin report talked about a similar area. Is that the only area that we should be looking at? Is it the small business community? What is it? The minister seems to suggest that the impact of the universities on the public sector, in public health, in training, in the long-term education and the Manitoba-based research that needs to be done, and I am giving him the example of public health. Is that something we should take for granted and that the universities should move on to look at something else?

People are looking for guidance. They are looking for some sense of what directions the public of Manitoba, as represented temporarily by this government, want them to go. The minister has only talked about small business, yes, an important area, but where else?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I could be wrong, but I am willing to surmise that at the conference attended by the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), no or very little reference would have been made to the government's blueprint to the framework of economic growth, which laid out, more so than any other government that I have seen or any other document by any other government, a blueprint for where this province in all of its dimensions, in all of its institutions, should be providing its focus.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, obviously medical research fits right in. So that is not an issue. There are six key areas that were specified. We said that, as the elected representatives of the people, we deem that these are the six areas that, once it comes down to hard decision during these times of prioritizing, these are the areas that the universities, all other publicly funded institutions, the government itself within its discretionary spending, anybody who senses where the province is going to try and concentrate—it laid out a blueprint of those areas.

I am willing to bet that very few people have read that within the broader context and are prepared to make decisions to that end. I would not prejudge, but I will be disappointed if the university community totally, across the province, does not dwell on the areas of agrifood, environmental industries, tourism, aerospace, information and telecommunications and health industry. Work has been done. I do not know, but most of these areas, yes, are in the wealth-creation areas. In our view, that is where universities should begin to turn a significant portion, greater portion of research, although certainly within the health industries, and within the whole health field, an awful lot of good research is being done, and we have to do what we can to maintain it.

Nobody is going to tell me that there still cannot be a significant change in mind-set with respect to many of our institutions, including universities, as to what is important in this province. So applied research and teaching in these areas, these strategic areas, obviously more co-operative programming within these areas, better articulation between institutions within these areas. I do not know whether I can be more definitive.

Having been at a national conference for two and a half days, and we talked about this but in a global fashion ever so much larger than this, I did not hear many people, professional educators, come forward and be definitive as I have been in the last two minutes, talking about where I sense the greater focus should be with regard to our public institutions.

Ms. Friesen: Would the minister like to make some comments for the record on the role of universities in learning, in ideas, in research? You see, that is what the universities are not hearing from this minister. I am glad he has made very specific, very clear, the applied research and teaching, which he expects universities will move towards. I think he has put it very clearly, very succinctly. I do not think it is one that perhaps will—I am looking for the right words for this one.

Shall we say, I think that universities anticipate an understanding from their government of the role of learning and research and teaching, and I am

wondering if the minister would like an additional opportunity to put some comments on the record about where he sees universities fitting into that historic and international role.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, nothing that I have said precludes the emphasis on academics, on teaching—nothing. The reality is, when the member asked me the other day, and again I do not know in what context it was asked, but certainly I took it in the context of being, are the universities relating to the public in the fashion they should?

I do not sense, from my point of view, that they are held in the esteem that they once were. I think it begs all of us to ask the question why. I certainly do not pretend to have a monopoly on that answer, and maybe members opposite would state for the record whether they agree with that and provide maybe some answer to the why from their own point of view.

All I do know is that this is not a Manitoba phenomenon. This is happening across the country. This is happening across North America. It is happening across the western world. A lot of it is because of the change our society is undergoing, but beyond that, it is a recognition today that after you come out with a basic degree, in a lot of cases you are not sought after the way, in an employment sense, you might have been 10 or 20 years ago.

I do not pretend to have the full understanding of why that change, but I can say that the public ultimately will determine—in spite of kind words and statements of advocacy presented by the minister of the day and/or all the opposition parties, society of the day will determine what value they put on all of our institutions. Obviously, we are at that point in time when we have to reflect.

I can make a point that a broad liberal arts degree is something that, in the context of stimulating thought and preparing rationality of argument, given the level of challenge directed towards students, is at a level comparable or beyond what it was in the past, and that there is certainly an incredible role for that.

Society is saying today that a lot of that is going to have to take place at an earlier age and beyond that, once individuals want to build upon in an institutional and a university setting, then that should be allowed for, too, and state supported. I am not troubled with that. At the end of the day, society will ultimately decide how much it wants to direct, how much in resource it wants to direct towards the total university setting.

* (1510)

Ms. Friesen: I am not sure if the minister means by society in this case, the market will determine, since that is often the phrasing he uses. One of the areas where the market, of course, has great difficulties in fulfilling the needs of society is in the area of long-term research. As the market becomes more and more geared to shorter and shorter time frames and turnarounds, that is one of the areas where the public sector becomes increasingly important.

I wonder if the minister would like to make some comments on his government's research policy. Where are they intending to direct their research funds? There has been \$10 million, for example, in I, T and T, which has been sitting there undistributed every year since this government has been elected. I do not see a great deal of that I, T and T money or money from the province in university terms going, for example, into research into tourism, agrifood or some of the other areas of the government's supposed strategies. I just wondered, generally, does the minister have a statement on his government's policies in research?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, to the extent that we can, again, influence the direction into the areas that are mentioned, we will.

The member talks about \$10 million. That was from the proceeds of the sale of Manitoba Data Services. We purposely set that up so it would not end up just being swallowed in the large Consolidated Revenue Fund of the government. It took us some time to put criteria into place for the whole community to agree on the criteria in place. They are in place now, and the money out of that fund is, I understand, beginning to flow. I would

think it will have to flow in a fashion in keeping with the target areas that have been determined as being the more valuable in the context of the Province of Manitoba.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chair, since this is, I understand, the major research fund of the government, and I know that the present assistant deputy minister of the department was formerly at I, T and T, I think there is an opportunity here perhaps to explore some of that research orientation of this government, since the minister talks about it as applied research and teaching a better articulation as being one of his goals.

The research money in I, T and T—and the minister talks about criteria having been established. Was there any provision for peer review, which is the basis of all research grants and applications, peer review in the distribution of that \$10 million each year, not that it has ever been distributed until this year?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, this fund is under the auspices of the Economic Innovation and Technology Council. Certainly the individuals who are sitting in judgment of applications as they come forward are individuals who are obviously from the university community, from the community at large.

I would have to say in a sense it is a peer review committee, maybe not totally in terms of what the member traditionally accepts as that meaning, but I say, a peer committee targeted in the fashion that the Province of Manitoba wants it targeted and to the areas that it holds as the higher priority, or does she want complete hands off so that the peer review committee can do as it chooses, because then I say there is an inconsistency there in a significant fashion. So, yes, this committee is—it is not the dictates of the government that are directing funding. It is much more than that.

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

Examples of the members in that committee: John Wade, Dean Laliberte, Faculty of Engineering—we all know who John Wade is—formerly Dr. Marsha Hanen and Terry Hogan. Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I would sense that

these are individuals who bring, obviously, a strong perspective to any consideration.

As I point out, some of the funding has gone into helping support a chair for the aerospace industry. That is in keeping with the focus. Some other part of the funding I understand has gone into support of TR Labs which ties into the telecommunications thrust, information systems. So I say to you that there has to be consistency here. I sense we have in place a process that attempts to address consistency.

Ms. Friesen: I think the minister is right, that indeed there are university people from two or three disciplines on that larger committee. I am not so sure if the minister checked how many of them, in fact, are on the committee which distributes the grants or at least sits in judgment on the grants. Peer review is not, of course, necessarily—you can have peer review within guidelines that a broader group sets, but you do have a much broader experience when you bring in people from outside and people who are particularly specialists. Canada has created one of the best systems, I think, in the world of peer review, very inexpensive to run. People give of their time voluntarily over and over again in these peer review systems. It is not a difficult system to run. When we met with I, T and T, as a caucus, I was very concerned about the lack of peer review in these kinds of grants, given that this is the major focus of the government's research program in grants.

I wanted to ask the minister to look at another area of university grants, where the government has targeted certain areas, and that is in the Faculty of Management. Over a number of years, the last four years, I believe, the government has targeted a particular sum of money in one or two different pockets to the Faculty of Management. I wonder if the government has looked at the results of that. It seemed to be the one area that the minister was concerned had not been—where the university had not been fulfilling its needs, the community's needs.

Has the minister asked for a report from the Faculty of Management? Does he have liaisons through the Universities Grants Commission with

the Faculty of Management? Has he indicated to the Faculty of Management what his concerns are about their current inability, as he sees it, to meet the needs of small business in Manitoba? Does he anticipate any discussions with the Faculty of Management over his concerns? What does the minister believe that he has got for those targeted dollars that have been spent in the Faculty of Management, and have they been satisfactory?

Mr. Manness: Certainly the faculty, in support of the agreement, has tabled with us a report on a yearly basis. Let us again indicate for the record why it is that we entered into this agreement with the faculty. We did so, bearing in mind that our Faculty of Management had a very low ranking, almost near the bottom with the proportion of students in administration, commerce and management. We sensed that there was obviously some problem, and that is why we entered into the agreement four years. This last year, or this year, '94-95, is the first year when the general grant to the University of Manitoba also covered the designated amount to go to that faculty.

Ms. Friesen: The minister indicated he believed the university should do more for small business. Has he conveyed that concern to the Faculty of Management, and what response has he received?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, this is not a Faculty of Management issue. This is a university issue. That is like saying the Department of Education should be the only department interested in education for the government of Manitoba. That is nonsense. The reality is, the whole government has to be through all of its departments, and I dare say that all the faculties at the university also have to buy into the corporate model of understanding how important wealth generation is in our province.

* (1520)

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I have a number of questions which are actually identical to the member for Wolseley's, so I do not think there is going to be much point in repeating the questions, and I have been listening to what the minister's responses have been.

I did want to go back to a comment that the minister had made on Wednesday evening when we were in a discussion about funding to universities and the decision by the University of Manitoba and probably by Brandon University to impose what results in an increased tuition fee above and beyond the 5 percent cap. The minister, in that general discussion, also spoke of, or did not rule out potential clawbacks throughout the remaining of this fiscal year, and those clawbacks might be initiated by the now-Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson).

I am wondering if the minister has any indication at all as to, when we move towards the fall, which I guess we would be into the third quarter, if in fact there might be a move by the Minister of Finance to look at further cuts across departments, including that of Education.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, six months away in that consideration is like being 20 years away. Who knows what is going to happen to the Canadian dollar? The federal Liberal Party has taken the Canadian dollar and caused it through their actions to be worth, as we know, 72 cents now, if the dollar stabilizes, anywhere from 72 to 76 cents. That will not cause drastic action, but if indeed this Canadian dollar were to slip away because of particularly the Quebec situation down to below 70 to the mid-60s, certainly it is going to have incredible impact on our budget.

Indeed, if the confidence around consumer spending throughout the nation begins to lag in any respect, that, too, will have incredible impact on economic growth and therefore the amount of dollars flowing, particularly to the federal government, and therefore the amount that is redistributed to the province by way of equalization. We will not know that or any part of that yet for several months. So it is just foolhardy to speculate six months out.

Ms. Gray: When the minister is looking at his budget in the Department of Education—I know we are on the Universities Grants line and he is looking at how he decides what kind of dollars go to which sections of the Department of Education—does he support the fact that if we are having to

look at further reductions, that we look at cuts across the board, or has he done a form of prioritization exercise within the entire sections of the department to determine if in fact some sections would keep their budgets intact, some might look at further reductions, et cetera?

Mr. Manness: It is for the most part not a departmental call. It is, if indeed having gone through the exercise and leading the exercise, very much a call of the Treasury Board. These are extraordinary measures that no government and certainly no minister likes to find themselves engaged in the process of having to find these numbers, but I can tell anybody who wants to hear that it is not a minister's discretion that comes to the fore. It is certainly a larger policy decision than simply a department's.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, as the Minister of Education, if in fact there was a move by a Minister of Finance to look at cuts across the board, across the department, would this minister vehemently fight to not allow cuts across the board to occur?

Mr. Manness: That is a foolhardy question again. What the member is saying is set yourself up apart from your colleagues. Again, that is the way government has been practised for 25 years in this whole country, and it is part of the reasons why we have so many problems, because that has been the attitude of most ministers: I am special, I am the most special person, my department is sacred and the hell with playing the corporate game at all. Everybody becomes an island unto their own. Of course, that is one thing that we have tried to do in this government over a number of years is to try to look at each other, try to look at all the pressures that come to government, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson.

So maybe the member could tell me from her point of view which department should be sacrificed—I challenge her to do so—and what line within those departments should be sacrificed, all to the greater good of Health and/or Education. I know that Education is very highly regarded within this government. We have increased it as a percent of total funding from 17.2 to 18.2 percent

of the global. We have put in an additional over \$100 million into Education over the course of the last six or seven budgets. Nobody has to state the high priority that this government has given to Education.

I was the Minister of Finance when these decisions were made globally and the allocations between departments. I dare say that Education was always given a very high rating. I do not think that will change regardless of who the players are, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, the question is not foolhardy because it is a matter as a Minister of Education or as a minister of any department how you decide on budget allocations and whether you support general reductions. I asked the question because when we are looking at cuts across the board as we have seen with this government and in the various departments, I think it is not a way to go.

The minister, the other evening, spoke very highly of the former Premier of this province, the Honourable Duff Roblin, and talked about him as a leader of education. One of the first words out of his mouth during the press conference when he presented the recommendations of the Roblin commission was to say that cutbacks across the board lead to mediocrity. I happen to agree with him on that. That is why I was asking the minister about these wholesale cutbacks that we seem to see.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

Now the minister has asked what suggestions do I have. One of the things that you need to look at throughout your departments is the incredible waste of resources that is spent on having middle people having to deal with anything related to space, car, communications and buildings with Government Services. There is a lot of waste of resources and time that is spent on that particular issue where you could have departments taking more responsibility for some of the decisions that have to be made in that area. So I would be quite prepared to discuss that further with the minister.

So when you talk about changes to government and how government delivers service or what

government delivers the service, I think there are a number of areas that can be looked at in some of the departments.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I do not know who gives the member her advice. I do not know who she may have been talking to inside of government over the course of the last six years. Why do you think the MGEU is running ads today? They are running ads, for the most part, because of the number of people we have taken out of administration. No government in the land has taken out more of the bureaucracy than we have. The members opposite, including the Liberal Party, have voted against us. We have taken out approaching 15 percent of the total civil service. Most of it were in administrative areas, most of it in administrative areas.

The member can look at the communications budget from what we inherited. We have done everything to keep the programming, but the administrative side is where we have chopped. Why do you think Peter Olfert and the MGEU are running these ads today? Oh, it is under the guise of programming. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it is not. That is because most of the hits have been in the administrative areas, midmanagement areas.

* (1530)

We have gone through the department where we did a reorganization on the program development side and, again, criticism at this table, why it is we let midmanagement go. So the opposition cannot have it both ways. We have taken millions of dollars out of communication. We have taken a third of the car fleet out. We have taken a third of the space out, the leased space out. So what side do the Liberals want it? They criticize us when we try to downsize government in its administrative sense, and the member has the gall to come here and say, you have not done enough. Yet, when we do more her Leader stands up and attacks us for not having done enough, not balancing the budget. Yet the members opposite, every move we make they say, well, why did you do that and why do you not put more money into solving the problem. Surely to goodness there is some incumbency upon the

members of the Liberal Party to be consistent. Surely, there must be.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the Minister of Education asked for some ideas of where I thought there could be some more efficiencies within departments. I gave him some suggestions, and then he goes on, to me, to seem to implicate that in fact there are all these great efficiencies in government. If you did a survey of probably all the civil servants just in this room alone and asked them about efficiencies in government, they could probably write you pages and pages of things that can be done differently in government.

The minister talks about administrative efficiencies. Some of the positions that have been cut provide direct service to people. We may agree to disagree on the definition of administration. Even within the Department of Health, which is what I am more familiar with, some of the positions eliminated are direct delivery. They are not administrative positions. The odd clerical support position is gone, but as far as actually eliminating departments or sections of departments, we have not seen a lot of that.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I have spent 20 hours, or close to it, on Workforce 2000 between the NDP and the Liberals. The basic thrust of that coming from the opposition—if you believe in this program then have more resources in place, more people in place to do the monitoring, to do the evaluations. That is all administrative, and that does not deliver programs. The members cannot have it both ways. I am not going to let them have it both ways, not idly anyway.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I do not think the minister and I are disagreeing necessarily on what constitutes administration or where there need to be changes. My only point is that I would hope the minister is not complacent about the fact that we need to look at where we can create more efficiencies within some of the departments, so that where resources can go to Education and Health, important programs, that they do go to those particular areas.

Mr. Manness: There are only three ways an outside observer can pass judgment as to the difference of views represented by the member for Crescentwood and myself: throw away all the lip service, all the BS around priorities; look at the lease costs of government, look at the car fleet; and look at the number of centralizations that have occurred including communications—the only three objectives to be able to decide whether or not we have done anything on the administrative side to try and remove some of the overlap and duplication, which I accept exists in government, existed in a big way when we took over government and, yes, still exists in some small places now. I say when you look at those three areas and you look at the measurement of those three areas, vis-à-vis other governments, you will get a handle as to whether or not this is a fat bureaucracy or not.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am not going to sit here and say we are a fat bureaucracy, because we are not. As a matter of fact, when you look at the number of civil servants on a per capita basis we rank in the low quarter. When you look at the dollars spent on the communications side we rank low. When you look at the number of individuals or you look at the leasing costs we rank low. I had to state that for the record.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am not about to get into discussion with the minister on these issues because I think, first of all, the Chairperson will call me to order about the particular line we are on, but I would be quite prepared to, at some other point, sit down with the minister and talk about the role of Treasury Board and what kind of a role they play for looking at efficiencies in government.

I wanted to make a couple of comments about the Roblin commission and the minister's pending announcement on the Roblin commission. I, again, think the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) asks a very pertinent question when she asks why there was a decision made to look at no more than a 5 percent increase in tuition fees when clearly the first financial recommendation in the Roblin report was to talk about a freeze in tuition fees until a number of other issues were sorted out. I guess I

would ask the minister—I am making the assumption that his response to the Roblin commission has already been determined and probably was determined before his budget was finalized. Is that correct?

Mr. Manness: No, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that is not true. We have been working for the best part of two and a half months now developing a formal response to the Roblin report, and the budgetary decisions were made not in total isolation from that process. Certainly the university funding and global announcement and decision were made in the context of the fiscal framework of the province.

Ms. Gray: One of the recommendations in the Roblin commission, albeit a smaller one but certainly one which the various faculties and schools at the universities have difficulty with and, in fact, feel that they could be much more efficient with their current resources if this change was made or if there was a promise kept in terms of the date within which they know what their budget allocations are going to be—in the Roblin commission, it talks about January 15 as a reasonable time.

Can the minister, without going into what his announcements are going to be, tell us if this is something that will be possible through the Department of Education that universities will have an earlier indication of what their budget allocations are?

Of course, there are very many reasons for this. Universities certainly plan far ahead and are already planning into the next school year in terms of the programs and the calendars they develop, looking at teaching resources, allocation of teaching resources, et cetera, and so the longer it is delayed in terms of their ability to plan, it costs the system more money. So I am wondering if that is one recommendation that the minister feels could be considered in terms of them knowing their allocation by January 15, the date that is suggested.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we are trying to study that, but bear in mind if all the discretionary decisions are made by January 15, if everybody wants to have their commitment made early, then we are going to have to start the

budgetary process much sooner, and so then we will have to be out of session much sooner because right now the process starts, I do not know if the member knows it or not, in September. So, if she is dictating then that we begin to start in July in support of trying to make all of the publicly funded recipient groups, providing information to them by the middle of January, then we, again, by necessity would have to begin that process much sooner.

