

**Fourth Session - Fortieth Legislature**  
**of the**  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**  
**Standing Committee**  
**on**  
**Social and Economic Development**

*Chairperson*  
*Ms. Nancy Allan*  
*Constituency of St. Vital*

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Fortieth Legislature**

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**  
**THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**Friday, December 19, 2014**

**TIME** – 2 p.m.

**LOCATION** – Winnipeg, Manitoba

**CHAIRPERSON** – Ms. Nancy Allan (St. Vital)

**VICE-CHAIRPERSON** – Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley)

**ATTENDANCE** – 11 QUORUM – 6

*Members of the Committee present:*

*Hon. Mses. Crothers, Irvin-Ross, Wight*

*Ms. Allan, Mr. Altemeyer, Mrs. Driedger, Ms. Howard, Mr. Martin, Mrs. Mitchelson, Messrs. Saran, Wishart*

**APPEARING:**

*Hon. Jon Gerrard, MLA for River Heights*

**MATTERS UNDER CONSIDERATION:**

*Annual Report of Manitoba's Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy (ALL Aboard) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2013*

*Annual Report of Manitoba's Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy (ALL Aboard) for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2014*

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**Clerk Assistant (Mr. Andrea Signorelli):** Good afternoon. Will the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development please come to order.

Before the committee can proceed with the business before it, it must elect a new Chairperson.

Are there any nominations for this position?

**Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples):** Yes. I nominate Ms. Allan.

**Clerk Assistant:** Ms. Allan has been nominated. Are there any other nominations?

Hearing no other nominations, Ms. Allan, will you please take the Chair.

**Madam Chairperson:** Our next item of business is the election of a Vice-Chairperson. Are there any nominations for this position?

**Mr. Saran:** I nominate Mr. Altemeyer.

**Madam Chairperson:** Thank you. Mr. Altemeyer has been nominated. Hearing—are there any other nominations?

Hearing no other nominations, Mr. Altemeyer is elected Vice-Chairperson.

This meeting has been called to consider the following: the Annual Report of the Manitoba Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy (ALL Aboard) for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2013; the Annual Report of the Manitoba Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy (ALL Aboard) for the fiscal year ending March the 31st, 2014.

Before we get started, are there any suggestions from the committee as to how long we should sit this afternoon?

**Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie):** I would suggest that we go for an hour and then evaluate.

**Madam Chairperson:** Thank you very much.

Is there agreement? [*Agreed*]

Does the honourable minister wish to—are there any suggestions as to the order in which we should consider the reports?

**Mr. Wishart:** I would like to consider the report as a whole.

**Madam Chairperson:** We will consider the report as a whole. Thank you.

Does the honourable minister wish to make an opening statement?

**Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Housing and Community Development):** Yes, I do, please.

Thank you very much. I am pleased to present the committee the second ALL Aboard annual report. Publishing this report is one of the requirements set in The Poverty Reduction Strategy Act. With the publication of this annual report, we have met all of the requirements set out in The Poverty Reduction Strategy Act. In 2012 we published a four-year poverty reduction and social inclusion strategy. We have established in regulation a set of 21 indicators to measure progress on the

strategy. We have published poverty reduction and social inclusion budget papers each year. We have created the ALL Aboard committee made up of both ministerial and community representatives.

The 2013-2014 report to be discussed today includes information about each of the 21 poverty reduction and social inclusion indicators. In summary, the report shows either stability or improvement on 15 indicators. There are four indicators showing where more efforts are required and one where information is unavailable and one where it is not possible to summarize data in a single outcome.

Subsequent to publication, new information has become available showing that the number of households in core housing need, housing that is unaffordable, unsuitable or inadequate, decreased by 8.8 per cent between 2006 and 2011. So that is an improvement. While long-term trends are positive, we still have a lot of work to do. We're working towards a future where all Manitobans have the supports they need to build healthy and fulfilling lives. We are committed to reducing poverty and supporting families with affordable housing, health care, education and training.

Poverty reduction is an issue for all of us. Everyone benefits from a society that helps all individuals to participate and to prosper. Like most Manitobans, I envision a more equal society where the consequence of social problems, ill health, family disorder and poor educational outcomes is not a life of poverty, despair and inequity but supports that level the playing field allowing all to prosper, share in Manitoba's bounty and enjoy rewarding lives in the fellowship of our amazing citizens.

I believe that our economic and social investments, combined with the initiatives of private businesses, the non-profit sector and, most importantly, low-income people themselves will help us to create the kind of province where all Manitobans are socially included, connected to their communities, participating in the economy and contributing to our province.

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**Madam Chairperson:** We thank the honourable minister.

Does the critic for the official opposition have an opening statement?

**Mr. Wishart:** I appreciate the comments of the minister, and I certainly am looking forward to a chance to ask a few questions in regards to some of the indicators. But, in light of some of the numbers that we have seen in terms of child poverty rates increasing in Manitoba and—while the rest of Canada goes down, I think myself along with many of my colleagues are struggling to feel that this is a very positive report.

We're seeing general indicators that indicate something completely at odds with some of the individual indicators that are in this so we'll certainly be looking at them. But I think that sometimes I think it's an indication that some of the indicators that have been chosen, which we asked a lot of questions about last year—some of the indicators are not very useful in the big picture and certainly are not indicative of what Manitobans, those that are on limited and fixed income, are, in fact, seeing.

So we will look forward to a chance to ask a few questions in regards to this. Thank you.

**Madam Chairperson:** We thank the member.

The floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. Wishart:** I'd like to start with some general questions about the structure of the committee, and I know we did this last year as well.

Could the minister outline to us who the current committee members are and any changes that have occurred since the last year, because I know there must have been some?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** Yes, the committee is comprised of community members Jennie Wastesicoot, Charles Loewen, Louise Simbandumwe, Marla Somersall. But I do need to say that she has resigned about a month ago; she's moved out of province. Myself, I chair the committee—Minister Robinson, Minister Kostyshyn, Minister Wight, Minister Bjornson, Minister Dewar, Minister Crothers, Minister Chief, Minister Braun and Minister Marcelino.

**Mr. Wishart:** Thank you very much for indicating that. So, if I counted right, and you were going fairly quickly, is that a smaller committee than we had before?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** Not that I—no.

**Mr. Wishart:** I'll remember that, going on. If I can move on from that, in terms of staff support, where exactly is the staff support for this committee and who is it funded by?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** The staff for the ALL Aboard Committee is within the Department of Family Services, and it is part of our annual budget, the department's annual budget.

**Mr. Wishart:** Could you indicate how many staff people there are, and if you could break out the annual budget, at least approximately?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** So the number of staff we have that are assigned to ALL Aboard is three, and the budget that we have specific to ALL Aboard is just a little bit below \$20,000–\$19,218.

**Mr. Wishart:** I thank the minister for that. So of the three staff that's obviously just part of their time, if that's the total budget. What percentage of their time is spent on this? Or is the budget in excess of there?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** Yes, this budget that I spoke to was around printing costs and data-purchase costs that we have had and then costs related to the committee. This is—does not include the salaries of the three employees.

**Mr. Wishart:** And have any of those staff changed in the last year?

\* (14:10)

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** No, they haven't.

**Mr. Wishart:** Now, how often does this committee meet?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** We meet quarterly.

**Mr. Wishart:** And I believe that is the mandate of them. Did they actually meet four times in this last year?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** Yes, they did.

**Mr. Wishart:** Moving on, I guess, in regards to that, the same three staff have been there all along in this process, so they are experienced?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** The director, the co-ordinator of ALL Aboard, has been with it from the inception of the program, and one staff person started in 2013. But there is consistency.

But I'd also like for the committee to understand that this is sort of the core operating group, but we rely on all departments to contribute to the indicators, to the strategies, that this is a—really, an

overall government strategy that does include the private sector as well as the not-for-profit sector. So it is not isolated; it is far from a silo; it's a really—it's a strong committee of Cabinet that includes for the first time community members that sit around a table and work on the different strategies and improve the strategies as well as planning consultation initiatives.

**Mr. Wishart:** Thank you very much, Madam Minister, and I certainly was aware that this was the guiding committee, but it is a very small group, and I know that it's necessary that other departments would co-operate on this issue. Pretty difficult to get a feel from the report—and it covers many areas—exactly how many other staff have input in this and what their roles are. So I'll—I'm not going to ask you that question because I don't think anybody can—could actually answer it.

But I did want to move on to talk about Manitoba Housing, which—

**Madam Chairperson:** Honourable Minister.

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** Just—may I just make one comment? That, I guess, like, when I think about it, that there are hundreds of people that contribute to this. When we think about the number of consultations that we've had over a couple of rounds across the province and the amount of energy and time that goes in from the other departments as far as civil servants, you're right: I can't put a number on it. But it—there is—the contribution can be seen and felt throughout our civil service as well as from our community.

**Mr. Wishart:** Thank you, Madam Minister, for those comments, and I certainly appreciate that it touches on many different departments.

