



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 19, 1992

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Ron Samchuk, Margaret Samchuk, Albert C. Billaney and others requesting the provincial government reconsider its decision and return the Manitoba Heritage Federation's granting authority.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules (by leave). Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba, humbly sheweth that:

Domestic abuse is a crime abhorred by all good citizens of our society, but nonetheless it exists in today's world; and

Violence against women and children in the domestic setting is on the increase; and

Often it is desirable for the victims of domestic abuse to leave the scene of the abuse and seek shelter elsewhere; and

It is the policy of the current government to limit refuge to victims of domestic abuse to a 10-day stay in shelters;

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislature of the Province of Manitoba may be pleased to request that the government of Manitoba increase the initial allowable stay for victims of domestic violence at a safe shelter from the current 10 days to 30 days.

I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans), and it complies with the privileges and practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba, humbly sheweth that:

The Brandon General Hospital is the major health care institution for southwestern Manitoba; and

The citizens of Brandon and southwestern Manitoba are deeply concerned and disturbed about the downsizing of the hospital and view it as a threat to the quality of health care in the region; and

The Manitoba government has chosen not to review the current budget to ensure that cutbacks to vital services do not occur; and

The administration of the hospital has been forced to take drastic measures including the elimination of the Palliative Care Unit and gynecological wards, along with the layoff of over 30 staff, mainly licensed practical nurses, to cope with a funding shortfall of over \$1.3 million; and

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislature of the Province of Manitoba may be pleased to request that the government of Manitoba consider reviewing the funding of the Brandon General Hospital.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments): I beg to present the Second Report of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Your Standing Committee on Law Amendments presents the following as its Second Report.

Your committee met on Thursday, May 14, 1992, at 10 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building to consider bills referred.

Your committee has considered:

Bill 6, The Denturists Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les denturologistes;

Bill 38, The Manitoba Evidence Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la preuve au Manitoba;

Bill 48, The Personal Property Security Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les sûretés relatives aux biens personnels;

Bill 68, The Public Trustee Amendment, Trustee Amendment and Child and Family Services Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le curateur public, la Loi sur les fiduciaires et la Loi sur les services à l'enfant et à la famille;

and has agreed to report same without amendment.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

Mrs. Dacquay: I move, seconded by the honourable member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): I have a statement to make with copies for members opposite.

Last week's Western Premiers' Conference in British Columbia was one of the most productive and important in recent years. Consensus was reached on a wide range of issues. My colleagues and I issued nine communiques at the end of our conference. Copies have been distributed with the text of these notes.

The meeting began with a strong reaffirmation of the value of co-operation among the western provinces and the territories which are now full participants in western Premiers' conferences. We concluded with a firm and clear statement on western and territorial constitutional priorities, stressing that the concerns of the west and the North must not take a back seat to those of other provinces and regions in the current round of constitutional discussions.

Communique No. 1 outlines the Premiers' commitment to a co-operative and co-ordinated approach to economic diversification, the delivery of public services and national policy issues of significance to western and northern Canada.

* (1335)

Communique No. 2, headed Better Government, deals with the need for improved financial management and more effective delivery of public services. It draws attention once again to the problems of federal offloading and of overlap and duplication between federal and provincial services.

The western Finance ministers are being asked to resume their work on these concerns and to prepare a report by the middle of August. Joint work will also be undertaken on improving the quality of service to the public.

Communique No. 3, on economic co-operation, sets out several key priorities for developing and diversifying the western Canadian economy. Improved electrical interconnections, a longstanding priority for our province, are at the top of the list. Major initiatives and advanced technology are also identified, and I am pleased to note that the Premiers supported our efforts to reactivate the Churchill rocket range.

This communique also calls for an early announcement of federal plans for the national highways program. It notes that a positive start-up decision this month would ensure additional construction activity and employment this summer. The communique also notes the progress which has been made by the four western provinces in reducing trade barriers in recent years and commits all governments to expand those efforts. It also reaffirms support for a possible agreement on the elimination of destructive competition for investment.

We had hoped for greater progress on these issues, but they are difficult ones. I believe there is a good chance for significant progress in the coming months.

Communique No. 4, on international trade, deals with several current concerns, including the importance of formalizing the provinces' role in international treaty making and implementation where areas of provincial constitutional responsibility are involved. Reference is also made to the possibility of a joint western Premiers' trade mission to the Asia-Pacific region in the next year.

Communique No. 5, on agriculture, establishes a comprehensive work program for western Agriculture ministers on such issues as GATT, farm income and farm financing and grain transportation. This communique also contains a strong statement of support by the western Premiers for the Port of Churchill. It urges federal authorities to ensure that Churchill's viability is maintained.

Communique No. 6, on rural and urban communities, commits the western provinces and territories to working together to deal with the problems of rural and urban development.

Communique No. 7, on health care reform, summarizes one of our most important and strongest areas of agreement. We intend to work very closely with the other western provinces and territories to reform health care delivery. I have advised my colleague the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) that his strategy paper on Quality Health for Manitobans attracted considerable interest at the conference and has been referred to the Health ministers for discussion.

Communique No. 8, on training and education, calls for joint work on improved training strategies and on education reform. Much of this work is to be completed this summer for review at the annual Premiers' conference in Prince Edward Island in August.

Finally, Communique No. 9, on constitutional matters, emphasizes, quote: ". . . that this round of negotiations must be truly 'the Canada round', wherein the issues of concern to the West, as well as those of other Canadians, have to be addressed."

The communique identifies several major western priorities, including fundamental Senate reform, such as Triple-E, and has strengthened equalization provision and protection against unilateral federal changes in transfers for health, education and social services.

* (1340)

The discussions in British Columbia last week were positive and encouraging. Partisan considerations were set aside in favour of principle and co-operation. As I said in Vancouver at the end of the conference, despite some disagreements on individual topics, we were able to find a great deal of common ground. Because that agreement crosses party lines, it will be stronger in its impact, and I believe it will be listened to carefully in Ottawa and right across the country. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): I would like to respond to the statement of the Premier today in the House. We are absolutely delighted with the changed tone in the statement produced by the Premier today in this Chamber, of co-operation, consensus, working together, economic renewal, revitalization and all the words, Mr. Speaker, that we asked the Premier to take to the table last week in the area of economic development for western Canada.

Last week, of course, the Premier responded in a very partisan way, talking about how terrible it was in New Democratic provinces to the west of us—[interjection] Well, there he goes again, Mr. Speaker. The sentence after he talks about being nonpartisan, he just has to chirp up in his usual partisan way.

Mr. Speaker, we asked this Premier to go to that western Premiers' meeting because we have a very serious situation in western Canada right now. We have the situation of the tale of two regions in western Canada. We have a booming British Columbia with increased members of the labour force, increased members of population, decreased unemployment, increased members of people working, increased investment, increased tourism, increases in all the economic factors that are important to the quality of life and job opportunities for people.

We have a modest increase in Alberta—very, very modest. We have declines that have taken place in the last four years in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, declines in labour force members, last-place finishes by this government in terms of gross domestic product, in terms of our economy, poverty numbers that should be a scandal for any government and any Premier.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, we ask this Premier to truly go to those meetings in a co-operative consensus way, rather than the comments we had from the Premier last week on page 3268: ". . . we do not need any advice from New Democratic governments who are destroying provinces right across this country."

So the Premier, I am pleased he has come back with a much more positive response because, as the Premier has noted, we must rely on each other in western Canada. We cannot rely on the federal Conservative government which has decreased the infrastructure in western Canada, whether it is transportation, whether it is telecommunications policy, whether it is rural economic initiatives from post offices to other initiatives and has decreased the opportunity for western Canadians and offloaded—as the Premier has noted in his statement.

So the real villain in Canada and western Canada is rightly stated by the Premier in his page 2 statement. The real villain of our country is the Progressive Conservative Prime Minister Brian

Mulroney who has offloaded year after year and day after day on western Canada. I am glad the western Premiers are going to deal with the real factor of our decline in our economy in terms of western Canada.

Dealing with the specifics, as I say, we asked the government to take a co-operative approach. We are pleased that they are going to take one. We think that there has to be more co-ordinated approach to offloading from the federal government. It is much better for all of us to talk when the federal budget is announced in a co-ordinated way.

We would note in the last federal budget, the Premier of Manitoba and the Premier of Alberta spoke one way. The Premier of Saskatchewan and the Premier of British Columbia spoke in opposition to the federal budget of Don Mazankowski. I think it is better to have a co-ordinated approach with the thousands and hundreds of thousands of people who do not have jobs and the tens of thousands who do not have jobs in Manitoba.

We are absolutely pleased that the government is looking at a number of co-operative efforts that will be important for us in western Canada. We always thought that Grant Devine was making a mistake with the Shand development, Mr. Speaker, in terms of electric development. The Rafferty-Alameda scandal, which we still oppose, was not a good idea for western Canada. We are pleased that they are looking at a western Canadian grid.

We are also pleased that we are working together on the Churchill rocket range. My colleagues and I were in Churchill last week, and indeed we are competing with Alaska on that rocket range. We understand, certainly, that the government is working on a rocket range in Churchill. We would work very closely with the government and support the government on that potential development.

* (1345)

Dealing with some of the other communiques, Mr. Speaker, we note the government has dealt with international trade. I would say that there is a fundamental difference of opinion between this Premier and the Premiers of other western Canadian provinces. The Premier of Saskatchewan and the Premier of British Columbia have called on a full stop to free trade negotiations with Mexico because of its impact on agriculture, textiles and other industries. This Premier has gone from being opposed to trade with Mexico to having the conditional trading agreement with Mexico.

Mr. Speaker, we applaud the government's effort to work on a comprehensive approach on agriculture. It is again another prime example where the federal government, in competing with the American treasury and, unfortunately, the European treasury, has got into a situation where the federal government has been allowed with their tripartite programs to offload onto the western Canadian taxpayers and onto the western Canadian treasuries. We believe strongly that all western provinces should work together to have a national agricultural support program, because we believe international trade and its national ramifications should be dealt with by the national government, not again offloaded onto the prairie provinces.

In terms of the Port of Churchill, Mr. Speaker, again we think there is some renewed enthusiasm for the Port of Churchill. The minister had other Saskatchewan ministers at the last Hudson Bay Route Association meeting which is a change from past years, as our Minister of Transportation (Mr. Driedger) notes, and there are no ships yet confirmed for the Port of Churchill. We hope that the announcement of the grain sale last week which has not been formally confirmed yet, the massive grain sale to the Soviet Union, will be used by this government to enhance the use of the Port of Churchill and the tremendous facilities that are there ready, willing and able to ship western Canadian wheat from our producers to our markets abroad.

Dealing with health care reform, Mr. Speaker, we certainly would like the western provinces to work together in a close way. It is absolutely essential that we not have two conflicting agendas all under the same rubric. It is important that we do have a reform agenda, a true reform agenda for health care. Western Canadians have been well served by the fact that Saskatchewan started the medicare program years ago. The New Democratic government started it years ago. Manitoba was the first province to get rid of health care premiums. Saskatchewan was the second.

It is important that we reform the system, and we will work with the government. Any change in health care—just as in the early '80s when we reduced health care beds by 100, we made sure that there was outpatient surgery and day surgery to replace those beds. We will ask questions from this government to ensure that there is real reform and not real rhetoric in terms of health care and our quality of health care in this province.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker—this is a long communique—education and training, we would ask the government to return the \$10 million they cut out of the post-secondary colleges. They have returned \$1 million to it. They cannot sign communiques in the morning and cut \$9 million out of post-secondary training and education in this province and have any credibility with any members in this Chamber.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we would applaud the provincial Premiers in working together on a constitutional resolution, and I would again remind the Premier that the No. 1 issue in all the public hearings in Manitoba was the need and desire to keep a strong federal government with the ability to work with all regions in this country. We hope the Premier is remembering the No. 1 priority, the people of this province, a strong national Canadian government as part of any constitutional reform in this province. Thank you very much.

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted that the Premier was able to report to us, but less delighted to see that he is limping a little bit more. I think we have to keep him out of British Columbia, because that seems to be where he has the biggest problems with his ankle.

Mr. Speaker, much of what the Premier has stated in his communique today is very positive. I think that there are a number of initiatives, which have been announced, which will bode well not only for Manitobans, but indeed all western Canadians. I would like to begin specifically with the Communique No. 2 headed Better Government. I want to raise a concern, and that is that what we are debating at the present time at the constitutional table seems to be the distribution of powers. In this particular communique, the First Ministers of the four western provinces seem to be referring to the offloading and indeed the overlapping of services, and yet their report is not to come in until August.

It would seem to me that while we are debating powers is the time when it is most important for us to have this report, because if we are going to talk about a change of powers, we as one of those western provinces, should have the data at our fingertips so that we know what would be in our best interest; to work co-operatively and taking a power potentially from the federal government, or in fact giving a power back to the federal government, if that could end the duplication and the overlapping

which everybody talks about but nobody wants to document.

* (1350)

Well, I am glad to see that it is being documented, but I am concerned that the documentation is going to occur perhaps after we have dealt some of those powers away. So I would urge caution on the part of our First Minister and other First Ministers to make sure that that timing does not occur as it would appear in his communique. Obviously, we welcome the possibility of an early announcement of federal plans for a national highways program and would hope very much that those potential jobs would be available this summer and into the early fall. It may indeed be a wish on the part of the Premiers but may not turn into a reality, since the federal government seems less than willing at this point to promote their national highways program in a fast track position.

As to communication No. 4 on International Trade, they have dealt very specifically with the importance of formalizing the province's role in international treaty making. As the Premier (Mr. Filmon) has indicated over and over again in this House, the provinces could be opposed to any international trade agreement, and indeed all 10 provinces and two territories could be opposed to any international trade agreement.

That would not prevent, except in a moral suasion type of way, the federal government from signing such an international treaty, because the bottom line is that treaties are within the purview, constitutionally, of the federal government. I think that if the Premiers are looking at some type of mechanization whereby some, at least, majority provincial participation and acceptance might be necessary, I think this may bode well before we get into a future down-the-road impact.

I refer specifically to the sections having to deal with free trade agreements which are in the purview of the provinces, and that is consistently the retraining portions, the employability portions, which we know have been adversely affected by the U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement and will be even more adversely affected by the North American free trade agreement with Mexico. The provinces are on the sidelines watching this happen, knowing that they are going to have to provide the monies for retraining and yet having no say whatsoever in what the federal government ultimately is going to decide.

If the Premiers are looking towards some form of provincial participation to a greater degree in the input of these treaties or decisions with regard to negating those treaties, I see that as a positive move.

The fifth communique deals with the Port of Churchill. Obviously that has to be welcome news to everyone who lives in the province of Manitoba. He speaks about the fact that western agricultural ministers are prepared to work more closely together, but bear in mind that what is happening, particularly in Alberta, is rich programs in agriculture, which we simply cannot meet in the Province of Manitoba and to some degree also in the Province of Saskatchewan. That has consistently impacted very unfairly on the provinces such as Manitoba and Saskatchewan, whose budgets, quite frankly, are not as full as has been in the past in the budget of the Province of Alberta.

Finally, I would like to comment specifically on the health care reform. It is delightful to see that there is a positive message coming from the Premiers about the need for the reform of the health care delivery system. We saw in the announcement of our Health ministry on Thursday, a positive move in that direction. I was interested in seeing a full-page ad taken by the B.C. government advertising for a number of community-based facilities and community-based staffing which are going to be required in order to meet that reformed health care system.

We looked with interest, and to some dismay, at some decisions made in provinces like Saskatchewan which are deinsuring certain services, because we do not believe that that is the direction to go. What we believe the direction is, is genuine reform of the health care system, not the imposition of user fees, not the deinsuring of certain services. We hope that the provinces will in fact work together to ensure that the five principles of health care are maintained in all four western provinces, this one taking a lead role in this particular initiative. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*(1355)

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of all honourable members to the gallery, where we have with us this afternoon, from the Park La Salle School, forty-two Grade 5 students. They are under the direction of Nancy

Krueger. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau).

Also this afternoon, we have twenty-five journalism students from the Red River Community College, and they are under the direction of Mr. Donald Benham.

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Department of Government Services Director of Leasing Dismissal

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in early March the RCMP raided one of the Government Services offices, and they seized a number of contracts, invoices, tendering material, construction reports, audit reports, lease agreements, et cetera, of two buildings: one 280 Broadway and one 85 Smith Street. One of the buildings, 280 Broadway, was the subject of discussion in this Chamber and the subject of special audit by the Provincial Auditor.

Mr. Speaker, we have been raising a number of questions on this issue for the last number of months. We are very concerned about this investigation and the impact this will have on the people of Manitoba. I would like to ask the Premier if he could advise Manitobans that the director of leasing, one of the integral persons involved in the original 280 Broadway decision, has been dismissed last week by the provincial government. Can the Premier tell us the reasons for that dismissal?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Government Services): First of all, it is true the director of leasing was dismissed last week at the advice of Civil Service Commission. It was not as a result of the RCMP investigation, because that is still being carried out.

As the member opposite is aware, part of the process and the process in place is the Civil Service Commission makes a recommendation. That recommendation has been carried out by my staff.

Leasing Branch - Report Release

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the government now has two reports: one from the Civil Service Commission and one an internal audit from their own Government Services

Department. The government has not yet released or made public any of the reasons for the internal audit or the special investigation by the Civil Service Commission.

In that most of the issues related to the government leasing impact upon the Treasury Department of government in terms of the authority that these people allegedly had or did not have, I would like to ask the minister whether he will make public both the Civil Service report and the Internal Audit report because they do pertain to the public trust. They do pertain to a relationship between this person and the Treasury Board which authorized the 280 Broadway decision last year. Mr. Speaker, will the government release those reports so that we will not have to continue to ferret out this information, but will know it in a full and public way as the public should have?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Government Services): Mr. Speaker, finally, the member from across the way realizes that it was an employee. There was no landlord involved in this particular issue. The employee was carrying on the same authorization policy that was by the previous administration. The employee, according to Civil Service Commission, violated that.

We are still waiting for the RCMP report, and as we receive those reports, I will be going through those with my administration.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the government will acknowledge that this person was reporting directly to Treasury Board. In fact, last year in Hansard, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) was quoted on a number of occasions as citing the director of Government Leasing as the rationale for taking certain decisions in government.

The minister has indicated that they are also investigating another hundred leases that were conducted by this individual, the director of leasing. Mr. Speaker, who is investigating the relationship between the Treasury Board and the director of leasing who has been dismissed by government?

Mr. Ducharme: First of all, Mr. Speaker, the person involved was reporting directly to the minister and to the deputy minister in regard to these leases. We found no further indications of any other leases so far. We have 120 leases almost every year as done by my staff.

In this particular case, unfortunately, the member violated his role and his position, and that is what I

stressed a month and a half ago when it was first brought up in this House. I answered those questions to the member of the opposition. At that time, he insisted the landlord was involved. We insisted, no. It was an employee who was involved, who violated his position, as the rule and at the recommendation, I repeat, by Civil Service Commission, was let go by our department last week.

* (1400)

Pornography Government Policy

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae).

There is a great deal of uncertainty respecting the application of the law relating to pornography. We now have the Supreme Court ruling, but we have no provincial policy with respect to the law against pornography.

When will this government reveal its policy on pornography so the public will have some protection and the police will have something to work with regarding this kind of material?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I remind the member for Kildonan that it was this government that took this matter to the Court of Appeal to ensure that we could indeed prosecute porn and video shop owners under legislation and that it was as a result of that that the obscenity laws were upheld, because this province took that appeal to try and ensure that this kind of reprehensible material was not available in this province. With respect to the remainder of this question, I will take that as notice on behalf of the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae).

Mr. Chomiak: My supplementary to the Premier: Why is it taking so long since the Supreme Court ruling, since it was reported in early March that the Crown Attorneys were meeting for two weeks in order to outline and determine this policy? It is now May 18, and we still have no policy.