* (1540)

Ms. Gray: In terms of starting the budget process sooner, we have not sat for eight months. There is no reason why we could not begin sitting sooner and hear a budget from this government sooner. I know the process starts in late summer, early fall, and usually the departments have made their recommendations to Treasury Board by some time in November, which, oftentimes, is the deadline. So perhaps that is something that the Department of Education and the minister in conjunction with his colleagues need to review in terms of the process, and when we sit, when we hear budget as opposition, when we have an opportunity to go through spending Estimates, and when we have an opportunity to pass budgets, which is all part of the cycle, even though universities have some understanding of what their budgets are going to be beforehand. I think the universities are certainly very interested in trying to be as efficient as they can, knowing that dollars are depleting.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am not going to sit here and take that statement either. I mean, as the Minister of Finance, I have brought down budgets one to six, but particularly four, five and six. After there was a majority government, there was not a province in Canada over those three years that brought out budgets sooner than the Province of Manitoba. The reason I am sensitive is because the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mr. Edwards) had the gall to get up and say we were missing the forecasted revenue. One of the reasons we missed the forecasted revenue is because we brought those budgets out so early and the federal government did not come out till after us, and had we had the full knowledge at what the federal government was estimating then,

obviously, we would have been better off. So here we have a Liberal critic criticizing us for not bringing down the budget quickly enough, her Leader is criticizing it for bringing it down too quickly and not having the full knowledge of the revenue side. They cannot have it both ways.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, well, the minister has presented both sides of the coin. Which one does he prefer?

Mr. Manness: I prefer to bring it down in the middle, just like the Liberals always say. They like to do things in the middle. I guess that is what I prefer.

Ms. Gray: I wanted to ask some questions, again, the recommendations of the Roblin commission, and the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) has certainly asked a number of questions. So it has been interesting listening to the minister's responses. I wanted to ask a question in regard to the four universities in this province and also the universities throughout the prairie region and probably the Lakehead as well. What type of work is being done to look at co-operation amongst the universities in terms of not just looking at potential for savings when it comes to purchasing of supplies and services, but as importantly looking at, sort of, from the Lakehead to at least the end of the Alberta border, British Columbia border, which universities provide which types of learning situations, which types of courses, which opportunities for graduate studies? Is there any formal mechanism that is in place that is addressing these issues?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, officials within certain departments, Western Diversification from the federal side, and with our Departments of Education, and Industry and Trade, are beginning to put into place a process to discuss what tradeoffs could be put into place, bearing in mind that the premiers in meeting just a week ago in Gimli also addressed this issue. I point out that in these specialized areas there has been a history of sharing. It has worked out reasonably well. But, until the universities also buy into this process, it is going to be very difficult.

As I made reference the other night, for governments just to impose their will it is going to cause a reaction from the university. So it is going to have to be a pretty wide consolidative approach here, but if we are going to move on—I mean, right today you have the government of Alberta or at least the University of Alberta that is prepared to field out dentistry requirements. So some provinces or universities or a combination of the both are making unilateral decisions and are moving out of the higher-cost areas and wanting somebody else to provide that training. We are embarked upon the process of seeing whether we can do some trading, but, again, the question is, who is going to take the lead in it. At this point governments are beginning to broach the subject, but obviously the university communities are going to want to have some significant input into this also.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I was not sure by the comment or the tone of the minister's response, is the minister suggesting that the universities are not prepared to look at these types of co-operative ventures or are they very much interested in doing this, and is the government going to be taking some initiative to get the universities together to explore what can be done?

Mr. Manness: I invite the member to ask them and see. I really do. On her own, and then she can answer the question. Rather than coming through my lips let the universities speak for themselves.

Ms. Gray: Well, actually I have talked with the president of the University of Manitoba on that subject, and I have talked with the president of the University of Winnipeg on that subject, and certainly both of those individuals in discussions indicated that there was room for co-operation and to look at those kinds of issues.

One individual also talked about where there was room for looking at some of the core subjects that are currently being offered at the University of Manitoba and the University of Winnipeg and actually exploring more opportunities for some sharing of those. Now I know the Faculty of Arts at the University of Manitoba is engaged in some sharing of studies with the University of

Winnipeg, the Women's Studies program for one. So I know that some of that is going on.

I guess I would ask if, from the minister's point of view, does he feel that there is more opportunity for that type of sharing of resources amongst just the universities in Manitoba and also, what opportunities are there for that for sharing of resources and looking at some further centres of excellence across the prairie region including the Lakehead?

I also wanted to ask the minister about the Dental College and their accreditation here. I am assuming either he knows, or does he have the staff here that can perhaps respond to a question of status of the Dental College accreditation at the University of Manitoba?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member talks about, or at least comments or asks questions on two different issues. Firstly, with respect to greater co-operation. I would be overjoyed if the universities can work towards greater co-operation. I do not know why it takes a mandate from the government though to bring that about. I mean, that says that common sense cannot exist to the realization that, certainly, if everybody is a little bit stronger in one discipline, then obviously the whole province is better off.

So I am encouraged to hear that the presidents of the universities are accepting of the challenge, because that will be the challenge that I will be putting to them, most definitely, when I comment on the Roblin report.

Of course, it takes a lot more than presidents, does it not? It takes heads of faculties. It takes—because there has been an awful lot of delegation and diffusion of power within the university setting and somebody there is, not at the high level necessarily but at the levels below, going to have to buy into that process too and I hope there is co-operation at that level. Because if there is, then we can meaningfully move to this area of greater focus of excellence, greater sharing of resources, leading to, I think, a higher quality education at a cost that the taxpayers can afford.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it does not necessarily take initiative of government or

government mandate to look at some of these ventures. However, I think that governments do have a role to provide leadership in having the universities look at some of these issues, and I think when you look at the experience of co-operation and what we are seeing that is occurring in the Maritime provinces some will say that the reason for how they have moved ahead in that area is because of interest, motivation and leadership by the Premiers of those provinces and some of their senior officials, i.e., deputy ministers. I think that, again, sure universities can do this and get together, and they are starting to, but I think if they also recognize that it is seen as important and necessary from the government of the day, that adds to perhaps what can be done in a certain period of time.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, certainly my predecessors have indicated how important that process be. The member can talk about co-operation in Maritime Canada or Atlantic Canada. We know there is an awful lot of dialogue going on and certainly there is some good will at the senior level, in other words, the Premier level.

I am very mindful of what happened in Nova Scotia where they had 11 degree-granting faculties of education. That was talked about for 15 years, and finally the government had to put down the hammer. So nobody is going to tell me that this process of co-operation and talk just comes because the government points to it being a nice thing. It is hard because for every winner there is a loser, and, of course, it becomes then the challenge to find out, to minimize the number of people who are negatively impacted. That becomes the challenge.

* (1550)

I say that universities are in ever so much better position to find the healthier solution as compared to governments everywhere across the land who have had a hands-off approach to our university institutions to impose, because that would not, obviously, work very well.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I guess I get the impression—I am quite prepared to be wrong—that the minister does not have a lot of faith in

the universities and their ability to look at some of these areas. It is almost like the minister has written them off in terms of the universities' ability to get together and actually produce a vision that would really lead to some new areas of co-operation amongst universities in the province of Manitoba and also across the prairie provinces. I hope I am wrong in that.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member is dead wrong on that. I mean, the challenge I will be putting out to universities to do just that, but when I do put that challenge it will be interesting to hear how the member chooses to criticize me at that point in time, or as to whether I have given enough time or not enough time. I imagine there will be a criticism in there somewhere, but that will be the challenge to our universities.

Now, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member had a question dealing with our dental college and accreditation with respect to our dental college. The member is going to have to be a little bit more specific in her question.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the faculty or the dental college at the University of Manitoba, I understand was under a conditional accreditation, and, in fact, there was an infusion of government money and I am not sure which fiscal year. It is probably two years ago now, I am not sure.

Mr. Manness: Longer than that.

Ms. Gray: Longer than that, the minister says. Too, I am assuming a system in meeting the standards related to accreditation. I understand that the college is—are they still under a conditional accreditation, or has that been changed or upgraded, and has there been a time frame that has been put on that accreditation in terms of their upgrading from conditional to whatever the term would be for regular accreditation?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I will have to return with that information. I sense nothing has changed, but I will try and provide more definitive information.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, one of the reasons I also asked that question is, I am sure the

minister is aware, and I am not sure which province it is, but Saskatchewan and Alberta, I believe they are both closing down, or one already has, their dental colleges, and so that leaves the University of Manitoba at least with an opportunity to look at what kinds of services are going to continue to provide. I had heard that the dental college was still having a lot of difficulty in terms of meeting the standards for accreditation, and that there was some concern that either the condition had to be extended or there was still some indecision in terms of where they stand.

I guess one of my questions as well was, does the minister or his department feel that with that infusion of money that occurred a number of years ago, do they feel that it was able to assist the college in making the changes necessary to actually meet the accreditation standards?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I cannot engage in a meaningful dialogue on this issue. I can tell you that when I sense that Alberta moves out of this area of instruction, it says to me that it is so costly they decided that there is greater efficiency associated with buying the spaces they need somewhere else than putting into place a system that has to be taxpayer supported to such a large degree.

I do not know how we could find ourselves in a better position, unless we made sure we got absolute full cost out of students and supporting governments from outside, and we can build an economic unit, but obviously, the university and the Faculty of Dentistry would know better on this. I would have to think they are preparing a plan in response to what Alberta and other provinces are doing.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, has the minister had discussions with Brandon University in regard to their proposal to look at a baccalaureate nursing program and to do that in conjunction with the Brandon General Hospital nursing program and the Grace Hospital nursing program?

Mr. Manness: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, this is an issue that will be dealt in a formal

manner, at least for the first viewing, I understand by the board, the commission at their next meeting.

Ms. Gray: One of the recommendations in the Roblin commission also talked about the ACCESS funds being maintained.

I am wondering in this announcement that is coming up with the minister in regard to implementation strategies, is he going to be addressing the issue of accessibility to university programs for students, including those individuals who right now may be going to university through what is considered the ACCESS program.

Is he going to be doing that in light of the recommendation from the Hikel report which talked about a concern over instability of funding and that that was one of the factors that led to some difficulties in the objectives of the program being met?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, again, this is an area where we are trying to present ourselves with various options. As I point out, as I read the Roblin report, what it said was there certainly is a place for ACCESS funding in a fostering sense.

In other words, it should have a finite period of time; it should have a finite program period of time. Then once it has done its job of fostering, defined in three, four or five years, then the general funding from that should be part of the general allocation. That is the way I read the Roblin report. Then that ACCESS fund should then move to another priority still with that same level of funding. Because indeed it was to introduce, it was to make known, it was to reach out, it was to try and entice, but once it had done that over a period of years, it was then to move on to a new area of programming. It was not to be locked into concrete, saying well, this programming is here now, we will build on this and build, build, build. That was my understanding of what Mr. Roblin and his commission were saying. It was to foster systemic change.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister is going to have to explain what he has said because I do not quite understand what he is trying to tell me, because when we look at access to

universities and special kinds of programs and funding, we are looking at that oftentimes for individuals who, as the minister has indicated, are disadvantaged, and there have been systemic barriers to those individuals going to university.

Is the minister suggesting that over time those systemic barriers change and in fact we can remove them or they have been removed?

* (1600)

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, since the beginning of time, there have been systemic barriers, and to the end of time, there will be systemic barriers. That is a given. So the reality is, it is where you choose any point in time by way of government policy to focus. I read Roblin to say, look, once you have done your focus here, let the funding needed then to maintain that level of programming come through the general grant, but then let us shift your focus. Keep shifting your focus after four or five years. So you can try and do then more than just focus forever and a day in one area, because the dollars are not going to be there to let you do everything. They never have been in the past; they never will be in the future. Keep it evolutionary. Keep it changing.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, does the report through Peat Marwick then refer to the findings of the ACCESS program that talk about changes that those programs have seen in terms of the type of students who are entering those programs and who require financial assistance?

I mean, I would think we are always going to have students who are disadvantaged financially because of socioeconomic background and some cultural factors, and there is always going to be need for governments to provide programs, albeit they maybe change in nature but provide programs to assist those individuals in accessing universities the same way other individuals do.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I do not know what the member—I sense that in reading the two reports, what the Roblin commission was talking about was the realization that the university with its good funding and this outreach, supported as we know at a very high cost by the public purse, should be maintained but not the actual programs

that we know today being maintained from this level of funding. It should shift, still with an access bent, trying to reach out to those who, for whatever reason, are disadvantaged, but some of the programs—ENGAP and BUNTEP, of course, but some of the others—those programs per se should not be locked into at the beginning of time under this level of funding, that it should maybe, if it is a good level of programming, after the fostering has taken place, the level of support for these programs should come under the general grant to universities. Let the fund then, the ACCESS, move into a new area of obvious shortcoming and disadvantaged status.

What Hikel was talking about was that, under the existing level of programming he is saying if you are maintaining them, then you have to look at the eligibility criteria. You have to take into account the demands where the community has—the demands. He spoke also about the level of what should be expected by way of loan versus a totally free level of education and other issues dealing more so with access as we have known it over the past.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I look forward to the minister's response to that report and the Roblin commission. The Roblin commission also does speak to community colleges and their role, but I think it makes sense to discuss those recommendations as we get into the section on Community Colleges.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I want to come back to research, which is one of the distinguishing characteristics of universities compared to, for example, vocational schools, and I wanted to pursue with the minister—he did not seem to be able to articulate a research policy on the part of his government, and yet seemed to sense, he articulated in a global sense but he certainly gave the example of the University of Manitoba, that the research, the university, was not meeting the needs of the community of Manitoba.

I wanted to ask him about two particular examples. One is the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences, one of the applied science faculties which I am sure the minister is familiar with and

which assists Manitobans and Canadians to remain competitive in world markets.

I am using the language of the University of Manitoba plan, a language which I am sure is dear to the minister's heart: to remain competitive in world markets and to facilitate the productivity of Manitoba manufacturing and processing industries. The university strengthens the faculty's contribution through the introduction of a Ph.D. program in Agricultural Engineering and through intensified co-operation with the Manitoba Department of Agriculture. The Food Science components of the present Agriculture degree program will be enhanced and become a separate degree program in recognition of the growing public concerns about the safety and quality of food.

I wonder if the minister could tell us why the proposal for the program in Food Science dealing with the safety and quality of food, a proposal for a B.Sc. in Food Science in the Faculty of Agriculture, has been turned down by this government under the I, T and T grants.

Mr. Manness: I cannot answer the question, Mr. Deputy Chairperson.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, does the minister see this as one of the areas where the university could be contributing to the rural community that he spoke of earlier?

Mr. Manness: We do not know what the member is talking about with respect to I, T and T grants.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I understand that the minister does not have his staff, the I, T and T staff, here entirely, but I have seen a proposal that went—[interjection] Well, yes, he does have one in part. But I have seen the proposal from the Faculty of Food Science, and I believe they did apply for a grant to the I, T and T \$10-million program and were turned down.

Mr. Manness: That, as I said earlier, EITC, the Economic Innovation Technology Council is an arm's-length council of government, and they make decisions accordingly with all the information that is brought to bear. Nobody at this table has influence or is part of that decision.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, well, I am looking for the research policy of this government, a government which is critical of the university's role in the community. When the university comes with a program which is applicable to the kinds of goals which the minister has laid out, does not receive perhaps the encouragement that it had anticipated, I think there is some puzzlement on the part of the people involved in this.

Again, I am trying to understand where the minister wants the university to go. Where are the research policies? Where are the research funds? They are in EITC. The minister has indicated that those funds are applicable to the industrial and economic strategies of the government, and yet when an area which seems directly applicable to the government's economic strategies applies to that fund, which is the only research fund that the government has apart from the Faculty of Management, there is not the response that one would have anticipated. So I am looking, through examples, for a general research policy on behalf of this government.

* (1610)

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member draws a distinction between applied and primary or basic research. Certainly EITC and the funding it has focuses on, tends to focus more on innovation, which is closer to pure, primary research, but nothing would prevent the university from, and even the Faculty of Agriculture and all of its departments to focus more so even more on applied research. I am led to believe, out of roughly \$53 million that comes into the University of Manitoba in research, the faculty commands 9 percent of it. So I do not know how the divisions are made. Obviously, the outside granting organizations have some considerable influence in this. One of the problems is, maybe everybody has considerable influence and maybe sometimes the government has absolutely none. I do not know whether the member supports that or not.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chair, well, a government which talks about universities becoming more responsive to the economic strategies of this government and yet does not have

a research policy that the minister can articulate, and when I come with the examples or at least an example where one might have thought that the government would have responded, it is very difficult to find out why they have not. What is the research policy?

Mr. Manness: Again, I do not know how the bachelor degree and the faculty—what parallel the member is trying to draw. I really do not. Is she talking about the Faculty of Education or is she talking about the post-secondary emphasis given by that faculty and the research therein? I do not know what she is trying to draw as a point.

Ms. Friesen: The point I am making is an innovation, an innovative approach to the needs of Manitoba to create a program in food engineering which builds on the existing expertise in the Departments of Agricultural Engineering and Food Science, which, at the time that it was proposed and brought to the attention of government, would have been, I believe, one of the earliest in the country. I gather now that Saskatchewan has moved in that area, and so the long delays that people have experienced in dealing with that EITC \$10-million research fund, the only research fund this government has, I think have been to the detriment of Manitoba. Again, that is why I am asking, what is the research policy of this government, which is critical of universities for not meeting the needs of Manitobans?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member tries to put it in such definitive terms. I do not remember where I have seen this government criticize our universities, to use her terms, for not meeting the needs of Manitobans. I have never seen that. I have certainly never spoken that. I do not know why she states it in that fashion. What the Roblin report did was focus on what research is being done and whether or not it was keeping with the mandate of the government in those areas which are deemed as of higher priority for the future prosperity of our province.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chair, I still have not heard the minister articulate a policy on research and research funding in Manitoba.

Mr. Manness: This is coming under the Universities Grants Commission. The member is asking me to react to Roblin's report. I have said I will do that. The member is asking me, I gather then, because we fund a significant amount of money in general terms to the university, that we dictate where it is research money should go. Or is she asking that we set aside additional funding in the Department of Education? If she is asking me to provide for her the historical and the criteria around accessing a \$10-million fund, that is not in my department, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. I am sorry, I will not do that because I do not have the responsibility to do so.

Ms. Friesen: Well, I am trying to understand or to establish what the research policy of this government is for universities. One of the things which sets off universities from other institutions is the role of research, both in an international sense, in a national sense and in a regional sense.

The minister has a Universities Grants Commission. After many years, the government finally established a review of universities, and yes, we are looking at that line. I am looking for some response on what the role of the UGC or what the role of the government is in establishing a research policy? The Royal Society of Canada, for example, has recently suggested that the provinces take a much greater role in funding of research. It is a proposal—[interjection] Not necessarily. It said a greater role, and there may be some indication in their report of a different assigning of values with the federal government or with federal granting agencies.