As such, I'd like to ask a few questions about the gate—housing pillar in particular, which, I think, is indicator No. 2. And it does a—the graph there is actually fairly useful. It gives us some idea to how many people are coming in to Manitoba Housing units. I would assume, then, being it's the number of Manitoba Housing units, though, that goes up, it's relatively fixed, that the number that goes in is also matched by a number that are leaving.

Do we have any information on those that move out of Manitoba Housing as to where their alternative housing is reached?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** So, yes, Manitoba Housing does not currently track the reasons why households exit the program. But what we can tell you is that we

do have a number of—two primary programs that address affordability of rental housing, from low to moderate income. And that is the Social Housing Rental Program and the Affordable Housing Rental Program, and those are related—eligibility is related to the gross household income. Tenants who exceed the Affordable Housing Rental Program, they'll transition into the market program in the rural communities to enable them to remain housed while charging market-based rents that help transition the client off subsidies towards independence.

So we have—we provide housing to a number of individuals, and there's lots of—there are opportunities that are happening within some of our housing complexes. And I know that you've heard me talk about it time and time again, but I think it is a beacon of hope, the Lord Selkirk Park project, and the number of people that were able to find employment and training based on the local hiring principles. And, for some individuals, when they find employment, they are able to transition into the private market and do quite successfully.

So there are multiple reasons why individuals leave and come to Manitoba Housing, but all of them contribute to stronger communities.

**Mr. Wishart:** I thank the minister for those answers.

Now, there's a number of people that are in Manitoba Housing on RGI. Does that percentage remain relatively constant, or does it evolve over time that—of the total capacity of Manitoba Housing, what percentage would be on rent geared to income?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** So we provide housing assistance to over 35,000 households in our various programs. We own and operate 14,300 units, and then there are another 3,800 units that are managed. So the units that we manage, all of them would be rent geared to income because of the formula that they're based on.

There are projects in which we have mixed housing involved where there is some social housing and some affordable housing and then, in some cases, some market housing. Most of those are operated by our sponsored managed groups, so there's examples across the province that we can highlight.

**Mr. Wishart:** Thank you very much for that answer.

Now, in terms of indicators here, and I'm looking at page 13 in particular, they talk about the 30 per cent indicator in terms of available income and then sufficient size and then also the question of

whether the housing that they're living in is in good condition.

Now, certainly, the 30 per cent is an RGI-type situation and that would be a measure. In terms of adequate size, what are the criteria there for a family, for instance, of—with a single parent and two kids? Is that a two-bedroom, three-bedroom? And the condition of their existing house, how is that assessed?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** So there's occupancy standards that are set and which we need to implement. We know that the number of—the size of some families that are coming to Manitoba because of our great immigration policies, they've been growing and we need to focus on building units that have—more than two-bedroom units. And so there are some examples across the province, and I think the one that people are most familiar with is IRCOM I, where we have multiple units, and now working on IRCOM II.

**Mr. Wishart:** I thank the minister for that. And, when she talks about that particular project, is that the one that was in—adjacent to and in conjunction with University of Winnipeg? That the one you're talking about?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** IRCOM? No.

**An Honourable Member:** Touching on that particular project, I understand that it's not yet occupied. I can't give you the name of the project, I'm afraid. It was supposed to accommodate immigrant housing [*inaudible*] anybody here knows the name?

**Madam Chairperson:** Excuse me. Excuse me. Excuse me.

Ian, could you do me a favour, please, and repeat the question? You've kind of dropped your voice a little bit, so could you—yes.

**Mr. Wishart:** Going back, the project that I was asking about was in conjunction with the University of Winnipeg and was designed to accommodate immigrants, and I understand it's located on Pacific Avenue. Could the minister update me on the—where that project's at?

\* (14:20)

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** There is a project on Pacific Avenue, but it's not related to the University of Winnipeg. It's related to IRCOM, and that project, right now we are just renegotiating contracts with subcontractors, and we anticipate that construction will resume on that site in the very near future.

**Mr. Wishart:** Well, I thank the minister. That one is, then, currently empty, though it was originally planned to be occupied by now?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** It is still under construction.

**Mr. Shannon Martin (Morris):** Just to clarify, Minister, did you say that you're currently renegotiating?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** That—I think the member opposite knows that there were some issues around a particular contract within that—on that housing project, and we have been working with the contractors and renegotiating subcontractors so we can get the workers back on site.

**Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East):** If I might just follow up on that question, it's my understanding that several of the subcontractors in that project haven't received their pay, and as a result they've had to lay workers off. Can the minister confirm that and can she indicate when payments might be made to the subcontractors? I know where—there were some issues with the contractor, but there are subtrades that I've had calls from that have indicated that they've had to lay workers off as a result of not being paid by the department. So I'm wondering if the minister could clarify that for me.

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** What I can tell you is that we've been working with all the contractors that are on—that have been on site to resolve the issues so we can get the work back up and running, because the priority is to get that housing built but to do it in a fiscally responsible way and make sure that the site is safe for all workers. So right now the department officials are in the process of renegotiating contracts and getting workers back on site, and that's the information that I have now for the member.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** I'd just like to follow up on that a bit because what is happening, subcontractors have done the work, they have billed for the work that has been done, and it's been done months and months and months ago because there's been no activity on that site since at least May of this year. So that's been boarded up. There's been no activity, nothing happening. So those—that work was done and in—and much of it was completed.

I guess the question is: Have those subcontractors been paid? Are they the same subcontractors that are being renegotiated with or are they—is the department negotiating to hire other contractors or subcontractors? And are those that

have done the work going to be paid for the work that they've done?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** What I can tell the member is that we've been negotiating with the original subcontractors, including the main subcontractor, to get the work back up and running, and that's what our commitment is right now. We know the need to have that housing in the market and we appreciate the patience of the—of IRCOM as we're working our way through this extremely complicated situation. But we're confident that early in the new year that the construction will resume and we'll be able to conclude the project.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** I think we all would want to see that project completed and finished and the families that Housing was committed to move in to that facility. I guess my only concern is that we have Manitoba companies, companies that have invested time and workers, that deserve to be paid for the work that they have done. And my only question is that things have been at a standstill. There has been absolutely no activity in that complex for months and months now. It's been boarded up; we wouldn't want to see anyone in there working in unsafe conditions. None of us would want to see that. My question is, there is work that has been done, what is the department doing to ensure that workers that have done that work have been paid for the work that they have done, or how long do companies have to wait to receive some remuneration for the work that's been done, from government?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** So I think we have to be very careful here that we're not negotiating this at this table because that's not what we can do. What I can assure the member is that we are working with the main subcontractor and all the other subcontractors to ensure that we are getting value for our money, to ensure that there is a quality of work that's being proven. Our priority is to get the workers back on site and get that building done as soon as possible.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** I would just like to ask the minister, then, when those families can expect to move in. I know that there was an expectation that they would be moving in in December of 2013. That's a year ago now, and things are boarded up. There is no activity. Nothing is happening. This was something that the government promised these families and these people. Can the minister today commit to an approximate date—and I don't want a Monday or a Tuesday of a certain week—but can we at least look at a month, maybe, in 2015—not 2013,

but in 2015—that these families might expect to be able to move into a facility that they were promised in 2013?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** I think that, as members know, when you're in the construction business, that there are a number of delays that happen for lots of unforeseen reasons. And I think that it's important to know that we have a responsibility when it comes to building that we're ensuring that we're getting good quality for our money and we're meeting standards, and it's unfortunate what's happened on this project. I think we need to focus on the other 1,500 units that we've been successfully completed within the social and the affordable envelopes and the relationships that we've had. That there's been complications, I'm not shying away from it at all; I'm being honest that there's been complications. Our priority is to get the workers on site and the families in those suites as soon as possible.

What makes this project really interesting is the number of units that will have multiple bedrooms, well over two, and that there is going to be movable walls in this project which will provide some extra flexibility. As well, there will be a nearby child-care centre that will provide good quality care.

So everybody as far as the sponsored manage group, the officials in the department and the subcontractors are all working as quickly as possible to ensure that we can have families moving into that building. That's what we all want.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Have new tenders been let, then? Are there new subcontractors that are being negotiated with? Have there been formalized arrangements made so that the work will commence?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** What we are doing right now is we are in a process of re-engaging the existing subcontractors and starting with them because I think that they deserve to continue to do the good work that they've been doing, and folks are being—getting caught in the middle, and we need to get this back on track. I've just been notified that I am of free will to say that the goal date for families to move into this new housing unit—or complex will be July of this year, 2015.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Okay, and I'm fine, I'm—I just beg the indulgence of my colleagues, but there was one other issue that I wanted to raise, and that was the issue of housing that was shut down in Flin Flon. And I've communicated with the department on that, and it was, I think, with the former minister before

this minister was given the additional responsibilities of housing again. But I know that there was a low-income housing unit shut down because of water problems in Flin Flon, and they were promised that that would be replaced. And correspondence back and forth to the minister and the department have indicated that they're now looking at replacing that low-income housing for low-income families with seniors housing in Flin Flon, and real concern in the community that there are other low-income families with needs that were moved out of housing and that there still is a need for that housing but there's no promise today to replace that housing for low-income families. And so those—many in Flin Flon are kind of wondering whether the government is renegeing now on that promise to rebuild that same kind of housing for that community.