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, I know that the critic for the opposition wants to be sure that whatever guidelines that are put in place are enforceable so that we do not run into a situation, as has happened in other jurisdictions, where the laws were overturned or thrown out by the courts because of insufficient guidelines. That is the reason that adequate time is being taken to ensure that they will

be legally enforceable and understood by those who have to make those decisions.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary to the Premier: Will the Premier commit to a time line to specifically outline when the policy will be in place so that the police can have something to work on, since they have indicated in the media that they are not prepared to act, they are not able to act until they hear what the provincial policy is? Will the Premier commit to a time line, say the end of the week?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, I will take that question as notice on behalf of the Justice minister.

Health Care System Reform Monitor's Mandate

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my questions are to the Minister of Health.

Last week the minister released his plan for reform of Manitoba's health care system, and we in the Liberal Party welcomed the goals and principles of that plan. We began offering our ideas on how we felt they could be better implemented. We suggested, at that time, that the progress of reform be evaluated by an independent health reform monitor who would report to the public.

Today we would like to make a further suggestion. The minister has joined many experts in acknowledging that health is more than sickness care; that it also is a reflection of life style, of education, of socioeconomic status, of the environment and one's awareness of how to stay healthy.

My question to the minister is the following: Will he expand the mandate of the body, which will monitor the progress and impact of the reforms to include all departments and activities of government in order to make proposals on how they, too, can be brought in line with health reform goals?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, as discussed on Thursday of last week in terms of the suggestion on the evaluation component and how it might serve the purpose of the Legislature, I have taken very seriously under advisement.

This suggestion, Mr. Speaker, really embodies the Population Health: Major Determinants graph on page 9 of the strategy paper and is preceded by the establishment of the Healthy Public Policy

committee of government at the deputy minister's level. The activities of the Healthy Public Policy committee are basically to attempt to bring together government through varying departments to assure that our separate activities are interconnected in that we develop the policies knowing full well the impact on Education may well spin back on Health. Certainly the impact of Industry, Trade and Tourism, in terms of the economic environment, spin directly back on health, because I think it is clear in here that income directly relates to higher health status.

So, Mr. Speaker, during the course of the next number of months, I would anticipate that there will be a number of opportunities in which interrelated policy initiatives of government, stimulated by Healthy Public Policy considerations across departmental jurisdictions, will be the order of the day.

In terms of the specific suggestion of lining those two together, that may have value, although I want to assure my honourable friend that the analysis by the expert group to determine health outcome and maintenance of health status is clinically related to the changes in the health care system itself and not involving other departments and may not have a natural fit, Sir.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, what we are maintaining is that it must have a natural fit. I would like to give the minister two very specific examples.

We have a minister responsible for the Liquor Control Commission who could be doing far more in the way of preventing fetal alcohol syndrome, which is a health disorder, but it is related to the consumption of alcohol. If the minister responsible for the Liquor Control Commission would in fact do some public policy and public education and put signs up in liquor stores, we would in fact go some way to preventing this dreadful affliction.

In addition, we have the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) who is now negotiating with the City of Winnipeg and other municipalities, and the option that the province is presenting is actually going to result in less money for food for 89 percent of the social recipients in the province of Manitoba.

Can the minister tell us why he does not believe that it is not a perfect fit, a marriage, if you will, made in heaven of merging these things together in order to ensure that health care becomes a dominant policy in all departments?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I am not arguing with the proposition that those departmental initiatives and many more have a direct impact on health status and cost in the health care system. I do not want to argue about that at all. What I am saying to my honourable friend is that we intend, as outlined, I believe, on page 31 of the strategy document, to establish a very close monitoring system to assure maintenance and hopefully improvement of health status as we change the focus of where we deliver needed health services, away from high-cost institution to more community-based care.

That, Sir, is a specific delegated mandate because, as my honourable friend so correctly pointed out, the change in the health care system, as announced in the action plan, can become a political football. Assurance by experts as to how the change from physician-driven, institutional-based care to community-based care is a very important component of achieving reform that, I think, for 20 years has been discussed, talked about but never implemented. That is where we need the expert opinion, to assure Manitobans that a perchance speculation about the outcome of change in the health care system may be inappropriate, in fact outright wrong, and hence move the system closer to a more kind and caring system, providing care closer to home.

That, Sir, is a separate function narrowed to the reform process in health care.

* (1410)

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly why we feel that there is a need for broader monitoring. We know that because this can be such a political football that any issue can be raised and said that "the system is not working because of," "the system is not working because of," and we want to ensure that in fact this reform process does work, and does work to the best interest of Manitobans.

The other issue that concerns us that we would like to see also in a broader monitoring aspect is the health care professionals who will be moved from their current jobs, and many will indeed lose their jobs. Will the minister add to the mandate of the health reform monitor the responsibility to act as a watchdog over the shifts in personnel requirements, to make recommendations for retraining, if necessary, of any displaced professionals so that the talents and dedication of all of them are retrained in this new structure of health care in the province of Manitoba?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, when we announced the reform of the mental health system in January of this year, one of the very first initiatives that took place was a bringing together of individuals representing workers, representing professional disciplines, unions, to discuss the needs of caregivers in the changing environment of reform mental health system, i.e., to look for opportunities for redeployment of those same individuals and indeed to suggest to government ways and means of improving, retraining opportunities for those who may be displaced within the reform of the mental health system.

Mr. Speaker, the same process is envisioned to be fully part of the next two years within the reform of the acute care side of the health care system, where unions, professional groups, will work with government in efforts of redeployment, retraining and other necessary efforts to preserve the integrity of quality caregivers and their contribution towards a reformed health care system.

Health Advisory Network Report Release

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): We will continue to ask questions to get specific details about government's plans with respect to health care reform. We have said we support the general principles of this document, but we reserve judgment. We reserve judgment on the action plan because we still have not found the action plan.

The details are a mystery, Mr. Speaker. Many of the details are buried on the minister's desk because he continues to sit on reports that he has received in final format from his Health Advisory Network, which contained hundreds of detailed recommendations.

My question to the Minister of Health is: Will he, in the interests of partnership that he talks about in this document, release the five final reports from the Health Advisory Network? Those reports are on home care, the elderly and prevention, the elderly and promotion, health information systems, and our rural health systems. Would he release those reports and tell us his action plans for those reports?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The question has been put.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Speaker, that is the answer we have been hearing for months and months and months—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Put your question, please.

Home Care Program Recommendations

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Let me ask a specific question. Since this report, this great action plan, talks about community care and home care without giving any details, could the minister tell us specifically how he is responding to the 31 recommendations of the Health Advisory Network report on home care which has been sitting on his desk in final format for a year now?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, in part, the response to that report was reflected in a significant budgetary increase to the Continuing Care Program, wherein it went from \$55 million last year to a budgeted expenditure of \$62 million this year, a very significant increase, part of which will help us to meet some of the recommendations that were made in the report referred to.

Home Care Program Funding

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, would the minister tell us why, even with this kind of promised increase, he is not increasing assessors and co-ordinators in the Home Care Program, causing an incredible burden and possible devastating impact on this very serious community-based program to the point where, as this reports says, severe understaffing of the Home Care Program has been caused by increased demands without resources, resulting in high demand, high pressure and high potential for staff burnout within the program? How is he addressing that situation? What is his—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, if one were to close one's eyes and go back for at least a period of time in the last four years, one would have heard the same kind of comments made by my honourable friend. The fact of the matter is that the Continuing Care Program has managed within the personnel and staffing resources to continue ever-increasing care delivery in a system much more effectively than any other continuing care program probably in the nation of

Canada, a record we all should be very, very, very proud of, Sir.

Western Premiers' Conference Agricultural Issues

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, on several occasions, we have asked the government where they really stand on orderly marketing and supply management, because we have every reason to be suspicious of this government's position. Their actions speak louder than their words. For example, at a recent meeting of Agriculture ministers, the minister refused to sign the declaration supporting marketing boards at the GATT talks, and the government has also supported the removal of oats, which severely weakened the Wheat Board, removal of the domestic price for wheat, which weakens the Wheat Board, and lately by being silent while the federal government refuses to enforce the requirement for export licences for grains being trucked to the U.S.

I want to ask the First Minister, since he said agriculture was very high on the agenda at the Premiers' meeting: Can the First Minister indicate whether he still believes, like his Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), that marketing boards will have to be sacrificed in order to achieve a settlement at GATT and the NAFTA? Is this still part of what this Premier calls the balanced approach that is referenced in his communique?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, that has never been the position of this government or the Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. Plohman: If the Premier is so supportive—[interjection] Yes, I do have a question. The minister has also referenced many other agriculture issues in this communique.

I want to ask him, since he is the Agriculture expert here today: Will the Premier now admit, because he referenced the financial difficulties of provinces in terms of the agricultural load, that his government and his Minister of Agriculture got taken to the cleaners in the negotiations with the federal government by following the Grant Devine election agenda last year?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The question has been put.

Mr. Filmon: No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Plohman: The usual enlightening—

Mr. Speaker: Question, please. Order, please.

Mr. Plohman: Will the Premier reject his minister's proposal that was made with regard to the fragmentation of the Crow benefit that was discussed at the ministers' meetings as well as the First Ministers' meetings? Was it rejected? Will he now categorically reject this proposal which will serve to undermine the Crow benefit, which is historic in this country, and will ensure that it is in shambles before a very reasonable period of time?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, without accepting any of the preamble of the member for Dauphin, I will take that question as notice on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay).

Brandon Mental Health Centre Replacement Facility

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

The health reform document released last week talked about mental health reform. About five months ago, there was an announcement of a consultation process for mental health reform in the Western region. Mr. Speaker, real changes are needed now.

Can the Minister of Health tell us when the construction for the new building for the Brandon Mental Health Centre will be given a priority and when the new facility will meet the new agenda for health care reform in the Western region of Manitoba?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I cannot give my honourable friend such specifics, but I indicate to my honourable friend that the Western region of the province of Manitoba is much more advanced from the Regional Mental Health Council discussions around the reform paper of January of '92 in that the Parkland region, the Westman region in Brandon and Western-Central region will hopefully be presenting an action plan for consideration, implementation, approval and mid-subsequent implementation by government in co-operation with those professionals and citizens around the mental health councils by June of this year with hopeful implementation of a number of features before the end of this calendar year.

* (1420)

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell us how many beds will be reduced from the existing facility when the new facility will be provided along the side of Brandon General Hospital? Can the

minister also tell us how many personal care home beds will be allocated for the patients who are going to be dislodged from this Brandon Mental Health Centre?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, two elements are part of what we believe will be the suggested plan of action by the Westman councils, namely acute facility—acute psychiatric requirements being met in affiliation with the Brandon General Hospital. How that fits and the reason why I cannot answer my honourable friend in terms of construction, et cetera, is that is being worked within the general redevelopment of the Brandon General Hospital.

Secondly, a fairly complete patient profile has been accomplished at the Brandon Mental Health Centre, and a number of individuals who are long-term residents at Brandon Mental Health Centre are indeed long-term care candidates. The numbers, I do not have naturally in front of me, in terms of specifics, but the accommodation of those individuals will certainly be subject to suggestions and further discussions by the ministry, once the Parkland, Westman, West Central Regional Mental Health Council report comes in.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Speaker, health care reform needs the review process. This morning, like everyone else, we also heard the story of this patient out of Grace Hospital. These things will happen because of the health care reform, and we want to see that these patients will not suffer if we have a monitoring system.

Can the minister, in view of these reports, make sure that he will and he should establish a system to make sure the people will not fall in the cracks?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased my honourable friend brought up the circumstances that were subject to a discussion on the radio media earlier today.

Mr. Speaker, I can indicate to my honourable friend that the circumstances experienced unfortunately by that family were in no way anything to do with health care reform.

According to the Grace Hospital, there were three of their 12 Intensive Care Unit beds not open on Saturday because of staffing shortages caused in part by staff phoning in sick and not able to report to work. With some rather intensive action on Saturday, staff were made available so that approximately by noon on Sunday, those staff sicknesses, as phoned in on Saturday, were

replaced by noon on Sunday, and the individual in question received care.

It had, Sir, nothing to do with reform of the health care system, but everything to do with staff, because of circumstances, phoning in sick. They were unable to be there; hence three of the 12 beds were unavailable for service on Saturday.

Lake Winnipegosis Cormorant Population Control

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Natural Resources.

We have drastic figures in this province of people living below the poverty line. Some of these people are the fishermen at Lake Winnipegosis. Last winter, the minister made a commitment to these people that he would look into the problem of cormorant on the lake. Over the last winter, the staff at the Dauphin office worked with the fishermen and devised a plan, a plan that made it through all the departments but stopped at the minister's desk.

I want to ask the minister why this plan was able to make it through all departments, why he is stopping it and why he has broken his promise to the fishermen on Lake Winnipegosis.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to advise the honourable member that we are currently having further discussions with the Fisherman's association at Lake Winnipegosis as to some further control measures having to do with the cormorants on that body of water. Decisions will be made shortly.

Ms. Wowchuk: I want to ask the minister: Is he going to go ahead with the plan this year, or is it just going to be another promise during the winter and a broken promise in the spring? They need that—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The question has been put.

Mr. Enns: Mr. Speaker, I want to make sure that I understand what it is the honourable member for Swan River, the member of the New Democratic Party, is asking me to do. She is asking me to kill cormorants, birds that are recognized by the Canadian Wildlife Service. Is that what she is asking me to do? Does she want me to use public money, on a large scale, to kill cormorants? I want to be quite clear and have her on the record.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell the minister that I would like him to keep his promise and work along with the fishermen—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Does the honourable member have a question?

Ms. Wowchuk: You promised. I did not. You are the minister.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. This is not a time for debate.

Ms. Wowchuk: Working relationships between Natural Resources staff and fishermen are at an all-time low.

What plans does this minister have to improve working relationships between fishermen and Natural Resources staff, so these people can continue to make a living on the lake?

Mr. Enns: Mr. Speaker, I can report to all members of the House with some satisfaction that fishing returns on Lake Winnipegosis last year were at an all-time high. The honourable member is aware of that. That has a great deal to do with the management programs put in place by the previous administration when they closed the lake for a number of years, by this administration that helped produce the quota in terms of demand on the lake. It resulted in a much improved fishing season on Lake Winnipegosis which, by the way, also brings into question the degree of impact that the cormorant population has on the fish population. That is a debate that is going on within the professionals, within my department, and one that will have to be resolved within the next little while.

Labour College of Canada Scholarship

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Four years of this government, Mr. Speaker, it has worked every year to poison relations with the labour movement and the working people that the labour movement represents. It not only brought in a legislative agenda that is dictated by the Chamber of Commerce, it has cut Labour Education Centre funding, Unemployed Help Centre funding, Workplace Innovation Centre funding and now a \$4,000 scholarship for the Labour College of Canada that has been provided since 1963.

My question is to the Premier, very simply: Will the Premier overrule his Minister of Labour in cutting back this scholarship that has been in place since 1963 and have it reinstated so that working people

can go to the Labour College in Ottawa, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I think the member for Thompson would agree that it is important for working people to have access to health care. All of us in government in the last number of years, because of the financial situation, if one looks at the amount of dollars that this Legislature has to vote each year to service the accumulated debt of this province, one will realize the pressure that has been on every department to find resources that are available to fund the departments that are a priority. Obviously, health care is one of those priorities.

The member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) talks day after day about the priority of health care. One of the decisions we had to make in the Department of Labour was what was available, and that was part of our contribution.

Mr. Ashton: Perhaps the minister can take it out of his \$7-million training allowance for corporations.

Unemployed Help Centre Funding Reinstatement

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I have a follow-up question, Mr. Speaker, and it is in regard to the Unemployed Help Centre.

Will the government now reinstate funding for the Unemployed Help Centre in light of a study that showed that many Manitobans on UIC are being shortchanged and that, through the help of organizations such as the Unemployed Help Centre, many have been able to get increased benefits, they are entitled to Unemployment Insurance, something this government has not helped by cutting its—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The question has been put.

* (1430)

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I am totally amazed at the contradictory statements we have from members opposite day after day. They would think that members of the media, members of the public, other members of this Legislature do not listen to him.

On one hand they talk about the need to retrain; they need to provide investment retraining. When this government provides an opportunity to see some of the dollars that are contributed through payroll tax going into training in industry, the

member opposes it. I would point out to the member with respect to the decision that was made some years ago in the Unemployed Help Centre that that particular institution is an area of federal responsibility and the area there is owned by the federal government.

Mr. Ashton: I presume the answer was no, once again, Mr. Speaker.

Health Care System Essential Services Agreement

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): My final question to the minister is: Why has this government requested a review of the current Essential Services Agreement in the health care sector in light of the fact that it is working well? It is being supported by many institutions. Why is this government now opening up the whole issue of the Essential Services Agreement in the health care sector?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I wish the member for Thompson who always tries to give the impression that he is very close to the labour movement would get his information correct. Following the strike with the hospitals, the Manitoba Nurses' Union a year or so ago, the Essential Services Agreement was assessed by the MNU. It was assessed by us internally.

There was some issue that arose as to whether or not there was a way of strengthening the dispute settlement mechanism. We called together the subcommittee of the Labour Management Review Committee which has examined that, and unofficially I have been told that there is no recommendation coming for change.

I think it would be irresponsible for all of the players not to review that agreement. That does not mean necessarily that it is being changed.

Economic Growth Private Sector Capital Investment

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): I have a question for the Premier.

Last week the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) shared with us his belief that if you forced wages down in this province and forced more people into poverty, this would create a competitive climate within which people would invest more capital, and that we would see—and he quoted statistics that

suggested private sector capital investment in this province was going to improve.

Can the Premier tell us why private sector capital investment in this province last year was nearly half a billion dollars less than it would have been if we had just maintained our same position that we had in '88, and why it is projected at some \$373 million less than it would be if we had just maintained '88 levels?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Just to remind the member for Osborne that this province is expected to have the largest increase in capital investment, both public and private, of any province in the country in 1992 and also the largest increase of manufacturing capital investment of any province in the country in 1992.

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Speaker, Statistics Canada seems to vary. Public sector capital investment is projected to go down, not up, and private sector capital investment is still some \$373 million below.

Perhaps the Premier can explain why we are doing so poorly at attracting private sector capital when the Finance minister's plan seems to be working to his satisfaction.

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, Statistics Canada has indicated that we are expected to have the largest increase in capital investment of any province in the country in 1992, both public and private capital, and the largest increase in manufacturing capital investment. Both of those are good news. I would hope that the member for Osborne would be happy about that.

Mr. Alcock: We will have the lowest level of capital sector investment in this province—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Osborne, kindly put your question now, please.

Mr. Alcock: Perhaps I could ask the Premier this. Why is our level falling?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, I repeat, Statistics Canada says that we are expected to have the largest increase of capital investment of any province in the country this year, both public and private investment, and in addition to that, the largest increase of manufacturing capital investment of any province in the country.

Abnochi Preschool Program Minister of Native Affairs Meeting

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): My question is to the First Minister.

The Royal Commission on aboriginal peoples that is travelling this province has heaped praise on the innovative native language program, the Abnochi program, and also that indigenous language is a necessary part of the definition of the inherent right to self-government.

I would like to ask the First Minister if he has instructed his Minister of Native Affairs (Mr. Downey) to meet with the Abnochi preschool board like he has promised to do, yet has not fulfilled that promise.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that if the Minister of Native Affairs has made that promise, he will keep it.

Mr. Hickes: Then my second question is: If the minister does not keep this promise, will the First Minister remove that minister from the responsibility that he is stepping aside from?

Mr. Filmon: That is a hypothetical question.

Urban Aboriginal Strategy Release

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Also to the First Minister, the Native Affairs minister has been promising this House for the last two years an urban aboriginal strategy which he has yet to deliver.

Will the First Minister talk to his Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst) to ensure that he brings to this House the urban aboriginal strategy that the aboriginal people have been waiting such a long time for?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the commitment that has been made by the Minister of Native Affairs (Mr. Downey) is a commitment that we will keep.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I may have leave to revert back to reading and receiving petitions. [Agreed]

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member, and it complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and

complies with the rules (by leave). Is it the will the House to have the petition read?

The petition of Seven Oaks General Hospital praying for the passing of an act to amend the Seven Oaks General Hospital Incorporation Act.