So those are the kinds of things that I am looking at. The minister has indicated that the universities must direct themselves more to the economic strategies of the government. All right. Research direction and research monies is one area in which the government can suggest that to the universities.

The only research fund that this government has has been that \$10 million assigned annually to EITC. I am trying to draw from the very slender evidence, from the single fund that seems to exist, what the research policy is of a government which

wants universities to look at the economic strategies of its policy.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the \$10 million that the member references is an innovation fund. It is not a research fund; it is an innovation fund. So let us make a distinction right there and there.

The member, again, wants to have it both ways. We started this, the questioning earlier on this afternoon, with respect to the powers of the government vis-à-vis the powers of the commission vis-à-vis the powers of the board.

We were talking about student support service fees. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the law says—the law—with respect to the fees, be it the board of the University of Manitoba—pardon me—the legal basis for the setting of fees by the University of Manitoba set out in the Powers of board section 16(1)(c): fix and determine all fees and charges to be paid to the university.

With respect to operating grants, the law is very specific, and I will not quote chapter and verse, which says that the Universities Grants Commission should provide operating support to the universities.

I do not know what it is the member is asking for. Is she asking how it is that we should dictate to boards, either through moral suasion and through some clawback, that they engage in a certain greater priority of research in a number of areas, or is she dictating that we find more money to direct to the areas that we sense are the more important? The member and her questioning is all inept.

She is asking me to come up with, I guess, a statement. I sense she is reaching for a statement, a research-related statement as to what we want to see universities do. How much closer can we come than that provided within the Framework for Economic Growth released by the Premier (Mr. Filmon)? The member is very confusing in what she is trying to do.

I mean, so she does force me to state the importance of research in a number of areas. I would have to think that her next question is, how much money are you going to put toward that—at least I would think that would be the logical next

question—and are you going to take it out of the operating or are you going to force the Universities Grants Commission to separate its operating grant into research, and if you do that—I mean, the member is going to have to be much more definitive.

I know it is hard for the member at times to come down to the real world and remove some of the jargon. That is difficult at times, but it is called for at this point.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chair, I do not think we need those kind of personal comments. I have asked for a research policy. I have spoken of specific examples which have been innovative and which have approached the only research fund which the government seems to have.

What I was looking for was, yes, in fact, a statement. Yes, in fact, the application of some thought, some long-range planning in conjunction with the Universities Grants Commission or through the Universities Grants Commission for the kind of research which the government would be looking for from universities, since the Roblin commission has criticized the universities and since there are certainly national concerns about the future of research in this country.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I remind the member, first of all, what we did to try to do in a small way on the taxation incentive side with respect to research and development, what the federal government before this present one has done, and indeed what the province has done with respect to research and development. We have tried to provide some offset, some amount against tax payable for those companies which are engaged in research and development and/or go elsewhere to see it supported.

So, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, nobody has to impress upon us the importance of that whole dimension of activity at the university.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Shall the item pass? Pass.

6.(a)(1)(b) Other Expenditures \$113,100—pass;
 (c) Grants in Lieu of Taxes \$18,291,100—pass.

Item 6.(a)(2) Grants \$195,320,400—pass.

6.(a)(3) Access Fund \$640,000.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chair, this Access Fund refers to facilities for disabled students, I understand.

* (1620)

Mr. Manness: No, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, this is a fund where universities apply for very short-term projects. As a matter of fact, I think we have issued a letter of call just recently for next year asking again for the universities to come forward for applications. These again are of very short duration.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister indicate what the criteria are then for those applications?

Mr. Manness: Yes, the objectives of the fund are twofold: one, to support projects which would change or improve the ways in which universities deliver services in order to make them more accessible to students from underrepresented groups—mature, aboriginal, visible minorities, disabled and female students; and secondly, to change existing services and activities so that a broader range of students are admitted to universities.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chair, it is my understanding that that money has been used in the past primarily for—shall we say in the recent past, anyway, the last couple of years—changes to buildings and for structural changes to accommodate handicapped students. Is that the case, or has it been used in fact for programs for mature students as well?

Mr. Manness: Last year's projects, including the University of Manitoba: aboriginal law program, \$48,000; women and science in engineering, \$55,000; disability services computer services, \$140,000.

At the University of Winnipeg: ongoing access initiatives—and I do not have a breakout on that. [interjection] Oh, yes, I remember this, the visually impaired labs up on the higher floors there, yes—and the writing program, the University of Winnipeg, \$203,000. That was the largest single item. Integrated student services \$30,000, for a

subtotal at the University of Winnipeg of \$234,000.

Brandon University put \$80,000 into the Rural Development Institute, \$12,500 into the Rural Development Institute scholarship, and the open campus initiative, \$7,500, for a \$100,000 subtotal for Brandon University.

The College Universitaire de Saint Boniface: special services to students, i.e., promotion, resource centre, professional development, \$75,500.

If you were to add all of the subtotals, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, you would come to a total of \$653,500.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chair, some of these projects then of last year would be covered by the proposed student services fee of this year. Has the minister looked at that?

Mr. Manness: I do not know on what possible basis that the member can make that claim. Unless she has information she wishes to share with us, I certainly cannot agree to her statement.

Ms. Friesen: I am just looking at areas of disabled students where if it is not building changes, if it is counselling service, then I believe that some of those were covered in that proposed student services fee. That might cover also—I do not know specifically the St. Boniface program, the assistance to students—I did not quite get what the minister said—promotion and resources of special services. I wondered if that might be covered also in this proposed student services fee.

Mr. Manness: These were last year's projects, and we will have to see what applications come in this year and see whether or not there is an overlap.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I understand these are done on a project-by-project basis, so I draw the minister's attention to that for this coming year.

I particularly wanted to ask about the disabled students and to perhaps get the minister's reflections on some of the changes that universities as a whole are looking forward to as a result of recent court cases, particularly in British Columbia, whereby the University of British

Columbia, as a result of a court challenge, has been required to provide signing for one particular student to attend all classes at the university at a cost, I believe, to the University of British Columbia of \$40,000 for that student.

It is a judgment which has led to considerable anxiety on campuses across the country because of its financial implications, and I wonder if the minister, through the Universities Grants Commission, in their role as policy advisers, has perhaps looked at this and looked at the impact on Manitoba's university systems. It was not something that I believe Duff Roblin particularly looked at. It may have been that the case had not been—the implications of it were not available at that time, but I wondered what steps the minister was taking to look at this.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we are trying to follow up on the case, but I point out to the member that we have put resources to work at the colleges for several years with respect to providing signing opportunities and resources, and within Family Services we have vocational rehabilitation support that finds its way to this end also. So I hear the member. We are watching it, but this government, in other areas of outreach, has certainly tried to provide that resource where it was feasible to do so.

Ms. Friesen: I think the issue in this case is looking at it on a system-wide basis, and I do not mean just provincially. I think this is another national issue as well, and it is not so much—I am not here indicating the individual cases in Manitoba, whether or not their needs are being met. I do not have enough information, in fact, to know that, but I do think this is a long-term planning issue, and it is one that I think the minister, again, although his reluctance or perhaps frustration at raising issues with the Council of Ministers of Education, that this seems to be one of the areas to me where very immediate discussion should be taking place on national planning in this area.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I accept the comments from the member for Wolseley.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Shall the item pass?
Pass.

6.(a)(4) Faculty of Management \$1,139,000.
Shall the item pass?

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am wondering if the minister could elaborate a bit as to what exactly this money will be used for this year. I see that there has been an increase in the allocation to the Faculty of Management? Does he have specifics on this?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, this is the last year of a five-year agreement. It was entered into by the community, the government, the faculty, indeed, the students of the faculty. The broad goals of that agreement were to try and double the number of first-year students or at least double the size of the faculty, I guess is the more appropriate term; to introduce a Ph.D. program; and also to try and increase the faculty by a count of 20, I think, somewhere around that number.

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

Ms. Gray: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, was this five-year plan then—did it include the fact that there would be an increase in allocation of dollars for the last year? Is that part of the plan?

Mr. Manness: Yes, this was a commitment undertaken by way of contract.

* (1630)

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Reimer):
Item 16.6(a)(4) Faculty of Management
\$1,139,000—pass.

Item 16.6(b) Community Colleges (1) Colleges
Secretariat (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits
\$214,200.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I am wondering if the minister has any comments or any form of evaluation of the new changes with the move towards community colleges; and, now that they are functioning under autonomous or semiautonomous boards, does he have any comments, now that we are into that system, as to what some of the positives have been or some of the negatives? What are some of the changes that

need to be made as a result of this move to governance?

Mr. Manness: I would suggest that I do not have—I cannot compare it to the way it was because I was not minister at that time, but certainly I am struck by an incredible enthusiasm by those members of the board who are now, for the first time, able to practice governance in a fashion where they can select the priorities. They can make decisions internally without fear of favour or government influence in trying to hold back or direct.

Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, still the government, because it does fund a significant portion as you can tell, in this case, seeking authority for over \$40 million, wants to know into what areas the board and their senior management wish to take the colleges, and I dare say it probably has some veto. Still, there is an enthusiasm there with trying to develop a vision as to where training should be going and where the colleges fit. That is brought home to me every time I meet with the board.

So I think a lot of the administrative changes that were required through the transition for the most part over—we have a few months of some minor cleanup, but by the time October rolls around, the transition is complete. So it has been certainly an onerous exercise, but one which I think has led to greater enthusiasm, certainly at the colleges, and I dare say, the students and society as a whole will be better for it.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, one of the concerns that we had when the governance issue first came up was whether it made sense to actually have autonomous boards for each community college or whether we should look at an overall board and a structure so that individual colleges fed into an overall board. Does the minister have any comments on how that is working as far as the individual boards?

Mr. Manness: I must say, from a different perspective I shared some of that view. When government was really coming to grips with that policy, bearing in mind that we really went out to the community at large and got a very strong

message from the community that they basically wanted to have their own boards, what we did then is very much focus on the administrative side. We really went to work to make sure—the member and I talked about administrative costs before—that there was not a significant overlap and duplication as far as materials purchasing and property management and all that. We ensured that still came under a common head, and we would not let the colleges set up these semidepartments within their setting. They had to buy those services, as a matter of fact, from the new special operating agency of the government that used to be the old Department of Government Services. So we have watched very carefully the administration cost to make sure that we do not have an exact mirror image of universities, where you have all of those high administrative costs built into that.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, we have seen with the community colleges a move to what I would call satellite centres. Parklands now has a campus. I think there are some courses that are delivered through Russell. Can the minister tell us, is that a direction that he sees for community colleges that we move towards more satellite operations of the community colleges here in Manitoba?

Mr. Manness: The purest form of outreach, given the technology that is coming in, I sense that it certainly will continue to increase, and rightfully so. But a caution has to be thrown in to all of the institutions, post-secondary, and I am trying to do this every time I meet with them: if it is a demonstrated area of need either in course, program area and/or in locational area and it can generate significant revenues, that is fine; if it is just as an exercise to begin to stake a claim and protect turf, then I am troubled by it. I am not overly troubled at this point with respect to the colleges setting up the satellites in their attempt to reach beyond their campus.

Ms. Gray: The minister talks about outreach, and that brings me to a question related to Distance Education which not only affects the community college section but other areas of the Department of Education. Certainly, in light of the Roblin

commission comments about increasing enrollment in community colleges and allowing for greater role of community colleges as part of education in Manitoba, I am wondering in regard to outreach of the community colleges and Distance Education, is there an overall government plan in regard to expansion of Distance Education? I ask that because I remember last year or a year ago in June with the former Minister of Education we talked a lot about Distance Education and the fact that there was a committee of cabinet or that cabinet in fact was looking at this whole area and there would be a strategy developed. I am wondering if that strategy has been developed and how specifically the strategy will affect community colleges and how they deliver programs and services or potential programs.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I have responded to that question in another point in these Estimates. I know the member was not here, and in fairness I will repeat it. Certainly that is developing posthaste at this point in time. The greater focus at this point is within the K-to-12 system, but certainly there is a strong and growing involvement by the colleges and their systems people into how we integrate all of our Distance Education outreach across the whole spectrum, not only K to 12, post-secondary, and not only Education but other services of government.

We are trying to develop very quickly the integrated model, and there is no question that the post-secondary institutions have a significant role to play. I encourage them, as I do daily, to be part of a global planning thrust, so that we do not find ourselves moving into a system that is unnecessarily fraught with overlap and duplication and all of the inefficiencies that go with having that type of system developed.

Ms. Gray: With the various boards of community colleges, is there any structure in place, i.e., the committee or group that is actually looking at the use of distance education, the use of Internet, and also how public libraries can play a role, perhaps in looking at some Internet services along with public libraries in conjunction with community colleges in some of our smaller communities that do not have specific access to courses?

* (1640)

Mr. Manness: The answer to all of those questions is yes, and I am hoping that I will be able to make a formal announcement with respect to what we do have in place, certainly before the end of the summer.

Ms. Gray: In the Roblin commission, it talked about an increasing role for community colleges which, I think, is very positive and that the community colleges should move towards, I believe it was, doubling their enrollment over the course of five years or so.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

My only concern with the recommendation was that it seemed to be made, possibly within a vacuum, or that there may have been a lot of information surrounding that recommendation, but if there was, it was not really part of what was contained within the commission.

Although I think we want to see an expansion of community colleges and their role in Manitoba, and, again, maybe this will pre-empt the minister's announcement, but I guess what I would like to know, what I would be really concerned about, is that community colleges all of a sudden move towards this target of increased enrollment over a certain number of years, and there not be a strategic plan or even a vision as to what the role of community colleges is in the province of Manitoba and what specifically their relationship is to Education and Training, and how that relates or how it interfaces with the universities.

In this announcement that is coming up in June by the minister, is there going to be a vision presented that outlines some principles of what this government sees as the role of community colleges and specific ideas and principles as to how we actually move towards, not necessarily doubling enrollment and looking at a specific number, but at least move towards having community colleges play a greater role in education and training in this province?

Mr. Manness: Generally yes, but specifically no. What we will be dwelling again on is universities and how they become more accepting of greater

articulation between themselves and colleges. But the same challenge, whether it is directly worded or not, will go to colleges and ask them, then, to become leaders amongst greater articulation between our students who are in secondary education, either in apprentice training and/or in vocational training and how it is they take a leadership role in bridging that area. I would fully expect that they would be more than willing to engage themselves in any discussions with universities as to how there is a greater co-operation between these two post-secondary levels of institution.

I just see it as an absolute essential occurrence, and the college system, if it does not want to become more involved co-operatively will pay a tremendous price for it in some fashion.

In talking to appointed boards of governors and in talking to management at colleges, they see where they have this incredible linkage role as we move into the next century and the tremendous emphasis that is going to be on pure skills, and I think they are up to the challenge. So I am not troubled by—I do not think—I guess what I am getting to, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, is that I do not think I need to give them strong, strong direction. I sense they are ready. They are ready to go, and whether or not you hit the stated goal of doubling the numbers or not, that in itself does not become a crucial number, to my way of thinking. It is more approach; it is more attitude; and it is more realization that we have to measure where this crazy world economy is going and whether or not you want to be part of it and whether or not you want to prepare a maximum number of students to be part of it.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, is the minister saying then that the boards themselves, are they specifically looking at a strategic plan as to how they might achieve some of the recommendations of the Roblin commission because the minister said his focus on his upcoming announcement would be on universities? So I guess my question is: What then is going to be occurring in terms of process either with the Department of Education and/or the boards to look at the changing role of community

colleges and to pick up on the recommendations from the Roblin commission?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we are going to put into place the general guidelines, as the government. We will be talking part-time programming. We have to address that. We have to address distance education. We will be talking about greater articulation, and, of course, we will have to be providing everywhere we can the same level during times of general reductions in funding and/or increasing funding beyond the norm, but within that context, the boards are going to—

Ms. Friesen: Did you say more money?

Mr. Manness: They will like this one. Are you going to vote against this one? This one is more.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) takes issue with the fact that we are presenting more money to the colleges. I am kind of distressed by that. I thought that I would have her hearty applause.

So the reality is that within those general guidelines and now given the new freedom that the boards enjoy to a degree, and the greater freedom has been in the area of flexibility, to be able to change rapidly, then, obviously, we sense that they understand their role extremely well.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, who provides input to the community colleges in regard to long-range planning, and how will the courses that are offered in community colleges, in not just next year, but the next five years, reflect the changing needs of what our workforce requirements are not only in this province, but elsewhere?

Mr. Manness: This is why colleges are working today, because it is a joint effort. Certainly, we give them direction, but so does the private sector and so does the community and so does the business community. They have great influence on the boards. So it comes from several directions, this input, but when we sit down, it is no different than the answer I gave to the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) when she asked more or less the same question with respect to universities.

The fact is, we sit down with the boards through our staff and say, look at, this is where the

government is focused with respect to the framework for economic growth. This is where the action is going to be. So we have no difficulty presenting that, and, of course, that is reinforced by input from the community at large outside of government. So the board, we would expect them to take that into account and react accordingly, and to this point, they certainly have.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, can the minister tell us then in regard to the position of the government, in terms of their framework for economic growth, where do they see the action as being over the next number of years, and where should community colleges be focusing some of their training?

Mr. Manness: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am going to read out the list, the same list I read out to the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen). Those six areas again: aerospace, agrifood processing, environmental industries, health care, telecommunications and tourism. Those are the six areas that have been targeted within the Framework for Economic Growth document.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, what kinds of information then in regard to those six areas do the universities and, in this case, the colleges have access to in regard to how they plan their courses? I mean, to list those six areas is all fine and well, but there must be accompanying information and documentation in regard to those areas and how it would assist colleges in looking at specific kinds of training that they would want to perhaps embark on in those areas.

Mr. Manness: Well, through labour market analysis and sitting down with the experts in that area—the member for Wolseley is laughing at me again, Mr. Deputy Chairperson—and, of course, consulting with the business community at large. Of course, there is an expertise there. After all of this information is distilled and comes forward, courses conceptually are put to print. From that, we look at conceptually what colleges are contemplating. If agreement is reached at our level, then the colleges start to begin to develop programming around those concepts.

* (1650)

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, have the colleges over, say, the last year, as an example, dropped any courses because in fact they felt they were not relevant or that in fact they were not meeting the needs of Manitobans?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, not last year, but, I mean, I should not, but I will, remind members of the significant reduction in courses that occurred three and four years ago. That was, of course, done by design, to a large degree.

Ms. Gray: The review on the community college sector management information system, does the minister have information as to where that particular review is at in terms of process?

Mr. Manness: Right now the colleges are studying the feasibility of developing their own system. The member is probably aware of that. Ultimately where that will lead, it is too soon to say.

Ms. Gray: Does the college have access to the other management information systems that are in various stages of development in the other departments and some of the successes and failures of how to reach an effective management information system? I ask that question because some departments have had more difficulty in developing management information systems, and I am wondering if the college has access to some of the pitfalls to avoid.

Mr. Manness: I am not aware of any failure since we have been in government. I know there were several before that with respect to information systems. I am not aware of any, but certainly, as the member knows, we have had now for several years, a review office within the Treasury Board, of course, that tries to make sure that whatever mistake has occurred in the past does not occur again. So, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, certainly the colleges are using that resource tool as they try and study other development plans.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I probably used the wrong word when I said "failure." I meant more difficulties or pitfalls that the Department of Health as one have had in actually reaching a

successful conclusion in developing management information systems.