\* (14:30)

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** There's a lot of moving dynamics that are happening in—as far as the Flin Flon housing market. I think the project you're talking about is Hemlock, and so there's another couple of housing—family housing projects that we are re-evaluating and looking at the potential of adding on to those projects, but we also have a lot of pressure. We're balancing the pressures of that aging population in Flin Flon.

There's been lots of interest by the mayor and council, previous and the current one. I had the opportunity of meeting with them at AMM and they had asked for more seniors housing. So, if I can get some more specific information before the end of committee, I'll certainly put it on the record for you around the moving parts that are happening, but we are extremely engaged in Flin Flon of providing good social housing for families and also for seniors.

There are pressures out there. We're very familiar with that. But I am extremely excited about the potential of the redevelopment of the sites and the addition of the new buildings, and I think we need to acknowledge the municipal officials that have been working so closely with the Manitoba Housing officials to accomplish this.

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Just to follow up on a northern issue, too, we were recently in Churchill, and we met with a number of people from Churchill and certainly drove around and saw the Manitoba Housing and the state of disrepair in a number of units, the vacancies, empty, boarded up. The community in a number of community meetings was expressing concern about the, you know, the

state of Manitoba Housing in Churchill, and I wonder if the minister could indicate what there is happening in her department in terms of addressing, I guess, the upkeep, the upgrade of these—of the housing stock there, paint that would help immensely, and what is happening with all the boarded-up units. Is there some plan in place by her department to address some of the concerns that have been raised with us in Churchill?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** So, as the member knows, in Churchill Manitoba Housing owns—I'm not going to throw out a percentage, but the majority, well over 75 per cent, of the housing in that market.

The stock there in some instances needs some work and we have been making investments, and I'm hoping the answer is on its way about the dollar value of those investments. We're going to continue to do that. We're doing that across the province.

Our budget for maintenance is near \$100 million every year, and that's a huge increase that we've been able to acquire to ensure that we're making those investments in our existing social housing stock.

Churchill is a unique entity for lots and lots of different reasons. In Churchill, because we are the only housing in town, that—often many of the folks that are living in that housing are paying close to market rent and we're able to make investments in that property because of that extra rent that we're able to receive. If there is a specific housing unit that you'd like that you're referring to that you'd like us to follow up on, we certainly will. We know that investments have been made, will continue to be made and that we have a lot of work left to do.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Is it policy to allow businesses, for instance, to rent out units to travellers that might be coming up there and staying for a number of months, because my understanding is certainly if it's Manitoba Housing that's, you know, meant for low income? Is there a policy that allows more than that in Flin Flon, which then takes away the business from hotels but allows businesses to actually rent low housing units? Maybe they're paying more. Are you—have you got a policy in that area?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** Just for clarification, you referenced Flin Flon. Are you talking about—

**An Honourable Member:** Sorry, Churchill.

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** You meant Churchill, right? I just wanted to make sure of that.

So it's an interesting debate that we have in Churchill, that tourism is one of their really—we know the advertisement that's going on and the interest in polar bears and belugas and the tundra, and so they are attracting a lot of tourists. So there was a period where we were approached by businesses because they couldn't—they didn't have housing for their workforce, so there was a negotiation that did happen because they needed the hotel rooms for the tourists and they asked if we would be able to accommodate staff people or also the researchers sometimes. There's the polar bear researchers, and I apologize to the researchers; I can't remember the name that they have. And they will negotiate temporary units, but I can assure you that our priority is to provide social housing and we wouldn't be displacing individuals that require social housing for a business.

And I know that in—the last time I was in Housing that Mayor Spence approached me on a number of occasions and requested that we discontinue that practice now because there is—I'm not sure if there's more hotel rooms, but there is more availability and we need to find that balance to ensure that the private business is benefiting from the access. So it's always a—we're always working in co-operation with the business owners and the mayor and the other councillors of Churchill to try and find that balance so we're helping to support their No. 1 priority of tourism and—while ensuring that they continue—they can have the workforce that they need.

**Mr. Wishart:** I thank the minister for answering those questions specific to the Churchill market, which we all recognize is a fairly unique marketplace.

And talking about marketplaces, there was a program available through Manitoba Housing that offered for sale some properties that had been Manitoba Housing units. They weren't all rural, but the majority of them, I think if I remember correctly, were rural. I just wondered if the minister could update us all on how many properties have been sold under this and what percentage of the total that were offered that might be.

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** I'm going to get myself into trouble because I don't wait to find the answer and I have people that'll—Lisa will help me find the facts if we have the actual specifics for you and we'll be looking for that.

But the—it was a home ownership program that we were trying to do for low-income people, so it

was people that had a specific family income and giving them an opportunity to purchase a home. And so we did have a number of properties—mostly, you're right, in rural Manitoba—that were for sale and that had been vacant for a certain amount of time because that was part of it, is that there was not a waiting list for social housing, that there was not a need within that community but there was a desire to have those housing units back on the market. So we did do that and there wasn't as much uptake as we thought that there would be. There was a commitment to do some renovations and to ensure that we were handing over housing that was in good condition, but the interest wasn't there. So right now it's kind of—I'm not sure what the right word is to choose. Right now, it's sort of on hold, I guess, is the best way to say it, until we can talk more actively with municipalities about the direction in which they want to go and how they want to frame the opportunity for the home ownership.

\*(14:40)

**Mr. Wishart:** Well, I thank the minister for that answer. I wonder if she could, when the information becomes available, be sure to have it included in the results from this particular committee meeting, not only the total number that would be sold, but if you could get a—whether it's fair to say an average price or specific prices so that we have an idea of how much revenue is being generated from this. And, if I remember right, the total number was—of properties was well over 100. It was quite substantial, so could we ask the minister to include the total number of properties as well?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** We'll certainly be able to provide that to you, hopefully by the end of this committee meeting, and we'll find out what the total number was that was up for sale. I am not sure that there were hundreds that had for-sale signs in front of them. I think that there were conversations with a number of municipalities that identified certain areas in which they were interested in seeing if we were able to sell them, so—but, yes, we'll get that information for you.

**Mr. Wishart:** Thank the minister for that. We have all had, I think, a number of questions in this area, and yet not a lot of results that have gotten back to me. That may not be fair because sometimes people don't get back to you after you get the question.

I would like to explore a little bit in terms of the Manitoba Rent Assist program, a new program as of July that would help those that are on income

assistance and initially those that are in private accommodations. I'm wondering if the minister can give us an indication as to how many people have been eligible for this program, how many have been assisted by this program.

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** So I can tell you as of November of this year that there were 3,011 non-EIA households renting in the private market that were receiving help for their shelter costs in rent assist, and that's an increase of 592 households since June of this year, so a 20 per cent increase.

And just for the member, I just wanted to clarify with you, we had the pleasure of being in committee last—well, this year, of January 9th of 2014, and, at that time, there were a number of questions that I took under advisement, and it did take us a while but we did answer those questions. I just want to ensure that you received this letter that was dated April 10th. It did go to the PC caucus of Manitoba, room 227, so have you seen this? Have you received this?

**Mr. Wishart:** I don't believe I have, but that would align with a shift in our critic responsibilities around the same time. It may have gone to the Housing critic. Perhaps you could share it with us again.

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** We would be glad to do that.

**Mr. Wishart:** Thank you very much, Minister, for sharing that information with us. I know that there were some questions that were asked last year that we did not get responses to, and I'm hoping that this actually fills in the gaps that remain.

Okay, moving on from that in terms of the Rent Assist program in particular, can the minister indicate what the average amount of these payments would be for these additional people?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** So, if I'm reading this chart correctly, we know that the increase went up by \$70 per household, and so that was a 19 per cent increase, and so the—if you were asking about what was the average cheque that went out was between \$420 and \$563, yes.

**Mr. Wishart:** Thank you, and I—

**An Honourable Member:** Oh, just one moment.

**Madam Chairperson:** Honourable Minister.

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** That would be for a single adult, and then, for a single parent, it went up by 12 per cent and the range was \$701 to \$825.

**Mr. Wishart:** I thank the minister for that. And so that will—would be specific to those that were in private accommodation and that were on EIA housing allowance. I'm looking for some indication from the minister, as they move forward, as to how they're going to work this into any public housing projects that are there, whether they become Manitoba Housing projects or whether they're the ones that are administrated by Manitoba Housing. Is there going to be any extension of this program to those individuals as well?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** Individuals that are living in Manitoba Housing are already getting subsidized rent, so they wouldn't be eligible for Rent Assist.

**Mr. Wishart:** And that also applies to the ones that you are managing on behalf of other groups?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** Individuals that are in social housing are not eligible for Rent Assist because their rents are already subsidized through a different program, RGI.

**Mr. Wishart:** Through RGI. Thank you very much, Madam Minister, and that's what I expected. But I'm wondering if the two numbers actually align, the amount that they get for housing in private circumstances through EIA and whether the number that they get—they pay in terms of rent on Manitoba Housing or related programs or—that you manage, does the amount actually align between the per monthly rental or are they completely different numbers?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** I'm not really understanding when you're—what you're referring to—what are you hoping that aligns? What the rent is that people are paying in social housing and what the rent is that people are paying in the private market?