Nonpolitical Statements

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Seine River): Yes, may I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [Agreed]

Mr. Speaker, on April 30, I rose in this House to wish the team members of the 1992 Mount Manitoba expedition a successful venture and a safe climb. Today it gives me great pleasure to rise again and congratulate this group of Manitobans on yet another Manitoba first.

On Sunday morning, May 17, after several setbacks which included inclement weather and an avalanche, the 12 Manitoba climbers reached the peak of Mount Manitoba at 6:30 a.m. The team of Manitobans consisted of Tibor Bodi, Peter Aitchison, Bob France, Peter Muir, Dan Dunbar, Richard Tiley, Dennis Cunningham, Jeff Aitchison, Pat Dillistone, Raphael Munoz, Shane Petroff and Catherine Mitchell.

At the peak, a canister was buried which contained a picture of the late Free Press columnist, Elizabeth Parker, who co-founded the Alpine Club of Canada. We can also take pride in knowing that our flag of Manitoba was also raised and is flying over our namesake mountain.

To accomplish such an extraordinary feat, as the first ascent of a mountain, takes painstaking planning, great dedication and commitment and perseverance to overcome and conquer all obstacles and challenges encountered.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all Manitobans and the members of this Legislature, I would like to congratulate the members of the members of the Mount Manitoba expedition for their successful climb.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for St. Johns have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [Agreed]

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw on the support of all members in this House to acknowledge and congratulate the organizers of the fourth annual

candlelight vigil held this past Sunday, organized for all of us to remember those who are dying or who have died from AIDS.

This candlelight vigil was unprecedented in terms of numbers who came out to support and remember. This vigil was supported by all members in this House, and I know that there were candles burning in the windows of members and representatives of all political parties who could not be present at the vigil. We were a small community joining hands with some other 200 communities, 35 countries around the world. It was an event of great significance for many of us.

In this past week leading up to the vigil, it is apparent that three Manitobans died from AIDS. One of those individuals was a long-serving president of the Body Positive Coalition, Rick Koebel, who passed away the Saturday on the eve of the Sunday vigil.

* (1440)

Mr. Speaker, the work of Rick Koebel was not unlike the work many are doing in and outside of this Legislature to fight to help people living with HIV and dying from AIDS. We remember Rick and all others who fight and work and struggle to improve the quality of life in our communities and to rid our society of this deathly illness and disease.

So on behalf of all members in this House, I would like to again congratulate the organizers of Manitoba's fourth candlelight vigil and pay tribute to those who have died, and particularly Rick Koebel who has served this province well as head of the Body Positive Coalition. Thank you.

* (1450)

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Darren Praznik (Deputy Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I would move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

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

Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) in the Chair for the Department of Education and Training.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

HEALTH

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

When the committee last sat, it had been considering item 1.(a) Minister's Salary on page 82 of the Estimates book. Shall the item pass?

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I just want to make some comments regarding the health care reform package which we received the other day. I am sure everyone has had a look at this package by now.

The package has received very positive reviews from across the community; when I say community, from the health care professionals, from many organizations, many patient groups and above all, the public at large is willing to listen, that there is a need for change and they want to give a chance for reform to function.

Today, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) made his statement in the House, and we have read this May 15, 1992, Manitoba government's news release, so that clearly indicates that the health care policy in this province has not only been accepted in this province but in other provinces, specifically British Columbia and Saskatchewan. Both the Premiers have accepted some of the things with great interest, and they want to look at how the system could reform and they could learn from this experience.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would go back to my statement, and that was two years ago when the health policy analysis centre was set up. We said at that time that things will move and I want to reinforce that, that we had faith that time, and we still have faith in the process. We want to see that the system could continue to function. [interjection]

* (1500)

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. Could I ask the members who want to have a conversation

to do so quietly along the wall so that the honourable member from The Maples can continue.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I really appreciate the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) and the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), because my thoughts can be very easily broken by anybody who wants to make noise. They know it, and everybody knows in the House, so that is all right. I would accept that.

It is a very important document and has to be looked at. I was saying, if we go back to the statement two years ago about the health policy analysis centre when it was set up, I think at that time many people did not realize in this province that such a major thing was being done. When we made the statement, it looked politically very immature, that it was not a very positive step and was applauding the government without knowing, but we had an idea then that this group would lead us to a better health care system.

The work which has been compiled in this book has been taken from scientific studies. They have not been able to pull from any of the news releases of any of the three political parties. They may have taken some of the ideas, but the statistics are based on the health care which Manitobans have received for the last 20 years, from 1971 to 1992. The reports have been there and they are compiled.

In fairness to the whole report, I would say that this is a very positive report, and we will continue to watch, to make sure that the stated principles outlined in this report are implemented. I think that is the issue for the next six months to one year—how the report is going to be implemented and whether it will achieve what it was supposed to, and I think then we can make a judgment call.

In our view, there are four phases. The first was the identification of the problem between 1988 and 1990. Then the second phase was to come to the conclusion in terms of achieving a role, so to speak, developing a plan that would meet the needs, and I think that was the second phase. The third phase was to achieve this report. The fourth phase is going to be implementation of the report. I think the fifth phase will be again the judgment from the people. I mean, we cannot really tell how each and every individual will react to this health care reform in the long run, but I am sure the voters will tell us. I think the fifth phase is very crucial but that will all be open, and that is why we have never aligned ourselves against this proposal.

I want to make it very clear the reasons why we did that. You identify the problem. You try to come up with some conclusion, and then you try to help the system to get into some of the implementation. I think that is where we will watch for a two-year period how things are implemented.

For us, one thing is very important, the monitoring of the system. One can name it the way you want to. We have to have somebody monitoring the system. There are three reasons. I will tell the minister very frankly. First of all, how can we get reassurance that there is not going to be any change in the ministry? If tomorrow a new minister comes, are they going to follow up this same proposal? Second is, if there is a change in the government—anything can happen. There is a two-member majority. Things can happen and how will the system continue to function? I think the third thing is, if there is any new minister, whether they will be able to build credibility and understanding of the system. I think that is the issue, but that is up to the government to decide. Those are the very important issues that people have to know, that there is a continuity of care.

That is why we said when the health care ministers are put into place for six months to one year, that is the most irresponsible thing any government can ever do. That is why a four-year period, six-year period, eight-year period of Health ministers are very, very essential, especially when we are having the health care reform package. So those are the general comments, Mr. Deputy Chairperson.

I want to add a few things in terms of the things we have been asking. We said from 1988 that we should be spending smarter, and I think this report meets that statement. The second was shift of care resources to the community, and this report again satisfies our intentions. The third was setting up of alternative services in the form of community care, dealing with day surgery, home care—[interjection] That was day surgery, outpatient surgical procedures and expansion of home care. That is why, if you were to review Hansard, our one question was to review the home care policy. I think this report satisfies us to some extent, but some more expansion is required.

I think the other issue, we asked for a well elderly centre, and I think this report goes in that direction to some extent. Then we asked for a birthing facility. That was one of our election promises, that

we wanted to set up a system where a birthing facility could be provided. Victoria Hospital has that facility, and that satisfies our intentions. I would like to see it some other places, but at least the government has realized and health care professionals have realized that is the one positive way of doing it.

The other thing was the major emphasis on education, prevention and promotion, and the broader statement has been made in this report but more detailed information is required. I think as time goes by, we may get some of the answers. I think the minister should be very careful on that issue, on education, not only about health and wellness, but education about the tax dollars we spend. We want to emphasize again, patient education in the system is most crucial, not only for the protection of health care but also for the success of this health care reform, very essential.

Some of the provinces, as Mrs. Carstairs was saying today, even British Columbia is having ads in the papers because they know that something has to be done, but I do not believe in isolated approaches, just having one article here and one article over there and one plan here, and the other part of the plan does not know what the first one is doing. So we would like to have more patient education done.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we want to see in terms of one of the major issues in this report the fee reform policy which is very, very fundamental to our health care system. In terms of the open-ended system that we have today, the major structural changes, how the physicians are paid, how the services are being delivered, that answer has to be developed because without that, I do not think anything will be successful.

We understand that this report was not able to address because I think we are in the process negotiating and putting the process in place. A very complex issue, but at least the policy statement has been made. It needs more redefining, and retuning of this policy area must be done because people want to know how the physicians and other health care providers are going to get paid in the long run.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we strongly believe that to implement all these major principles, there has to be a co-ordinated approach within the Department of Health. The graph on page 31 which tells the patient in the middle—everything, environment,

economy, and all those factors surrounding that patient. We made that statement even before this package came. That was about six weeks ago and even during our budget speech, I made those comments.

* (1510)

After reading from many various reports, we felt that was a very important issue, because people only relate to health care only of illness. But as you said, the patient's mental and physical well-being will be only helped if we meet the definition of the World Health Organization. That says very clearly that illness it is not only the absence of disease, but also to meet the physical and mental well-being of the patient.

To do that, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, a healthy economy is very important because without jobs, without good environment, nothing can be achieved. Also to pay for the services we all talked about, there has to be some resources, there has to be money coming in. Also, the other responsibility which is very, very important is to be accountable to the taxpayers.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, nobody wants to talk about this issue, but I think it is very crucial that the \$1.8 billion—how it is spent and how we are going to continue to spend it in the future, if we have to borrow money from banks and other institutions to fund our health care system—I think we have to think about that. If you take money from one area, you are going to suffer from the other; so in that regard, I would like to see a more economic diversity. I would like to see people get involved. I would like to see many positive things, many creative things, many innovative things that will help a person as a whole, so that we can achieve the best quality health care for all people.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I just wanted to sum up by saying that there are many, many positive things. There are certain things which need redefining or a fine tuning. If anybody thinks that is not the case, then I think everyone is lying to themselves. I think the minister also knows there may be some changes that have to be required from time to time. That is why the rigidity or the other way, the flexibility, I would say, flexibility in the health care reform and the openness in the health care reform, and the frankness in the health care reform, must be one of the major focuses, so that the patient can be involved, the health care providers can be involved. Government should not be afraid to take bold steps

and admit their mistakes when they are being made. When they are doing a positive thing, they should tell people. They should not be afraid of the opposition parties when things are derailed for a while.

Some people will do it, but for the last four days we have watched all the news media—the print news media, the electronic news media, and above all, the public opinion in the health care sector. It is amazing that people are so willing to listen and so positive. I have never seen this in four or five years. It is amazing that their main goal seems to be, as the goal of this government and the goal of all people, is to save the health care system.

I will end my comments by saying that the minister has to succeed, because we have put all our faith on the five basic principles of the medicare system in this minister's hands and he is the head of the House here in terms of implementing some of the policies. So I would rather challenge him not to disappoint any one of us because it is not only his credibility, but the credibility of a lot of individuals, a lot of professionals, a lot of decent people who have worked very hard for the last 21 years starting from 1971 to come up with so many new things. At least we have all reached a stage and the minister should not be afraid of taking decisions.

I would say again that some are still afraid the system will not only fail, but they are afraid the system will succeed and to defeat those forces, we have to make that system work for the better of people.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I thank my honourable friend for his comments. My honourable friend and the critic for the New Democratic Party have offered comments indicating that they want to see this reform process move ahead. I simply indicate that it will not move ahead if it becomes a political football, if that is the appropriate language. My honourable friend puts a lot of onus on me personally and I accept that, but there are a tremendous number of people in the system as professionals, as managers and as trustees, who understand the need for change and that Manitoba has an opportunity over the next two years to make those changes in the most reasoned fashion possible.

I want to close by indicating to both my critics that on Sunday night on CKY television there was a

program on about ten o'clock. For the life of me, I cannot tell you what the name of the program was.

An Honourable Member: W5.

Mr. Orchard: W5. I believe that is correct.

One of the individuals featured in the interview was a chap by the name of Ken Fyke. Ken Fyke was a deputy minister for Health in Saskatchewan, subsequently moved to British Columbia about three or four years ago, five years ago maybe, and became part of the British Columbia ministry of Health, and over the last couple of years has taken over administration of one of the senior hospitals in Victoria, if not both of them—joint administration. I do not know the exact details. I met Mr. Fyke earlier this year at the symposium that I was at in Victoria. It is worth all of our whiles to see that W5 tape, because it shows us what can be done if there is a will to come around the issue and make the health care system, make medicare in Canada work for the individual needing care.

You know, we are going to see some pretty remarkable changes over the next couple of years across Canada, but I think in Manitoba we have the opportunity to see that significant change move in a very, very informed and progressive and understanding way.

I appreciate both my critics for past contributions, and I want to thank them in advance for future contributions for making that system of change work well.

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

Resolution 65: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$13,933,600 for Health, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March 1993—pass.

This completes the Estimates of the Department of Health. The next set of Estimates that will be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply are the Estimates for Rural Development.

Shall we briefly recess to allow the minister and the critics the opportunity to prepare for the commencement of the next set of Estimates?

An Honourable Member: But not too long.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Okay, we will recess five minutes.

The committee took recess at 3:17 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 3:27 p.m.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. We are now commencing consideration of the Estimates for Rural Development. Does the minister responsible have an opening statement?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. First of all, may I say I am pleased to introduce my department's Estimates for review. I look forward to the discussions, the linkages between the dollar commitments and the services to our diverse client groups.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts that have been put forward by the municipal officials, the Union of Manitoba Municipalities, the Manitoba Association of Urban Municipalities, and the Manitoba Municipal Administrators' Association. I would like to commend them and their executive and membership for their ongoing dedication to the citizens whom they represent.

I have had the pleasure of meeting with these groups, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, on several occasions, and I found their input to be very valuable to our department in terms of the advice that they have been able to provide. I would also like to recognize the efforts of the regional development agencies whose work fosters economic development at local levels, and conservation districts whose work on behalf of the environment will be witnessed by future generations. The people who dedicated their time to these organizations are valuable partners, who are essential to the progress we are making in rural Manitoba.

The strongest message that we are receiving from rural Manitobans is that people are willing to work hard to develop new economic initiatives in their communities. Manitoba's people are a rich resource—people with ideas, people who want to preserve Manitoba's environmental heritage and enhance its economic opportunities. They are ready to work hard to achieve their goals and they are asking that our government work with them.

This request for partnerships underscores the new directions we are taking as a government. I know many people in many other departments are working with the people to make changes and adapt

to a rapidly changing world. Our government believes that supporting locally generated initiatives, building upon traditional and nontraditional strengths, and focusing on new opportunities can help rural Manitoba reach its full potential. The people of Manitoba are indeed our greatest asset, and we will continue to support them in their endeavours.

In short, the people of Manitoba are ready to take on new challenges, and our government is committed to providing the tools they need to succeed. Our government is working as a team to ensure that we keep a tight rein on spending, using fiscal responsibility in every new initiative. We are reviewing outdated legislation to be more responsive to a rapidly changing world. The Department of Rural Development is committed to being a productive and a proactive member of this team.

This commitment forms the foundation upon which Rural Development's programs are based and funding directed. We are striving to meet the challenge of economic growth through job creation, industry development and diversification. We are introducing several measures to achieve this goal.
*(1530)

In particular, we are implementing new, innovative programs to help rural Manitobans achieve their goals. The most recent of these is the Rural Economic Development Initiative. The REDI program gives communities the tools they need to build on economic strategies. REDI is based on the conviction that by building up traditional strengths and focusing on new opportunities, rural Manitoba will have the ability to help itself grow.

As many of you are aware, the REDI program will be funded with revenues generated by Video Lottery Terminals in rural Manitoba. I want to stress that REDI funds are tools to provide support to municipalities and organizations which have outlined a game plan for their future. For that reason, priority for REDI funds will be given to communities which have organized and prepared a strategy for economic development. The program will focus on commercially viable development that has long-term economic benefit for the community.

The four program options are available to urban and rural municipalities outside of Winnipeg, as well as local regional economic development

organizations, Grow Bond corporations and businesses.

REDI has several thrusts. Its infrastructure development component is designed to ensure rural communities have the capacity to improve or develop the infrastructure needed to attract new businesses and allow for the expansion of existing industry. REDI's feasibility studies component administered by my colleague in Manitoba Industry, Trade and Tourism is designed to help rural business people hire independent consultants to prepare financial market or engineering analysis.

Through REDI's MBA student consulting portion of the program, business people can capitalize on the University of Manitoba's research and consulting capabilities while providing graduate students with real case studies in rural Manitoba.

A development support component provides a one-time contribution to fund innovative proposals in nontraditional areas to create business development opportunities. This program is developed to address the need to be innovative in order to remain competitive in the changing world economy and marketplace.

Partners with Youth is one component of REDI to which I feel particularly committed. Creating opportunities for our youth, educating and training them for jobs and opening up employment in our home towns can result in stability for them and a secure future for our communities.

The REDI program has immense potential for rural Manitobans, especially when it is used in conjunction with some of the other programs we have established to help rural Manitobans help themselves.

Last year, our government introduced the Community Choices program which encourages community groups to meet in round-table settings to examine their communities from environmental, social and economic perspectives and develop realistic plans for action.

I am pleased to announce that by mid-April, 30 round tables involving 57 municipalities have been established. We expect this program will continue to expand and take on a different focus as community development plans reach implementation phases.

This implementation process must be tackled from the grass roots upwards. We believe that rural Manitobans should have the opportunity not only to

set directions for the future but to invest in it directly to strengthen local economies and create jobs.

The Grow Bond program we introduced last year is designed to do just that. This program is lottery funded, and it is proving to be a great success. I know many of the members are familiar with this program, but what you may not be aware of is its successes and impact on rural Manitoba.

I am delighted to inform you that rural Manitobans have demonstrated their confidence in their communities and are ready to invest in their own future. Morden's residents were the first to sell bonds and were very successful. The Alco Rural Bond Corporation met and surpassed its minimum sales requirements in record time. Their success means Morden will soon have up to 16 new jobs and an expanded industrial base.

Four other bond proposals are undergoing the internal review process. Three proposals are in planned preparation stages while preliminary proposals have been received by two community groups. In addition, I might say, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that later this evening we will once again be making a fairly significant announcement in Teulon in terms of their bond corporation as well.

In addition, consulting services are being extended to 22 interested entrepreneurs to examine the viability of proposed projects. The people of Manitoba have demonstrated time and time again that they are ready and willing to work in order to find solutions.

While we are providing the tools for the people of Manitoba to build a framework for economic renewal in their community, the Department of Rural Development is also looking in the mirror to determine ways that we can improve and enhance our department to service Manitobans in a better way.

We are currently in the process of remodeling the department to adapt to changing requirements in our province. This restructuring process includes the creation of a new division to make our department more responsive to the economic development needs and demands of rural Manitoba.

This new rural economic development division has been created to serve as a lead provincial agent in rural Manitoba for regional economic development, planning and interagency co-ordination. The staff's role will be to advise and

assist community-based organizations and local governments to maintain, expand and create job and business opportunities.

The local government's services division will maintain the major function performed by the former Department of Municipal Affairs. This includes the delivery of services such as assessments for local governments and advisory services to municipal councillors and administrators in the areas of finance and administration.

We will soon announce the appointment of a new full-time deputy minister, and I might say that I can do that now. As a matter of fact, Mr. Winston Hodgins, who is the new deputy minister of Rural Development, officially started in the office this morning.

Because he is so new, we have Mr. Tomasson, the acting deputy minister for Rural Development, whose term ended today, will be assisting us with the Estimates this time.

The restructuring of the department will enable us to respond more effectively to changing economic dynamics, but we also recognize the need to make changes in legislation. This includes the review of The Municipal Act as well as conservation and planning legislation. This is something that has been called for by municipalities for a long time.

Finally, I think we are at a stage where we can begin the process of looking at how we can better address some of the issues that are addressed in The Municipal Act and also the conservation and planning act.

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

We have also recently begun a review of our provincial land use policies adopted in 1980 under The Planning Act. Given that they were adopted more than 10 years ago, it is appropriate that they be reviewed to ensure that they reflect Manitoba's current economic, social and environmental objectives, incorporates sustainable development and provide local authorities in provincial departments with better direction regarding the sustainable use of our land.