I also wonder, and maybe the minister can answer these questions, I have had one particular course, a pest control course that is through the community college, some concerns expressed over that course. Does the minister or his staff have any specific information on some of these courses, if I were to ask those questions, or any evaluation?

Mr. Manness: I cannot recall a letter that I have had since I have been in this office with respect to any course. If the member would like to have greater detail on any course or any question around that or issue around a course, certainly, all she has to do is request that to me in writing and I will try to provide her with an answer, or a response at least.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it is some specific questions from one individual in particular. I had told the individual I would raise it in the spending Estimates, but I am not quite sure there would be that specific kind of information here. It is in regard to the evaluation of the program, and number of people registered, mostly about evaluation and the success rate. I am quite prepared to give those details to the minister and let the staff get back to me at another time.

I wanted to ask the minister, in regard to the community colleges and the strategic planning, if in fact those colleges, if there actually will be a plan that is developed that will be available for the community, and for opposition members and other people within the education field, to actually view and to have an opportunity perhaps even for input back into this type of strategic plan?

I think of also the business and industry community, not that there is an input in the colleges and boards already, but it is impossible to have all industries and all businesses represented in this kind of thing, so I am wondering if in fact there will be some process where a draft document would be available for people and there would be a process for providing input back to the various boards.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I believe they are all working on developmental plans and

strategic plans at this point in time. I would encourage the member to make an inquiry of the colleges and try and give direct input at that point.

I mean we are encouraging them to do this on their own, and I do not see where—is the member asking us then to intercept a draft, and when we review it, then to take it as our own and then extend it to her? I do not know really what she is asking.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I was asking if the minister was aware if the boards and colleges would be having a process where they would be asking for input from the community at large in regard to what they see as their strategic plan.

My other question would be: Does the minister have a sense of what type of time frame the colleges would be looking at to come up with an initial strategic plan in regard to an expanding role of community colleges?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we require them to have a multiyear plan. They have a number of mechanism consulting going on, I understand, right at this point, so they are mandated to do this. Although I do not have it with me as to specifically what they are doing right at this point in time, certainly, they are engaged in that process right now.

Ms. Gray: Maybe I can ask the minister, I had a few questions about the private vocational schools. Is this the appropriate time to ask those questions?

Mr. Manness: It was actually in Section 5, but we can try and handle them, yes.

Ms. Gray: I apologize if these questions have already been answered, but I wonder if the minister could indicate what type of monitoring and evaluation mechanism is in place in regard to the dollars that go to these various private vocational schools that are registered with the department.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Before we refer back to that, is there leave of the committee to refer back to private vocational schools?

Ms. Friesen: I have no problem with that, but I will be asking some questions on colleges when it comes back.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Okay, then with leave, we will refer back.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we do not provide any direct funding to private vocational, just to the colleges that we are addressing right now.

Ms. Gray: The individuals then who attend some of these colleges such as Robertson College, et cetera, where is the funding provided from?

Mr. Manness: One of three areas: their own support; secondly, student loan; or direct grant from the federal government or a combination thereof.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, what type of system is in place with a number of these private colleges to ensure that there is not overlap with the kinds of programs that are being offered at the community colleges?

Mr. Manness: We try and provide equal opportunity to students, and where they choose to take their schooling—and when I am talking equal opportunity, I am talking loan support, primarily—and where they choose to access or what level, we are silent. We do not try and steer students one direction or another.

* (1700)

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The hour being 5 p.m., I am interrupting the proceedings of the committee for private members' hour. We will resume at eight o'clock. Thank you.

JUSTICE

Madam Chairperson (Louise Dacquay): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will be dealing with the Estimates for the Department of Justice. We are on page 109 in the Estimates manual.

Would the honourable Minister of Justice like to make an opening statement?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Chairperson, I do have an opening statement. As Minister of Justice and the Attorney General of Manitoba, it is

my privilege to be here to present the Estimates for Manitoba Justice.

The facts, figures and data contained in this document are at best only a modest indication of the accomplishments of the department and its dedicated staff who are responsible for its day-to-day operations. I commend my staff for their ability to meet the challenge of operating a government department with such a wide range of responsibilities. The challenge to identify and respond to the needs of the people of Manitoba is a tremendous one. Manitoba Justice is responsible for their safety, their rights and access to a justice system sensitive to these needs.

* (1430)

One fact that makes this challenge more difficult than it may appear is that society is not a stationary entity. It is constantly evolving, adapting and moving forward. To remain relevant, it is important that those institutions and structures which seek to serve society respond to this process of change. Manitoba Justice has done more than simply respond.

The list of accomplishments by the department makes me very proud of what I and many Manitobans believe to be one of the most effective and innovative justice systems in Canada. Initiatives and programs we have introduced reflect the positive interaction between the judiciary, the department and the community.

We have taken every step possible to ensure Manitoba's justice system remains flexible and responsive to social concerns and issues around us, for example, the establishment of our domestic violence court, with its focus on cases of spouse, child and elder abuse. It is unique in North America and has attracted great interest and numerous inquiries from other jurisdictions.

The prevalence of violence in our society, especially with its overwhelming impact on women as the majority of victims, is a major concern. As Minister of Justice, I have committed to working with all the community and our partners in the justice system to curb this trend. I believe this court is one method of accomplishing our goal. Dealing exclusively with family violence

is an essential tool in the enforcement of our zero tolerance policy on violence against women.

The court is a direct response to the growing public awareness and concerns of violence in the home. I am aware that the result of creating this court has been an 85 percent increase in caseloads. It has placed enormous stress on our Crown attorneys and our courts, but we are working to address those concerns quickly and comprehensively.

We continue to monitor the length of time taken to process various matters through the courts. The most important fact here is that Manitoba has not had any charges stayed by the courts because of undue delay in bringing the accused to trial. The fact that our domestic violence court exists, that the judiciary and Crown attorney are committed to its concept, that we have co-operated so effectively to address a specific issue in our community and that we are bringing these offenders into the public light is sending our message clearly.

The Courts Division has been the focal point for many other responses by Manitoba Justice to community issues and concerns. We are very positive about the common offence notice system about to be introduced. Scheduled to begin on June 13 in Winnipeg, this initiative will see the regional court centres on stream in September of this year. The automation of the common offence notice system will allow for the electronic transmission of these notices from police to the courts and for all dispositions, notices, trial scheduling and accounting functions to be included.

This new system offers improved control of tickets provided to policing agencies and offers better service to the public by allowing tickets to be paid anywhere in the province. The new system has created internal efficiencies through a redistribution of work and between courts and the Driver and Vehicle Licencing Division that resulted in savings for Manitoba.

On May 17, in our continuing effort to improve service, the Summary Conviction Court introduced a debit card technology to speed customer payment. The Summary Conviction Court is the first government program to offer this

service, and early reports indicate that it is being well received.

The Maintenance Enforcement Program has been another area of the courts from which we have worked to improve. We have increased the staff by five over the last two years to process work faster. Although cases involving payers residing out of the province are the responsibility of other jurisdictions, we have been taking those actions available to us. Manitoba has been issuing federal garnisheeing orders to secure income tax refunds, GST credits and other federal monies on behalf of Manitoba residents. The program is taking steps, where appropriate, to seize RRSPs and other types of property, to collect maintenance arrears.

The Family Law branch and the program staff will be meeting with community organization representatives and the Family Law bar to explore ways of improving the Maintenance Enforcement system. The director of Family Law is a member of the REMO subcommittee established by the Federal/Provincial Family Law Committee to review legislation and procedures and to recommend changes to improve the enforcement of interprovincial maintenance orders.

We are also reviewing our legislation and comparing it with other jurisdictions in an effort to develop initiatives which will help us improve its efficiency and its effectiveness. As I stated earlier, our creation of the domestic violence court has been one method of focusing our resources on a community concern. In our view, domestic violence remains a key priority of my department, and we will continue to develop responses to address this issue.

The Domestic Violence Review has served as a springboard for many initiatives designed to improve the response of our justice system to domestic violence cases and violence against women. Since the completion of the review, all sectors of the criminal justice system have implemented significant reforms. In the area of victim services, for example, we have improved funding for shelters, crisis centres and committees, women's resource centres, treatment services and other needed supports for victims.

The Women's Advocacy Program is expanding from Winnipeg to Brandon, Thompson and The Pas to serve rural and northern women. An additional staffperson was hired for the program in Winnipeg. Other supports we are overseeing include the Child Abuse Witness Program and the Victim/Witness Assistance Program. We have also concentrated on improved information sharing to ensure victims are more fully informed and advised of the developments of their cases. Our policing and prosecutorial services are included in our initiatives.

* (1440)

Manitoba Justice has co-ordinated the development of protocols for the police response to domestic violence. Comprehensive dispatch and investigation protocols now exist for police. We have included recruit and in-service training programs for police officers on domestic violence. We are also providing three education courses containing family violence components to Crown attorneys annually.

Manitoba Justice has developed and implemented programs for offenders, such as the 12-week mandatory program for sentenced domestic violence offenders. A comprehensive Corrections protocol has been developed for the institutional and community-based management of domestic violence cases.

The development of additional training program for staff, the establishment of a family violence corrections unit and the delivery of multicultural treatment programs for Filipino, Spanish, Polish, Vietnamese, Laotian and Portuguese clients have all improved the correction response to domestic violence cases. Separate initiatives in aboriginal communities such as Waywayseecappo have also been launched to assist them in confronting domestic violence.

Other initiatives we are very proud of at Manitoba Justice include the development of a women abuse guideline by the College of Physicians and Surgeons for all doctors, along with hospital protocols.

We have introduced amendments to The Family Maintenance Act to introduce expartite nonmolestation orders.

We are covering transportation costs to shelters and temporary housing for women and their children.

Manitoba Justice has been involved in the implementation of educational curricula for school children on domestic violence, and provision has been made for ongoing judicial education in this issue.

Tighter restrictions on access to firearms acquisition certificates and firearms by those convicted of offences have been imposed.

Another issue within the province which Manitoba Justice has responded to has been the recent escalation in the rate of youth crime. Offenders coming into contact with the justice system are doing so at younger ages. Obviously, in too many cases, there are severe limitations upon our entire legal system because of the youth of the offenders. Manitoba will continue to work with federal legislators to help redefine the Young Offenders Act to give us better advantage in dealing with these cases.

Crime, youth or adult, is a community-wide concern affecting all ages and all sectors of our society. Therefore, all sectors of our society must be involved in finding the solutions. The Youth Crime summit hosted by my department in December has helped us to develop initiatives to confront this problem.

Manitoba has adopted an aggressive position on preventing and responding to youth crime and violence. Our position is one balanced between tougher measures and criminal justice initiatives and community involvement in the prevention and the response to youth crime.

The summit brought together more than 500 youth, parents, elected officials, agency representatives, police, teachers and concerned individuals to focus on this issue. From this summit I introduced my department's nine-point plan.

We are in the process of establishing a gang and youth contact line to serve as an initial contact point for youth, parents and victims of violence. The phone line will offer help in obtaining various support services and will help Manitobans who wish to provide confidential information on youth gangs or violent activities to police.

The Youth Crime Intervention Team is a multidisciplinary group designed to increase communication between agencies and concentrate intervention efforts on high-risk youth and gang members. The team consists of police, prosecutors, Corrections and child welfare officials, educators and others. The team is currently developing proposals on client data bases and has identified a number of initiatives to be undertaken in the coming month.

A proposal has been submitted to the federal Solicitor General asking the federal Solicitor General to participate in a joint, three-year project in Winnipeg, and we expect their reply shortly.

The provincial Council on Youth Crime is a committee of experts established to serve as a resource to community justice committees, neighbourhood-based and community-based groups. Chaired by Mr. Gill Tyrrell, a security consultant and the designer of the successful Unicity Mall program, it works closely with the Corrections Division and will begin meetings with justice committees outside of Winnipeg. Meetings have been held with Justice committees within the city of Winnipeg. This process will help bring recommendations from communities across the province before the committee and Manitoba Justice for consideration and possible development.

In February, I stated my intention to seek changes to the Young Offenders Act, to ensure a strong legislative base, that the strong legislative base existed for the protection of the public.

In March, at the meeting of federal, provincial and territorial Ministers of Justice, I presented the key points of Manitoba's position on reforming this act. The points are: virtually automatic transfers of youth to adult court who are charged with serious offences; a presumption in favour of

transfer; creating a category of dangerous young offenders; reviewing methods to ensure parental accountability; targeting repeat and heinous offenders under the age of 12 for interventions. My departmental officials have been working with their federal counterparts to review potential amendments, and we are expecting a formal response shortly.

In addition to reforming the act, I have announced other measures. These include delaying the driving privileges where Manitobans or young offenders have been convicted of offences which relate to driving. It is the safety of Manitobans and the responsible driving which we are focusing on with any changes that will take place here.

In April, the Manitoba government co-hosted a school-based antiviolence workshop for over 250 police, teachers and youth-serving agencies. Winnipeg was only one of eight cities across Canada chosen to host this pilot project. The Training for Trainers focus allows them to return to their workplaces and teach the curriculum to students, staff and other community workers.

I have proposed youth camps in response to the concern of the correctional management of young offenders. The youth wilderness camps are intended to bring about a stronger discipline and structure to the institutional management of these offenders. This is a made-in-Manitoba initiative, and we believe this will balance stricter consequences with appropriate treatment and intervention.

A number of proposals have been received from external agencies wishing to administer these camps. The proposals are being reviewed, no decisions have been made, and they were received unsolicited. We also continue consultations with various groups such as aboriginal agencies, on this particular proposal.

In February, I announced the creation of a violence prevention consultant position to be a part of the Department of Education. This consultant provides training and assistance to school divisions, teachers and others, to help prevent or respond to school-based violence. That consultant will also participate in the creation of a central

resource centre containing research and program materials on prevention and intervention. The consultant also participates as a member of the Youth Crime Intervention Team and the Department of Education's violence intervention team.

Manitoba Justice is committed to addressing youth crime, and we present these actions as indications of our seriousness to protect Manitobans.

In Manitoba, the crime prevention fund has been a valuable resource in helping communities participate in the confrontation of youth and adult crime issues.

We have provided a series of grants in support of their actions and projects. These include \$4,000 to the Crime Prevention awards program to stimulate and encourage community input; \$2,000 to the God's Lake Narrows gun storage facility to help remove firearms from potentially deadly access; \$4,300 to Manitoba Crime Stoppers program to help them expand their program into rural schools; \$3,600 to the Winnipeg police department minority summer youth employment program; \$15,000 to the Citizens for Crime Awareness Winnipeg to help with the Neighbourhood Watch program in conjunction with the City of Winnipeg Police Service.

These and other grants made under the fund have helped my department to support community responses to their own specific needs more effectively. Manitoba Justice has also been involved in working with groups such as aboriginal communities to address their needs and concerns surrounding the justice system. For example, Manitoba Justice has been consulting with First Nations communities to achieve a First Nations policing in those communities. We are committed to ensuring these communities receive a level of police service that is community-based and consistent with the level of policing throughout Manitoba. With their participation, we have developed a pilot program with the DOTC under the guidelines of the First Nations policing policy.

Manitoba Justice is very proud of the progress that it has made on many fronts. The issues and topics I have presented here are in no way a complete or a comprehensive inventory of our many initiatives. The Estimates before this House go into these in greater detail.

As the Minister of Justice and Attorney General, I believe that my department has made enormous strides in meeting the needs of Manitobans and in safeguarding their persons and their property, but at the same time, I will concede that we are not finished. There is much more work to do and many more goals to be achieved. However, I am confident that with the support of my staff, the courts and, of course, Manitobans themselves, we will be able to make this province a safe and desirable community for all of us to live in. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): I have some brief remarks. I first want to say that the Supplementary Information is a tremendous aid in going through the Estimates and something that was not here in the days when I was last in the Chamber. I appreciate the work that goes into that. I think it must be a lot of effort that goes into that on the part of staff and the minister's office.

The object of the Estimates discussion, as I see it, is to not engage in debate so much as to seek out answers to questions on areas of vital concern to Manitobans, as well to ensure that the department and the minister are accountable to Manitobans through that process. There are some themes and some areas of concern that I will be addressing in particular.

I acknowledge that there have been some positive improvements made in the delivery of some programs in the Department of Justice. At the same time, Manitobans are very concerned about some trends that appear to be developing within the administration of justice in the province, in particular in these areas. First of all, in the Family Violence Court, Manitobans are increasingly concerned and I think I am certainly

concerned more now than I could ever have been about the backlog in that court.

The minister has talked in Question Period about a four-and-a-half month backlog. I do not know how she arrived at that figure. It is absolutely astounding that that figure was presented to the Chamber, and we will be dealing with that at length. We know that the backlog in that court is extending up to one year for trials, and we will want to discuss with the minister in detail how she plans to deal with that backlog that is threatening the very purpose of that court. I fear that it is going to cause a very serious problem when faced with the reduction in the number of full-time judges, as well, the imposition of Filmon Fridays over the next several months. I think that by the end of the summer, we will be in a very severe crisis unless action is taken immediately to deal with that issue.

As well, in the Family Violence Court, I am very disturbed to see the report, although two years old, but talking about delays up to 18 months in processing child abuse charges. I am also aware of that situation not getting any better. I am aware of a recent case where there is a backlog of about two years for at least one recent decision. I do not have the data on the other cases. I will be exploring that further with the minister as well.

* (1450)

The second area is the government's response—and I would like the committee to engage in an audit of the Pedlar report recommendations as to where they are at now. My colleague the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) will be contributing in that area as well.

I generally sense that the priority given to women's legal issues, women's justice issues, women's issues has been inappropriate, although there has been some movement. I think we have to elevate the status of those issues within the department and within provincial government generally.

In that regard, the third area of concern is the Maintenance Enforcement office. I am aware of the problems of accessing officers, of finding out what is going on with one's file. I am aware of the shortcomings in the legislation. While at one time

I think that office was a model in North America, it now has really fallen behind. It is behind the pack. It is certainly not fulfilling its objectives as it should.

I want to explore with the minister ways of improving the Maintenance office, not just in terms of resources but in terms of a different legislative scheme, one that can ensure that arrears will not occur in the first place and, second of all, once arrears arise, give new powers to the state and to individuals to get payments made on a timely basis.

The fourth area I want to explore with the minister is the response to the area of rising youth crime in Manitoba, in Winnipeg, in particular. One subtopic there will be the backlog in the youth court which I understand has now reached approximately 11 months and on for many, many cases.

Finally, again talking about a new role, an elevated priority for a group of Manitobans, that is, victims of crime, we will be discussing in detail the Victims' Assistance Fund and Victims' Assistance programs, and also would like to canvass a new role for the victim when charges are laid and there is a court disposition. I think for too long victims have been left out of the process, and that does nothing for the well-being of Manitobans, let alone the changing of behaviour of the offender.

So those are my areas of concern. I look forward to sharing of information and to working as our parliamentary system has enabled us to do towards a better system of justice for Manitobans.

Madam Chairperson: We will now have the opening comments from the critic for the second opposition party, the honourable member for The Maples.

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): Thank you very much. I have been both looking forward to and dreading this first round at Estimates as a new MLA.