**Mr. Wishart:** Yes, I think they should be at least close in terms of alignment, otherwise the marketplace gets a misinformation, I guess, if you want to put it that way, and will—it will direct people either in and out of the private housing market. I know that what really matters is the amount that's left for the other living expenses at the end, so, you know, it can be relatively—they may not specifically align. Though that—the amount that's left at the end is for other living allowances, that should align. Is that what you're looking at aligning, or?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** I'm not sure I'll answer this question to the—I'll answer this question to the best of my ability. What we are doing within Rent Assist is developing a plan over the upcoming years to meet

75 per cent of market median rent. And that's what we were asked to by the Poverty Reduction Council and by the number of people that signed it as far as interest in the community. People that are living in social housing or in Manitoba Housing, whether it's with direct manage or sponsored manage, it's income based. So it's 30 per cent of their income that they're paying, and we're trying to find that balance so at the end of the month that they do have the cash and the finances that they need for other services and basic needs that they require for themselves and their families.

**Mr. Wishart:** Thank you, Minister, for that answer, and I think I'll move on from that, talking about housing issues. I want to talk a little bit in the second pillar about education, and high school graduation rates was one of the measures that was used. And they've, fortunately for us, continued to rise here in Manitoba, but the minister last year indicated that where possible she would like to use StatsCan statistics, and accordingly there is some standards across Canada. I wonder if the minister wanted to indicate how our graduation rates compared with other provinces.

\* (14:50)

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** The information that I have in front of me today is specific to our province and the increase that has happened around Manitoba graduation rates since 2002. I can say, in 2014, we now have graduation rates that are of 85 per cent, which is a remarkable increase.

And, again, we have more work to do around providing supports to students to ensure that they are going to be successful, and I think the member is familiar with some of the initiatives that we've put into place, such as children staying in school 'til they're 18 years old and the supports that go into that; some of the initiatives that we've put into place around training, whether it's in specific trades or not; and then in the recent Throne Speech, you also heard about how we are going to provide more opportunities for young people to take post-secondary courses so that they can launch into their future and have much more success, whether it is within the college system or within the university system, ensuring that there is as many opportunities as possible.

**Mr. Wishart:** I thank the minister for those comments. However, some of the comparisons across the country, such as the C.D. Howe Institute report, indicate that Manitoba's performance in terms

of improvements in graduation rate is amongst the worst in the country. Would the minister care to comment on why that might be?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** I will comment on the increase and the success that we have had and the attention that we have put towards ensuring that our graduation rates are improving and what we've done to remove barriers that are created for young people to graduate. I think that there are a number of education facilities and departments that are providing innovative programming that engage the youth and to ensure that they're able to graduate.

So I'm prepared today to talk and to list off a number of different investments that we've made, and some of them are building on student success. When we're working with Aboriginal parents in the program, our community schools program, our Pathways to Education that is happening, our youth entrepreneurship program; there is a number of programs that we've put into place that will help support young adults as they find their way through school.

We know that the best way out of poverty is a good education, and that education starts within our school system. It even starts before school. It starts within our prenatal benefits that we provide to families, as well as our early childhood education, right to whatever the post-secondary courses that they would like to do.

**Mr. Wishart:** Well, I thank the minister for that answer, but, really, I think we do need to compare our position here in Manitoba with other jurisdictions so that we can tell—it's nice to make progress against yourself, but if you continue to fall behind other jurisdictions, that's really not looking after the best interests of people of Manitoba.

And the same report actually comments quite a bit on graduation rates that occur on reserves. And I recognize that a portion—or a significant portion of the education program's actually the—on reserves is the responsibility of the government of Canada. I wonder if the minister has entered into any discussions to try and work with the federal government to improve graduation rates on reserves.

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** Before I approach that question, I'd just like to clarify with the member that it is very difficult to do a comparison across jurisdictions because every jurisdiction sort of rates or evaluates the graduation rates, and so a comparison, you're not comparing apples to apples.

So we'll continue to do the investments that we're making, continue to ensure that we're providing opportunities for the young people and continue to celebrate our success. We have more work to do, but, you know, in 12 years, to go up 14 per cent is something to be celebrated, and I think that we have a foundation with our education partners that we're able to continue to work on.

Around Aboriginal education, that is an ongoing conversation that is happening at the provincial level with First Nations leaders but also with the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and the federal government is also having those conversations about what do we need to do to better support Aboriginal students. So there are a number of initiatives and conversations that are happening everywhere, from curriculum development to capital projects on reserve.

I can remember the first time that I had the opportunity to travel up north with the late Oscar Lathlin, and I was shocked and surprised to see that many communities did not have access to a high school and that their children had to go either south or north to Flin Flon to get their education by the Frontier School Division. And I thought about my own children and how hard that would be to have them have to leave their home community and find an education and go to a place where they're not necessarily feeling comfortable.

There are a lot of examples, though, that are happening around supporting Aboriginal youth and many of them are happening with the Department of Education and Advanced Education with their programs. The Aboriginal Academic Achievement Grant that is provided, it's \$8 million a year that's provided to the school division. There's the Shine On initiative, which is from the Aboriginal Human Resource Development, Inc.; Morningstar initiative is one with the Winnipeg School Division, so there are a number of initiatives that are happening, and we have more work to do and we're prepared to do that with all of our community partners. And there is Southeast Collegiate is another example of a school that is providing good quality education to students from First Nations communities from the east, as well as from the North, and providing them that launch pad to a successful future.

**Mr. Wishart:** I thank the minister for that answer.

I'm well aware it's hard to compare province to province and the C.D. Howe Institute actually made a fairly good effort to try and equalize those

numbers, which is why I was quoted members' raw numbers which make us make look even worse.

Turning from that, I'd like to touch a little bit on the PISA scores, which I know the minister is probably aware from—aware of. Sorry. Is there anything in this poverty strategy in terms of improved education that would make any effort or move towards improving the level of these PISA scores, whether they be on mathematics or reading ability or any other area?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** I will say that every part of the strategy supports families to better support their children and, as I spoke earlier in an answer, that's from the prenatal benefits that we provide to the employment and education programs that we provide to their parents, to the good quality child care that we provide, that that will build the foundation to help students be successful in school, and we are constantly tracking our EDI results and figuring out how do we target programs to better support the most vulnerable people and families in our provinces.

So I'm saying to you that I think that the work that we're doing around the social development will make a difference. Better housing, more stable housing, makes a huge difference. Good quality child care, families and parents that are feeling successful and getting the supports they need will make a difference. So we are very aware of the importance of education for not only the parents but also for the children, and we will continue to support that.

**Mr. Wishart:** Thank you for that answer, and I guess we were certainly all very supportive of improving the quality of education.

\* (15:00)

The minister basically is saying that all of her colleagues in—on the ALL Aboard Committee and all of their programs are what would be the result—or what would be the incentive to move these numbers forward. And I guess I'm looking for anything that might be specific in terms of the ALL Aboard strategy that would be different because of the strategy from what we would normally be getting otherwise.

**Madam Chairperson:** I'd like to review how long we are going to sit today. You suggested we sit 'til 3, and I'm just wondering if you would like to make a suggestion in regards to our sitting time.

**Mr. Wishart:** I would suggest that we will sit probably another hour. I know some of my colleagues have questions.

**Madam Chairperson:** We have agreement, then, that we'll sit 'til 4. Thank you.

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** I'm sorry that the member opposite hasn't really felt that my answers have answered his question, because providing a strong foundation for children that includes good quality food, so food security, stable housing, social supports that they need, opportunities for their parents, that makes a difference. Curriculum development at child care in the early learning child-care facility, that makes a difference. Ensuring that we have an education system that is responsive to the needs of the children, that makes a difference. So every part of our ALL Aboard strategy works towards better outcomes for families and for children, and we'll continue to make those investments with our partners and provide them with the necessary support.

**Mr. Wishart:** I thank the minister for that. I'm wondering if she would then suggest that, with all of these initiatives, how long she expects before we can see some improvements in something like the PISA score.

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** And we had this conversation last time we were in committee, and I have the privilege of chairing the ALL Aboard Committee and I take that responsibility very seriously, and I know that we can have conversations around specific things in the report, but very specific questions sometimes are better directed towards the Department of Education. But I strongly believe that the work that we do will make a difference, and I know that the work that the Department of Education is doing as far as strengthening teacher training, revising the curriculum to prioritize basic skills and problem solving, giving parents new resources so their children can excel, and that happens within our community school model. When parents feel comfortable in the school and they participate in the school, the outcomes for the children are better.

And providing new supports for teachers in the classroom—we have a number of supports that are provided through our funding model to give children that need it extra support and also ensuring greater accountability for student achievement. So we will be working with our education partners to make a difference and to see those outcomes.