Proposed revisions have recently been forwarded to our local municipalities, the districts' associations, and other interest groups for comments and suggestions. After a review of the submissions, we intend to bring the policies forward for adoption. Related to this review of legislation is a revision of

The Municipal Assessment Act. We are continuing in our efforts to improve the assessment system.

I would like to emphasize that both Bill 20 and the long-term portioning strategy announced by my predecessor last September will have a positive impact on the assessment and taxation system in this province. Our government's strategy is aimed at continuing to improve how property is assessed and taxed. It is important to remember that our government—for that matter, the Weir committee never set out to resolve overnight the inequities that have been built up over the last 25 years.

With the introduction of market value assessment in 1990, we took a major step forward on the assessment side of the equation. The adjustments to portions will now take us another step by improving the level of equity in the taxes paid by various property classes. As part of this portioning strategy, our government also announced its intention to delay the next reassessment which is to take place for 1993 to the 1994 tax year.

There are several benefits to this delay. With one more year, we are able to reach the portion targets for those classes containing the majority of ratepayers such as residential 1 and commercial properties. In this way, ratepayers can more easily distinguish between policy driven changes to their taxes and reassessment or market driven changes.

This is in keeping with one of the original objectives of assessment reform: to make the system more understandable. The delay also allows changes associated with the July 1992 implementation of the new Education Finance Formula to stabilize before the assessment base is altered across the province.

As you are aware, assessment is a fundamental element in the education tax system. I will stress again to the members opposite that Bill 20 does not affect the rights of farmers to appeal their assessments, nor does it propose changes that would restrict appeal rights in any way.

In summary, I would like to reiterate that the changes made to the portions as well as Bill 20 are in keeping with the department's ongoing commitment to improve the property assessment and taxation system in this province.

Our department has also introduced property taxes related to equipment in sand and gravel pits. On January 1, 1992, the province approved and adopted a regulation to set maximum levels for fees

which municipalities may now charge for the extraction and transportation of sand and gravel. The proposals for this regulation were put forward by a committee of municipal and industrial officials.
* (1540)

The regulations derived from the proposals have enabled us to resolve the long-standing dissatisfaction with a system of municipal taxation of equipment used to extract sand and gravel. The new fees will replace the existing property taxes on equipment in the pits with a more direct and equitable way of covering municipal road maintenance costs.

I am confident that we will soon adjust to these new systems, and the benefits are already being realized in rural Manitoba. We are also giving priority to the policing grants issue. I do not believe I have to spend a great deal of time on that, but I have spoken already with the executives from both MAUM and UMM asking for their co-operation in our request for a one-year extension, and that has been granted by UMM and MAUM. We are now going to move ahead with a long-term solution to the policing issue.

We are setting up a working group to discuss the entire issue at the present time, and we contemplate that within the next few short days or next week, we will have a committee in place which will then begin the process of addressing the issues that were set forth in the report that was forwarded by Charlie Hill and was tabled in January. We are hopeful that by September we will be able to have a resolution to this outstanding issue.

Our government is also involved in partnerships with various levels of government through cost-sharing programs. As members are aware, I recently announced that Manitoba municipalities will see an increase in their share of personal and corporate income tax collected in the province. Because this is a census year, population is used to determine that payments will change, but I am confident that municipalities with stable populations can expect an increase of 10 percent over last year. Municipalities with declining populations have been guaranteed that they will not see any less support than they did last year. The provincial municipal tax sharing payments will be made in July when the most recent census figures have been tabulated, and we are confident they are correct.

We are also using cost-sharing programs to improve the infrastructures in rural communities. I am referring specifically to the southern development initiative which is officially known as the Canada-Manitoba Partnership Agreement on Municipal Water Infrastructure or, in short, PAMWI. Under the PAMWI agreement, the governments of Canada, Manitoba and local communities, identified as regional service centres, will work together and share costs to improve the water infrastructure in the community involved. Brandon, Portage la Prairie, Steinbach, Winkler, Morden, Altona and Teulon have entered into agreements under this tripartite initiative, and Dauphin and Selkirk are in the final preagreement stages. Canada and Manitoba will contribute \$30 million each to this \$90 million initiative, and each community affected will contribute its portion of the remaining \$30 million.

The PAMWI agreement is an important tool in our overall game plan to improve the equity and the quality of life in rural Manitoba by opening up opportunities for growth through sustainable development. We have also targeted our larger urban centres and the cities of Brandon and Thompson for a downtown revitalization project. These communities along with their business people have entered into a five-year agreement with the province to improve the streetscape and appearance of the public and private properties, and we have already announced those two agreements in Portage and in Thompson.

Enhancing our rural communities through projects like the ones I have outlined here today is an important part of our commitment to rural Manitoba. Decentralization is another example of this commitment. We have repeatedly promoted open communication between rural communities and our department, and we are moving our services closer to them to make them more accessible and facilitate this communication network. Rural development is firmly ensconced in rural Manitoba. We have nine community development offices and staff who have a tradition of providing advisory and facilitating skills to local governments. This role is broadening to include regionally based integrated professional services to our municipalities, our economic development and conservation organizations, our local entrepreneurs and small business people and citizens anxious to preserve their rural heritage.

But our decentralization initiative does more than bring services closer to the people who use them. It also brings new faces and job opportunities to rural Manitoba. We have relocated 520 civil servants in Crown jobs since the program was implemented. There are an additional 65 contracts in the process of moving and 134 positions will be moved in the near future. We are indeed committed to the people of rural Manitoba, and our initiatives are geared toward them.

In examining our Estimates, members will note that—

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): Is it the will of the committee to let the minister finish his opening statement? Go ahead.

Mr. Derkach: In examining our Estimates, members will note that the grants to municipalities, regional development agencies and conservation districts represent a major portion of our budget—

An Honourable Member: Hansard is not recording it.

Mr. Derkach: So there is no sense in reading it—[interjection] We will wait.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): Bureaucracy triumphs. A formal vote has been requested in the Chamber and the committee recess.

* * *

The committee took recess at 3:47 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 4:50 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. This section of the Committee of Supply will come to order. Before the recess, this section had been considering Rural Development. We will now conclude with the minister's opening statement.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would like to indicate to the members that I will provide for them, if that has not already happened, copies of the opening statement so that they may peruse it in preparation for their questions which will follow.

Just in conclusion, I would just like to say that in the examination of our Estimates, members will note that the grants to municipalities, regional development agencies and conservation districts represent a major portion of our budget. Something like about 56 percent of the total budget is devoted to support to those agencies. Add to the Rural

Development's 17.7 percent contribution through capital assets and infrastructure support and just under 75 percent of our total budget, or over \$52 million, is earmarked for rural Manitoba.

This certainly represents a major commitment to rural Manitoba's future. Members have received copies of the Estimates Supplement, and before we proceed with line-by-line examination of the proposed expenditures, I would like to introduce, if I may, or perhaps not appropriate at this time, but I would like just to indicate that Mr. David Tomasson, who is the Acting Deputy Minister, has certainly done a tremendous amount of work in handling both the Department of Rural Development and the Department of Northern and Native Affairs. I would have to say that it is through the guidance of Mr. Tomasson that I was introduced successfully to this department, and I am indeed thankful for the guidance that he has provided to me as my deputy during these last three months.

Certainly, I would like to put on the record that Mr. Tomasson has done an outstanding job as the Acting Deputy Minister for the Department of Rural Development. Under his stewardship we were able to implement several major initiatives, I believe, in rural Manitoba. I have already gone through them, REDI being one, Grow Bonds and the community round tables, of course, have all been done while he has had a major influence on the department.

In addition, I would like to also acknowledge the efforts of the many staff whom I have in the department, the directors. The department as you know is still without several positions in it. We are advertising for several directors and ADMs within the department. Even in times of being shorthanded as we are, we have been able to do a tremendous amount of work. Certainly, I would like to acknowledge the efforts of all of the staff within the department who have done a tremendous amount of work over the last few months to introduce some fairly major initiatives to help to revitalize the rural population of our province. With that, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would like to conclude my opening remarks.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We thank the honourable minister for those remarks. Does the critic from the official opposition party, the honourable member for Swan River, have an opening statement?

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would just like to make a few

comments before we get into the actual line-by-line Estimates.

I would like to begin, first of all, by congratulating the minister on his appointment. The first comments that were made when he was appointed to this department was that he was a country boy and a rural person, and I hope that he is sincere about a commitment to rural Manitoba. I suspect that he is, because most of us who live in the rural community in small towns want to see growth in our community. I look forward to seeing what he is going to do throughout the rural part of the province to have economic growth.

I know that the comments were that taking a position in Rural Development was a demotion. In fact, I feel that rural development is a very high priority. When we look at what happens in rural Manitoba, it is really the base of the province. In order for the province to grow, we have to have growth in rural Manitoba as well.

I was very concerned when Rural Development and Northern Affairs were combined together under one minister, and I felt that rural development was not getting a fair share of attention. In fact, when the name of the department was changed to Rural Development rather than Municipal Affairs, there was an expectation that we were going to see a lot more happening in rural Manitoba. When it was combined with Northern Affairs, there was some feeling that rural development was going to take a back seat and not get the support that it was supposed to be getting. So I am quite pleased that it is now a separate department, and hopefully we will see growth in rural Manitoba.

I also want to congratulate the new deputy minister. I am sure that he—he has been in government for some time—will bring some good leadership to the department.

The concern that I have is that we had an announcement at the municipal convention that two assistant deputy ministers were going to be hired, and the department was going to be split. This was received very positively by councillors. I am concerned with the lack of movement. The minister has just indicated that there has been advertising going on. Hopefully, both these ADMs will be filled very soon, and we can see some development because it is of some concern when you see the number of vacancies in the department. So we look

forward to what is going to happen with the restructuring of the department.

As I said, as a rural person, my greatest concern right now is that there is not any real growth in rural Manitoba. We just saw a statistics report coming out on the population. Population in rural Manitoba has dropped drastically. We have to wonder why it is happening. Why are our young people not coming back to the community?

There was an interesting article in one of the rural newspapers just the other day. I do not have it with me but I am sure that the minister may have seen it, and that is, an article indicating that if we do not have growth in our rural community, if we do not have opportunities for our young people, they are not going to come back.

At this point, I can sincerely say that, as I look at the part of the province that I am from, I cannot see very much for our young people to come back to. It is a problem that we all have to address. We have to look at what we can do to have economic growth in the rural community. I guess some of the things that I am anxious to hear are what the minister has to say, what his position is, where he is taking the department on things that will attract growth to our rural community.

When I was at the rural convention at the Union of Manitoba Municipalities, the previous minister had indicated that he was still moving forward with getting natural gas to other parts of the province. It is not something that I have raised with the minister yet, but I hope that through this Estimates process, we can talk about where we are going with natural gas to other parts of the province that want to have the same economic growth that we see in the southern part of the province.

We have to have diversification, ways to sustain, ways to use our natural resources, rather than shipping them out in the raw state as many of them are going right now. We have to have diversification for our agriculture community. How can we process some of those products that we are producing and then have growth? An example that comes to mind is ethanol. There has been lots of discussion of that. The farming community is very interested in that kind of thing.

But I do not believe it is enough to say, yes, it is up to you in the rural community to look at ideas for diversification, to look at ways. The rural people cannot do it on their own. There has to be

leadership from government. There have to be initiatives taken that will support the rural community. As good as the Grow Bond initiative is, there has to be government support behind it to help those communities come up with those initiatives.

I would like to know, through the Department of Rural Development, how this minister feels about sustainable development of our forestry industry. Is there anything being looked at as to how we can keep more of the secondary jobs from our forestry industry here in our province?

We need, as I said, services to attract these businesses to the rural community, and I use my community, the major centre in my constituency of Swan River, as an example when I talk about natural gas. We have gone around this scenario time and time again where people come to government and ask how they can get natural gas to come to the community and the governments says, well, you do not have the business to bring in natural gas. It becomes a chicken-and-egg scenario. We went through the same thing just a very short time ago with cellular phones. You do not have the population to get cellular phones to this area, and there are many areas of the province that are the same—in the Interlake area.

What we have to have is a government that is sincere about rural development that will take the initiatives to attract industry—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. The time is now 5 p.m., and time for private members' hour. I am interrupting the proceedings of the committee. The Committee of Supply will resume considerations at 8 p.m.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Madam Chairperson (Louise Dacquay): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order? This section of the Committee of Supply is dealing with the Estimates for the Department of Education and Training. We are on 5.(b) Program Analysis, Co-ordination and Support.

Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber?

Item 5.(b) Program Analysis, Co-ordination and Support: (1) Salaries \$904,100.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolsley): Madam Chairperson, I think at the end of last time I was trying to find some relationship between the courses which have been cut at the community colleges over

the last two years and the labour market requirements in Manitoba.

I have been doing this from a document called High Demand Occupations in Manitoba, September '91, which I think is the most recent document we have, and also, unfortunately, in the absence of a labour market strategy that this department has not yet provided.

So I wanted to continue with that and see what the issues were in some of the other college programs that were cut. I think we were looking at Keewatin Community College. I believe I was asking the minister if it was, indeed, still the policy of the department to turn to correspondence schools for training for northerners which is one of the things which was indicated in the document she tabled.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): The honourable member seems to raise some concerns that people wishing to study in the North will have to leave their home, where they are living, to study. I would certainly say that it is not a policy of this government to make that be a reason for people to leave home. However, we do have an issue of supply and demand. We do have courses available where there is a demand and also where there are the resources to provide those courses.

I would like to speak for a moment about distance education as a viable alternative and to remind her that we do have a Distance Education task force which will also be looking at issues relating to universities and colleges. It is a viable alternative where we cannot be site-specific in some of the courses offered. I would remind her that other provinces, including Ontario, use this method through a program in Ontario called Contact North. I will also remind her that it was the action of the previous government in 1983-1984 when Maureen Hemphill was minister.

Ms. Friesen: What I was asking about was correspondence schools, not distance education. There is a considerable difference, and I assumed that the minister understood that.

* (1450)

What I am indicating is that in the document which she tabled or which her department tabled, when it is looking at alternate programs for those courses which have been cut in our community colleges, that on seven occasions on the list that is proposed—it is a list perhaps of about 20 odd courses—that at least on seven or eight occasions, the alternative

proposed is a correspondence school in Montreal, a private correspondence school.

I am asking: Is that still government policy, that we cut programs at community colleges and advise students to register in the Montreal correspondence school?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, yes, I certainly understood the question and wish to provide the member with some information I did not believe that she had.

However, I would like to say again that there are times when we have to look at other kinds of alternatives. The courses are useful courses. They are viable courses. They provide an education. However, most of those same programs also are available at one of the two other community colleges. So the correspondence simply offers a choice for those individuals in an area where they would like to study. In the area of pre-employment courses, where they have been eliminated, there is still access to the trades through the apprenticeship programs.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Chairperson, on at least three of those seven items there is no alternative listed other than the international correspondence schools. So I am not quite sure what the minister means that there are alternatives proposed.

I think at the end of last time I was asking her, is the alternative she is proposing for northerners to come to Red River or to go to Brandon or a correspondence school?

I think the second part I would like to address is, the minister advises us that she is sure that these are good alternatives. Could she indicate also who in her department evaluates these correspondence courses for the purposes of advising Manitobans that these are viable alternatives, and what kind of certificates, what kind of certification is available at the end of the correspondence courses that is acceptable in Manitoba?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, I would encourage the honourable member to look at the entire list of programming. She is really painting a slanted picture by picking a very few number of courses.

I would like to remind her again that the reductions have been replaced by what are considered to be more beneficial programming in the North. Those programs which have been reduced, I will remind her again, are available through other community

colleges or through correspondence. So there is, in fact, still access to those programs. Yes, there will be a point when all students cannot get, locally, exactly what they require, and therefore we have put into place this series of alternatives.

Now, on the issue of evaluations, these programs are evaluated by other jurisdictions. We are responsible for the evaluation of vocational programs within Manitoba, and other jurisdictions and the other provinces are responsible for the evaluation of their programs and the quality of their programs. I would remind her that I am informed that approximately 75 percent of those programs are evaluated and take place within the NDP provinces of the Ontario and B.C.

Point of Order

Mr. John Plohma (Dauphin): Madam Chairperson, on a point of order, I have noted that the minister is taking a great deal of time of this House writing down notes while her staff is raising points with her, rather than answering the questions that are put to her in a timely way. This is an incredible approach by this minister. We have not seen this kind of thing in the Estimates before. I talked to my colleague over the last week or so and found that, in fact, this has been a habit that has taken place, and it is killing an awful lot of Estimates time.

I do not know if this is a deliberate tactic on the part of this minister and this government, but I do not think that we in the opposition should have to tolerate this. Surely the minister can be briefed on these issues and come in here ready to speak on the issues that are being asked of her in this House.

If this does not stop, Madam Chairperson, on a point of order, we are going to have to move that the Estimates time that is being taken while she is taking notes be deducted from the total hours that are allotted for this department for Estimates. I will not make that motion at this time, but I hope that the minister will indeed attempt to change her procedure in this regard because it is not a normal approach by a minister in this House. I take it she is a new minister, but this is intolerable.

Hon. James Downey (Deputy Premier): Madam Chairperson, I am quite amazed to hear what I have just heard come from the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohma). I find that the activities of the minister are quite appropriate. Her answers are adequate and sufficient. That is the issue, is the answer that is

given. I think it is quite appropriate for the minister to carry out the kind of activity in answering, making sure it is complete and to the satisfaction of this Chamber. The method—I can go back for years as to the delays of the member for Dauphin and there are different styles among different ministers, and it is not, I believe, the purpose of this committee to in any way determine how the answers are derived at. It is the quality and the quantity of the answers that are important.

* (1500)

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): I appreciate what the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) said, although I think had he been witnessing what has been going on in this committee, he might share the same concerns. The member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) was here the last time this committee met. He commented that in 23 years he has never seen a minister take this kind of time to prepare for questions and deliberately use up the time available to the committee.

It is not being moved at this point, but the suggestion that has been made is, if the minister requires this kind of time and she is a new minister and perhaps has not had the time to be briefed, that we simply deduct that preparation time from the clock that is running on Estimates. Otherwise we are forced into the position of using the concurrence motion to try to get the answers to the questions that we are failing to get on a department that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) himself has designated as a priority. The government certainly is not acting as though this is a priority of this government, neither is the minister.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Second Opposition House Leader): On the same point of order, Madam Chairperson, I would point to the key point to which the member for Dauphin is pointing is the significant loss of time to members of this House and particularly opposition members. Given the fact that we have only a limited time period, 240 hours, we are concerned that it is a deliberate tactic, as we are seeing in the other section of Estimates where we have the government filibustering its own Health Estimates, thereby running out the clock and preventing us from asking questions in other important departments, and we are seeing it in this particular area.

I realize that we have a new minister here, but I think the minister should have some responsibility to be briefed on these matters and should not rely

on staff at the expense of committee time, because in the period of time I have sat in here we often end up out of every five minutes there is perhaps one minute in which the minister is actually putting something on the record and four minutes in which the minister is consulting. It is the degree to which the minister is not using the time of Estimates, is using it to consult with her staff which she can do at any time, that is of concern here.

I would, on the point of order, ask that the time that is taken off from the limited amount of time we have for Estimates, only 240 hours, not include the time during which the minister is consulting with her staff, and I believe it is only reasonable. I believe there is an element of having the staff here for detailed questions, but on broad policy questions the minister should not be consulting with the staff in the first place. The minister should be responding directly to questions based on her knowledge, her understanding of the department, her policies and the policies of her government. This is unprecedented, the degree to which we have seen this time wasted in Estimates.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Deputy Government House Leader): Yes, Madam Chairperson, I have listened to the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton). The member for Thompson tries to make a point of order on how the minister answers questions. I am sure that the members opposite agree—or the member for Dauphin has raised the point of order. I would imagine that members opposite want to ensure that the minister provides as accurate information as is available to them as possible. Now, if the members are trying to make a quick political point in this committee room, that is unacceptable.

Madam Chairperson, ministers have a right to consult. It is a time-honoured tradition in this Assembly which they as ministers, I am sure, did when they were ministers in the same predicament in Estimates. A minister has a right to consult with the staff who are here to ensure that members opposite get an accurate answer, as accurate as possible, to the questions that they ask. If a minister chooses to make some notes while the question is being asked, I do not think that there is a minister who has gone through committee ever who has not done that.