An Honourable Member: You did not get a haircut?

Mr. Kowalski: No. I have been looking forward to it in that I have been told when I have met

members of this Legislature, and told how I am surprised at what goes on here during Question Period and I have not exactly enjoyed the process, they said, you will enjoy Estimates. It is more consensus, more of a sharing, more of a talk. So I am looking forward to that if that does happen here.

I have been dreading it because as a member of a much smaller caucus without the resources, without a lot of the supports of a lot of other MLAs and with a number of duties, I am not as well prepared for this process as I would like to be, but I am looking forward to this being a learning experience. This is the first time through Estimates, and I am hoping to learn more about the department.

I know something of the Justice department, because in my position as a police officer, of course, I worked with the Justice department on many levels. I have worked in Community and Youth Corrections as a probation officer since the now-Minister of Health, former Justice minister signed my designation as an honorary probation officer and designated our Maples justice committee as a justice committee in Manitoba.

So I bring some background to this that I hope I can share. I am not naive enough to believe that anything I share will change any line in the Estimates, but I hope it will be taken into consideration and will move some of our debate in a certain direction.

I enjoyed the comments from the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) about what the process is to hold the government accountable and to clarify some policies and procedures of this government. One thing that I noted was one time when the member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs) mentioned about when the government gives money, that it is not the government's money, it is the people's money. When we in this Legislature authorize expenditures, it is the people's money. Although it is part of the political process for the government to take credit when they give grants to citizens for crime awareness or for crime prevention, that is the people's money. I guess if

we are giving it to them, we are not giving it to someone else. So I take that with a grain of salt.

I am looking forward to working with this Justice minister. We have a history going back from when I was a school trustee and she was Education minister. I met her father, a retired police officer, in Toronto. I also know how difficult her task must be following in the footsteps of a Justice minister whom, I cannot take back my words, as a police officer I congratulated for many of his good initiatives dealing with the impaired driving problem in Manitoba. So she has a tough act to follow.

Just replying to some of the comments she made in her opening remarks, she talked about accomplishments of the staff. I think no matter what party will be in power, the bureaucracy in the Justice department is a good bureaucracy. There is a lot of good staff. I have worked with them, and I have seen their commitment on many levels. It goes above and beyond the call of duty on a number of levels.

She talked about society constantly evolving and moving forward, yet I will be looking for clarification. I sense a tone in government policies to go back to the way it was, back to the good old days. I think that the good old days were not necessarily as good as we remember them. There was a lot of social injustice. There was a lot of injustices that went on in those good old days that are coming to light now, whether it was abuse to women or children, in so many different areas. The good old days were not as good as what we fondly like to remember. We have selective memory.

On domestic violence, I have seen personally the generations and how domestic violence in one family will be passed on to the children, to the grandchildren. Anything that we could work together on to help solve this problem, I think, can be appreciated, because we have an opportunity here. We have someone who has a legal background as one Justice critic here. We have someone who has a background as a child psychologist, someone who has a background as a police officer. Although we are in an adversary

political system, maybe there is something that we could share here to solve some of these problems.

The other thing we talked about was the length of delay in dealing with charges. I have seen over the 20 years working as a police officer that delay has gone up and down. It is nothing new. The more charges that are put in, of course, there is going to be a longer delay. Some of the reasons, in my biased opinion, for the increase in charges are the social fabric of this province falling apart because of some government decisions on priorities. Of course, that is my bias, and I will be speaking to that, but it is something that we have to work on together.

I believe my role as a critic, just as a movie critic applauds a good movie, is that if there are good initiatives here, I think the government should receive support for them, always with the fear that once you support, then come election time, you will not be able to criticize, but that is again part of the political process. One of the ideas here that the government is putting forward, electronic transferring of info for the common offence notices, I applaud that initiative. That is good; that is going to help police; that is going to help the justice system. I applaud that.

* (1500)

Maintenance enforcement: our caucus has received a number of concerns about this. Our Family Services critic is very involved with looking at the government's policies and actions on this. I am looking forward to the Estimates to finding out exactly how much money is going where to deal with this problem. The phone calls I receive are talking mainly about the delays, and it is not just to get the information. The bottom line is the money, the money to help the families and help the children.

As I have mentioned in this House before, one of the things that brought me into politics was the problems to do with youth, not just the crime but the suicide rate, unemployment rate, the pregnancy rate among youth, but part of that is youth crime. I think it was a member of the minister's staff, Cathy Everett, at the youth summit, mentioned that right now the justice system is dealing with many things

at the tail end of the problem that should not be a justice problem, that it should be dealt with earlier in the process, at an earlier age intervention, so eventually they do not become a justice concern.

The Young Offenders Act, of course, as any other act, constantly needs review. As society changes, our legislation changes, and although I am still looking for the appropriate forum to put forward our views, the minister has questioned a number of times our caucus's position on amendments to the Young Offenders. I would be glad to share with the minister our party's position on that; of course, it needs the review and revision. As society changes and our children change, that legislation has to change.

Talking about the youth summit, I also attended the youth summit and enjoyed it very much, but I think we have to be careful that, as in any communications, if we filter what we hear through a bias, we could use the message from that youth summit to give credibility to whatever actions we want to take. So I applaud the minister for having the youth summit, but some of the responses and some of the credibility given to the actions taken from that, I would have to disagree with. I think what I heard at the youth summit is that the emphasis should be on prevention instead of a lot of the reactive policies. This is a complicated problem, and I think we should not try to indicate to the public that there are simple solutions to it.

The Youth Crime Intervention Team: I think the more often that the police, Corrections, and the education system work together, the better it is.

The provincial council: I believe in Estimates I will have some questions about some of the membership of that council.

Youth camps, of course, have received a lot of attention in Manitoba. Whether they are called boot camps, wilderness camps or youth camps, I am interested to see what type of money will be going into this project, what kind of money to monitor, if the government does decide to go to some of these private proposals—the same as with nursing homes, where it has gone to private—that there has to be some type of inspection to see that

the programs that are put forward by these private groups are followed.

To leave my remarks—I guess they were not that short. I am looking forward to this process, and I hope that my questions and comments will both be helpful, and I hope they will help indicate our caucus's position on many of these issues.

Madam Chairperson: I would remind the members that item 1.(a) Minister's Salary and Resolution 4.1 will be dealt with at the conclusion of discussion and passing of all other line items.

At this time I would ask that the minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

Does the honourable Minister of Justice wish to introduce her staff?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, I would like to take a moment to introduce Mr. Bruce MacFarlane, the Deputy Minister of Justice; Mr. Stu Whitley who is the Assistant Deputy Minister of Prosecutions; Mr. Bruce Miller who is the Director of Winnipeg Prosecutions; and Mr. Pat Sinnott who is the Executive Director of Administration and Finance.

Mr. Mackintosh: What I would suggest to the minister—and we can discuss the different areas of concern—but under Executive Support what I suggest we do is discuss areas that go across different divisional lines within the department. For example, under this item, under (b) we deal with the Pedlar report, for example. I just wonder what her view is on that particular item.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, I just need to clarify for the member. If he is speaking about the administration of each of the divisions that we could perhaps cover it in one set of questions, I am not sure we would have the personnel available to assist with some of the detailed questions he may have. Item 4.1.(b) deals with the Executive Support in the minister's office.

* (1510)

Mr. Mackintosh: I do not know if the minister will have the staff support that she will want any time later than this to deal with Pedlar, because it is across a lot of divisions within the department.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, I am informed that we could deal with issues relating to the Pedlar report, that the staff here should be able to assist in answering those questions.

Madam Chairperson: Is that the will of the committee? [agreed]

Mr. Mackintosh: Just so we know where we are going, another area I would suggest might be appropriate under this head is dealing with youth crime, because it is not simply a youth Corrections issue, of course, and it may be best that the deputy and Mr. Whitley are here for that and Mr. Miller.

Mrs. Vodrey: I was just clarifying if the member wanted to deal with the nine-point plan specifically, because other issues as they relate to youth will come, as the member knows, under Courts and Corrections.

To continue, the recommendation is that it might be wise to deal with youth crime then in that holistic way rather than the very specifics under 2.(a) in Prosecutions and particularly under special prosecutions.

Mr. Mackintosh: I think the best place to deal with it is where the minister has the administrative support available, but I just wonder, since the nine-point plan deals with a lot more than prosecutions, in fact it deals almost entirely with matters unrelated to prosecutions, if there is not a better place, including now, but I defer to the minister.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, I certainly want to co-operate with my colleagues because I understand for all of us this is really a very important issue. I just am advised that this particular line dealing with my office may not be the place. However, we may be able to do some grouping of the issues in the wider discussion under the area of prosecutions, if that is helpful to the member.

Mr. Kowalski: Just on the introductions, I know everyone there except one gentleman. Is it Pat Sinnott and where does he work? What area?

Madam Chairperson: The honourable Minister of Justice, the question asked was the clarification of your director of Administration and Finance.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, the member was correct. Mr. Pat Sinnott is the executive director of Administration and Finance.

Mr. Mackintosh: I do not know how long it will take to deal with Pedlar, but another matter that I just put the minister on notice I would like to deal with under this area is the Chief Medical Examiner, not with regard to the details but with regard to the investigation issue as well. I think it would be more appropriate to deal with that before we deal with the examiner's office in particular.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, there is a very specific line in the Estimates for the Chief Medical Examiner's office and all that relates to that office, so questions around the Chief Medical Examiner's office should come under that line.

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, the reason I raise that, and with all due respect to the Chief Medical Examiner, I wonder if it is appropriate that the Chief Medical Examiner be here when we are discussing issues of investigation of his particular conduct, the conduct of the examiner.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, I am informed that certainly in dealing with that line, the Chief Medical Examiner does not have to be sitting at the table if that would be helpful in discussing that particular issue.

Mr. Mackintosh: The member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) and I addressed a letter to the minister, albeit relatively late in the process, but it was asking for a recommendation-by-recommendation status report on Pedlar. I am wondering if the minister has compiled anything either orally or in writing, preferably in writing, that can guide the discussions.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, the letter was received last Thursday, I believe just Thursday afternoon when we received the letter, Friday, so I can tell the member that we do not have a submission for him today. However, I am more than happy to try and deal with the issue.

The whole Domestic Violence Review has served as a springboard for numerous initiatives which have been designed to improve the response of the justice system. As I refer to the Pedlar report

itself, I believe it was on Roman numeral page VIII in the report itself, it had recommended that it was to be viewed comprehensively, as opposed to point by point.

Now, we will certainly endeavour to provide the members with the information available. However, we do not have that, as I said, in writing for them, but I am certainly prepared to answer or attempt to answer questions that the members would have.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Yes, I am aware that the Pedlar report should be looked at in its entirety. As I have stated before, I think it is a magnificent document and one that can be used and should be used as the basis for the actions taken by the Department of Justice.

I do have some questions on specific recommendations and specific groups of recommendations within the context of just understanding that the Pedlar report does need to be viewed in its entirety, and one of the strengths of the Pedlar report is it does talk about the requirements that need to be fulfilled by not only the various elements of the Justice Department, but also Family Services, Health, Education, et cetera, and I think that is one of the best parts about the overall Pedlar report.

My first question is in the Response to Victims category, the category B. I would like to ask the minister if she can give us an update on what the status is of the Community Advocacy Response Teams.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, that particular model is one which I understand the Pedlar group was particularly interested in. I understand the previous minister, however, in reviewing that did speak about that as a very expensive model and did respond that that was a particular model which would take—certainly its implementation would require significant planning.

At the moment, I would like to tell the member that there are a wide range of possibilities which are being reviewed. The implementation committee of the domestic violence court has the responsibility of implementing and are looking to do so in a very holistic and across-system way. They are not only looking simply at the court itself.

As a result of their work, I would just like to stress that there are a wide range of possibilities, that among them, which is currently being looked at.

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. I wonder if I might ask the honourable member for Wellington to move to her own seat to ask the questions. The leave that is granted during Committee of Supply is to have the official critics move to the front row to pose questions of the minister, but other members are normally recognized in their own seats. I actually erred in recognizing you the first time.

An Honourable Member: I wonder if there would be leave of this sitting of the committee in the Chamber to allow for the member to sit next to me here in the front benches.

Madam Chairperson: Regrettably, I cannot give that leave. As I understand it, it has to be the leave from the entire Chamber. The Speaker asked for consent and leave to do what we normally do in practice. Any deviation from that, I would suggest, would have to be dealt with through the whole House in a quest of leave by the Speaker.

* (1520)

Ms. Barrett: Madam Chair, I apologize for sitting in the wrong seat.

The minister spoke about a committee that is looking at the implementation. Is this the implementation committee that the minister is referring to or is it another more specific committee?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, there is an implementation committee chaired by the chief judge and from that implementation committee is a working group, and it is this working group which is looking at the wide range of possibilities, this among them. So it is the working group.

Ms. Barrett: The working group for the entire Pedlar report—no.

Mrs. Vodrey: No, it is not the Pedlar working group. It is a working group that comes from the implementation committee.

Ms. Barrett: Can the minister then, while we are talking about committees, give us an update on the

implementation committee that was, I believe, established after the Pedlar report was tabled that was to look at the implementation of the entire list of recommendations that were found in the Pedlar report.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, I just want to make sure that we have distinguished for those who may read this in Hansard later the implementation committee we are speaking about.

There is an implementation committee which is the implementation committee for the domestic violence court, and it is from that committee that the working group looking at the range of possibilities—that group flows from that implementation committee.

I believe the question that was just asked speaks about an implementation committee for the Pedlar report, and with that particular committee which is chaired by the Assistant Deputy Minister of Prosecutions, that group is currently in the process of putting together a response document, but the response document will go further than Pedlar, because since the Pedlar report, there have been a number of other issues which have come forward. I would reference, for example, the stalking crisis. I would also speak about the charging protocols, and also a federal document.

So this committee is now putting forward a response which deals with the range of issues and is using that as a springboard for response. It will be a comprehensive response.

Ms. Barrett: Can the minister give us an idea as to when this implementation committee coming out of the Pedlar report will be reporting to the minister?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, I am informed that a good part of the work has been done, but what has occurred very recently is the federal report, the royal commission, the Canadian Bar report. Those reports, by theme, may be reflected, but the importance of the work is not reflected at this point.

So the committee will be looking at making sure that those reports and the concerns within those reports will be reflected in the document. I would

look forward to seeing that document by the end of summer or early fall.

Ms. Barrett: Will the minister then, when she receives this document, be tabling it or a summary of it or some information about that report so that we can see what the outcome of the Pedlar report and all of these other federal reports is for the province of Manitoba?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, I see no problem in making that available.

Ms. Barrett: I appreciate that from the minister.

Another area of the Pedlar report that is I think a very important one, not only in its specific recommendations but the impact it can have on potentially breaking the cycle of violence and moving us forward is the Response to Abusers section, section C.

I would like to ask the minister what the situation currently is regarding the recommendation about an educational program for abusers involving no more than 10 sessions, the short-term program for abusers. What is the status of that? What is the wait list, if any? Where are these programs being offered?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, I am sorry. This is one of the difficulties in figuring out the best place to put the discussion around Pedlar. That is being looked after in detail by Corrections.

When we get to the Corrections line, we will be able to give the member information regarding programs available within the institutions, also programs available in the Community Corrections side, and I think we can answer those detailed questions that she has asked.

Ms. Barrett: Throughout the Pedlar report, there are recommendations dealing with training for virtually every member in every category of person who works in the justice system—the police, the Crowns, legal, paralegal, judges, magistrates, hearing officers, correctional and probation officers—dealing with the issues around the cycle of violence and all the other aspects. One of the areas that I think is one of the best things in the Pedlar report, and an area that I think can be translated as well into the health system, the

education system and the family services system—can the minister give us an update as to how that training for all of those various components is happening, and what percentage of the individuals have been trained, that kind of thing?

* (1530)

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, I think that the training is important too, and in terms of the Crown attorneys who are in prosecutions, the six Crown attorneys who are part of the family violence court receive concentrated training in this area. However, I am also told that now we are beginning to add this as a section in every training course for all of prosecutions, so that there will be some who are trained in depth, but there will be some training at least available for everyone.

In terms of the police, certainly during cadet training this is a part now of their training. There is a segment on domestic violence.

In terms of judicial education, I do not control judicial education, but I can tell the member that I certainly understand or am advised that the issues relating to domestic violence and family violence are included on their agenda.

In terms of Corrections, we might want to talk about this further in the Corrections area, but I am certainly informed, particularly in the area of Community Corrections, that all the Corrections officers and Community Corrections have had some training in the area of domestic violence. I will have to check the details within our institutions exactly whether it is all members or if it is just specialized individuals. Then, within the response document, I am informed that certainly all of this information will be available as well in terms of where the training has occurred and where the training dollars have been spent.

Ms. Barrett: The minister responded saying the six Crown attorneys, dealing in the family violence court, had a concentrated program, and then there is going to be an addition of a section or is being added a section, training for all prosecutions. Now does that deal with the legal, paralegal, magistrates, hearing officers, et cetera, or where would those individuals come in?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, I am sorry, I do not mean to be difficult in the answering of these questions, but those employees fall within the Courts Division, and so on the courts line, I will be able to provide a more full answer. I hesitate to give a global response at the moment.

Ms. Barrett: I appreciate that, and I think this is the way we can move through Pedlar. Now, when the minister said that their cadets have as part of their training a section on domestic violence, what about training for police officers who are currently on staff, many of whom have been police officers for many years and many of whom may not be as aware as they might be of the situation regarding domestic violence?

Mrs. Vodrey: I cannot give the member a comprehensive answer regarding active police officers; however, we will undertake to check with the four major forces, including the DOTC, to find out exactly what training is being offered and the amount and availability of that training.

Mr. Kowalski: If it would help this process, I could tell what happens in the Winnipeg police force. Every five years, every member goes in for a refresher course, and part of that refresher course now is domestic violence. There is information given on that now.

Ms. Barrett: I thank the member for The Maples for that update, so we will look for the further discussion about other police forces.

The area of legal and paralegal assistance for victims, recommendations under a grouping of (g), can the minister give us an update on the recommendation that a legal advocacy office be established for women and that this office would include a toll-free telephone line?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, I would just like to take a moment to thank the member for The Maples, also, for his inclusion of information that is helpful.

In terms of the advocacy, I know the member is familiar with the Women's Advocacy Program, and I just thought it would be important to speak about that because that certainly does respond to a number of the concerns Pedlar raised.

The Women's Advocacy Program, as the member may know, does include an individual who is legally trained, and, also, we have not yet through Justice established a toll-free line. We are expanding the Women's Advocacy Program to rural Manitoba—Brandon, Thompson and The Pas.

Ms. Barrett: Is there a line? I apologize for not being as aware as I should be of the Estimates in this department this year, but is there a line on Women's Advocacy that we can investigate some of this in further detail?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, in victims services.

Ms. Barrett: Yes, I have a question, again, in this same category about Legal Aid Manitoba. Is this the appropriate place to ask those questions and recommendations of Pedlar.

Mrs. Vodrey: The line for Legal Aid is 6.(b).

Ms. Barrett: I believe what I will do, then, is go through the Estimates, and now that I have some indication as to where these specific items should be dealt with, we will ask those questions under those particular items.

Madam Chairperson: 1.(b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits.