**Mr. Wishart:** I thank the minister for that. Moving on to the adult learning programs in particular, the numbers there seem to be relatively static, and it is very interesting to note that more than 50 per cent of the participants in that program self-identify as Aboriginal or Aboriginal origin. In this area, what has occurred with funding in the last few years? Has this been an area that additional funding has been directed towards?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** So what I can share with the member is that we've had a small increase of students that are participating in our adult learning program, and that's about 1.1 per cent. So, in the fiscal year of 2012-2013, we had just over 10,000 students that participated and we are very proud of what our partners are able to provide with them. There were, out of the—there were over 8,000 adult learning centre learners that completed 12,255 courses for high school credit. There were 1,425 learners that graduated with a high school diploma, and part of the—51 per cent of the participants were female. So there have been a lot of positive outcomes that have happened for individuals. And yes, you were correct, a number of the learners are declare—self-declare as Aboriginal, so that is—the statistics that I have in front of me says around 45 per cent of the adult learners are First Nation or Aboriginal.

**Mr. Wishart:** Thank you very much, Madam Minister, and I guess I was misinterpreting it. It is, you're right, 45 per cent that are—self-identify as Aboriginal. And I did ask in addition to the success of the program whether there was commitment for further funding in this area in the future.

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** We are in the process right now working on our Estimates so it would be irresponsible of me to comment on what's going to be in the upcoming budget, but I can tell you that the minister responsible for the adult learning program is extremely vocal on the needs of the programs and the services that need to continue, and the benefits—most importantly, the benefits that happen for the learners and the outcomes in which we see.

**Madam Chairperson:** Mr. Wishart.

**Mr. Wishart:** Just let the minister go.

**Madam Chairperson:** Madam Minister.

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** I can just—I'd like to put on the record, for the adult learning program for '13-14, the budget was \$19.5 million.

**Mr. Wishart:** Thank you very much, Madam Minister, for that answer. And certainly I've worked very closely with our local one, and they have amazing results, and—but they certainly seem to be struggling for funding, so I would certainly encourage you to give a long look at programs like that that actually do seem to have results at the community level. Talking—*[interjection]* You owe me for that.

In terms of moving on to indicators like average weekly earnings, it certainly been relatively static in terms of the gap between Canada and Manitoba in terms of average weekly earnings, and yet our neighbouring province to the west has quite substantially better numbers. And many people actually say that a big part of this, of course, is the personal deduction, the difference between personal deductions between Manitoba and Saskatchewan, leaving more hands—or more money in the hands of families, particularly low-income families. I wonder if the minister would care to comment on whether she sees increasing personal deductions as one of the possible solutions to improving average weekly earnings.

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** So, between 1999 and 2013, average weekly earnings grew 10.7 per cent faster in Manitoba than the national average: 13.4 per cent compared to 12.1 per cent. The average earnings rose by 13.4 per cent, which means from \$700.39 to \$793.90, meaning that after having accounted for inflation, the average worker in Manitoba earned \$4,862.52 more in 2013 than they did in 1999. And in 2013, the average weekly earnings, well, as I said, was \$793. *[interjection]* Sorry, I stopped to breathe.

**Mr. Wishart:** Thank you for that answer, but I did ask whether the minister thought that increasing personal deductions would improve weekly earnings.

\* (15:10)

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** I just wanted to remind the member that in Budget 2014 we increased the basic income tax exemption by another \$2,500, removing a further 5,500 low-income Manitobans from the income tax roll. And so this exemption increased by—has increased by \$1,000 since 2011, raising the number of low-income Manitobans who pay no income tax by 22,000.

**Mr. Martin:** Can the minister clarify—the minister just indicated that you increased the basic personal exemption by \$2,500 in the last budget. Can you confirm that?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** Budget 2014, we increased the basic income tax exemption by another \$2,500.

**Mr. Martin:** Can I ask the minister, or can I encourage the minister, to research that and correct the—potentially correct the record? I do believe that she's incorrect, so I'd ask her to have her staff look into that number. But I'll simply leave it there, or she may want to ask her colleague Ms. Howard, who could probably provide her the more accurate number. I think the minister's inadvertently added an extra zero to that number.

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** The officials have advised me that we raised it by \$250. Thank you for allowing me to clarify that.

**Mr. Martin:** I—what is interesting, though, is the minister's original number, the \$2,500. When the government of Saskatchewan increased their basic personal exemption by \$4,000, they took 100,000 people off the tax rolls, as opposed to the numbers the minister has given.

One of the other things that Saskatchewan does that this current administration doesn't do is that's the indexation of tax rates as part of their larger, overall poverty reduction strategy, and, again, it's only a component, not the be-all and end-all. What I found interesting is that the policy of indexation of Saskatchewan's tax brackets was actually brought in by the NDP while they were in office then, and they argued at the time that there was no single tax policy that had greater beneficial impact to individuals on fixed or low incomes.

So I'm wondering what the minister's thoughts are in terms of direction of her support of indexing of the tax system as a component to the larger poverty reduction strategy on a go-forward basis.

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** We'll certainly take your points under advisement, and as we're developing our next budget, we'll consider them.

**Mr. Wishart:** I think we've managed to correct the area here, and certainly I would encourage the minister to look at the impact on those on low and fixed incomes when it comes to tax policy, especially when it comes to personal income tax deductions because that certainly seems to have a very direct impact on the amount of take-home money that they have available to their family, and I think that's what we're all interested in improving, so could certainly look in terms of that.

Looking ahead, in terms of number of people participating in apprenticeship programs, we were looking the other day at how many apprenticeship numbers there were across Canada and discovered that, really, Manitoba residents occupied only about 2 per cent of the registered apprenticeship spots across the country, all combined.

Now, given that education—and whether it be formal education or whether it be an apprenticeship approach—is certainly one of the priorities and one of the ways out of poverty situation, does the minister feel that 2 per cent is representative of where we need to be in Manitoba?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** So we have done a relatively good job gathering all the information that we need on—to prepare for this committee, but we do not have any specifics about the apprenticeship strategy.

I do know, though, that our apprenticeship strategy is extremely robust, and again in this Throne Speech that we had, it was making further commitments to have more individuals trained and to support them and looking at different models of doing that, some of them through our post-secondary education and our co-operatives. And I know that the Minister of Jobs and the Economy (Mr. Chief) is working very closely with the provincial officials in—and also the building trades to ensure that there are opportunities for apprentices.

We do know that there is many opportunities for employment in the trades, and we have been working to ensure that we are opening those doors. And part of the way that we do that is looking at the employment for single-parent moms or dads, and primarily for women where they don't see themselves traditionally in the trades, and removing some of those barriers. And you can see that in our strategy for sustainable employment in a stronger labour market what we're doing around better co-ordination and partnership and mutual responsibilities, and looking at what are the needs of the employer and matching that with the employment as well.

We right now—based on that information, we have—the committee will be interested that Manitoba now has the lowest number of single parents on social assistance since 1992, and I'd like to believe that that has a lot to do with the single-parent sustainable employment strategy that we implemented along with our community partners and Jobs and the Economy, where we provided information sessions where hundreds of single parents attended and we provided them with

information and personal assessments and evaluation about where they want to be as an employee, and help to ensure that they could find that pathway. And we have seen that there is some success in that.

**Mr. Wishart:** Thank you very much, Madam Minister, for that answer.

And you referenced single parents, in particular female single parents. In—across Canada, in StatsCan, in terms of registered apprentices, they actually only registered 1,419 females as part of the apprenticeship programs, which was down. I just wondered if there was anything in the strategy that we're reviewing today that would be specific to encouraging anyone, whether they be male or female, to go into apprenticeship programs, and, if that is so, why don't we seem to be getting better results?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** So there are specific programs that we have that are highlighted in our creating opportunities for youth, and one is supporting the High School Apprenticeship Program which allows youth, age 16 and older, to start their apprenticeship training while they're still in high school by combining a regular high school instruction with paid part-time and on-the-job training, and also offering the Student Apprentice Work Experience Program through the high school. So those are two examples of what we're doing to promote the potential, and I think also our single-parent program is another example. I think that when we're able to identify and have people continue to register for these programs and participate for the programs and are meeting the needs of the employers, that we're having success.

If I may put the—may I put the information about Flin Flon on the record? So, right now we have two vacant family units in Aspen Grove, and they will—become available—will become available after capital project which we expect to go to tender in January. So we will be doing some of the construction on—that I have spoken about earlier.

\*(15:20)

And then around Churchill is that—again, just to reiterate, that businesses renting units in Churchill do not take away from the low-income people. Our priority is the low-income households.

And also around the rural home ownership and disposition program, the Rural Homeownership Program, it was successful in—since April 1 of 2013 it sold 29 homes for the Rural Homeownership

Program with a net revenue of approximately \$1.5 million.

Thank you.

**Mr. Wishart:** I thank the minister for that information. Of the 29 that sold, how many were offered, or do you have that information?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** I did so well.

**Mr. Wishart:** You did pretty good, yes.

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** Could you repeat yourself, please?

**Mr. Wishart:** Of the 29—the minister indicated 29 properties were sold. How many were actually offered for sale?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** That—I don't have that information in front of me right now at this moment. I did pretty good, though, Ian.

**Mr. Wishart:** Yes, and I would like to thank the minister for that information. That is something that will fill in some gaps. It was more successful than perhaps I had first thought because, certainly, the contacts I had were unsuccessful in their purchases, so that indicates that at least some out there were being successful.