All I can conclude, and I would submit to your ruling that first of all the point of order is out of order, but I would suggest as well that members opposite

are only trying to make some quick political point rather than have any real interest in the Department of Education.

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. I have listened with interest to the comments of all honourable members, and I would remind all honourable members that a point of order is used to bring to the attention of the Chair a breach of the rules or a digression from practices of the committee. The honourable member may have a complaint but does not have a point of order.

Secondly, I would like to remind all honourable members of this committee that indeed we do have a new minister.

Point of Order

Mr. Jerry Storie (Filn Flon): Madam Chairperson, you very carefully read the rules to the House and one of the rules is if there is a breach of practice. What has been pointed out by a number of my colleagues, including both opposition parties, that what is occurring here is a breach of practice. This minister, rightly or wrongly for whatever her motivation, is abusing the time of Estimates.

Madam Chairperson, I and a number of other people have been ministers, and there have been ministers on that side who have gone through the Estimates process year after year without taking the kind of time that this minister is taking to answer questions. We are not arguing that the minister should be giving us inaccurate or incorrect information. What we are asking the minister to do is to take her briefings outside of Estimates hours as has been the normal practice in this house over many, many years.

We are seeing the minister answer a very few number of questions every hour in this Chamber, and it would be much more efficient and much more effective if the minister would follow the practice of this House and answer questions more directly, take her briefing time outside of the Chamber so that we can get on with the business in this Chamber during the Estimates process.

Madam Chairperson: The honourable member for Filn Flon does not have a new point of order. He has reiterated the previous point of order raised.

* * *

Mrs. Vodrey: Well, in response to the two opposition parties, my suggestion is then that they realize that we are discussing the Estimates of

1992-93. Their questions have focused on Estimates that are several years past.

I have also made every effort to remind the other side that the line of questioning that they are pursuing is best pursued under Red River Community College, Appropriation 6.(5)(c), Keewatin Community College, Appropriation 6.(5)(e), and Assiniboine Community College, 6.(5)(d). So the members have been directed to put their questions in the appropriate Estimates line and they have said they did not wish to do that. They argued that point. Therefore, Madam Chairperson, I am delighted to answer the questions, and I will be answering them as fully and as completely as I possibly can in this Chamber.

Ms. Friesen: I do not know if the minister is speaking on a point of order there or not, but I have responded and I will continue to respond that we are discussing the overall policy and programming of community colleges.

It is quite legitimate since this government maintains that it has expanded the community college programs this year. It is extremely important that we continue to underline to the government and to the public that in fact they cut \$10 million from community colleges, that they cut over 30 programs. In cutting those programs, what they were doing was advising people to go to correspondence courses based in Montreal.

I was asking the minister a very specific question. Is it still the policy of this government to recommend correspondence courses based at ICS in Montreal, first of all? Second of all, who in the department evaluates those courses? What kind of certification is provided from those courses, and is that certification recognized in Manitoba?

I do not believe in her last answer that the minister answered those questions, so I am prepared to state them again.

* (1510)

Mrs. Vodrey: I will repeat the answer to the question, and perhaps the member will decide to listen to the answer this time.

The programs are regulated by other jurisdictions. We take care of those vocational programs and those correspondence programs here in Manitoba. I will also remind her that then their quality and their certification is done within those provinces in which the course is offered. I will remind her again that I

am informed approximately 75 percent of those courses take place in NDP Ontario and in NDP B.C.

Ms. Friesen: I really regret having to stay on this line, but my question is specifically related to ICS, the International Correspondence Schools, which the minister lists or this ministry listed on the piece of paper that it tabled.

International Correspondence Schools are located in Montreal, not in Ontario. Could the minister explain who evaluates in Manitoba these programs, which students are being advised to take in replacement of programs which have been cut at Manitoba community colleges?

Who is evaluating those programs? What kind of certificate is acquired at the end of those programs? Who in Manitoba is evaluating those certificates for use by Manitoba employers?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, again, private vocational schools are evaluated by those individual provinces where the schools are residing. ICS is part of a national association of career colleges. There is no external evaluation by provinces, and the only evaluation by an external province, by Manitoba for example, is for eligibility for the Canada Student Loan program or specific Manitoba financial assistance.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Chairperson, then could we get back to department policy? If there is no evaluation in Manitoba of these courses, on what grounds and on what basis was this ministry recommending to students that these programs that they were cutting in the community colleges were available in this jurisdiction at the International Correspondence Schools.

I am referring, in fact, to about 11 of the 30 courses that were cut. The alternatives in 11 of those were recommended as being, amongst others, the International Correspondence Schools.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, in terms of the schools existing in other provinces, they exist in other provinces, they are licensed in other provinces. These programs then obviously meet the standards within those provinces and within that particular province's evaluation.

Secondly, within Manitoba, employers have not let us know that they are not up to standard. In fact, employers have let us know that they are up to an acceptable standard because they have hired those graduates. Alternative availability has been considered whenever any programming is

restructured and reduced, and we have not specifically recommended that any students necessarily study by way of correspondence. We have simply gathered information which has said that these programs are available.

Ms. Friesen: It seems to me that then the department is waiting for employers to say that this is inadequate before any new policy is developed. It seems to me a very odd way, in a policy and planning branch, to develop policy because you have no alternatives in some of these programs. Employers who want to hire people, according to this list, will only be able to employ them from correspondence schools if we were to go on the evidence that the minister is suggesting. It seems to me a very bizarre way of making policy.

Overall, what we are looking at in the community colleges is a cut or reduction two years ago of more than 35 courses. I think we have talked about this in Estimates and in Question Period a number of times, particularly when the government wants to trumpet its "extra" \$2.5 million to the community colleges because in fact we are limiting community colleges. It seems to me that we are reducing their role in the post-secondary field in Manitoba at a time when we have, as I said last time, thousands of people unemployed and hundreds and hundreds of students waiting and unable to have access to community colleges or to universities.

I want to ask the minister about something that I have asked her in Question Period, but now that she has her staff here, perhaps we could get some more specific answers, and that is the waiting lists at community colleges and in particular the waiting list at Red River Community College, which I believe have resulted from the program and policy developments in this government.

There are, from my understanding, about 25 courses at Red River Community College in technology areas that have waiting lists, some of them to August '94, some of them to September '93, March '94. I would be happy to read the list into the record, but perhaps the minister would like to comment generally, first of all on the waiting lists at the community colleges.

Mrs. Vodrey: We do recognize that there are waiting lists in some courses at Red River Community College which the member has referenced specifically, and that is why we have attempted to add new programming in some of those areas. I would be happy to discuss it more

fully when we get to the appropriation for Red River Community College, but I would also like to remind the member that we do not charge for the processing of applications, that some students in fact register for several courses and waiting lists do not always necessarily reflect the demand for the course specifically.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Chairperson, how does the college, how does this Policy and Planning Branch in fact evaluate the demand from a student perspective?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, the primary way is the medium-term demand within the marketplace, and then we add to that the student demand. So it is labour market demand and student demand. We certainly look to see that the student demand would lead to employability.

* (1520)

Ms. Friesen: We seem to be moving in circles. Labour market demand in a department which has no labour market strategy yet, in fact, which started from scratch in recent months to development; student demand in an area where the government now claims that it cannot even count student demand because students, they argue, register for many courses—I do not understand how in fact the department is developing any kind of planning framework for the community colleges which it is now sending off to govern themselves. You do not know the student demand. You do not know the labour market strategy. Where is the planning coming from?

Mrs. Vodrey: Well, I have discussed with the honourable member that at the moment we do not have a formal strategy. That is true. We are in the process of developing that strategy. We are also in the process of preparing to sign the Canada-Manitoba Labour Force Development Agreement, but we do have access to statistics on demand, and I think we have discussed that already within these Estimates.

Madam Chairperson: Item 5.(b)(1) Salaries \$904,100. Shall the item pass?

Ms. Friesen: Madam Chairperson, I move, seconded by the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohm), that the committee condemn the government for its lack of planning and support for community colleges, its failure to respond to the needs of the thousands of unemployed in Manitoba, and to the immediate needs of the hundreds of students waiting for training in the province.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Just for clarification, do we have to debate this motion before us, or is it nondebatable?

Madam Chairperson: The motion is in order, and the motion indeed is debatable. I will now read the motion.

It has been moved by the honourable member for Wolsley (Ms. Friesen) that the committee condemn the government for its lack of planning and support for community colleges, its failure to respond to the needs of the thousands of unemployed in Manitoba and to the immediate needs of the hundreds of students waiting for training in this province.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, I am extremely pleased to speak to this motion, because I believe that it will give an opportunity to discuss our government's commitment to training in this province and also to the community college system within this province.

I would like to start by saying that choice is a very important principle guiding my department as outlined in the Strategic Plan. We believe that Manitobans want to be able to choose alternatives to education and training which include both public institutions funded by government within the resources available to us and private training providers paid for primarily by the individuals making those choices.

I would like to address, specifically, the policies of the former New Democratic government to see if in fact our approach differs significantly. The honourable member has criticized this government for taking the necessary steps to eliminate certain college programs as part of last year's Estimates based on the criteria that I outlined previously: labour market demand, student success, post-graduation employment, program costs, and the availability of alternative delivery approaches.

I have indicated to the honourable member that we have, in fact, added new or expanded programs last year and again this year in those areas which, we believe, will most significantly contribute to the well-being of the provincial economy. What I now wish to remind the member is of certain decisions made by the former government. I refer to the statements from Hansard made by the former minister, Maureen Hemphill, on May 22, 1984. During that year's Estimates, the NDP government also cut a number of college programs, but it failed to introduce new programs to replace those which

had been eliminated. The former NDP minister clearly indicated that her government had considered the availability of similar programs at private vocational schools, other colleges or secondary vocational schools as part of its decision-making process.

I would like to quote Ms. Hemphill's response: "If the program can be delivered by another institution, and I give you an example where we have some of the same programs being delivered through our vocational schools as are being delivered through the colleges, and if we can say this program is being delivered through other institutions, then we do not have to keep delivering it, do not have to duplicate. That is another of the criteria."

The NDP minister went on to say: "An example, ...is the fact that various of the trade schools, like Success, are able to train an adequate number of people in that area successfully and it is not necessary for us to duplicate that program."

So we see now that the program eliminations and reductions are not something new to the community colleges. What is new, however, which I have stressed on several earlier occasions, is the restructuring which we have undertaken as indicated by the large number of new and expanded programs which this government has introduced at the colleges, both last year and this year.

As part of the government's ongoing activities of strengthening the Manitoba economy by developing the skill levels of our labour force, an extensive review of community colleges was taken in 1991, and I stress the process of review and of restructuring. The aim was to focus on effective long-term approaches to meeting our labour market needs, rather than on the short-term, quick-fix measures which the NDP party has consistently spoken of in this session.

The review resulted in a redirection of programming from the less effective programs to ones which would be more effective in addressing labour market mismatches. College programs were evaluated based on enrollment levels, graduation rates, job placements, projected demands for graduates as well as program costs and effectiveness. Although some programs were eliminated, for example, the recreational vehicle technology, and hairstylist, and clerical bookkeeping, which we did spend a great deal of time on in Estimates—and I spoke on that one very

specifically when we spoke of the accountancy and the requirements for a greater technological ability on behalf of the graduates. Many were added, including technology and business management programs, computer-related programs, programming related to our aerospace industry and expanded programming within rural and northern Manitoba.

In 1992-93 we are proposing a further expansion of \$2.5 million to college programming in areas which will contribute to the economic development of our province. As I have said to the member previously, this training will result in an additional 640 students in 1992-93.

I would like to read into the record again some of the additional programs which are available at our community colleges. At Red River Community College: the post-diploma in geographical information systems, that is a new program; the post-diploma in biomedical engineering, a new program; manufacturing assessment services, an expanded program; development of learning technologies, a modified program; post-diploma in technology management, a new program; post-diploma in electrical and electronic technology, an expanded program; telecommunications technology, an expanded program; developmental services, an expanded program; civil engineering technology, both a modified and an expanded program; motor vehicle mechanic, a modified and an expanded program; business administration, an expanded program; technology preparation, a new program; advertising art, a modified program; business accountancy, an expanded program; applied sciences, a new program.

* (1530)

At Assiniboine Community College: agribusiness, rural enterprise, a new program; heavy duty equipment electronics technology, a new program; business administration year one, an expanded and a modified program; media production technology, a new program; sustainable shelter specialist, a new program.

At Keewatin Community College: instrumentation electronic technology technician year one, a new program; computer technology, a new program; computer technician, a new program; facilities technician, a new program.

So this government has recognized the urgent need for the community colleges to have greater

flexibility and greater responsiveness and great accountability in order to meet the rapidly changing demands of a highly competitive information and technology-based economy. As it stands today, the colleges are the direct arms of the government and this structure does not provide them with the flexibility they need to meet the future challenges.

After consultations with the private sector the government decided that the colleges must move to a system of board governance which would on one hand provide flexibility while on the other accountability of public funds.

Since The Colleges Act was passed in July 1991 an implementation plan has been prepared and is currently being reviewed by the government, and \$250,000 has been provided in the 1992-93 Estimates in support of the activities associated with this transition including funds for staff development and training so that the college staff can assume their new responsibilities under board governance. Incorporation of the three colleges under separate boards is expected to take place on April 1, 1993, and The Colleges Act allows for the continuation of existing pension plans for college employees.

So, Madam Chairperson, I hope that I have underlined again this government's commitment for training and training through the community colleges, but the issue of restructuring the community colleges was an important one, and it was very important for us to look at the employability of graduates and also the number of young people or adults who started the programs and then who were actually able to finish and graduate from those programs.

As a part, as I have said, of making sure that colleges are able to provide the programming that is the most flexible and the most important to their areas, we are moving to a system of college governance and through that system of college governance we fully expect colleges then to be able to look at labour market needs within their area, to utilize the labour market strategy developed by this government and to provide the kind of programming that will be the most responsive to their specific area.

Having visited the community colleges and having visited in the North, we can see that this is a very important move. The member has spoken about the colleges in the North, and she has spoken about the need for employment in the North, and she

has spoken about concern for people in northern Manitoba. I have spent a great deal of this Estimates time speaking to her about our efforts to be responsive to northern Manitobans and to allow the colleges to also be responsive to northern Manitobans through strategies that we have put in place in northern Manitoba, and we have to look at what are the specific needs in the northern part of Manitoba and how people in the North will be able to access those programs.

So as I said to her much earlier and for several days, day after day, it has been very important for us to make sure that people who are studying in these programs or in programs which lead for them to a personal satisfaction as well as an employability and that the programs are in sync with the current labour market needs in Manitoba.

Then again, I will remind her that when she speaks of the private vocational schools, that it was also her government in the government of the NDP in 1984 who said, and I will just read again into the record, Ms. Hemphill's response: if the program can be delivered by another institution, and I will give you an example where we have some of those programs being delivered through our vocational schools, the area being delivered through the colleges, and if we can say this program is being delivered through other institutions then we do not have to keep delivering it, we do not have to duplicate it.

An Honourable Member: Who said that?

Mrs. Vodrey: That was said by Maureen Hemphill who was the Minister of Education in 1984.

Point of Order

Ms. Friesen: Madam Chairperson, I think the member is reading a setspeech and I think perhaps she has not adapted it to the situation because, in fact, we have not talked about vocational schools yet. I asked about one correspondence school. We have not mentioned any other vocational schools. I think the minister had a prepared speech that she came in with that she has not adapted. But we would be happy to give her the time to adapt it.

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

* * *

Mrs. Vodrey: I know if the member goes back and references Hansard, she will find her own reference

to vocational schools and private vocational schools. She did raise this issue this afternoon. I think it is very important to get on the record all of the information that will be important to a motion such as this.

In terms of our labour market strategy and our labour force strategy in Manitoba, the Manitoba government does believe that the skilled human resources are integral to the maintenance of the provincial economic competitiveness and also prosperity. A labour force strategy, therefore, will form an important component of the government's economic strategy. The labour force strategy will provide a framework to provide the development of Manitoba's labour force through a period of rapid change by ensuring that Manitobans—

Point of Order

Mr. Ashton: Our rules are fairly clear that speeches, apart from very isolated occasions, should not be read from a written copy, and I do believe the minister is doing that. If she wishes to table a copy of her speech, I am sure we will all read it, Madam Chairperson. But our rules are very clear that speeches apart from some very specific designated occasions—and in the case of Estimates about the only exception is when ministers make introductory comments and that is standard practice. But in debate on motions, it is highly irregular for members to be reading from speeches and I would ask that you bring the Minister of Education to order and ask her address the motion rather than read a written speech into the record. That is a point of order.

Mr. Enns: On the same point of order, I would have to agree with my colleague, the member for Thompson, official opposition House leader. That indeed was the tradition in the rule of this Chamber some time, but long ago abandoned. If, in fact, that were to be applied now, you would have to rule out the Question Period pretty well, because most questions are read onto the record.

Furthermore, there has always been, as long as I have been in this Chamber, substantial leeway given to ministers during the Estimates period to read from particular documents because of the nature, because of the specific questions that are being asked. I think it is a rule that I, quite frankly, support, that members should desist from reading from papers in their contribution to the Chamber, but there are exceptions to the rule, and certainly the

minister when engaged in her Estimates is one of them.

* (1540)

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable member for Thompson does not have a point of order. I am referring explicitly to Rule 29. "A member addressing the House shall not read from a written previously prepared speech except in the case of a Minister of the Crown making a statement of policy."

Mr. Ashton: Madam Chairperson, are you saying that at any time that a minister is speaking—I just want to get the clarity on the ruling—that they are entitled by your interpretation of that rule to speak. My understanding of that is to do with ministerial statements. It is also to do with opening comments, but in debate it has never been the policy of ministers, particularly on motions.

I would just like to ask for clarity on your ruling.

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. My interpretation of Rule 29 is indeed as I have previously stated, that a minister shall not read from a written previously prepared speech except in the case of a minister of the Crown making a statement of policy. It is my interpretation that the minister is indeed stating departmental policy in response to the concerns expressed in the motion by the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen).

Mr. Ashton: Madam Chairperson, with all due respect, I challenge your ruling.

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. The ruling of the Chair having been challenged, the question before the committee is, shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained? All those in favour of sustaining the ruling of the Chair, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Chairperson: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Mr. Ashton: Madam Chairperson, I request a formal vote.

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

* * *

The committee took recess at 3:44 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 4:39 p.m.

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. In the section of Committee of Supply meeting in the Chamber to consider the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training, the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) rose on a point of order alleging that the honourable Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) was in breach of the rules by reading from a prepared text.

The Chair ruled that the honourable member did not have a point of order and that the honourable minister had complied with Rule 29(a). The honourable member for Thompson challenged the ruling which was sustained on a voice vote. The honourable member then requested a formal vote.

Therefore, the question before the committee is: shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained?

* (1640)

A STANDING VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 24, Nays 25.

Madam Chairperson: The ruling of the Chair has not been sustained, therefore I must request the honourable minister not to read from a previously prepared text.

* * *

Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply is dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training.

Order, please. We will continue to consider the Estimates for the Department of Education. Question?

Mr. Praznik: Pardon me, Madam Chairperson. Which question did you call?

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. I have called the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training back to order, and when the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) rose on a point of order and then subsequently challenged the Chair, there was a motion on the floor, and the honourable Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. Vodrey) was debating that motion.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Would you read the motion, Madam Chairperson? I think a number of us may want to speak on this particular motion.

Madam Chairperson: Moved by the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), that the committee condemn the government for its lack of planning and support for community colleges—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. The Chair had not concluded reading the motion: its failure to respond to the needs of the thousands of unemployed in Manitoba and the immediate needs of the hundreds of students waiting for training in this province.

Mr. Downey: Madam Chairperson, I am rising to speak on the motion that was brought forward by the member for—

Point of Order

Mr. Alcock: This is a friendly point of order. I believe the minister was speaking and has not finished her remarks. Has she concluded her remarks?