Mr. Mackintosh: We are certainly aware of the police response to the government's zero tolerance announcement in Winnipeg and in Brandon as well where they have detailed police protocols in place.

I am just wondering what steps the government has taken to ensure that there are similar protocols being developed and that zero tolerance is in fact being implemented at the police level in other areas in Manitoba, for example, in the RCMP detachments and the other municipal forces in the province.

* (1540)

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, I am informed that from the start of these policies, we made sure that all police forces were included and were a part of these policies, including the military, so that everyone was working from the same basis.

Mr. Mackintosh: My concern remains that when we have so much work and effort and so many detailed provisions for the police in both Winnipeg and Brandon, the absence of those provisions outside of those two cities causes some concern as to whether there is an appropriate response. I leave that with the minister.

I am wondering, given that the zero tolerance policy of the government is not really a policy—it was an announcement; it was a press statement—and there is no detailed policy available to Manitobans, what concerns and action has the minister had and taken about police investigations to ensure that the police are investigating domestic violence incidents as they would with any other incidents, or perhaps even more thoroughly, by interviewing other available witnesses and obtaining physical evidence?

In short, the question is, has the provincial government taken a role to spur the method of police investigation in domestic violence cases?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, first of all, in terms of the action, as I answered in the previous question, police were involved in the development of the protocol. In the development of the protocol, there certainly was a recognition of the traditional bias against family violence coming forward to the courts, a sense that this was in fact a private matter, and a recognition that there is a special dynamic between the victim and the accused.

So as police were involved in the development of the protocol, these issues were explored with police. Certainly now they would recognize or should recognize when called to such a scene that they would need to look elsewhere in recognition of the special dynamic, that that would be a basic part of the policing.

Mr. Mackintosh: I know the Pedlar report recommended changes to The Provincial Police Act, specifically to empower the Manitoba Police Commission to develop regulations for the police in responding to partner abuse allegations.

Has the minister and the department considered amendments to The Provincial Police Act, at least in regard to that issue?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, at the moment the method that we have chosen to deal with this issue is again through policy and also through communication and through working together. That, to this point, seems to have had some effect. However, the issue of legislative amendments does remain open to us should we decide that this is not working under the present circumstances.

Mr. Mackintosh: I would certainly urge the minister and the staff to have a hard look at that act, not just with regard to this issue, but generally in regard to discipline standards for police across Manitoba, I think the legislation is in need of an overhaul. I note from the Pedlar report that it was recommended that there be discussions with Queen's Bench to see if that court might establish a family violence court as with the Provincial Court. Is the minister aware of what the volume of family violence cases are that are going to Queen's Bench rather than to the Provincial Court?

Mrs. Vodrey: I understand that we do have those available to us. We do not have it here today, so we can undertake to bring those figures to the member and the figures, I would remind him, are prosecutions figures and do not relate to any civil actions.

Mr. Mackintosh: I thank the minister. I would appreciate receiving those figures. Have there been any discussions with officials of the Queen's Bench with regard to establishing a family violence court at that level?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, I am told that the Chief Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench has not raised that issue in regular discussions with the deputy. However, the ADM of Prosecutions has approached that idea with the Chief Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench.

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, is the minister aware whether there are ongoing discussions within the Queen's Bench as to the establishment of a family violence court at that level? Is it under active consideration?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, I am told that to our best knowledge, I do not believe that it is.

Mr. Kowalski: I do not know if this is the appropriate place to ask this question. Since the zero tolerance on abuse was introduced, the number of women charged with violent offences appears to be significantly increased. Do we know the number of women who have been charged in the increase?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, I just want to clarify from the member, are you speaking about increased number of women charged, or are you speaking about a counteraccusation charge?

* (1550)

Mr. Kowalski: An answer to both questions would be helpful.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, I am informed that there is an ongoing study to look at that at the moment, and that the numbers have increased to the point that it has caused us to want to look at those, and particularly a concern expressed in the area of counteraccusation.

Mr. Kowalski: What programs are there existing to provide support and counselling to those women who are convicted of spousal abuse?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, the member speaks about women who have been convicted, so it becomes an issue that the Corrections Division may have information on in terms of numbers. If we could defer the question to the Corrections Division, that would be helpful.

Mr. Mackintosh: Is there currently any review of the bail procedures and the procedures on granting orders of prohibition and nonmolestation in domestic violence cases?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, I am informed that there are instructions to all Crown attorneys to seek protection orders in respect to complainants and also that where they are in a bail hearing, in cases where bail may not be opposed, at a minimum, the Crowns then seek written restrictions or conditions which circumscribe the kinds of behaviour that is expected of the accused.

Mr. Mackintosh: I will refer to a particular circumstance, the one that Mr. Miller and I have been dealing with. I do not know how widespread

the practice is, but certainly, I guess, one is enough for a concern, where there has been a breach of a nonmolestation order or probation order and another one is simply granted again with regard to the same aspect of the order. I have some concern about that, where there is proof before the court of a breach of a particular aspect of an order and yet the order is again granted. I am just wondering if the minister has dealt with that particular issue.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, I can speak in general terms about the issue. Certainly we are concerned where there have been breaches, and the member has raised an issue where there has been a breach. I can tell him that certainly the direction to Crowns is again to be very vigorous at bail hearings and to make sure that issues are taken into account that would be important particularly for the victim. So, beyond that, I am not sure how much more I can answer the member. A position is taken by our Crowns. It is a vigorous position, and then the judge makes a determination. Was there something in addition that the member had in mind and wanted to discuss?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, I believe the minister has a letter from me, dated May 11, and that issue is addressed in there. I can await the answer there.

I wonder if the minister can provide to the committee—I do not know if this exists—a written directive to the Crown regarding procedures on bail applications, on prohibition and non-molestation orders.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, yes, we can provide that to the member. We do not have it with us today, but we will certainly see that he receives it.

Mr. Mackintosh: Pedlar also recommended that the government of Manitoba consider whether there can be provincial legislation to supplement the federal firearms provisions in the Criminal Code. Has the minister's department undertaken a study to determine, No. 1, the constitutionality, and, No. 2, the practicality of provincial supplementary provisions for gun control purposes?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, I am informed that this is one area which is best dealt

with under special prosecutions. The staff who work in special prosecutions should have that information. The appropriation number is 4.2.(d) for the member's reference.

* (1600)

Mr. Kowalski: I notice one of the Objectives in Executive Support: "To co-ordinate, administer programs and activities of the Department in order to meet statutory and government policy objectives." As far as the allotment of Crown attorneys in the different courts, whether it is the domestic violence court, youth court, traffic court or whatever, is there a tradition of hierarchy that the most junior Crowns are in youth court? And, I am wondering, in the other courts, whether it is in the violence court and that, is there a makeup of Crowns of different levels of seniority, or do we have a situation where we have the most junior Crowns in some courts and the most senior Crowns in other courts?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, in response to the member's question, I am told that it was at one time a practice where there were the Crown attorneys of least experience in the youth court. I am told that that is no longer the case, and, as we reviewed those very quickly, those Crown attorneys who are operating in the youth court, they are, by and large—the majority are Crown attorneys of experience. So, as we have reviewed the department, we have not been able to find that there is any area of the department which has a larger number of inexperienced Crowns and all areas have Crowns of experience. Particularly, the area of family violence, though, and youth have experienced Crowns.

Mr. Kowalski: The other area where, and correct me if I am wrong, I am sure you will, is that certain levels of court have gone away from provincial court judges and gone to hearing offices or magistrates. I believe traffic court is one area. There are other levels where this could be looked at going away from provincial court judges to either hearing officers or magistrates. At one time, for example, bail hearings were all done by provincial court judges. Now it is done by hearing

officers. Are there other areas where there is that possibility?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, that really is a very major question for consideration in terms of how the courts operate, but for a further discussion I might recommend that we look at that under Courts and the appropriation would be 5.(d) for your reference.

Mr. Mackintosh: Where does the minister want to deal with double charging? I understand there is a new directive as of last week or two weeks ago on that, and where would be the appropriate place to deal with questions?

Mrs. Vodrey: We will deal with it now if that is helpful.

Mr. Mackintosh: I have a document called Counteraccusation Charging Directive of May 19, 1994, which I understand is the new directive. Has that been now circulated to police throughout Manitoba?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, yes, I am informed that it has been circulated and is also in the process of being circulated. So certainly it is our intention that it has been out, but whether all police services have had the opportunity to review it yet, I am not entirely sure.

Mr. Mackintosh: Were law enforcement agencies consulted in putting this directive together?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, I am informed that the department has had discussion with the RCMP and also with the Winnipeg Police Service senior executive, and they were in agreement that this is a problem that does need to be addressed by a charging directive.

Mr. Mackintosh: It says in the directive that the Crown opinion should be obtained before proceeding with charges against a victim of violence, and there are certain conditions which would apply. Is it contemplated that one particular Crown attorney be assigned to that role?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed that within Winnipeg, we are looking at that consultation to be within the family violence court rather than one specific Crown attorney, but Crowns operating

within the family violence court. Within the rest of Manitoba, we are looking for that to occur with the regional director.

Mr. Mackintosh: I am just wondering, I have not thought through all the pros and cons, but I am just wondering if it might be appropriate to have one particular Crown charged with that responsibility, so not only is there accountability but there will be expertise and a particular sensitivity to this issue.

Has that issue been considered?

Mrs. Vodrey: The expectation is that these would be overseen by the senior Crown of the domestic violence court.

Mr. Mackintosh: The issue of double charging has been a very difficult one, particularly for those who have had to face charges and enter the system. I think it has been an injustice for many, if not most of them.

I am just wondering what policy there will be for those who have already been charged?

Mrs. Vodrey: I, too, agree that this is a serious concern, which is certainly why the issue has been examined. I am informed that the cases have been few. They have been very rigorously scrutinized by Crown attorneys from the domestic violence court. Outside of the city of Winnipeg, I am informed that we have not had any reported to us, and so it may have been that those have been resolved at the local level, but certainly within the city of Winnipeg, they have been subject before this time certainly to a very rigorous scrutiny.

Mr. Kowalski: First of all, I am wondering if I could obtain a copy of that directive, if that would be possible to get that from the minister.

The second question is, I am not too sure if I understand this directive. How does a police officer going to a scene of a domestic dispute decide who is the victim and who is the assailant, the one that is hurt the most? How do you decide who is countercharging whom? I am not too clear.

* (1610)

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, I am just in the process of seeing that the member for The Maples has a copy of this charging directive so that he can

refer to it. I am informed that the analysis is a legal analysis, and it is done based on the police report. So I think, when you have had an opportunity to look at the policy itself, that may assist in answering the question.

Mr. Kowalski: Just in the meantime, sometimes there is action taken at the scene, and the police officer has to decide if they take both spouses away or one spouse. Before I read through this directive, again the question is, when there is immediate arrest, there is action taken, someone is taken out of the home, and is this directive telling the police which person to take out of the home? I am not too sure.

Mrs. Vodrey: As the member knows, the focus on zero tolerance is the separation of the parties so that the abuse cannot continue, so that there is some immediate relief.

In looking at the picture, the police officers look at evidence that is available to them. We have listed in the Counteraccusation Charging Directive certain areas that should be examined, that would be helpful to examine, but in the long run, there is no doubt that we rely on the good sense and the judgment of the police officer within the zero-tolerance policy.

Mr. Kowalski: Reading that directive, it just talks about the principal offence. How is determination made about which is the principal offence? Is it the person who calls and is making the original allegations? If that is the case, what happens on a call when there is a third-party complaint into a domestic violence incident? How is it decided which is a principal offence?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, these policies are guides. They cannot capture within them all possible scenarios; however, they are meant to be used as guides. We have provided a way to look at this, certainly to examine some areas.

In some cases both individuals will be charged, and they both may be equally at fault in some cases. But in other cases, it may be obvious that one is a victim, and that may be obvious by the experience of the police officer. So there is a number of criteria which will be referred to.

The member references a third party calling. We would have to pay attention to what the third party did say. Who did the third party report may have been crying or may have been screaming or may have been the one where the concerns were then registered by the third party?

So I would again say that the policy is a guide.

Mr. Kowalski: I will just add one comment.

I would not like to see the police put back in the position where they are going to be the judge and decide who is the aggressive spouse and have to decide there who is the principal assailant and who is the secondary one. Because I think that is what this zero-tolerance policy has tried to get away from, leaving the police in the position to decide at the scene. I will have to look at this more closely, but I am concerned at putting the police back in the position of being the judge at the scene.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, I would say to the member that we agree. We do not want to go back to that time before zero tolerance, but there has also been a recognition that a very strict application of that zero-tolerance policy has led to, in some cases, a handful of injustices or concerns, so what this is intended to do is to provide some fine tuning, to be of assistance.

I can assure the member that we certainly will be monitoring how this works, and we will be in contact with police services across the province in terms of any concerns that police officers are raising.

Mr. Mackintosh: Under the section titled Policy is it actually contemplated that the Crown opinion must be obtained?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, of course there is a recognition that the police do have the right to lay charges. This is a recommended course of action. However, in cases where police are extremely sure of the situation, then they would go ahead with the rights that they already have.

Mr. Mackintosh: I have another question. I am not sure if the suggested matters for further investigation that are listed under that paragraph entitled Policy are only to take place after the Crown opinion has been sought, or is it

contemplated that you get the basic facts, you go back to the Crown and then, if necessary, you go back and do the further investigation? I am just not sure as to what was contemplated there.

Mrs. Vodrey: I just want to clarify from the member that his question was under policy. Having looked at the issue he has spoken about under policy, is it then possible that our Crowns may then want to proceed with charges under the other areas which are listed applicable offences? If that was the question, the answer is yes.

Mr. Mackintosh: I will just leave it at this. I think there is room for some confusion on the steps that an officer must take and the steps that one has to go through before a decision is made as to whether charges are laid or not. I am just wondering if there is a plan to have a training session with officers or with law enforcement officials in Manitoba about this policy.

* (1620)

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, we will be sending a follow-up letter to the police services across the province. There will also be a follow-up meeting. Where there are ambiguities or concerns that have been raised or questions, then we certainly would seek to clear up any of those ambiguities through those measures.

As I said to the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski), we certainly will also be monitoring this particular policy to look at its effectiveness and to look at how it is actually being implemented.

Mr. Mackintosh: I may have some further questions on the policy later on, and perhaps we can deal with that under Prosecutions or wherever that may fit, but I do commend the minister and her department for addressing this issue. It may be that there is some further fine tuning required in regard to double charging, but we can address that down the road.

I think we have dealt with Pedlar for now as much as we can under this heading. I wanted to move on to another area.

The Health Care Directives Act was recently proclaimed by the government. I am wondering if

there has been any public education program either implemented or planned by the department to advise Manitobans of their new rights under this legislation?

If the minister can recommend where this should be raised, I would be pleased to raise it where she has the appropriate staff available.

My understanding is that under Executive Support there usually has been some latitude in dealing with general issues across policy.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, I just had an opportunity to speak to the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae). The member asks about a public information campaign, or an opportunity for the public to understand this, and I am told there is a public information campaign which would be conducted by the Department of Health.

Mr. Mackintosh: I am certainly aware of an education campaign conducted by the Manitoba Medical Association which has been quite vigorous. Is the minister aware of whether a program has, in fact, been announced and whether it has gone public?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, as this relates to the Department of Health, I will undertake to find the information for the member and see that he receives it.

Mr. Mackintosh: I want to deal with the issue of the appointment of judicial vacancies in the Provincial Court, as well as the compensation package awarded or made available to judges of the Provincial Court, and I ask the minister where it is most convenient that that be dealt with.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, for the member's reference it is item 5.(d).

Mr. Mackintosh: In the throne speech the government announced that it would be seeking legislative amendments to make young offenders more responsible for their actions by denying driver's licence to individuals under 18 who have had any convictions. I am asking this now, or whether it would be under Policy and Planning, as to—I would like the minister to comment on whether the government has received a legal

opinion as to whether that constitutionally can be done.

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed that, yes, there is an opinion in the process of being put together, and, yes, the government does intend to bring forward legislation. The details of that legislation, however, I will not be able to reveal to the member until that legislation is tabled in the House.

Mr. Mackintosh: My concern really regards the scope of that remedy, in other words, denying a driver's licence to a youth who has had any convictions. I am just wondering if that is the subject of the legal opinion being sought. I certainly am very—I find it very attractive that one would take away certain privileges of the road when those privileges are violated, where one has been involved in car theft or car vandalism or otherwise abuse the rules of the road and certainly would support that kind of legislation. What I would support broader, I do not know, but I would just like to know the legal basis of the ability of the government to take away a licence for any conviction.

Mrs. Vodrey: I certainly understand the point the member is getting at, and I certainly understand the issue. Basis of the legal opinion is to, again, look at the issue of scope and that the activity be tied to an area of provincial responsibility constitutionally. I can tell the member that I expect to be tabling that legislation very shortly. I believe a number of the questions will be answered at that time, but I accept his comments.

Mr. Mackintosh: I would like to deal with some issues regarding drinking and driving. Is it convenient to the minister that they be dealt with here?

* (1630)

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed that under 1.(c), I should have available a staffperson who may have further information available.

Mr. Mackintosh: With regard to what is generally known as the antisniff bill that was enacted by the Legislature, I think, last session, could the minister advise whether there has been any public

education campaign undertaken by her department about that legislation?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed that my department specifically has not undertaken a public awareness campaign; however, we have made sure that information has gone to all police services across the province regarding the types of evidence necessary.

Mr. Mackintosh: On the understanding that the nine-point plan and other youth crime issues can be dealt with later, I am prepared to pass right up to (f) at least, and we can deal with Computer Services.

Mr. Kowalski: I am not too sure if I understand this process correctly. Would we be passing all of page 21 if we did that, everything that is on 21?

Madam Chairperson: I do not have the Supplement open in front of me. I have the actual Estimates manual.

Mr. Kowalski: I just have some questions about page 21 here, more for my information to understanding the process. Under Other Expenditures, there are a number of changes in Estimates of Expenditures for 1993-94 and Estimate of Expenditures for 1994-95. The two questions I have, what were the actual expenditures in 1993-94, is that information available? Secondly, why the differences in those categories?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, I am informed that the final numbers for 1993-94 are not yet available. The books have not been closed. But I am informed also that the area where there might be some discrepancy is that benefits are now included, and that would be up in the Salaries and Employee Benefits. That was not included in the line before. If the member is speaking specifically of other expenditures in which we have, in most lines, looked for a reduction this year, if there is a specific area, I will certainly try to answer it.

Mr. Kowalski: Maybe I ask much, but I am interested in all of the reductions. What can they be generally attributed to?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, managers did undertake to attempt to reduce expenditures to

eliminate nonessential kinds of spending. The two areas that the member mentioned under Other Expenditures, Transportation and Communication, it is an undertaking then to reduce the nonessential expenditures in those areas and to commit to the reduction, recognizing these are also the minister's office.

Madam Chairperson: Item 1.(b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$380,100—pass; (b)(2) Other Expenditures \$81,300—pass.

1.(c) Policy, Planning and Special Projects—

Mr. Mackintosh: I had forgotten. That was the area where the drinking and driving issue would be raised.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, I did not know if we would reach this point this quickly. I am informed that the staffperson is on a plane back, so if it would be helpful to the member, why do we not try to answer the questions now? Then I will undertake to bring information back that I am not able to provide him with at this time.