I just want to touch a little bit on the post-secondary education, of course, the participation, and we would note from your indicator 12, which is page 25, that we seem to have lost a number of people that are moving on to post-secondary in the 18- to 24-year-old. It was down a little bit, down 5 per cent, which is a pretty critical age range. I wondered if the minister had any idea why that would occur and whether there's any steps being taken to try and change that.

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** Just for the record, our 10-year trend has been an increase of 7.4 per cent, so I think that's a number that we need to also acknowledge and I think, also, what we've been able to do is, by keeping tuition rates low, that that opens the doors for individuals in providing multiple opportunities for them to achieve post-secondary.

So we're always working with our post-secondary institutions across the province, and I'd like to—in Winnipeg, in Brandon and in the North, in Thompson, in The Pas, and then also, you know, the Assiniboine credit—or Assiniboine Community College initiatives that we have in areas such as in Dauphin, we're always trying to make sure that we are offering programs that are meeting the needs of the students and the new economy that is happening

and ensuring that tuition is—that it's successful as well as our student loan program and our bursary programs are also being provided for individuals. That's just a few examples of what we're doing.

And then in the Throne Speech, as well, that there was mention of providing better support, and I know that the minister representing a rural—well, city constituency would, you know, would appreciate that the assets that are being now calculated, we're not considering the ownership of a car in that calculation in providing additional supports to rural students.

**Mr. Wishart:** I thank the minister for that. I just wanted to touch a little bit on some of the other indicators before some of my colleagues would have questions, as well, and, in particular, child poverty rates, which we know from Campaign 2000 placed Manitoba as the highest rate of child poverty in Canada of any province. We were pretty much 10 per cent above the national average. And, as this whole ALL Aboard strategy is really all about decreasing poverty, what is the minister's feeling in regards to this increase that we saw here in Manitoba while the rest of the country actually dropped in terms of child poverty rates? Is there—based on those kind of results, does the minister feel it is necessary to make changes in this program?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** I'd just like to put on the record that, you know, our focus with the ALL Aboard strategy is to ensure that there is—opportunities for all Manitobans and we are committed to tackling the root causes of poverty and don't accept people living in poverty and believe that one child living in poverty is too many. And so that's why we're committed to our strategy, working with our community partners, and I'd also like to, you know, highlight that, you know, our strategy is called the ALL Aboard strategy, and the ALL Aboard strategy states that it is all of our responsibility to work together to provide opportunities and social inclusion for Manitobans.

Now, I have a—there's always debate about what measurements people use to rank poverty. What we choose to use in Manitoba is a market basket measurement, and in that rate, it says that we are the sixth, we are ranked sixth in 2012, and that there's been an 11.8 per cent decrease in child poverty.

I don't want to and—debate what statistic that we use. I think that it's really important—it's the actions that we take to address poverty and make sure that, you know, there are specific things that we did. And, you know, when we came into power in 1999

and we stopped the clawback of the National Child Benefit Supplement, the way that we've increased minimum wage every year is substantial and makes a difference. And we also, in 2008, increased—or introduced the Manitoba Child Benefit, which provides \$420 of tax free—\$420 tax free per child per year and which helps low-income people to pay for their children's needs. The investments that we've made as far as funding child-care spaces, we have 6,500 more child-care spaces since 2008.

All of those together make a difference and support children. And I know that that's—that is a factor that we all want, is to ensure that we are reducing that statistic and making a difference for all Manitoba families.

**Mr. Wishart:** And the minister's certainly right in that different methodologies give some different results, and I was certainly quoting Campaign 2000, which is widely used across Canada, so I feel somewhat comfortable looking at their numbers. But sometimes you look beyond the statistics to indicators like food bank usage, and on food bank usage, it would tell us that we have a problem here in Manitoba, in that food bank usage continues to rise and, actually, it's virtually doubled since 2008 here in Manitoba. So, from our measure, we were concerned that childhood poverty is a significant factor and a growing factor that is limiting people's—children's ability to make use of the opportunities that are available here in Manitoba.

Now, I'm not going to ask the minister to debate the relative merits of different methodologies, but I would—I guess I'd like an indication from the minister whether she feels the increased use of food banks is indicative of a problem when it comes to poverty and, in particular, child poverty.

\* (15:30)

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** As many community advocates watch the use of food banks and develop theories about what is happening, we, too, watch them very, very closely.

And, when we saw the number start to increase for children, we called together a round table called Community Action against Child Hunger and food insecurity, and that table included a number of community leaders. David Northcott sat on the committee. Mel Lazareck was on the committee. Rick Frost was on the committee we had. Marla Somersall from Brandon sat on the committee as well with us, Tammy Christensen from Ndinawe.

That's just a small sample, I think there was around 20 people that sat around the table, and we all had very honest and open conversations about food bank usage and what we want to do about it. We all agreed, and David Northcott has said this often publicly, that, you know, he wants to work his way out of business so he does not have to provide that service, and we—you know, I've always thought that myself as a community activist as I watched food banks develop across this country.

So, as we came together we came up with a number of solutions, some of them short-term, some of them long-term, and the one that was adopted in Budget 2013—or 2014-15 was better support or increased support for breakfast programs, because there's a strong belief that if—and it is well researched—if children have a good breakfast that they will be better learners. And we know that we have great partners in the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba, and we gave them a grant of nearly a half a million dollars and they're going to be able to use that grant to provide breakfast programs across the province.

We also have the Northern Healthy Foods Initiative, and we've increased the northern food allowance for our northern families. We also are supporting, in the North End of the city, the first community food centre.

So there are a number of initiatives that are happening at the grassroots that we find—we feel that it's going to be promising. We need to keep working to address this issue and I think, again, it goes to providing supports for families, and we know that the greatest equalizer is education and employment and ensuring that we're able to provide that pathway to support families, because where there are children using the food bank there are families that are a part of that equation. And we need to make sure that, while we're doing that, that we're building good quality housing, providing our Rent Assist and maintaining our lowest child-care costs besides Quebec in Canada.

**Mr. Wishart:** One last question and then I'll let one of my colleagues have a few here.

But, if the minister recalls, in—when we did the first review of this whole, we were very critical of the fact that it did not contain a more robust policy when it comes to food and food security, and I think we're continuing to see the results of the fact that there is only piecemeal programs out there with regards to food and food security. And so certainly

it's good that you start programs and I know that many of them are quite new and so we'll look for results on them, but that was one of the very clear messages that came forward in the What We Heard document, and I really don't see it. And I know at the time the minister referred me to some other strategies on food, and I have looked at them and saw very little in terms of new initiatives.

So I would repeat I feel that this particular initiative and evaluation is very weak on the issue of food security.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Yes, I want to go back to the recent report on poverty in Manitoba which was part of the Campaign 2000 report. It was released and signed by the respected executive director of the Social Planning Council, Dennis Lewycky, and that report called the current situation in relationship to child poverty in Manitoba, and I quote, a simmering disaster, end of quote.

And it also says in the report, and, again, I quote, that there's little potential for improvement under current efforts. The recent report which, of course, we have debated the statistics, but the way this was done was done much more carefully not by a survey but—as much of the Stats Canada work is done—but by actually looking at income tax records and so on. And what it showed was that the incidence of child poverty in Manitoba was 29 per cent, whereas the average across the rest of Canada was 19 per cent, and that was for 2010. The information which was in this 2013-14 annual report was only up to 2011.

Now I think it must be said that the ALL Aboard strategy for reducing poverty in Manitoba has been very heavily criticized. Professor Sid Frankel, who is very well known and very highly respected professor at the University of Manitoba, and he has said, and I quote from a lengthy article which he did an analysis of this ALL Aboard strategy from A to Z, he said, and I quote, ALL Aboard is not an evaluable policy. Its goals, objectives and logic are simply not sufficiently articulated.

And so I asked the minister: Why did the government not put reasonably articulated goals, objectives and logic into its ALL Aboard policy?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** I will ask the member to look at—there are 22 indicators that we use—or is it 21—21 indicators that we use to measure our progress, and in this report you can see that there are 15 indicators that show a demonstrated progress. There are some that show we have more work to do

and some that show that statistically that we need to change the—how we calculate and measure that indicator.

So it is a work in progress. We are committed to seeing the reduction of poverty, and we have seen the reduction in poverty. There's 5,000 fewer—more Manitobans living in low income in 2011 than in 2000 and that's three—that includes 3,000 children.

We have a lot more work to do. I am—I've spoken with both of those individuals. I've heard their remarks. They've—were a part of the development of the ALL Aboard strategy and extremely vocal, and I respect both of them. But we're going to keep taking the actions that we need to, to provide better support for families, and which include quality child care, quality housing, employment and education opportunities. That's where we need to focus our energy, and I'm proud of the actions we've done. And we have a lot more work to do. It—the statistics prove that. And we know that one child living in poverty is one too many.

**Mr. Gerrard:** One of the problems is that for many of the indicators the way they're put forward and designed is not providing all that useful information in many respects.