An Honourable Member: No, she was just being ruled out of order.

Mr. Ashton: Yes, if I might be of assistance. Also, in a friendly manner to the government since it is having some difficulty here, I also believe if we are now back in the section of the Estimates, the staff should be invited back in. The minister should come down. We are ready for the question, but we should proceed normally with the committee, Madam Chairperson.

* * *

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

Mrs. Vodrey: I am pleased to continue the speech that I was delivering before the point of order was raised, the speech in which I have delivered those points many times when I visited around in this province and when I have also spoken in this House.

I have spoken very frequently about this government's commitment to the community college system and to the training of Manitobans. I have spoken about that commitment first of all in terms of the movement towards college governance. As I have said in this House before, the community colleges are in fact, at this point, an arm of government, and it has been determined, through a bill passed in this House, that those community colleges will move into college governance so that those community colleges will

be able to be much more responsive to the citizens of their area.

By way of example, I spoke of the citizens in northern Manitoba who will have the community college close to them and have that college be able to develop programs which will be very suited to northern Manitobans. I say this with a great deal of pride, because certainly the NDP government did not at any time move to take any measures such as that. They did not make any attempts to assist the community colleges in the North become more responsive to northern Manitobans, and in fact they were responsible for the severe fiscal mismanagement of this province. As a result of that, we are dealing with a huge deficit in the Province of Manitoba right now. Manitobans are being forced to shoulder that deficit.

This government has made every effort to attempt to manage this province in a more responsible way, dealing with the left-over debt of the NDP government.

In terms of the management, we have looked very carefully at the budgeting in this province, and we have also looked at what Manitobans can afford. In looking at what Manitobans can afford, we have also looked at the structure that would best suit the people of Manitoba. We did look at restructuring within the college system, and that did involve the development and the expansion and the modification of many new community college programs or present community college programs.
* (1650)

We certainly are aware that the issue of management is a major issue that is simply pouring money in, which, as the NDP answer, has not answered anything and in fact has led us deeper into debt and has been what has led us to the need for restructuring in this province. We do have a commitment to the community college system. We do have a commitment to training within this province. We have also looked into the development of new college programming to programming which is responsive to the needs of the labour market.

There has been an opportunity to discuss with employers what it is that employers are looking for, what is the technological need for employers, what is the greatest amount of employability for Manitobans so that in fact they will be successful

when they have spent that time within the community college system.

Madam Chairperson, I think it is very important that those people studying within the community college system also develop a sense of internal satisfaction as well as the belief that they will be able to look ahead, and that they will be able to look for employability. I respond to the honourable member by saying not only have we moved toward college governance, but I will remind her again that we have put more money into community colleges and that we have been looking at developing programs which are very responsive and will lead to the issues of employment.

Going along with this, Madam Chairperson, I have also spoken in this House over the past several weeks about the development of a provincial labour force strategy for Manitoba, a strategy which was not developed by the NDP, a strategy which was not even envisioned by the NDP and a strategy which was developed from scratch by this government. There has been a great deal of work put into that, and we look forward to that being brought forward as soon as possible. Certainly, that should provide us and assist us in developing a labour market and training within this province, so we do look forward to that.

In addition, we also look forward to signing a Canada-Manitoba Labour Force Development Agreement and within that, we will also be looking to the partnerships within the community. We will be looking at how we can co-operate in terms of training with not only what the labour market demands but with what students demand as well.

This government through its development of a labour market strategy, this government through its move to a community college governance, this government with its development of courses that are very much more updated than previously has put thought into this. The NDP has said that if you just pour more money in and run up the debt, keep the programs, keep the status quo, do not do any restructuring, do not do any further development, that everything will be fine.

That has been the message that the NDP has delivered in this House during the Estimates process, and this government has said that we will, in fact, provide a strategy and the strategy is one that is in the process of being developed now. It is a strategy that will assist Manitobans; it is a strategy

that does not just talk about maintaining the status quo for Manitobans. As I said in the Estimates process, those Manitobans in many cases were not able to complete the programs, were not able to find jobs at the end of the programs, so we looked at some of those programs that were, in fact, reduced and the restructuring of the programs.

We looked at those programs, and we said the employability is low and we found that there was an attrition rate as well. We are now looking to develop programs within the community colleges that are more responsive to Manitobans and also to employers. I put forward to you again that we are looking at the issue of management. In addition to management, we are also looking at responsiveness for Manitobans and assisting Manitobans to stay in their programming and also to help bring them a sense of satisfaction.

We also have to acknowledge, in the planning of a labour force, in the planning of training and the planning for community colleges, that Manitoba is not alone in the way that it has to look at what its labour force's needs are. We have to look at Manitoba very specifically; we have to look at what the needs of the North are; we have to look at what the needs of our rural areas are; we have to look at the needs of our urban areas. We also have to look across Canada, and we have to say, what are the needs across Canada? Where are we moving across Canada? We are moving into a much more highly technological period where we certainly need training. Those expanded programs and those new programs which I have spoken of, also speak to the need for the development in terms of technology. I think it is very important not to simply bury our heads in the sand and maintain the status quo, but instead to move and to look at what those needs of Manitobans truly are.

So we have developed these new programs. I know that we will be speaking about them in detail when we go line by line looking at the community colleges, looking at the planning of the community colleges, looking at the staffing of the community colleges. All of those issues, Madam Chairperson, will be very important when we look at college governance.

As I have acknowledged in this Chamber already, the move to college governance requires a trained staff. It requires a trained administration and that administration is in the process of receiving the training that it needs, both the administrative training

and the financial training, and that staff also continues to need that kind of training.

We want to make sure also at our community colleges that our instructors are as up to date as possible, that they have had the opportunity to experience professional development and through that professional development, to offer the highest quality of training for the students within Manitoba. We certainly support that issue, and we want our students to graduate in a way that is in sync with labour and business and industry that they will be moving into as well as the technology that we can be providing through the community colleges.

So we certainly have focused a great deal of attention, as I have explained in the process of discussing the college governance implementation team, that we have an interdepartmental team which is looking at all the issues that relate to movement to college governance. There is a plan that is a well laid out plan, and we are looking at issues as they relate to instructors and their agreements with the college. We are also looking at the courses, and we are looking at property. We are looking at all the issues to assist the community colleges within the college governance structure.

So I think it is very important that this government has a plan and this government has worked according to this plan. We developed the plan. We have moved according to the plan, and I think that it is a plan that Manitobans can then begin to look at and say, this is a government that has provided a plan. The other government had no strategy. The other government did not have any way to be responsive, but this government has developed a plan. This government is being responsive to the needs of Manitobans.

Through the community colleges, that is one way in which we are proving our particular interest in both the instructors and also the students who will be studying. We want to make the community colleges attractive places. As I have said in the last several weeks of Estimates, we are working with communities to make the course content that is offered at community colleges, very important to the areas in which people are studying and that the community colleges will become a very attractive option both to students and to parents.

We are working with high school guidance counsellors, so that high school guidance counsellors can assist students in the transition and

that community colleges become a very viable option. I think that is a very important thing, because the colleges during the '80s were left with very little. They were left with nothing. They were not a priority of the NDP government, and this government has begun to make them a priority.

So I think that motion is absolutely unfounded because this government has shown that it is—

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. The hour being 5 p.m. and time for private members' hour, I am interrupting the proceedings.

Call in the Speaker.

* (1700)

IN SESSION

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hour being 5 p.m., time for Private Members' Business.

House Business

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Yes, Mr. Speaker, we are quite prepared to waive private members' hour to go back into Committee of Supply if the government is agreeable.

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

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Yes. That is agreed. We will waive private members' hour. We are back into Supply. Madam Deputy Speaker, take the chair, please.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. The Committee of Supply will now resume the consideration of the Department of Rural Development.

Ms. Roaann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would just like to continue on with my opening remarks. I was just indicating that I have some concerns about what is happening in rural Manitoba, that we are not getting the leadership from government that is necessary to get the communities working. Community leaders can only do so much work, but they must have the initiatives from government, the supports from government, to have their projects come to fruition. This is one of the things that I would like to talk about to the minister as we get into the Estimates.

* (1710)

The other area of concern that we will be raising in Estimates is the changes to the amendments to

the assessment act, Bill 20. The minister has indicated that this is not going to affect a farmer's right to appeal, but there are many farmers out there, farm organizations, who have expressed concern with this. The questions are asked as to, if this is not going to affect the farmer's right to appeal, why are the changes even being made?

The other issue is the delay in reassessment, and we cannot agree with the minister that it is necessary to have a delay in reassessment. We feel that there was a commitment made when Bill 79 was being presented that never again would there be a delay in assessment. It would always happen in three-year periods, and I think that people expected that to happen and we should go forward with it. There are many people that are concerned, many people who want the assessment to go forward and cannot understand why this government has chosen to delay that reassessment. So we will be raising those issues.

Also, we have to have some discussion on the portioning and what is happening with portioning and shifting of taxes—the decrease in apportioning and the different percentage of decrease for some classes versus other classes. Farmers are having to pick up additional education costs, and I know that the minister will say that is the local levy that is causing the extra taxation on farmers, but I think we have to look at a way that—how can this be addressed?

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

The intention of the legislation was that the taxation for education would go on farm buildings, on homes as it does in the town, and that seems to make sense. But, as is happening right now, there is an additional tax being put on farmland, and we have to look at how this can be addressed so that farmers will pay their fair share of educational tax but not a disproportionate amount of tax, which, I feel, is happening right now.

Another area that I would like—there is a concern with taxation on Crown lands or lack of ability that municipalities have to collect taxes on Crown land. I would like to raise that issue with the minister and see whether there is any way that we can resolve that problem because municipalities, although they are providing services to people who are living on Crown lands, do not have the ability—now this may not fall under Rural Development. It may fall under

Crown lands, but I would like to talk this through with the minister and see how we might be able to come to some resolve on this particular problem.

One of the initiatives that this government has taken, as the minister outlined in comments, was the REDI program and the allocation of lottery funds that will support the rural community. I attended the Hotel Association meeting. It seemed to be very positive from the people within the Hotel Association. It is helping their business and that is good. I have said earlier that I have difficulty with raising money only from lotteries. I have some problem with that. There have to be other initiatives, but if that is being done by all governments—and I think that is something we just have to accept that it is going to be a way of raising money.

I want to know, how much money is being raised and what percentage of the money that is raised is going back into the rural communities? We need some clarification of where the money is going to be spent. How is the money going to be allocated back to the communities? Is it going back to the communities that raised the money, or is it being distributed right across the province? If it is only going back into those communities that have the video lottery terminals, what about the rest of the province? So we need some clarification on what is happening and what the benefit is to those communities.

I guess I want to know whether the government will consider matching that money. I do not believe that everything that happened in the rural community should happen from funds only raised in the rural community. There has to be, as I have said earlier, a commitment from government to also stand up for rural areas and, again, all of rural Manitoba. I do not believe rural Manitoba ends at No. 1 Highway. I think there is a lot more further north than that. I do not believe it ends in Roblin, Russell. I do not believe it ends anywhere. I think it is the whole—

An Honourable Member: Or Portage la Prairie.

Ms. Wowchuk: It does not end at Portage la Prairie. I hope that other parts of the province will benefit. I guess I get back to my own constituency again, because I feel that this area of the province has been neglected by this government. We have been neglected. We have been very badly hurt by the Repap deal. There is no doubt about it that our part of the province has been hurt. We do not have the economic growth there.

We hear about the water and sewer program, the Southern Development Initiative, that this government continues to praise and that is good. That is good for southern Manitoba, because they are going to have the ability to attract industry, but again I say that we have to look beyond the southern part of the province. We have to look at how we can attract business to the northern part.

If you want to call us the northern part of the province, then I am not sure the Swan River area falls into the Parkland, which is partly northern, partly southern. The people in my part of the province also want their children to be able to come back home after they have finished their school. They want to be able to work in those communities. We all want to go back. Most people want to go back to where they came from. They have roots there, but at this point there really is not any attraction. When I see young people having to go out to Alberta and to B.C. to find work because there is no work in Manitoba, I do not think that we are addressing the real concerns.

The decentralization program and Community Futures are also a few areas of concern. The minister talked about Community Futures and the round table program. I guess I am anxious to know what the next step is with the round table and whether the process on round tables has changed at all. Is the funding the same as it was before for round tables? Is there a change in funding? What happens when the communities put a proposal on this round table? Is that the end? Is the government taking any initiative to go farther, because it is not enough to say, well, yes, we have had a round table meeting and this community has put together a proposal and there has been money spent on it, but if the ideas do not go farther, then that is not helping communities.

The minister talked about decentralization and how positive it has been. I cannot completely agree with some of his numbers. I do not know whether we are going to talk about decentralization at this time or whether we are going to talk about it under the decentralization budget. Estimates, we will not have very much time at that time I do not think, as we will not have very much time in this area. I guess what I would like to know is, what has happened with decentralization in this department? How many jobs are really moving out of Rural Development and where are we going with decentralization?

I think there are only a couple of other areas that I have concerns with. I think that one of them is the minister's power as it relates to LGDs versus municipalities, and who has the final say and what is happening in those areas. I mentioned this briefly to the minister at some point during the Estimates. I would just like some clarification.

As I said, our major concern is Bill 20 and the reasoning behind bringing in those amendments at this time and the concerns that people are raising with us. I think with that I will close and let my colleague for the third opposition make his comments, and then perhaps we can get into more detail in specific areas.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

* (1720)

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I thank the honourable member for those comments. Does the critic for the second opposition party, the honourable member for St. Boniface, have an opening statement?

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): Firstly, I would like to congratulate the minister on being promoted to Rural Development. I say promoted because I think Rural Development has just as much importance as any other department here in the Legislature. I also would like to congratulate the appointment of our new deputy minister and say thank you for the work that Dave Tomasson has done for the Department of Rural Development. I am sure he will be missed, but I am sure he will be available for his help when required.

Also, I am pleased to have been given the chance to be the critic of Rural Development. Having come from a rural area myself, you always have your roots in the rural area. The minister will know that because I have visited his constituency and have enjoyed doing that. I have worked with him co-operatively, I think, and I appreciate his efforts in helping me out when I met those people.

I have visited many rural areas since I was given the portfolio of critic for Rural Development, and I will continue after the session to visit the rural area, because it is always pleasant to go out to the rural communities, and you are always welcome. You are always well received.

I will be very brief, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, because I know we have several Estimates to go through yet, and I think all the Estimates that we have to go through are just as important as any of

the other Estimates that are left to be dealt with. I know we have just so many hours to deal with.

I think we want to raise the issues that have been raised by the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk). The minister has announced—I look here at the Manitoba focus where he says five new programs, and we would like to deal with those programs on a one-to-one basis so that we have information and know where we are going and what it has to offer for the rural development of our rural areas.

Again, like I said, I would be brief, and I want to go into the details of the Estimates. I will end my comments at this time and look forward with positive criticism—[Interjection] Well, I think that is what we need, positive criticism for the rural areas, because like the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) has mentioned, it does not stop at the Perimeter Highway. I think our interests are for all Manitobans, and I think the interest of all legislators here in this House should be for all Manitobans, and I look forward to dealing in the Estimates with the minister.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We thank the honourable member for St. Boniface for his opening comments. Under Manitoba practice, debate of the minister's salary is traditionally the last item considered for the Estimates of a department. Accordingly, we shall defer consideration of this item and now proceed with consideration of the next line.

At this time, we invite the minister's staff to join us at the table, and we will ask the minister to introduce the staff members present.

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Chairperson and members of the committee. I would like to introduce to you our Acting Deputy Minister, Mr. David Tomasson. As I said, David is the Acting Deputy Minister who will be moving on to Northern and Native Affairs. Also with us is Brian Johnston who is our Chief of Financial Services for the Department of Rural Development.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: At this time we will be dealing with Item 1.(b) Executive Support: (1) Salaries \$368,600. Shall the item pass?

Ms. Wowchuk: I do not want to spend very much time on this section. I just want to ask briefly on the increase of staff. You have had an increase of 2.25—am I on the right line? I am just wondering, is

that the proposed assistant deputy minister? What are the increases in staff there?

Mr. Derkach: As the member knows, this department formerly was administered by a minister who had joint responsibility for Northern and Native Affairs and for Rural Development.

When the responsibilities were separated, it meant that there would be some additional staff because of a separate ministry for such things as your special executive assistant and also some of your clerical support.

Ms. Wowchuk: I am sorry, I just did not quite understand. You are saying that your special assistant then comes with the ministry. This does not include the new assistant deputy minister that will be hired at some point, and if it does not include that, I am just wondering where that will show up in the lines?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, this includes the special executive support to the minister, but it does not include the deputy minister's component, or ADM's.

Ms. Wowchuk: My question then is, where in the budget will we see the allocation of funds for the new ADMs?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the ADMs show up in two separate sections, one under 5.(a), and that is the ADM for the Local Government Services Division. Then in section 6.(a), the other ADM is found for the Rural Economic Development Division.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 1.(b) Executive Support: (1) Salaries \$368,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$94,400.

Mr. Gaudry: There is an increase in Other Expenditures of some \$13,000. What does that consist of?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Manitoba has the distinguished honour this year of hosting the ministerial conference which is going to be held in August at Elkhorn Ranch. There is \$12,500 allocated which is our share for the joint ministerial conference between the Departments of Rural Development and Urban Affairs.

Mr. Gaudry: You say it is going to be held in Elkhorn. Is that just for the government or is that—the opposition also will be invited to that conference?

Mr. Derkach: Well, the agenda has not been finalized, I guess, but it is a ministerial conference.

Whether or not we will make available for the opposition the social evening, I do not know. I do not even know if one is planned. This is something that is planned as a joint effort between provinces across the country.

It is not usually done for the public or members of opposition parties. It is usually confined to ministers only and some support staff whom the minister may choose to have there.

Ms. Wowchuk: Gee, I am disappointed, I cannot go to that conference. Just on the conference, I wanted to ask the minister, is this a new function? Has this happened with Rural Development, or is this a new initiative that has been taken with other provinces, and which provinces will be invited?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, my understanding is this is an annual event, that each year some province in Canada hosts a function of this nature. We were honoured to have the occasion this year to be able to host it as a joint endeavour between Rural Development and Urban Affairs.

Last year, it was in Halifax. It seems that this year I get to travel to Elkhorn Ranch, and certainly we are proud, very proud, to be able to host this because I think our setting at Elkhorn Ranch in the western part of this province, in a rural setting, is indeed a very fine setting for a ministerial conference. I am certainly proud that Manitoba can host that kind of a conference.

Mr. Gaudry: Yes, maybe since we are not available to join the ministers, maybe you could arrange for golfing for the opposition.

* (1730)

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item (b)(2) Other Expenditures \$94,400—pass.

Item (c) Brandon Office: (1) Salaries \$100,600.

Ms. Wowchuk: Just on the Brandon Office, every time we do these Estimates we get into the issue of the value of that office. Again we see the expenses, the cost of that going up. I want to ask the minister his feeling on that office, if he feels it is a worthwhile investment, and in particular, has he considered moving that office into the government building?

There is space in the provincial building. It would be a saving rather than an increase in cost. Just on that, has the minister considered that type of move?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I certainly have not considered moving the office into a

different location. At the present time it is located on 18th Street, a spot that has become quite familiar to many of the rural people in Manitoba. We have had numerous clients use the office ranging from the UMMs, to City of Brandon, the Rural Development Institute, Alcoholism Foundation of Manitoba. I could go through a list which brings together many, many entities into that office.

Western Manitoba finds that it is a long distance away from Winnipeg. Many people who sometimes only need a few minutes of government time find it fairly cumbersome to travel for four or five hours into the city. So for that reason we tried to strategically locate offices in Manitoba. There is one in northern Manitoba under the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Downey) and there is one in Brandon.

Now, from time to time ministers use the office as well in meeting with groups, in meeting with different organizations. I intend to use the office much more than I have in the past, because I only had an opportunity to use it as Minister of Education and Training, at which time I did use it on several occasions.