Mr. Mackintosh: I think all Manitobans have lauded the government's efforts to deal with drinking and driving in a meaningful way, and I know it is often said and I hear it on the radio that we have the toughest drinking driving laws in North America, but oftentimes I question even then if it is tough enough.

I am wondering if the government is looking at further improving the drinking-driving laws in Manitoba. I know that the minister and I were at a meeting recently of the Citizens Against Impaired Driving where a number of different policy options were talked about, and recently in one of the local papers there was some speculation that the minister might be considering pink plates.

Just, first of all, on that issue of pink plates, what is the minister's position on that one? Was that speculation on the part of the media, or is that in fact in the works?

* (1640)

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, that issue was not presented at any time to the ministers who very recently, as recently as last week had a meeting

with Citizens Against Impaired Drivers. Three ministers were present, and none of those recommendations were brought forward.

So the Minister of Highways (Mr. Findlay) had undertaken to take in this information, to look at it. However, concerns have been expressed that that particularly notes only the car and does not speak to the driver, and the Minister of Highways also in his public comments spoke about concerns around constitutional matters, so that has never been formally presented to government.

Mr. Mackintosh: So I take it that, because it has not been formally presented, it is not under active consideration by the department at this time.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, not the Department of Justice, no. I cannot speak for other departments, but not ours.

Mr. Mackintosh: Is the minister aware of any kind of—what the backlog is for drinking and driving cases in the courts? Are there any statistics that deal with those kinds of charges?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, I do not have the support staff from Regional Prosecutions here, but I am informed from Winnipeg Prosecutions that in the area of drinking and driving a date can be accommodated within one to two months.

Mr. Mackintosh: I understand that the problems now really are the repeaters. I am wondering if the government has any plans to deal with that issue.

Mrs. Vodrey: I am not able to commit to a plan today, but I can tell the member that very recently ministers did meet and discuss the concerns around repeaters. CAID is one organization which has presented some issues around repeat offenders to government, and so we have had discussion very recently on that issue and certainly now are looking at the numbers of repeaters.

Mr. Mackintosh: Does the minister or the government currently have a position as to whether the drinking age should be raised or not?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, that issue is probably best discussed with the Minister responsible for the Liquor Control Commission (Mr. Gilleshammer), who may be able to provide

further information as that falls into his department.

Mr. Mackintosh: I know that the blood alcohol content level right now is set at .08, and there have been discussions by organizations, for example, like CAID. I think there are some other jurisdictions which have a lower blood alcohol content tolerance; CAID, for example, has argued for .05. Does the government, the minister have any policy or have any position on that?

Mrs. Vodrey: CAID did present some concerns around the blood alcohol content level. There was a recognition at that presentation, however, that this is a responsibility found within the Criminal Code and that it would require amendments to the federal legislation, and they are also aware of that area of responsibility.

Mr. Mackintosh: I know Ontario, I think they introduced a graduated licensing system just recently. So it appears to be becoming more acceptable to move toward that kind of licensing system. I am wondering if the government has looked at that kind of a program and whether it has a position on it at this point.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, that area of responsibility falls to the Minister of Highways (Mr. Findlay), and so the questions would best be posed to the minister responsible.

Mr. Mackintosh: I am wondering what the minister's view is as to the workings of the current drinking and driving law in Manitoba and what opinion she would offer as to how that can be improved so that Manitobans are better protected. I certainly understand that there are other ministers that can be responsible for this, but I do see it as primarily a Justice issue. I think it has been the—certainly the former Justice minister has led the pack, so to speak, on this. I am just wondering what the opinion of the minister is as to what more we can do.

Mrs. Vodrey: In this area, first of all, I appreciate the recognition that the member provided for our colleague, the former Minister of Justice, who did lead in this area, and certainly government then provided for changes which dealt with the

seriousness of drinking and driving. We do not want to stand still. We do not want to assume that all things are corrected by a current action. There are a number of ministers who are involved, however, and the Minister of Highways (Mr. Findlay) and the Minister of MPIC (Mr. Cummings) and the Minister of Justice are engaged always in discussions of improvement.

If the member is asking for a specific initiative today, I would want to be careful not to suggest a specific initiative because decisions have not been reached at this time. However, I think that he should know that we take the issue very seriously. In an earlier answer, I commented on concerns around repeat offenders, that we know we have certainly had an impact on, in some areas, drinking and driving, and now our concerns are focusing on repeat offenders.

Mr. Kowalski: In this area, research and special projects, under this category, prior to putting out the nine-point plan, and part of the nine-point plan being boot camps/wilderness camps, I am wondering what research was done to look at the effectiveness of that type of correctional facility. Was there research done by this department prior to that being instituted?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, the whole idea of boot camp, the term boot camp and the term wilderness camp, was to speak about our concern and recognition, and recognition that Manitobans also held, that within our institutions we wanted to make sure that it was a rigorous confinement. So what I did, at the time of the announcement, was put forward certain principles around which we would be developing our made-in-Manitoba solution. Those principles were, first of all, very well-known and well-recognized rules. It has certainly been my experience, and I am sure the member's as a police officer, that some young people simply do not know the rules or do not realize that the rules apply to them. So it was to put in place an opportunity for those young people to experience the rules that when rules are broken, there be well-known consequences also.

There was also the principle that the environment should be austere. The environment

should not be a comfortable environment, in some cases, far more comfortable than individuals have experienced at other times. The wilderness camps or boot camps should also be characterized by a very high level of activity. There should not be the time just to sit and watch television or to entertain each other, that in fact this should be an experience which added structure to the young person's life.

With those four principles in mind, which formed the basis of the announcement, we then looked at research as to what had been shown to be extremely successful and what had shown to be not so successful.

From the very beginning, my statements were always prefaced by the fact that this is a made-in-Manitoba solution. This is a made-in-Manitoba movement towards rigorous confinement. The terms were always meant to conform to the principles that I had put forward.

Mr. Kowalski: The question was, the last part of what I was looking for is there was research done into the effectiveness of each principle in this program. For example, with this Guidelines For Proposal To Operate A Youth Camp, there is a criteria for programming including recreation, substance abuse, school, cognitive restructuring, work, fitness, awareness. In all these categories again the question is, is it being done because it feels right, or is it being done because there is researched evidence that is showing this will reduce the amount of youth crime?

* (1650)

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, there is certainly in all areas research on both sides—research which says, in some cases, a very rigorous confinement does not necessarily assist in recidivism, and there is other research that says that it does.

The one characteristic which we found to be the most important was that those four principles would be in place during the period of confinement, but that following release there would be a very strong and intense follow-up or support. It seemed from the research we had done that one of the areas lacking was the follow-up, and that recidivism then occurred because there

was not the next step. So in the made-in-Manitoba solution, we are looking at those principles which were the principles around which we decided to develop this as a system of very rigorous confinement, but also with always the recognition that there needed to be a follow-up.

Also, from the very beginning and the first announcement, there was never any suggestion that we would be eliminating the needs for treatment. There is a recognition that individuals who come into our institutions may have problems of drug and alcohol and substance abuse, and at the moment, we also have opportunities for people to gain insight into their criminal behaviour. The basis of the rigorous confinement within our institution will be very focused on the four principles but also with the inclusion of necessary treatments and also a strong follow-up.

Mr. Kowalski: Is it possible to have a broad knowledge of what research projects this department is investigating right now? Especially in the area of prevention, what is the department looking at in the areas of prevention? What research, what pilot projects are being done right now in the area of prevention?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, in relation to this particular line, which is research being undertaken by our Policy and Planning, some of it which is in progress now, there is not a specific research relating to prevention. However, if the member would like to speak about the kinds of prevention programs which are currently ongoing, we might talk about it in 2.(d) which is the Law Enforcement Services area, and I think that we will be able to speak about the kinds of prevention programs and support to prevention programs which we are giving currently throughout Manitoba.

The list that we have for Policy and Planning's research does not include prevention programs.

Madam Chairperson: 1.(c) Policy, Planning and Special Projects (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$315,700—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$154,900—pass.

1.(d) Financial and Administrative Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$985,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$238,400—pass.

1.(e) Human Resource Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$647,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$137,900—pass.

1.(f) Computer Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits.

Mr. Mackintosh: I wanted to deal with the computerization of the Maintenance Enforcement office. Is this a good place to raise that?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed that that is probably best discussed, for the member's reference, under line 5.(a), where I will have available to me the staff from Court Services and be able to give the member more detailed answers.

Mr. Mackintosh: I know in some other jurisdictions there have been projects to put sentences of the provincial courts into the computer, and one can punch in certain variables and spit out the sentence, the precedent that could apply. I know this was done in British Columbia a number of years ago, not many years ago, and I think what it does is it provides certainly guidance for the court when sentencing.

I am particularly concerned about the guide for the court on maintenance orders. I understand there might be a study right now currently ongoing about what is the appropriate level of maintenance support for children. I am wondering if there has been any consideration and any action to put into a database precedents of the Provincial Court so there is a guide to the court in sentencing or in giving maintenance orders.

Mrs. Vodrey: I certainly appreciate the member's question. I understand what he is looking at trying to achieve there. I am informed, however, again, that under 5.(a), where we can deal with the whole Maintenance Enforcement Program, we will have the staff available to speak about any studies which have been looked into in terms of assisting Maintenance Enforcement in any of those areas.

Madam Chairperson: Item 1.(f) Computer Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$766,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$416,800—pass.

Item 2. Public Prosecutions.

Given there are 30 seconds, I would suggest that the hour being 5 p.m., and time for private members' hour, I am leaving the Chair with the understanding that this committee will resume at 8 p.m. this evening to consider the Estimates for the Department of Justice.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

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

* (1700)

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Res. 13—Social Policy Review

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): I move, seconded by the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), that

WHEREAS social programs are important to Canadians, and are valued for redistributing income to the poor, as well as providing important services such as child care and universal access to medical care; and

WHEREAS during the 1993 federal election, the Liberal Party campaigned on a platform of preserving and protecting social programs, a promise which has not been fulfilled; and

WHEREAS the federal government has stated that the purpose of its social policy review is to restructure and modernize social programs; and

WHEREAS the 1994 federal budget forecasts a \$5 billion reduction in social spending over the next two years; and

WHEREAS an independent study found that the changes proposed by the federal government will cost \$1 billion and will force 40,000 Canadians onto welfare; and

WHEREAS many of the cuts will hit the unemployed, and other vulnerable groups like seniors and students, particularly hard; and

WHEREAS cuts to welfare benefits in First Nations communities are unfair; and

WHEREAS continuing high rates of unemployment have a significant social cost, forcing a large number of Canadians and Manitobans to rely on welfare, and contributing to poverty in our society.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the federal government to consider putting cuts to social programs on hold, and ensuring that any future restructuring or redesigning of social programs does not result in a reduction of assistance to the poor, the elderly, students, or members of First Nations communities.

Motion presented.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Speaker, I think the main purpose of this resolution is to say that while we are not opposed to the federal government's social policy review, we do think that it has been going too quickly and needs to be put on hold and rethought. We are opposed to the budget cuts which have already happened and which are proposed to happen in future budgets.

I would like to begin with the first WHEREAS of my resolution which says that Canadians value social programs. The Liberal government in Ottawa has done some public opinion polling on this, and it is very interesting. In fact, I even offered to share this paper with the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson), so I must make good on that promise.

I will quote from it again. This is Mr. Axworthy's paper. It is called: Social Security Reform Communications, the Public Environment, the Strategic Overview in Communications Action Plan, Tabling of Government Action Plan on SSR and Communications Support to Public Consultations Phase. This is a strategic communications draft confidential document of March 21, 1994.

Parts of this document concern me. On the other hand there are some very interesting things in here as the result of the public opinion surveys that they did. What they found—and the first statement is Public strongly attached to current social programs, for example: 94 percent support for benefits for the disabled; 90 percent support for

benefits for seniors; 78 percent support for young people to get jobs; 73 percent support for unemployment insurance; 72 percent for support for assistance to students; 71 percent support for workers compensation; 62 percent support for skills upgrading; and 50 percent support for welfare or social assistance. The only one that was not 50 percent or higher was 44 percent support for relocation assistance.

That is a fairly long list of social programs. It is very obvious that Canadians do value and support these programs. In fact, I think that any government would be foolish if they campaigned on a promise to get rid of any of these programs. In fact, the federal Liberal government did the opposite. They said, we will protect our social programs; we will enhance our social programs.

Of course, as we know, Liberals run like New Democrats and govern as Conservatives. The proof of that was in the budget where they cut money to unemployment insurance. I have some stats on that, because the cuts were quite substantial. The reason I asked the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) a question about that today was that this has an implication for the province of Manitoba, and we learned this in Family Services Estimates last week, that the gross cost is \$4 million but because it is cost-shared 50-50 under the Canada Assistance Plan, the actual cost to Manitoba is \$2 million. That is the result of the federal government cutting the eligibility for unemployment insurance so that fewer people will go on unemployment insurance, which is a cost-shared program between employers and employees. These people will now be applying for municipal assistance or provincial social assistance, and that is a cost half of which is borne by the taxpayers of Manitoba. So we are already seeing that this has negative implications for the Province of Manitoba and for the individuals involved.

The next WHEREAS says that the Liberal Party campaign on a platform of preserving and protecting social programs, and, as I have already said, some of the evidence appears to be contrary to that. The cuts are already there. Perhaps I can find some of the figures. Yes, here is a Globe and

Mail story from February 26, which says that in the budget on Tuesday the government announced a \$5.5 billion cut in unemployment benefits over the next three years. So there is one example.

Another example would be a Free Press article from May 25 which says: "Martin's budget said federal payments to provinces for social assistance would be cut by \$1.5 billion in 1996-97.

"It also cut unemployment insurance by \$2.4 billion in the same year and said Axworthy's social program reform will lead to 'further significant reductions' in UI spending.

"The advisory group's bottom line: Changes to social programs will include spending cuts, including federal payments to provinces."

I think that will be and is of great concern to the Province of Manitoba. I expect to hear the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) put on the record some of her concerns on behalf of her government about the implications for the Province of Manitoba as a result of those cutbacks, one of which I have already mentioned.

The resolution says that "the federal government has stated that the purpose of its social policy review is to restructure and modernize social programs." I think that there was probably no one saying that we need to modernize and restructure. I think what this really refers to is the fact that we are in a very serious recession, and the result is that the cost of government goes up, because as unemployment increases people are on either unemployment insurance or social assistance and that is a burden on the public purse. I think that was the main reason for the concern. I think, regardless of whether the Conservatives had been re-elected or a new Liberal government was elected, either of those two parties would have had a major focus on this simply because of the cost.

I am not saying that that is an unreasonable reason for looking at the cost. I guess my concern is why they are doing it and how they are doing it. I think that one of the reasons is simply to save money, not just to modernize and to restructure.

* (1710)

I have already mentioned that there will be a \$5 billion reduction. In fact, my figure was wrong. It is more than a \$5 billion reduction. I underestimated the amount of money that the federal government projects to save. I have already quoted the figures about the 40,000 Canadians going onto welfare.

My concern is that these cuts will affect people who are unemployed, particularly vulnerable groups like seniors and students. If the federal government would just look at some of the successes of the past and imitate those, we probably would not have a problem here. For example, if you look at different groups of people who are defined as poor in our society, there has been one group that has had a significant reduction in the number of people in poverty over the last 25 years, and that group is seniors. There are a couple of reasons for this. One of the reasons is that more and more seniors have been in paid employment in the past, and so they have got Canada Pension benefits coming to them when they retire and company pensions when they retire.

There is also another group of people, some of whom have been employed in the paid workforce and some not, who are benefiting from the guaranteed income supplement. So, if you look at the stats over the last 25 years, there has been a steady and continual decline of the number of seniors living in poverty. That is—to give credit where credit is due—because a federal Liberal government brought in the guaranteed income supplement.

The suggestion that I would like to make is, why do they not do the same thing with other groups? Why do they not say, we are concerned, for example, with families with children living in poverty? Say, okay, we are going to do the same thing. We are going to provide extra benefits to families with children so that they do not live in poverty and adopt some of the goals of the Campaign 2000, whereby all parties in the federal House of Commons agreed on a target of eliminating child poverty by the year 2000. If the Liberal government were to do that and were to say, we are going to target families with children, and we are going to have goals, and we are going

to reduce the number of children in poverty over a number of years, that is something that we could support. It worked in one area; it could work in another area.

There are some very easy and positive ways of doing that. For example, if we were to make compulsory having pensions for everyone in the paid workforce, which the Saskatchewan government is moving on doing, then when those people retire, they would have higher incomes. If we extended pay equity to the private sector, which Ontario has moved on doing, then the income, particularly of women, would be increased, and fewer women, particularly single parent women, 60 percent of whom live under the poverty line, women who are heads of households with children—if we were to do that, we could help raise their income and have fewer single parents with children living below the poverty line.

So there are a couple of ways that we could make a difference to those groups in society. The background papers that have been put out by the federal government are quite interesting to read. One of their focus papers talks about disincentives to work. There really are disincentives to work. That much I agree with. Some of them are the inability of people to get child care, because there are not enough spaces in the child care system. The federal government, once again, has promised something. They have said that if the economy grows by more than 3 percent, they will bring in a national child care program. The experts are saying that is probably not going to happen until at least 1995.

Another positive change that could be made is that the work incentive for people on provincial social assistance could be increased, and this actually costs the government less money, because they are allowed to keep more of their own money and that replaces money that was given to them in the form of social assistance. If the government were to do that, that would remove one of the barriers to employment.

Another one is taxation, because when people get a job they start paying taxes. The income tax

system kicks in at a very low level, and that is another disincentive to work.

Another one is that paid employment needs to be higher than social assistance rates so that people have an incentive to get into the paid workforce, because one of the problems now, particularly with people with large families, the social assistance rate is higher than paid employment in many cases, particularly if people are working and being paid at minimum wage.

So another thing that governments could do is to raise the minimum wage. With this government, we have had very few raises in minimum wage, and whereas I think we were first or highest in Canada under the NDP, now we have dropped considerably to maybe sixth or seventh place, second lowest in Canada for our rate of minimum wage. So there are some concrete examples of how the government could move to eliminate barriers to employment.

Now some of the things that I have suggested, I admit, will cost money and so the minister or the government or even the Liberal Party would say to me, well, how are we going to pay for this? I think that is a legitimate question. I think that we need to start with some fair taxation to ensure that we can pay for these things. For example, more than \$140 billion in corporate taxes have gone untaxed in the last nine years, more than \$140 billion in corporate taxes untaxed in the last nine years. Eighty corporations each owe \$100 million or more in deferred taxes. Workers often pay more taxes than the companies they work for.

Let us look at one example of the implications of the unfair tax system. If Imperial Oil had paid its 1992 deferred tax bill of \$1.58 billion, we could have created 600,000 child care spaces in the country or we could have built 54,000 social housing units. Now I could go on and on and talk about the business entertainment deduction, which was reduced from 80 percent to 50 percent, but should be eliminated so that taxpayers are no longer subsidizing corporations paying for sky boxes at the SkyDome, for example.