I've looked quite considerably at the various definitions of poverty, right, and there are a variety, and I've taken StatsCan data and whether it's low income or 'marketbar' basket rate or low-income measure after tax for the most recent data in StatsCan, and when you compare Manitoba to nine other provinces and to Canada as a whole, you know, I have Manitoba versus 50 different other measures of poverty when you count the different provinces in Canada. In only two of those measures are the measure higher somewhere else than in Manitoba. In 48 of those measures, Manitoba is higher in terms of child poverty than anywhere else in the country, and that's a pretty poor record for a—I think the specific numbers that you quote are probably debatable, particularly given the information that was in the Campaign 2000 report.

\*(15:40)

You know, there has been very little progress in 15 years. I mean, that's the bottom line, and that's what the numbers tell us, and when you—we compare Manitoba with other provinces, there is clearly a big problem. I mean, I think that, you know, the government has to stop trying to make the argument that Manitoba's doing just fine and start admitting

that there is a big problem here and that there needs to be a shift in direction, because the ALL Aboard strategy, which has now been going for a number of years, you know, hasn't produced a significant reduction in child poverty, and, you know, there needs to be a change.

I ask the minister, will she consider making some sweeping changes to the ALL Aboard strategy to address the problems that I've raised, the problems that Dennis Lewycky and Sid Frankel and others have raised?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** And as I stated earlier, that we could spend—and we did—when we were developing the ALL Aboard strategy, we spent days and days with many of the advocates debating what measurement would—should we follow. And, at the end of the day, we agreed that we would focus on 21 indicators, and that's how we would evaluate our progress and make sure that those 21 indicators measured many different parts of an individual's life and could have a more broader perspective.

I'm very interested in taking action. I think that what we have to do is continue to support this initiative, the ALL Aboard initiative. The root causes of poverty do not get changed overnight. Some of them are generational. Some of them are based deeply within colonization and residential schools. That healing is going to take years and years and generations to solve, so I think that it is imperative that we acknowledge that there's been improvement in some indicators, acknowledge—and this government, every day, knows about the work that we have to do to reduce the number in poverty, and are committed to that. We are not drive-by poverty activists. This is just not new to us. This is a commitment that we have had—and many of us have had—many years before we were elected, and we're going to continue to make those improvements.

I—you know, I respectfully accept that we have more work to do, but we're committed to doing that work, and it has to be—the work has to be on a continuum. It has to be short-term investments and long-term investments and a commitment to the strategy so we can address the root causes and provide opportunities for people living in poverty so they can find their way out, which includes employment and education as the equalizer.

**Mr. Gerrard:** You know, as has been pointed out before, that, I mean, even if you take away the indicators, right, and you look at what's a functional measure of the extent of poverty, which is the extent

to which people are so poor that they have to use food banks, that we stick out, as a province, like a sore thumb, right?

I mean, the fact is that we have more than twice as many people using food banks as Saskatchewan, in spite of the fact that our populations are a little bit different, but on a per capita basis we are more than twice as many people using food banks. And, in fact, it's true for virtually every other province in Canada. And you have already indicated, as a minister, that, you know, you have some interest in moving this situation forward, and that David Northcott has indicated that, you know, what we need to do is to have a real plan so that we wouldn't need food banks anymore. But, you know, the fact of the matter is that so far, you know, the—what has been put in place and in the ALL Aboard strategy and in everything else that this government has done, that the NDP government has not in 15 years ever presented a plan to adequately address poverty in a realistic way that might have had even the remotest chance of ending the need for food banks in Manitoba.

Now, as a—an NDP government, at the moment, you may only have a year and a quarter left until the next election. Are you as an NDP government going to bring in a realistic plan which has the articulated objectives, goals and logic in order to have a view that you would like to end food bank use in this province? And, you know, most Manitobans are not going to be satisfied with an answer, well, it'll take generations to do this. I don't think that's acceptable, quite frankly, and we need to have something better than that.

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** We have seen improvement. It's not fair to say there's been no improvement, because there has been improvement. There are—in using the MBM, there are fewer people living in poverty today than what there was previously. We're committed to making these changes. We will continue to work with all of our partners, which include the federal government, the municipal governments, the private sector as well as the not-for-profit. We have a lot of work to do. We're not shying away from that work. We're going to continue to make the investments in housing, child care, employment and education.

**Mr. Gerrard:** You know, I mean, the progress is very debatable, and certainly in terms of food bank use Manitoba has gone up, since 2008, 52 per cent. And that's, you know, more than any province, and the only other provinces which are even close had extremely low food bank use to start with. So maybe

that was part of the reason why they have a larger increase.

But, you know, let us have a look at one of the indicators that you had come forward and you were saying this is the indicator which deals with the core housing need. And, you know, as I look at the record, in 2002 and 2010, we are virtually identical, right, that there's been essentially no change from 2002 to 2010. Now, there is a problem in that this index is four years out of date, and I'm not sure why that is. It would be very helpful if this had been more up to date.

But, you know, you can't just pick a year that somewhere in the middle and say, well, it's gone down a little bit from that year. You have to take the whole period that you've been in government and have a look at the progress. And the progress from what I can see, in terms of core housing need, is zero, between 2002 and 2010. So, you know, it is possible to pick short time frames where there is, you know, short-term improvement in one index, but if you look at the longer term, over 15 years of government, the progress has been pretty small, if any.

Now, why is the data on the core housing need four years out of date?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** That—one of the things that we have to talk about is that in 2011 there was 3,505 fewer Manitoban households living in core housing need. That's significant. We have a lot more work to do, but that is significant. And we've continued to make commitments around 1,500, which we completed last year, social housing units, 1,500 affordable housing units, and another commitment, after we've completed that, for 500 affordable and 500 social, as well as partnerships with the private sector, whether it is Live Downtown or whether it's development on our own provincially owned land where the private sector's going to build, and a certain portion of that will be affordable housing.

\* (15:50)

So it's building social housing, it's improving our social housing stock that we have right now, and that is making a difference and partnering with the private sector. There are some really interesting statistics around the tax credit around the housing projects. I think that there are eight applicants, and out of those eight applicants around 533 units will be built, but out of those 533 units I think around 352 of those units will be affordable.

And around—the question around the statistic about the ALL Aboard—or around the core housing need, there is a little information there that is on—what page is that? It is on page 13—that talks about that the data was unavailable from CMHC, but we will continue to work with CMHC as we have in the past and get more information.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I mean, as you point out, as the minister points out, there is a problem in terms of the availability and the ability to accurately analyze trends, and you can't just cherry-pick, you know, one year here and one bit of data here. If you look at the overall trends, the progress is not nearly as good as it should be.

Now, let me refer to a recent article by Mary Agnes Welch, and she—writing in the Winnipeg Free Press, and she's a respected journalist who does her homework well, and she says that the government's approach to welfare is to turn it into something of—out of a Kafka novel. She described the government's Kafkaesque approach as, and I quote, so infantile that it robs recipients of any autonomy and forces them to fight for every penny. And yet the government's report, rather than admitting it was admirer of Kafka or, on the contrary, admitting its wrong-headed approach for the last 15 years, you know, this report is full of, you know, cherry-picking numbers, full of really soporific balm instead of substance. It's a problem.

I ask the minister: Has she considered that the failure of the NDP government with respect to child poverty in Manitoba is a direct result of its Kafkaesque approach?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** I can tell you that the investments we are making are—they're making a difference and that there are some very specific things that we can point to and that I will share with the member again. We agree that child poverty is a blemish for all of us and that we have work to do and we're committed to do that work. And I have confidence in our government to do that work and have seen success. We have a heck of a lot more work to do and we're committed to doing it.

And I can tell you about the minimum wage being increased and how that has—it's now at \$10.70 per hour—it's putting in 720 more dollars into workers after tax. We're investing \$20 million this year in Manitoba Rent Assist. We are building more social and affordable housing. We ended the clawback of the national child tax benefit. We've ensured that we have prenatal benefits. We have the Manitoba Child

Benefit. We have funded more child-care spaces; we now have over 33,000 licensed child-care spaces.

We're going to continue to work with all of our community partners. We have more work to do, and there's one quote that I think that the member did not reflect and that was after David Northcott heard the budget last year and how he was dancing and celebrating and felt that that was one of the best budgets he has heard in decades that addressed the issue of poverty for Manitobans.

**Mr. Gerrard:** I think that there were a number of people who thought that moving to 75 per cent of market rates was a reasonable approach, but there were very few people who expected that the government would delay this for four years, and the way it's being implemented and the people that I talk to and the people who use assistance that I talk to, as well as those who work in this area, tell me that it's not having nearly the impact because the government has only gone a quarter of the way that it said—originally in the budget.

Now that may come in four years, but when you're dealing with people who are marginalized, who are at the very end of their resources, you know, it's difficult to persuade them that they can wait four years until they can get enough food to eat and enough for their kids. And so, you know, David Northcott may have been very happy at the time of the budget, but I'm not entirely sure that he's so happy today because of the slow pace with which this has been approached. And, when it comes to child care, the government is showing about 17 per cent of children are—will have the availability of child care for them.