It was a good place for us to meet with superintendents, school board members who were not from Brandon but perhaps from outside of Brandon. We met with the university people, with the college people. As Minister of Rural Development I have had the occasion to meet with several municipalities at that cabinet office. Municipalities know that the service is there. They appreciate it, and so do other organizations that use that office quite frequently.

As of this time we have two positions there, as you can see by the Estimate line in front of you. Indeed, I think it is a very worthwhile use of space. Just to give you an idea of some of the groups that have used it, I would like to just list a few: the Manitoba Telephone System, Native Affairs, MPIC, Lotteries Foundation, Natural Resources, the Justice Department, Manitoba Mediation Board, McKenzie Seeds, Manitoba Government Employees Association, Brandon District Labour Council, the UMM, Manitoba Pharmaceutical Association, the Assiniboine Community College, Brandon University, Brandon Economic Development Board, Westman Multicultural Council, Brandon Mental Health Centre, Brandon General Hospital, Downtown Brandon Business Improvement Area, Prairie Forum on Rural Education, Westman Recycling Council, as well as the City of Brandon.

So, as you can see, there is a wide range of communities and organizations who have accessed the office, and I am hopeful that we will continue to promote that office as, if you like, a seat of government or an office of government outside of this Legislature.

Ms. Wowchuk: I just do not quite understand spending that kind of money. I can see that the office is used, but I think that those needs could be met through a provincial building, through the provincial office because there are staff there that deal with all of those departments. But since the minister feels that this is such a good investment and it is being so well utilized, is he giving any consideration to setting up an office similar to this in other parts of the province? If he considers it such a good investment, is it something that is being considered in other parts of the province?

Mr. Derkach: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I guess when you are looking at the kind of financial constraints that we as a province have, you have to try and maximize the resources that you have. Given that attitude, we have determined that the two offices that we have presently are probably as much as we can do at the present time.

The member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) is indicating that the cost is high. Well, it is high. No matter what kind of an office you have, there is still going to be some cost to it. Duplicating that kind of an office is going to, of course, increase the cost.

We feel that with the two offices that we have presently, we can reach out to a large population of the province, maybe not ideal, but certainly better than we have been able to in the past. In the future, if the demand is there and if the resources are there, I am sure that we certainly could look at the possibility of doing that.

My interest, of course, is to ensure that we have a presence in rural Manitoba. When I speak about rural Manitoba, I speak about the province of Manitoba outside of this city. It may not be necessarily a cabinet office in a community, but I think we have made our presence felt as government by decentralization, by cabinet office locations. I think that together, down the road, we, as legislators, have to look at ways that we can serve people in the rural part of this province in a better way.

So, in that vein, I am interested in proposals and in suggestions, if they come from opposition or

whoever, in terms of trying to maximize our presence out there.

Mr. Gaudry: How long have you had this office in Brandon?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would have to research that and get back to the member, but I know it is at least two years that we have had the cabinet office in Brandon. But I will get the exact length of time that we have had that office there.

Mr. Gaudry: Do you feel, for those years that you have had the office in Brandon, that you served the purpose of serving rural Manitoba in the area surrounding Brandon?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I guess I would say that we can always do more. Certainly, it is up to ministers of the government to ensure that when they are travelling in rural Manitoba or when they have groups to meet with in rural Manitoba that they utilize those offices.

When the House is not sitting, I have to tell you that it makes it much more easy for us to access those offices and to use them and to meet groups there. One of the constraints, of course, is when the Legislature is sitting for a long period of time it does not allow for us to be as accessible to those offices as we would like to be.

Personally, I have been in both offices, in the Thompson office and in the Brandon office. In talking to the people from Thompson and from the western part of the province, I have had nothing but positive comments about the fact that we, as a province, have two other locations, besides just the city of Winnipeg, where there is a government presence.

Mr. Gaudry: What rent do you pay for the building that you are in now on 18th Street, if you have space available in another building like the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) was saying?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, as you know, that is paid through Government Services, and I will get that figure for you from Government Services.

In terms of the kind of space it is: what we have is one boardroom; we have two offices, and a reception area. It is not a big, elaborate office. It is one that is functional and one that is accessible to the public because there is a large amount of traffic on 18th Street. It is the street where the Keystone Centre is located. It is not that far from there. So people do find it quite handy to access. But I will get

the specific costs for you at our next sitting or I will provide them for you in writing.

* (1740)

Mr. Gaudry: No, I expressed concern like the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk). I expressed the fact that the rent is not included in the cost here for Rural Development Estimates, and the cost to me should be reflected into this Estimate. I think the fact that you have other buildings, that you have vacancies, I think it would be important that this should be looked at. I mean, I appreciate him saying that on 18th Street where it has been used to being there—I think now that we are in a recession or where we are having problems with financial difficulties in other departments, even in this department I am sure, it should be looked at.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it is certainly something that I will take under advisement. But let me just say that when you have a cabinet office, per se, you certainly want to locate it in an area where it is fairly accessible to the public, not that it cannot be in a provincial building. There are certainly—the Thompson one is in that building, but the office was located where it is before I became the minister. Nevertheless, it is a government office. It is a cabinet office. If you drive by that office you find that it catches your eye fairly quickly. It has the Manitoba logo on it, the emblem on it, and it gives that separate, if you like, appearance that it is a cabinet office where you can access cabinet ministers and the Executive Council of the government through that office. So I guess for those reasons some decisions were made with regard to locating it outside of the provincial building.

Indeed, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I will take the comments of the Liberal critic under advisement, and we will leave it at that.

I have the information, while I am speaking, about the cabinet office. It has been in Brandon now for three years.

Mr. Edward Connery (Portage la Prairie): Just for the edification of the two opposition members and especially the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), the NDP government used to have, in the government building in Thompson, a cabinet office in there also, but they also provided free space for the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) and free secretarial space for the member for Thompson which was not kosher by the rules. So just for your edification, to understand and [interjection] Pardon? Well, the member for Thompson had an office in the

cabinet group of offices and had his own space there, which is not kosher by the rules where MLAs should have office space outside of government buildings. But in the case of the NDP during their reign the member for Thompson had free office space and free secretarial space in the government offices.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item (c) Brandon Office: (1) Salaries \$100,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures, \$30,000—pass.

Item (d) Human Resource Management: (1) Salaries \$156,000.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, just one question on the Activity Identification. The statement says, new and ongoing initiatives such as development of a Policy and Procedure Manual, and an Affirmative Action Program, among other things. I want to ask the minister: What direction is the government going? This Policy and Procedure Manual—basically that is a staff manual I take it, but on the affirmative action, what is happening with affirmative action in the Department of Rural Development? Is there a plan in place?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, in the Activity Identification it spells out that the ongoing initiatives such as development of Policy and Procedure Manual, a Performance Review and Development Program—this is done in conjunction with the Civil Service Commission, and we are constantly, I guess, revising and reviewing the policies that we have with regard to employees, the workplace, affirmative action. We are an affirmative action employer, and we do not do it in isolation. We do it in conjunction with the Civil Service Commission to ensure that any policies and procedures that we have in place are going to conform with the overall policies of The Civil Service Act, and also that we are not different from what procedures and policies are in place in other departments.

Ms. Wowchuk: Just for clarification, there is not a specific affirmative action policy that applies to the Department of Rural Development. It is a general policy that applies, that is carried through, because I see it here as an affirmative action program, but you are saying that it is not a specific program related to Rural Development.

Mr. Derkach: No, it is not Rural Development affirmative action policy. It is one that is generic, if you like, for all of government.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 1.(d) Human Resource Management: (1) Salaries \$156,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$11,400—pass.

(e) Financial and Administrative Services: (1) Salaries \$305,800—pass.

(2) Other Expenditures \$184,500. Shall the item pass?

Ms. Wowchuk: The Deputy Chairperson is going so fast that we may end up missing one of these lines here at that rate.

Just on Other Expenditures we end up seeing a slight reduction of roughly \$5,000 which is not a great reduction, but there seems to be a shift of money from one area to the other. You see a shift from Communication, down by \$20,000. We see a shift in Operating Grants, up \$20,000. Can the minister give us some idea the amount of money is being spent? What is the shift? Is there a change in the structure of the department?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the shift that the member refers to is the cost related to putting on our annual UMM and MAUM conventions. As members know, the convention shifts from Brandon to Winnipeg alternately, and the costs of hosting a conference are substantially higher in Winnipeg than they are in Brandon. Therefore we have to set our budgets accordingly so that when we host that particular evening we can cover our costs. Because of that differential you see a shifting in money from year to year.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that will account for, as I understand it, the reduction of \$20,000 because of a different location, but is that money then allocated to other operations? Is that right? Do you just shift it back and forth from year to year? You are saying the municipal convention costs less. It has gone down, but it has gone up in another area, so I do not quite understand what the money is then spent for. If you have saved it on a municipal convention, what have you spent the money on?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, there is not one big item that is causing the shift. It is such things, as I indicated, as the differential cost of hosting the banquets for the UMM and MAUM conventions. There are some insurance costs that we as a department have to pick up. There has been some shifting, or as you can see, some changes in terms of the capital as you can see and

that is for computer software and computer hardware that has been purchased. So those are the kinds of shifts that you can see. They are not any one big item that is causing that.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 1.(e)(2) Other Expenditures, \$184,500—pass.

2. Municipal Board, Reviews and renders decisions on municipal borrowing, assessment, planning and other matters as required by statute. (a) Salaries \$346,200.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the department deals with municipal borrowing. I am asking for clarification here, is this where municipalities then get their approvals for spending? I am not quite sure what the municipal borrowing means.

* (1750)

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, this is the Municipal Board. Its responsibilities, if you like, are quasi judicial. They are mandated to sit to hear applications or appeals and referrals pursuant to the variety of statutes that we have in the province.

We have 22 members who are appointed by the province to this board. Once again, their responsibility is to try and deal with such appeals as may come in from time to time from individuals and groups regarding the statutes of the Legislature. More specifically, I guess, with The Municipal Act or The Municipal Assessment Act and the other acts that we may have under the jurisdiction of this department.

Ms. Wowchuk: I am referring to the main Estimates where it says, "Reviews and renders decisions on municipal borrowing . . ." Again, I am wondering which borrowing does this board have jurisdiction over?

Mr. Derkach: Once again, from time to time municipalities may require capital. Under the statutes it is this board that they would apply. That is why I indicated in my comments in the beginning that the board does sit to hear applications, appeals and so forth from individuals or municipalities as they relate under The Municipal Act, the assessment act or any of the other legislation that is the responsibility of this department.

Ms. Wowchuk: On this borrowing, is this the board that when a municipality wants to borrow a substantial amount of money they have to give approval before they can borrow for capital

investment, or who gives the approval? Is this where the decision is made?

Mr. Derkach: The Municipal Board would be dealing with borrowings, large borrowings if you like, by municipalities for capital purposes.

Ms. Wowchuk: If a municipality is borrowing money, does this mean borrowing money against their reserves or does it mean borrowing money from a bank? If they are borrowing against their reserves, is this also the board that gives them approval to borrow against their—?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, as I understand it, with regard to the reserves, that is not handled by the Municipal Board. Municipal Board would authorize, or if you like, hear application for capital borrowings which could be debenture, for that matter.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 2. (a) Salaries \$346,200—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$64,700—pass.

Resolution 115: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$410,900 for Rural Development, Municipal Board for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1993—pass.

Item 3. Surface Rights Board. Provides for the resolution of disputes in accordance with the Surface Rights Act. (a) Salaries \$71,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$28,000—pass.

Resolution 116: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$99,000 for Rural Development, Surface Rights Board for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1993—pass.

Item 4. Provincial Planning. Provides technical and administrative support to the Interdepartmental Planning Board and the Provincial Land Use Committee of Cabinet, as well as administering the subdivision approval process, (a) Salaries \$362,900. Shall the item pass?

Ms. Wowchuk: There are several questions under this area that I would like to ask the minister. The first one is dealing with the provincial land use policy. I understand there has been a draft policy put in place, and it has been sent out to municipalities for approval or for comment on it. I would like to ask the minister, what is he proposing for changes to provincial land use?

Mr. Derkach: Before I begin the response, I would like to introduce Mr. Ed Sawatzky who is the acting manager for the branch.

Let me say with regard to the question asked that we have sent the policies out to the various stakeholders, if you like, for response. It is not a fait accompli. We will certainly be waiting for a response to the policies that were sent out.

The reason that the changes were made was that they were put in place to reflect or to ensure that the policies are more positive towards development in our province, that they perhaps become less regulatory in character, and that they can be more easily understood by the people who use these policies, because one of the complaints we have had over the last number of years is that sometimes as governments we lay policies down which are difficult to understand, cumbersome to use, and require sometimes a lawyer to interpret.

So we want to ensure that people, when they have these policies before them, are going to be able to understand them, understand their intent, and we want to ensure that the whole concept of sustainable development will be incorporated into the entire document. It is for that reason that we have tried to come up with a draft that is going to allow people to do some thinking about whether or not this is what we as a province should be doing in terms of our land use policies, and it gives them an opportunity to respond to those policies. Later in the year we will be getting together in regions with the various stakeholders and formally addressing the whole issue of land use policies and where we should be moving.

Ms. Wowchuk: The minister indicated that this would be less regulatory and would encourage more development. Are there plans in place, with this land use policy, in this proposal that will protect agriculture land? Is it a move to get more development? We all want development in a rural area, but we also want to have that land based for agriculture. Is part of it to protect the agriculture land base?

Mr. Derkach: From reading the policy it indeed has a fairly significant emphasis on the importance of protecting and enhancing the agricultural land that we have in this province. It is still one of the greatest resources that this province has, and I think developing a land use policy without paying extraordinary attention to agricultural land would be foolhardy.

It is for that reason that we want to ensure that municipalities and other stakeholder groups and individuals can respond to the draft policies that have been circulated, and perhaps we have left something out or perhaps we have overlooked something that needs to be incorporated. It is for that reason that we want to hear the responses. Yes, we have put in place the importance of agricultural land in protecting it, but if there is something else that needs to be added to it we are open to those suggestions.

* (1800)

Ms. Wowchuk: Where did the direction come from to change this land use policy then? It is a rural land base that we are looking at, change of land use: Who was that was not happy with the present land use policy? Was it municipalities that were wanting to change? What initiated this new policy?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, as the member knows, the existing policy has been in place now for some time. I believe 1980 was the last revision to it.

Since that time, many things have changed, in terms of our agriculture, in terms of our renewable resources, in terms of our use of water and our attitude towards the protection of our land and water. There has been a tremendous amount of changing done to the landscape in terms of refacing it, if you like, in some instances, and development. It is for that reason that we want to ensure that we upgrade and reflect the changes that have been made and also the new social and economic and, if you like, environmental and sustainable development objectives that it seems everyone is subscribing to.

It is really an upgrade, an update, of existing policies. We set them out for people to comment on because we want to make sure that we have hit the mark, if you like, and that if there is comment with regard to certain areas, we are going to be listening to the people. It is a partnership approach rather than a single-focused sort of upper-hand approach by government.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. The time is now 6 p.m. I am interrupting the proceedings of the committee. The Committee of Supply will resume consideration at 8 p.m.

Mr. Connery: Could I ask a question before? Just a question on procedure for tonight.

I have been asked by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to present the Order of the Buffalo to a person over by

Polo Park at St. James. I would like to ask some questions of the minister on the economic side, but I do not know, it might be 8:30 p.m. before I get back—8:45 p.m. Will the committee still be in process and can we refer back to that area if we are passed it?

Some Honourable Members: Sure.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Is it agreed by the committee that we will revert back if the honourable member is not here? [Agreed]

The time is now 6 p.m. I am interrupting the proceedings of the committee. The Committee of Supply will resume consideration at 8 p.m. Thank you.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Madam Chairperson: Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

This section of the Committee of Supply is dealing with the Estimates for the Department of Education and Training. Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Energy and Mines): Madam Chairperson—

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. Does the honourable Minister of Energy and Mines have leave to speak from that chair, given the minister has been sitting in his chair?

Mr. Downey: I will use my own.

Madam Chairperson: Okay. I have recognized the honourable Minister of Energy and Mines.

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, Madam Chairperson, we just had a speaker from the Conservative Party speak, and we would like the opposition to have the same right to speak.

Mr. Downey: On the same point of order, Madam Chairperson, when the opposition get recognized, they will have the same opportunity. I believe I have been recognized.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): Madam Chairperson, the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) was clearly standing up to be recognized. The Deputy Premier was not in his chair. The government had just finished answering a question that was put forward from another member.

The opposition would like to continue asking questions, and it is a debatable motion in which the government in fact has put up a speaker and the opposition would like to put up a speaker.

Mr. Downey: Madam Chairperson, on a point of order, I have no objection to you recognizing the member opposite, but I would think that what we are seeing here today is a demonstration of a lot of nonsensical petty politics and not really wanting to get on with the issue of the event.

I would invite the opposition to be recognized so that they can deal with the issue in hand. I am prepared to speak, not have the question put, but I want to speak to this motion.

Madam Chairperson: On the honourable member for Thompson's (Mr. Ashton) point of order, I was determining initially whether there was leave to recognize the honourable Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Downey), given that the minister was seated in his chair and has been seated in that chair consistently throughout Estimates, but I am now of the understanding that the honourable Minister of Energy and Mines has relinquished his recognition of speaking to the honourable member for Thompson to speak to the motion.

* * *

Mr. Ashton: I want to indicate first of all to the member opposite that this is not a question of petty politics. We are talking about the community college system of this province that this government has starved, has cut back. We are talking about the fact that this government has demonstrated today, by its own incompetence, the fact that it views the government process obviously as a drop-in centre, a voluntary process; they drop by when they feel like it.

I think the member opposite, the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey), might wish to talk to some of his colleagues about that because we are facing serious problems in this province, and we do not need a part-time drop-in government to deal with them.

I want to say to the Deputy Premier that he has to understand what this government has been doing in terms of training, and he of all people should understand that because if he had any input, which he obviously has not, around the cabinet table, if he had any input at all within this government beyond the fine-sounding titles he has been given, I wonder if we would be seeing the kind of cuts we have seen

in terms of the North, in terms of what has happened with KCC. We have seen the complete and absolute dismantling of the training that was put in place in terms of the trades. It was completely wiped out last year by this government. They talk about market-driven training. I want to talk about what my constituents in northern Manitoba have been saying about this government and its strange, twisted set of priorities.

They have been asking, when there is still need for trades people in each and every community in the North, why they cut back on trades. They have been asking with the future needs in terms of whatever major developments will take place in the North, whether it be hydro or forestry, why this government is cutting back in terms of trades and training and instead has not put anything in place in terms of substitutes. Those are serious questions. That relates to the North.

* (1710)

Let us deal with Red River Community College, and let us deal with Assiniboine Community College. What has this government done in terms of training? It has cut back in terms of training. Now it is engaged in a shell game. You cut out \$10 million one year and you add back a couple of million in the following year. That is not going to fool anyone. There are fewer student placements available in our community college system. There are fewer because of the actions of this government. This is one area where this government cannot blame boards of governors. This is one area where this government cannot blame other agencies; it cannot blame school boards.

There is only one level of government that is responsible for our community college system. It is the provincial government. It is run directly through grants to that. As much as they are trying to change that now with the structure they have put in place in terms of governance, the bottom line is this is one area that has always been a priority, a concern of the provincial government, Madam Chairperson. I say to you that this government has been failing and failing seriously in terms of dealing with this.

I found it interesting, by the way, that the Minister of Education in debate prior to the vote that took place on the point of order, went back to 1984 to trot out comments made eight years ago in defence of what her government is doing. This is the same minister whom we had been critical of in terms of not having information, in terms of whether government

is doing now, in terms of delays that have taken place in getting those answers. This minister all of a sudden trots out 1984, eight years ago.

I must say, Madam Chairperson, we have seen this government stretch over a little bit far backwards the last number of days and weeks in trying to say that somehow all the problems of the province could be blamed on the previous government. Let us not forget one thing. They are the previous government. They were elected in 1990. They were elected in 1988. They have had four years.