I hope that the Minister of Family Services will support this resolution today. I would even be

prepared to look at a friendly amendment because I think we need to send a message to Mr. Axworthy in Ottawa. I know this minister has already put on record some of her concerns that we are waiting for a vision from Ottawa. We have not seen the paper yet. We have nothing to respond to. In fact, we need something like that so that Manitoba can prepare its position and so that all of us can critique whatever it is that Mr. Axworthy is doing.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that all members will support this resolution. Thank you.

Ms. Norma McCormick (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, the premise of this resolution is that we are moving too quickly and that Canadians value and support programs and therefore we should return to the days of the past and do nothing to make changes.

I think the first question that has to get addressed is, do we in fact need to do any reform? In fact, social security reform is an essential part of any strategy to remove dependence on—[interjection] Excuse me, I think it is my turn. It is essential that we look at the social services system if we are going to reduce dependence on social security and, in fact, get people working again. There is no question that job markets and the skills that people need to get and keep jobs and to earn their families' incomes and even the structure of families have all changed. Our income support systems were designed for an era which is long past. So we need to create a system that is flexible and which responds quickly to economic and social change.

We need to begin by determining what kinds of things should be part of a social policy reform process. The first thing we need to recognize is that Canadians want to work. Canadians do not want to be on unemployment insurance, and Canadians do not want to be receiving social assistance. Canadians want to work. So we need to look at the way in which programs provide temporary income support for people who find themselves without work. We need to ensure that any programs that are in existence, in fact, sustain people in their time of need but do not create an ongoing dependency.

* (1720)

The other thing that is being alleged by the previous speaker and the person who seems to want to speak while it is my turn is that it is designed to cut spending. The primary purpose of our social security reform is to build a better system. In fact, since major social policy accounts for about a quarter of total federal spending, excluding seniors, it is important that we get this kind of money oriented towards something that can do some good. The 1994 budget of the federal government establishes that transfers to provinces for social programs will be no higher in 1996-97 than at present. So, if we cannot expect an increase in money to flow, then we need to figure out the ways in which we can get this money working better.

Another point that was made by the previous speaker is that we should be building on the successes of the past and imitating them. For example, he used as a suggestion that the ways of eliminating poverty in seniors should be viewed as a model for developing programs for families and children. He acknowledged himself that the reason seniors are less poor is because more seniors are continuing to work longer. The solution is not to be found in topping up income as an alternative to work but providing Canadians with the skills and the job opportunities which will in fact offer families the opportunity to earn.

I think another thing that the speaker spent a lot of time talking about was whether or not this kind of initiative, or the initiative that was taken with respect to unemployment insurance, was in fact a diabolical plot intended to punish people who are on unemployment insurance. I think it is important to talk about the February 22 budget announcements with respect to the ways in which it was intended that the measures introduced under C-17 would work. The intention was to provide relief for employers so that the UI rate would go down and that money would in fact turn around and be creating more jobs.

The thing that we need to look at is the deficit for the unemployment insurance program ballooned to \$6 billion by the end of 1993. The federal

government, in fact, did something that was fiscally responsible and did in fact recognize that the measures that were introduced would reverse the trend of continually escalating premier costs for employers and workers. It is recognized that the premium rollback means that there will be 40,000 more jobs in the economy than would have existed had the premium been allowed to rise. That is 40,000 more Canadians who are contributing to the prosperity of the country as opposed to receiving benefits from the unemployment insurance system.

The other thing to recognize is that employees also pay the premiums. So over the same period employees will benefit as well as employers. The net effect will be that employers will have more money to employ people. It will have the added benefit of lowering Canadian production costs, encouraging exports and making domestic markets more competitive.

Another thing that is essential to this plan is that premium rollbacks will create an environment for employment growth, but premium reduction alone is not enough to give us an effective UI system. So it is necessary to create a climate which gives recognition to long-term work records.

We know that almost half of Canadians claiming benefits work for 40 weeks or longer before making a claim. In keeping with this reality, it is important to propose changes which strengthen the link between work history and UI eligibility.

So I think the member, in trying to impugn to the federal government a motive of trying to punish people who are on unemployment insurance or people who are in transient working situations, is entirely incorrect. In fact, the proposals will mean that the benefit rate for people who are supporting dependents will continue to be at 55 percent. This is an important change, because Canada is one of the wealthiest industrialized nations, but we still have 1.2 million children living in poverty. So the proposal will offer greater assistance to low-income UI claimants, those who have dependents, those who are in most need, including women and children. So, again, I would say that any attempt to

say that this UI strategy is negative is speculative at best.

Another thing that is interesting to me is the previous speaker, the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale), said that the Liberal Party campaigns like New Democrats and governs like Conservatives. Well, I would like to ask the member for Burrows to explain how it is that the NDP, who supposedly also campaign like New Democrats, got their clocks cleaned in the last federal election.

Anyway, my purpose in standing up here today is to reaffirm the importance of social policy reform. Social policy reform is a major commitment to change. I think indication is present in this resolution that the mover and the seconder have no commitment to change. It appears to me that what they are looking for is a preservation of the status quo. What we need to do is figure out the ways in which we can get Canadians back to work, off dependence and into independence. People want to be independent and to care for themselves. They want choices and opportunities.

We cannot have an effective job strategy without reforming the social security system. The reform, in fact, is to be a consultative one. We have to recognize that the economy and the labour market have changed, that more people are now unemployed for longer periods of time. Over 400,000 young people are looking for work. Real family incomes are lower than in the 1970s, even with both parents working. The nature and distribution of work has changed. Much employment growth is nonstandard, and I have spent a lot of time in the House talking about this in terms of the move from standard to nonstandard jobs.

* (1730)

Society and the workplace have changed dramatically, and it troubles me that the NDP are not prepared to recognize the change or to affirm the need for making sure that we change with the times. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that the resolution of the member for Burrows (Mr.

Martindale) be amended by deleting everything following the first WHEREAS and substituting the following:

we recognize the need to change our social safety nets; and

WHEREAS the provincial government should work with the federal government in its review of Canada's social programs; and

WHEREAS Manitoba's Minister of Family Services has declined to instigate a provincial review of Manitoba's social programs which would parallel the federal review.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Legislative Assembly urge the Minister of Family Services to conduct a review of Manitoba's social programs similar to the federal review.

Motion presented.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member's amendment is in order.

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today and speak to the amendment that was put forward by the member for Osborne (Ms. McCormick) regarding social policy review, the original resolution being placed on the Order Paper by the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale).

I do want to go through, before speaking to the amendment directly, the events that have taken place since the new Liberal government was elected in Ottawa and a very early decision on their part to change and reform Canada's social safety net. There was much dialogue around the issue and many announcements by the Minister of Human Resource Development, Lloyd Axworthy, at the federal level, regarding a new approach and major changes to the social safety net reform that were being contemplated by the new federal government.

Mr. Speaker, very early on in the process he indicated that it would be a process whereby he called together all of the provinces and territories and asked for some input into the process. It would be around the middle of February—I think it was February 14 where federal and provincial ministers met in Ottawa to discuss the federal

government's agenda. At that point in time it was made very clear to all of us as provinces that the federal government was embarking upon putting to paper a vision and an action plan that would be a federal vision and a federal action plan.

Indeed, I guess he was somewhat critical of the former federal government for not having a vision and not having a plan, and he indicated that he would put that kind of an action plan forward for provinces to respond to.

There was some question and some concern by many of the ministers provincially right across the country that this was a unilateral decision, and there was concern that the advisory council that the federal minister was going to put in place, surrounding him, appointed by the federal minister, did not include input from the provinces. At that time, the federal minister made it very clear that indeed it was his advisory panel of experts that was going to advise the federal government on a federal vision for an action plan that would be shared with the provinces and that we would have an opportunity then to respond and to react.

Mr. Speaker, that process was supposed to be put in place, and there was supposed to be an action plan prepared by the federal government, available for provinces to look at and to provide some input to at that point by all provinces, and that was to be ready by about the end of March. Then he was going to call together again the ministers from across the country and ensure that we had some input into the draft before the final document came out.

Well, it now is the end of May, going on into June, two months after that end-of-March deadline, and to date we have not seen that action plan. We do know that the advisory committee that the minister surrounded himself with has reported to the federal government. We do know that there is, I would believe anyway, some sort of a draft action plan in process or ready, and to date we have not had the opportunity to see that.

Now, we have had meetings that have been cancelled, several meetings, one that was scheduled around the end of March, middle of

April, that was cancelled. The federal government made the decision to cancel the meeting.

An Honourable Member: Because of the Province of Quebec, unable to participate.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Well, I hear the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) indicating that the Province of Quebec could not participate. I am not sure what inside line he has to the Province of Quebec that might lead him to believe that the Province of Quebec was not participating, but I would venture to guess that most Manitobans and most Canadians would like to see what the federal vision is for social safety net reform. If Quebec chose not to participate, I think that it would be only fair that the rest of the provinces might have the opportunity to see that action plan and respond to it.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we have been through many, many years where Quebec did not participate in federal-provincial talks when the Conservative administration was in power federally, but we went ahead with those discussions without Quebec being at the table. So I believe that the federal government could have called that meeting. There were enough of us who wanted to be a part of the process. I do want to say that I do want to, and we do want to as a province, be part of a process. We do want to have some input into social safety net reform, and we do not disagree that it needs to happen. We know that we need major reform of our social safety net, that you cannot continue with programs that have been in place for decades without reviewing and evaluating and changing, if there is a need for change, and we agree there is a need for change.

We do also agree that we need that federal vision before we have an opportunity to look at what the plan might be. We are concerned that it is not just an offload onto the provinces again. We have seen many times—and I will say we saw when there was a Conservative administration federally the federal government unilaterally offloaded support for First Nations off reserve for social assistance, for child welfare. We are still reeling from the results of a \$25 million increase to the taxpayers of Manitoba as a result.

* (1740)

We saw a unilateral decision by the new Liberal federal government to change the way they provide support for Unemployment Insurance. Those were unilateral decisions, and we do not know what the unilateral vision of the federal government might be, but it was clear that the federal minister did say that he wanted to present a federal vision and a federal action plan, and we want to see that before we have an opportunity to develop a response. We have seen delay after delay after delay. We were first under the impression that we would have federal legislation presented by fall. I am wondering if we are even going to have the action plan, the federal vision by fall, in order for us to respond to.

Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate clearly that we want to be a part of the process, but we do need to know where the federal government believes their direction will take Canadians. It is clear that they have had setbacks, that they have not had co-operation from all of the provinces, that provinces do not necessarily want to be a part of a process where they are told what is going to happen, but we do need to know.

I said clearly at that meeting with the federal minister that what we need to do is see the action plan tabled for all of us so that we will have the opportunity to respond. If it is not national reform, the provinces certainly could go ahead and look at their own social programs. We are indeed doing that, and we make changes as we believe those changes need to be made, but the federal government's unilateral decisions could have far-reaching implications on us as provinces and on our taxpayers.

So we have seen time and time again where the federal government has made decisions to offload, and we want to ensure that if there is social safety net reform that it is true reform, and it is not just offloading their problems onto those of us who have less ability to pay.

So, Mr. Speaker, at this point, I would like to move, seconded by the member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer), that Resolution 13 as amended be further amended by deleting all words following the first

WHEREAS and replacing them with the following:

WHEREAS growing welfare caseloads and rising welfare expenditures are a serious concern in Manitoba;

WHEREAS the federal government announced its intention to undertake a major reform of Canada's social security system;

WHEREAS the Manitoba government is supportive of efforts to reform the social security system so that clients will gain greater financial self-sufficiency;

WHEREAS the Manitoba government is implementing welfare-to-work initiatives that will enhance work expectations, work incentives and job training as part of an overall strategy to reduce dependency on social assistance;

WHEREAS Manitoba is concerned about the possible offloading of costs from the federal government resulting from changes to the unemployment insurance program, reductions in transfers to provinces and territories in support of social programs, and withdrawal from long-standing cost-sharing arrangements for Status Indians living off-reserve.

WHEREAS Manitoba maintains that reform of the nation's social security system is long overdue and should not be pre-empted by unilateral decisions by the federal government to reduce its social spending;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the federal government not to use the social security reform as a means to offload costs to provinces and territories, and support the provincial government's position that the provinces and territories be full partners and participate in all aspects of the social security reform process.

Motion presented.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable minister's subamendment is in order.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin my remarks by stating that we are in support of the subamendment to the amendment to the resolution. I would like to state

why we are in support of this subamendment. It flows very nicely from the original resolution and in particular when it talks about the maintaining "that reform of the nation's social security system is long overdue and should not be pre-empted by unilateral decisions by the federal government to reduce its social spending."

That is exactly what we have been talking about in the House in Question Period, what this resolution deals with, and what the subamendment of the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) deals with. I would like to put on record the fact that most certainly no New Democrat, whether provincially or federally, disagrees with the need for social service reform. We all know that we are in the 1990s and not the 1960s. We all know—certainly New Democrats are very aware from talking with our constituents and people in Manitoba and throughout the country—of the impacts that 25 years of Liberal, largely Liberal, federal governments have had on the social service network in the country and in Manitoba.

When the member for Osborne (Ms. McCormick) put her remarks on the record, she stated that, as she stated in questions and comments before, the New Democrats and the government are in opposition to reform and want to keep the status quo and live in the past. I cannot particularly speak for the government, but I can speak for New Democrats. The last thing we want to do is live in the past and keep the status quo.

* (1750)

Mr. Speaker, what this government, this federal Liberal government is doing is not social policy reform. It is cutting and slashing in the guise of social policy reform. The federal government is pre-empting true social policy reform with its decisions to cut back transfer payments to the provinces, with its decisions to cut back unemployment insurance.

The subamendment talks about the need for provincial governments and territories to be full partners and participate in all aspects of the social security reform process, and as the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) put on the

record just this afternoon, as she has before, the federal Minister of Human Resources has stated on numerous occasions his wanting to consult and be partners, but his actions have said no, no, no. His refusal or unwillingness to meet the provinces shows that he really is not concerned with consultation.

I would like to ask, along with the Minister of Family Services, where this action plan is. How is the provincial government supposed to parallel this reform process if they do not know what the federal government is looking at? Where are the public hearings that were supposed to be implemented before this all took place? Where is the federal vision, as the Minister of Family Services said?

Mr. Speaker, maybe a little bit more of the reading of the Social Security Reform Communications document that the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) talked about earlier, a draft confidential document from March 21 of this year, might shed some light on those questions.

The social security reform document, called strategy and action plan, says when it is talking about the budget and what is happening in the country, and I quote: The budget—i.e., the federal Liberal budget—exacerbated concerns that the government's only concern is cost-cutting. The UI cuts are seen as evidence that government wants to fight the deficit on the backs of the poor. Some groups are suspicious and looking for hidden agendas. What a surprise. Also, some groups are concerned that time frames are too tight for full discussion.

We have not had a single public hearing. We do not know what has happened. All we can do is listen and look and see what the federal government has actually done, which is cut unemployment insurance, cut social housing, cut transfer payments.

The only visible campaigns mounted to date are around UI cuts and the budget, and the government is very concerned about the implied message that program users and clients are lazy and dependent.

I do not think it is implied. The member for Osborne (Ms. McCormick) talked about

dependency. I thought that, when the member for Osborne talks about the unemployment insurance program and dependency, she sounds very much like the federal Conservative government, and a note, Mr. Speaker: A close watch needs to be kept on the fallout from the Alberta budget.

This is the budget that is going to cut in three years the deficit of that province completely on the backs of the poorest and most vulnerable people in this country.

What works there in Alberta will be used in the social security reform as well. Now we talk about honesty and integrity in government. Mr. Speaker, I ask you, is this the work of an honest government, a government that has integrity? I do not think so.

We have not heard what is going to happen from the review from the policy analysts, what is happening in the federal government. The Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) has not heard. None of the other provincial governments have been consulted at all, even though the federal minister said that he would.

When the Minister of Family Services talks in her RESOLVED about being full partners and participating in all aspects of the reform process, the provinces are not participating. They are not full partners, not because they have chosen not to be, because the federal government has chosen not to share anything with them.

Again, in this document that was the Social Security Reform Communications document, it talks about community distribution vehicles of the program, of the reform, none of which we have seen yet. Very interesting. They are going to distribute it to grocery stores. They are going to distribute it through YMCAs. Regional human resource development offices will be asked to develop a distribution plan tailored to their provinces and mindful of provincial sensitivities. How are they going to know what the provincial sensitivities are if they have not consulted with the provinces?

But most particularly, and most importantly, and most interestingly, I think, there is a headline,

Special Third Party, and I am going to quote the entire paragraph:

We propose—this is the federal Liberal government—to approach not the unemployed help centres, not the provincial advocacy groups, not the social planning councils, not the Canadian Council on Social Development for distribution or allocation.

No, Mr. Speaker, who are they going to consult? They are going to approach the Canadian Bankers' Association to allow distribution of the workbook throughout all Canadian branch banks and trust companies. There is a bank or trust company in virtually every community in the country, no question about it.

Now, this is another significant phrase in this paragraph that I think all members would be interested in hearing: This initiative will provide significant third-party credibility to the reform process.

So it is the Canadian Bankers' Association that is going to provide credibility to the reform process, not the Canadian Council on Social Development, not the provincial governments, not the local provincial advocacy groups, not the antipoverty organizations. It is the Canadian Bankers' Association.

An Honourable Member: No. That is the Liberals' social policy platform.

Ms. Barrett: The Liberals' social policy platform is going to be distributed through the banks. Mr. Speaker, yes, they are in every community in the country, and I think that it is very interesting that they do not talk about talking with the provinces. They shut the provinces out of this whole process except through offloading of millions and millions of dollars onto the provincial governments at the same time that they can stand up in this House and in other Houses and in the federal government and spout on about how wonderful their social policy is. The member for Osborne (Ms. McCormick) can get on her high and mighty horse and say how dreadful it is that we are not supporting this terrible process. Well, Mr. Speaker, I and my colleagues on this side of the House want a vote on this subamendment. We want to support the

government in this, and we want to send a message to Ottawa. Thank you.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, actually, I think if there is a concise message that we would want to send the federal government, it is one of incompetence that the NDP party continues to provide to this Chamber on a day-in and day-out basis and the coalition that has been formed in the Province of Manitoba.

We start off today with Question Period, where we get the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer) lobbing a question over to the Premier (Mr. Filmon) so he could take a hit at the federal government. How do we end the day, Mr. Speaker? We try to end the day by the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) in her hypocritical way saying how bad the—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. We are going to deal with one point of order at a time.

Points of Order

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Energy and Mines): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if my honourable friend the Liberal House leader might also acknowledge that his Leader lobbed a question over to the Premier today, too.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Energy and Mines does not have a point of order.

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member for Inkster to withdraw his comments about my hypocritical actions and words as being unparliamentary.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I do not want the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) to take great offence from it. I will withdraw that.

Mr. Speaker: We thank the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I think it is very important when the member for Wellington says, look, they have not been doing any consulting. She knows full well that is not true. Why does she not

talk to the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) where he, I understood, attended the Social Planning Council, where there was a considerable amount of dialogue.

The member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) herself made reference to the Social Planning Council and said that the federal government is not even consulting with organizations of this nature.

Well, those sorts of statements, complete contradictions in terms of what is actually

happening, demonstrate very clearly what the reason—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) will have 13 minutes remaining.

The hour being 6 p.m., I am leaving the Chair with the understanding that the House will reconvene at eight o'clock in Committee of Supply.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, May 30, 1994

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