The fact of the matter is that right now we have thousands and thousands—the last wait-list I saw was somewhere around 10 or 12 thousand children waiting for spaces, and last year toward the end of 2003 there was a conference on the crisis in child care in Manitoba and the discussion there. And I asked Susan Prentice at the discussion, you know, what should we have. All right, 17 per cent is clearly not good enough, and she said, well, you know, probably we should be thinking about 50 per cent. You know, we're not even in the right ballpark, right, in terms of numbers, and we don't have a plan to get us into the right ballpark. We have a plan to steadily increase it but increase it in a way that we're going to continue to have very, very long wait-lists.

And, you know, the indicators, we were talking about these indicators earlier on, this new households

served through the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation's programs and services. But you've got people being served, but you've got other people who are no longer being served. So the number being served at any one time may be going up or down. We don't have a measure that gives us a really good picture of what the overall situation here is. The core housing need is a better indicator, but the fact is that the last one is from 2010, which is four years out of date. So it's pretty 'duff' to have a sense that you're on top of what's happening in terms of the situation here.

Now, I mean, I can understand why this government would want to have this report reviewed late on a Friday afternoon when the results have been so dismal, but the fact is that one needs to face up to the fact that there is an extraordinary high rate of child poverty in this province. And it's not just Sid Frankel but a variety of others who pointed out that this is a—on a continuing basis, a major, major issue in our society and one that needs to be addressed with a plan which really has well-articulated goals and objectives and sets actual targets for what sort of reduction should be realized.

Those are my comments, and I don't have further questions. Thank you.

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** I just want to put on the record, when the member was talking about Rent Assist, there were 18,883 EIA households that received increased shelter benefits. Now that is significant. We have a plan to get to 75 per cent market median rent and we're going to get there. But that made a difference, that investment of over—of \$20 million to those families made a huge difference, and that cannot be ignored.

\* (16:00)

We've got more work to do. We're not shying away from that at all, and I know that our time is running short and that there are more questions from the committee that I'll certainly take. But there are significant improvements that we are doing around our five-year child-care strategy. You're going to see more spaces; you're going to see more funded spaces; you're going to see more training. And that's going to make a difference for Manitoba families.

**Madam Chairperson:** As the time is 4 o'clock, we have to revisit how late we're prepared to sit this evening. So I would like to ask for recommendations.

**Mr. Wishart:** I would like to recommend that we have one or two more questions and then we would wrap up.

**Madam Chairperson:** Thank you.

**Mr. Martin:** Minister, on several occasions you've referred to your government working with non-profits as part of your larger poverty reduction strategy. I'm wondering if you can advise whether you support your government's claw-back request that provincially funded, non-profits return 4 per cent of their previously approved 2014 budgets back to government, and, if they're unable to return that requested 4 per cent, that they justify that to their funding partners.

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** The specifics of what you speak about are within the child-welfare system; it is not overall with our not-for-profit organizations. Our not-for-profit organizations, we have an extremely robust, multi-year funding plan that gives them core operating money. We have reduced the red tape as far as reporting, so there's been significant improvements made for the not-for-profit sector.

The 4 per cent that you speak about is around staff vacancies; that's what we're saying. Many of our not-for-profit organizations have vacancies, and we know that that's a natural of doing business. There's people that are leaving jobs, that are coming to jobs, people going on maternity leave or paternity leave. And there is that dynamic that happens in all agencies and businesses, and 4 per cent is seen to be reasonable. I can tell you that the Department of Family Services, I think we're at about 12 per cent now vacancy rate, and we're holding to that. So we are asking the agencies to support a 4 per cent vacancy rate. We're in ongoing conversations with them. There is to be no layoffs within those agencies at all, and, for the most part, the agencies are able to meet that requirement, and, if there are problems within an agency, we will sit down with them, we will help them and support them with their budget and review the request.

**Mr. Martin:** So is the 4 per cent vacancy rate a new policy for government in terms of not-for-profits that they are to maintain?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** No, this is a specific initiative related to child-welfare agencies within the Department of Family Services.

**Mr. Martin:** Just for clarification, does the minister's department fund any other not-for-profits outside of child-welfare agencies?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** Yes, we do.

**Mr. Martin:** Are those agencies also being requested to return 4 per cent of their previously approved 2013-14 budgets back to government, and, if they're unable to, to justify why they're unable to?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** Those agencies that we fund, those are through grants, so it's a different funding relationship. You can't compare the two groups at all.

**Mr. Martin:** But the minister didn't answer the question. Have any of the other agencies that your department funds, the non-profit agencies, been requested to return 4 per cent of their previously approved 2013-14 budgets back to government?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** The—our relationship with the other not-for-profits that we support is through a service purchase agreement, so they are very different than what the child-welfare agencies and the authorities, and our relationship is with them. These agencies, the child-welfare agencies, are legislated agencies, so the comparisons—they're not apples and apples.

**Mr. Martin:** Can I try again? Can the minister advise whether or not any of the other agencies outside the child-welfare agencies and non-profits you fund through service agreements, and I worked for one of the agencies—like, not funded through Jobs and the Economy—if we had a service purchase, and there is slippage that does occur and, as you go towards year end, and, in talking to a number of non-profits over the last week, they're advising me that the government has made a request of non-profits to return 4 per cent of their previously approved budgets to government and, if they're unable to, to justify why they're unable to.

Is that also occurring within your own department to non-profits that you're funding outside of child-welfare agencies?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** So the member is talking to me hypothetically, but you have actual stories. So I encourage you, if you are talking with a specific agency, to share it with us and we will certainly meet with this agency. I am not familiar with any policy at all that our government is requesting that of not-for-profits across the board.

**Mr. Martin:** Just for the member's—or minister's clarification, it's not a hypothetical; it is occurring, and I can tell you that it is occurring and is occurring with multiple non-profit agents.

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** And I will certainly investigate that on Monday.

**Mr. Martin:** So do I have the minister's commitment that there'll be a formal response coming, then?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** I would—if the member would provide me with the specifics of the agencies that he is speaking to, I will certainly look into those specific requests.

**Mr. Martin:** And, not surprisingly, there's a certain degree of fear with any not-for-profit when it comes to biting the hand that feeds them, and whether that's being provincial or federal funding. So their willingness to air their grievances public is quite limited. So I would simply refer to my earlier question about the larger policy of whether or not the government, or through her department, is requesting a 4 per cent return of previously approved budgets to not-for-profits funded through her department.

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** It makes it very difficult if I don't have the actuals to investigate. But I can tell you that this government has a very strong relationship with many of the not-for-profit organizations, and they know that they're welcome to contact me directly if they have concerns. They are welcome to do that, and we will certainly look into these—this situation that you present today and evaluate and find out exactly what the message is that the not-for-profits are receiving.

Our not-for-profit red-tape reduction has been extremely successful. We have completed phase 1.

We are now expanding to phase 2 where we will invite the application of many other not-for-profits to join us in that project of reducing their—the red tape and also ensuring that they have consistent multi-year funding.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** I guess I just would like to seek a little clarification, and I'm not aware of anyone that has received any official correspondence from the government of Manitoba or from this minister's department, but if the minister could just clarify she is indicating that the only agencies that have been asked to find 4 per cent savings or return 4 per cent are the child-welfare agencies throughout the province? Am I correct in that understanding, that there's been no official correspondence from her department to any other agency requesting money to be returned?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** To the best of my knowledge, there has not been any letters sent from the minister or from the Department of Family Services, that there is

ongoing conversations with—between the authorities and agencies and the Department of Family Services around the 4 per cent vacancy rate.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Then just for clarification, places like—just because I have a special interest in some of the agencies that are funded by the Department of Family Services, and, as I said, I haven't received any, you know, communication from anyone—but I look at the Marymounts, the Knowles centres, the Macdonald Youth Services and all of those agencies that are funded through Family Services, and the minister is indicating, and just could she confirm that there has been no correspondence with those organizations from her department requesting that money be returned from those agencies? Can she confirm that that has not happened?

**Ms. Irvin-Ross:** To the best of my knowledge that that has not happened. But you can trust I will be investigating that on Monday.

\*(16:10)

**Mr. Wishart:** Just had a couple of comments I'd like to make. There are a couple of things that we truly do agree on. One is that, certainly, more work needs to be done in a number of areas, and we would certainly support the need to do that. And we're very concerned that the child poverty rates continue to rise. And we do not see anything that seems to be effective in terms of changing that at this point in time. So that's certainly a very bad indicator from our

point of view. That said, we're prepared to let the vote take place.

**Madam Chairperson:** Hearing no further questions.

Annual Report of the Manitoba Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy (ALL Aboard) for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2013—pass.

Shall the Annual Report of the Manitoba Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy (ALL Aboard) for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014, pass?

**Some Honourable Members:** Pass.

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Madam Chairperson:** I hear a no. The report is not passed.

This concludes the business before us.

The hour being 4:11, what is it the will of—what is the will of the committee?

**Some Honourable Members:** Committee rise.

**Madam Chairperson:** Before we rise, it would be appreciated if members would leave behind any unused copies of reports so they may be collected and reused at the next meeting.

Committee rise, and happy holidays.

**COMMITTEE ROSE AT: 4:11 p.m.**

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