We have seen their policies in four years in terms of education. We have seen their policies in terms of community colleges. Let them not blame previous governments for their conscious decision to cut out money from the community college system last year. That was their decision. Let them not blame previous governments for their deliberate policy of privatizing our college system, our training system. That is not the fault of a previous government. That is their responsibility, their responsibility alone.

So this government and this minister in particular should be very careful with the kind of statements that are put on the record. I say to the minister who one minute before had been professing the need to talk to staff to get detailed information about decisions made in 1992, but had Hansard in detail from 1984: Perhaps she should stop reading the Hansard of 1984 and start dealing with 1992, the province of Manitoba today.

To this government that seems totally in chaos, inept, incompetent, I cannot believe this, Madam Chairperson. I have never in the years I have been in the House seen a government lose a vote such as the one they have lost today, be in the position where they are attempting to stall any further votes, because I know that is what is taking place. I do not know what is going on with that government.

We have the worst economic circumstances in the last 60 years. You have to go back to the Great Depression to find similar circumstances. We have seen a government that has been fiddling while Rome burns to use—

An Honourable Member: Nero.

Mr. Ashton: Nero, indeed. Well, as the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos) pointed out, Nero fiddled; currently, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) plays squash.

I mean, what happened to this government? Madam Chairperson, they applauded greatly for the

minister's speech, but when it came to voting, where were they? Where were the members of the government, those brave supporters of this Minister of Education, or have we seen in this one afternoon the government itself, by its feet, vote to say no to the policies of this Minister of Education? Because if it is not important enough for government members to be in the House to support their Minister of Education, we will know in the opposition exactly when other members who are here applaud the Minister of Education, how much that means. I say this to the minister—we have heard much of how she is a new minister—I would say she should be very careful about her back after today, because I wonder what kind of support she really has in terms of her government when they are not even here to support her in Estimates—not even here.

The first time, and I look to the dean of the House, the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) who has been here a lot longer than I have, but it is the first time I have been here. I remember tie votes in committee, and I remember the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos) having to break a tie vote. I remember the drama of that occasion and the difficult decision he had to make. This was not even the same situation today. We have not seen enough government members to support this minister in terms of what she is doing on community colleges, what has been happening at all. I wonder what is going on? [interjection]

Indeed, in fact, the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) asks if I have read the resolution. The critic for Education and I worked on this matter, Madam Chairperson. We drafted it. I know—[interjection]

The Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) says they were only voting on supporting the Chair. I guess they do not have any confidence in the Chair either, which is for the second time.

But I digress, Madam Chairperson. I digress, because I know the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) is trying to draw me off track. He will have to explain later whom the government has lost faith in, because if they cannot bring in their members for important discussions dealing with the Department of Education, the second largest department in government, the second largest department, if that department cannot bring its members here, there is a serious problem. There is something rotten in the state of the Conservative caucus, rotten to the core, indeed.

The bottom line is this government is rapidly losing the confidence of this province. It is losing the confidence of this Legislature, when it cannot even support its Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey), and it is rapidly losing the confidence of the people of the province. That is why this motion is very clear—no ifs, no ands, no buts. We are condemning the government for its policies in terms of community colleges.

I know that is something that is supported by both opposition parties, because I know the Liberal Party has raised this issue in Question Period, indeed, as we have. There are fewer spots; there is fewer money; there are fewer students at a time of record unemployment amongst young people, upwards of 18 percent unemployment amongst young people. This government has cut back on the opportunities, and this shell game has to stop.

The bottom line is this government has to accept responsibility for matters within its competence. There may be some question in terms of whether it has any areas in terms of competence, but in terms of administrative competence, a term that is often referred to in this House.

The bottom line is it has to accept responsibility for the community college system. It has let this province down. It has let the young people down, in particular, who rely on community colleges in the North, in the south and in the city for opportunities for advancement. It is letting the province down, because we cannot be competitive if we cut back in terms of such things as I mentioned earlier, the trades training, some of the kinds of things.

Let the minister not put on the record, let the minister not say to this House, that they are simply adjusting according to the market. The bottom line is the amount of resources that this government has put in for community colleges has been cut \$10 million. It was cut the previous year.

It is not a question of cutting out one program and adding another one here. The minister obviously does not understand. The bottom line is there are fewer opportunities. There are fewer of the kinds of courses we need, because this government has cut back in terms of the resources available. That is why we have used this motion to put forward our clear condemnation of this government. This motion deals with it without doing what we can only do as an opposition. We cannot add to

expenditures, we can only reduce, if we move a motion in terms of other line items.

It sends a very clear signal to this government, Madam Chairperson, that their policies in education, particularly in the area of community college education, are a complete and absolute failure. I wonder if perhaps the fact that this minister has been abandoned this afternoon has something to do with the fact that maybe there are some open minds, some clear consciences over on the other—

Madam Chairperson: Order, please.

* (1720)

Point of Order

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Urban Affairs): Madam Chairperson, the member for Thompson has stood in his place and indicated on four or five occasions—I have not exactly kept count—somehow suggesting the government has abandoned the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey). There has been no vote on the competence or anything else related to the Minister of Education. There was a vote on a point of order challenged to the Chair, and that is all.

Madam Chairperson: The honourable minister does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Ashton: Madam Chairperson, let there be no doubt—and I am not referring to any specific vote. It is very clear to anybody watching today, the complete chaos on the behalf of that government and their complete lack of support for the Minister of Education. That is absolutely clear.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Ashton: I hear members in the Conservative benches howling. Indeed, they should howl at the incompetence of a government that does not support its Minister of Education, that does not support its Deputy Chairperson. This is a government whose days are ticking away.

Point of Order

Mr. Ernst: Again I would like you to call to order the member for Thompson. He is talking again about the support or the lack thereof of the Minister of Education.

Madam Chairperson: The honourable Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst) does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Ashton: Madam Chairperson, we know, in the opposition, the complete chaos in the government ranks, and this is very clear on this matter. In fact, we believe that we should now give the members of this House the opportunity to put very clearly then—if the Minister of Urban Affairs has any comments he wishes to make, he can stand now. But, even better than that, we are quite prepared to put this matter to a vote and to see how the members of the Legislature will vote. We will see where they stand on the Minister of Education.

Mr. Downey: Madam Chairperson, I rise to speak today on the resolution brought forward by the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen).

As has been indicated, through a point of order, as to whether there is confidence in the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) or whether there is not, has not been put to this Chamber. The question that was put was to whether or not we would support the Speaker's Ruling as to whether or not a read text or any form of a read text could be used in responding to questions.

Madam Chairperson, I call that a nonsubstantive matter. I call it playing petty politics, when the public of Manitoba are asking for governments and their elected people to come to this Assembly, ladies and gentlemen, to act responsibly when we are in difficult times. That is what the public of Manitoba are asking, and it will be they, the opposition members, who pay the price for their petty politics and not dealing with matters of substantive issues.

I say shame on them, shame on them. I say particularly shame for the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), and I am not going to do a personal attack on any individual, but I say shame on her as an elected member to try and play politics with an educational institution known as the community college when she sits in the comfortable pew at the University of Manitoba, and has never raised a question dealing with the activities that are taking place in that jurisdiction.

I think that she is very selective in her criticism.

Point of Order

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): The honourable member, in the guise of not making a personal attack, has personally attacked me on the grounds of not having asked questions about the University

of Manitoba. That is quite untrue. Perhaps he would like to continue with his personal attack.

Madam Chairperson: The honourable member for Wolseley does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Downey: Madam Chairperson, if the member took it as a personal attack, I apologize. It was not meant to be a personal attack.

What I said was: I would expect the same kind of scrutiny of the University of Manitoba by that individual.

Ms. Friesen: That is not what you said.

Mr. Downey: Okay, I apologize if she took out of context what I said previously.

What I am saying is, I would expect—will she bring the same kind of a resolution forward dealing with the University of Manitoba? Is this a selective approach by the opposition party to bring forward an attack on what I consider very credible, well-dedicated people who are running our community college system?

Madam Chairperson, I take an offence to the approach from the member for Wolseley on those well-meaning people that are out there running our community colleges and that are bringing forward, in consultation with the minister, policies to equip our young people to face the kinds of challenges that this society demands of them and will demand of them.

I believe that there are responsible activities being carried out, and there is full confidence in this minister and the staff of people who are working at our community colleges. I believe that they are really coming into the responsible areas that is being demanded of them through the college governance system that is being introduced. There is a crying need out there, Madam Chairperson, for change.

Point of Order

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): On a point of order, the discussion that we are having today, the resolution that we are debating, the motion that is before us today does not cast aspersions on the people who are delivering the programs in the community college system.

It points the finger of responsibility at the Minister of Education—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable government House leader on the same point of order.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): If you were listening carefully, Madam Chairperson, like I know you were, as I was, to the point of order, the member says we were not casting aspersion on those delivering educational services.

What she suggested in that statement was that really where she was casting aspersion was on the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey), and that is totally against the rules, Madam Chairperson. The very essence of the motion is casting aspersion, and I would ask you to call the member to attention. That is against the rules of the House.

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable member for Wellington does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Downey: Well, again, the members of the opposition cannot have it both ways. They cannot have it both ways, and that appears to be what they are doing.

The real issue here is the petty politics of the opposition and how they have dealt with today's activities in Estimates. They, first of all, have complained about the manner in which the minister has responded. I would have thought that if there was a concern to how the answers were coming forward or the content of the answers, it would have been something of substance. Really, what we get down to is one of operations of the committee, as to how the person responded.

Well, I remind the members opposite, and I am sure if my colleague from Lakeside (Mr. Enns) was here, as many members of this House, when you impose the wish of this Legislature, either party from opposition and/or from government, you had better be prepared to live with the long-term implications of that precedent that you have set or that request that you have put forward to this committee.

That has been I think somewhat relaxed by the government as we have proceeded with a lot of new members in this House, that if you were to go strictly to the rule book and to say that no one shall read their questions or no one shall read their speeches or no one should read whatever, we have been a little bit more lax as a House in that regard to help some of the new members. But today we saw the opposition members for their own little—because I

can tell you why, Madam Chairperson. I can tell you why.

They have not been able to lay a glove on this Minister of Education, who is demonstrating her competence, her full, complete answers on issues of anything that has been brought forward. They have not been able to touch it. In fact, after the minister finished her comments at five o'clock today, I would not be surprised if they will want to introduce a motion that she now has to read from a prepared text after the lecture that she has given them as to what she is doing in her department or doing in this government or doing on behalf of the community colleges of this province and the young people of this province. I would think tomorrow they will feel that something is wrong and they will want her to go back to that.

I was here at the beginning of this, what I would call, petty political debate, brought forward from whom? None other than the member for Dauphin, Madam Chairperson, who if one were to go through his record of asking and answering questions on his performance in this House, one could not find enough rules to make him respond in a responsible manner. I do not want to even get into that, but it is important that we point out the kind of game playing that we saw here today, not of substance, but of petty politics.

As I said earlier and I want to re-emphasize, the public are fed up with it. They are fed up to the teeth with the kind of performance we saw from the opposition party here today. If there is one thing—yes, the Liberal and the New Democratic Party—if there is one thing I hear from the constituents that I represent day after day after day is, why do you not get on with getting the improvements of this province and why do you not put the petty politics aside?

* (1730)

Well, the answer has to be pretty clear, is that when they cannot get at any matter of substance to the minister, they cannot get into any matter of substance with the Department of Education, they come forward and criticize the minister because she works from a prepared answer. Well, goodness sakes alive, what a terrible sin that we have seen committed in this Legislature when we have tremendous difficulties out there dealing with keeping this country together, and we have a minister away dealing with that, dealing with issues.

I was in northern Manitoba meeting with an Indian band, dealing with hydro this morning, and I was a little bit late getting back, Madam Chairperson, but I was dealing with matters of substance, something that the New Democratic Party has neglected for 15 years. We are finally dealing with it, Madam Chairperson, and they come in with this kind of pettiness, this kind of irresponsibility, and the public, quite frankly, as I said earlier, are fed up completely with it.

I tell you, these are the kinds of things that the members of the New Democratic Party will have to support and defend when they go to the by-election, when the Liberals go to the by-election, and say our No. 1 plank in our platform is that we will not allow the government members to read from a prepared text in the Legislature. That is our No. 1 plank; that is what we support.

Oh, that is really going to turn the cranks of the electorate. The Liberal Party, that will be their plank as well. That is the kind of foolishness that people are fed up with. That is exactly what we saw performed here in the Legislature today, and I can tell you the members of the opposition will have to explain it when they stand on their platform in their debates and say, our No. 1 issue is that we do not want the Minister of Education reading from a prepared text when she is answering a question in committee. My goodness sakes. My goodness sakes.

The point is that I believe, if I observed correctly, that the minister was not reading from a prepared text of any way, shape or form. I know what was taking place, probably some notes being taken. I have done it, I have seen members opposite do it when they were in ministry, but the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) would never be involved in that because he never got that far. Again, the point is, what I think the minister was doing was making a note from what staff had told her and then responded to the questions. The point is the minister quite often—and it has been a normal practice in opening statements to work from prepared text. During the Estimates process, notes are made, comments are made from those notes, and I can tell you I think we have an excellent Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey).

Anyone who is as prepared and thorough as she is to make sure that all issues and subject matter are covered, I want to compliment. I do not want to stand in the Legislature and vote against that kind

of performance. I believe what our education system needs is more of that kind of thoroughness and concern and consideration and direction and leadership from a responsible person like that. I do not think they should be condemned, and that is what the opposition condemned today is efficiency, thoroughness in the education system. I say, shame on them.

Now, let us deal a little bit more with the community colleges, because I really have not heard, and I would appreciate the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) really substantiating the need for the resolution that she brought forward. I cannot for the life of me see why she would condemn this government in that area when, in fact, we have increased the program funding for the community colleges.

An Honourable Member: No, you have not.

Mr. Downey: Yes, we have. What we have done, we have increased the programming by over \$300,000 and, yes, we have done something that the member for Wolseley adamantly opposes because she is part of that system, is the administrative side has been probably streamlined a little bit, running a little more efficiently.

You see, that is where the New Democrats and the Liberals fall apart from the Conservative Party. Conservative Party believe that the taxpayers should not be taxed more to get more services. What we believe is streamlining and redirecting the monies towards programming. That is what we have done. We have demonstrated and can demonstrate many times over the improved efficiencies in the system. I again understand why the member for Wolseley is upset with that, because when she joined the New Democratic Party—I do not know how long she has been a New Democrat, but she did not do her research very well as to some of the past practices of the New Democratic Party.

I do not know why she would sign up with a government that would fritter \$27 million away in Saudi Arabia. Just think what that would have done to the educational system of this province and the community colleges. Look at the young people that would have supported. I have never heard her make a comment on it. [interjection] The money that was frittered away in all those New Democratic experiments. Yet I have never heard her stand and support or even try to defend what they did. She says, that is a part of the past; I am prepared to go on with the new New Democratic Party. It is not

quite that simple. You cannot have it that way. You joined a party that brought rack and ruin to the fiscal affairs of Manitoba. That is exactly what happened. [interjection]

I belong to the federal Tory party, yes I do, certainly I do, and I do not mind admitting it. I do not mind admitting I belong to the federal Tory party. [interjection] Pardon me?

Mr. Ashton: You have become an endangered species. Some of your people have problems admitting to it, and some of them

Mr. Downey: I believe, Madam Chairperson, that they are trying to get me off the subject matter of which I am trying to debate here.

The bottom line is that today's performance truly demonstrates how really serious this opposition party really is, it really does. They have not been able to lay a glove on the Department of Education. They have not had one line in any newspaper as to the Estimates process.

In fact, I just want to speak about the Estimates process for a minute. I believe the objective of the opposition has now arrived to the day where we are going to burn up 240 hours, regardless of questions, just the objective now within this House is to use up 240 hours. It does not matter what questions we ask. Oh, it matters how the minister responds. We do not want the minister working from notes.

The issue is, when are we going to get on to something of substance from the members opposite? The objectives, Madam Chairperson, have to get back to matters of substance and not on the absolute use of 240 hours.

So I have a really difficult time with what I saw here today. I will challenge the member for Wolseley as I do the other members of the opposition party to pay more attention to the substance of the answers than how the answers are prepared and responded to. I hope that would be the issue that we would be dealing with. I would hope they would deal with the whole area of the questions which are developed and whether they get the answer or whether they do not. If they do not get the answer, they have every right to object, but if they get the answer, I think is an important point.

The absolute use of 240 hours for the exercise of Estimates is established by an agreement of some time ago. I think that, rather than just for the sake of using up time and, again, what I would say to some degree, not using the taxpayers' money

wisely in this process, that should be reconsidered by this House. I think that we could be well advised to look at reviewing that. It seems to me that we get into situations like today, and we are dealing with procedure rather than what we are dealing with as far as substance. If we cannot deal with substance, then we really do not have anything to deal with.

So let us get on and pass the Estimates. That is what we are sent here for. Again, I hate to go back to this point, but if you did a survey today as to what they expect of government and opposition, the first thing they want us to do is to deal responsibly with the issues that are out there, not as to whether or not a minister responds from notes that happen to be taken from her departmental response. I think that the minister still has every ability to do it one way or the other and has performed very well in all roles as the Minister of Education.

* (1740)

Madam Chairperson, where do we go from here in the Estimate process? Where do we go from here as members of the Legislature and members of this committee? Are the members of the opposition going to get the vote on this particular resolution that we are dealing with? Are they going to want to vote against the government, saying that we have done a bad job?

Where is the evidence that supports the resolution from the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen)? She, as a partisan member, stood in her place and brought forward this resolution. It is a resolution that was concocted by a partisan political party. Where is the evidence coming from—groups of students, from teachers, from the industry out there who are depending on these young people who are going to be educated to fulfill the needs of industry?

Where are those people whom she is representing in the resolution that she has brought forward? Does she have any? Does the New Democratic Party have a list of people who support the resolution that she brought forward, or is she doing it and the New Democratic Party doing it surely as a partisan political maneuver to try and embarrass the government? Is it not a fair question to ask of the member? Is it solely based on her political partisan approach or is it based on substance?

It is not based on any substance. Madam Chairperson, I think, and I say this again, I do not

believe it is based on any substance. I believe it is based on political partisan politics of which the public have asked us to quit playing in this House, to get on with the issues of substance and quit playing the political games that we are seeing here today.

The member has not laid any basis. The member in debate should lay a basis before she advances this kind of a concept, this kind of an idea. I, quite frankly, cannot see why this resolution is delaying, and has been brought forward to delay, the debate of this House. That is really what it is doing. It is delaying getting on with it. I would challenge her to get a list of teachers in the system at ACC, and give us evidence that the system is not working. I challenge her to get a group of business people who are depending on these people for the need to fulfill jobs for them, but that is not there. There is not anything of any substance there. It is a game, political partisanship, petty politics that is being played by the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen). Of all members from this House, she is the last one that I would have thought would have got caught up in this kind of games playing.

I thought probably as a member of an educational organization, as she is part of, that she would have more confidence in the people involved in the community colleges, but this is demonstrating, I believe, a lack in the leadership at our community colleges and the teachers that are performing that activity. That is really what I think this is, a true reflection on those people who are involved in program delivery and leadership of those facilities.

This is not what I would have expected from the member for Wolseley. What I do have confidence in, though, is the close communication link that the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) has, that the department has, who are responsible for the programs, that are—[interjection]

Madam Chairperson, I cannot help but put this on the record, what the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) from her seat said: Who is filibustering now?

Well, in that comment, she is actually saying that this is what it is all about, that they were filibustering the Estimates of the Department of Education. That is really an admission of what their purpose really is.

Point of Order

Ms. Barrett: What I stated, Madam Chairperson, to the Minister of Northern Affairs is that he is filibustering now like his government filibustered in the Health Estimates, refusing to deal with the issues.

Madam Chairperson: The honourable member for Wellington does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Downey: I am now more astonished than ever as to the admission of the New Democratic Party as to what their strategy was today. Again, the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) to fall into that trap of her own party, to get caught up in a filibuster, to waste time on the Department of Education Estimates, Madam Chairperson, for her to get caught up in this, I am astounded by it. I am disappointed in that kind of an approach.

I, Madam Chairperson, have not been known to be one to filibuster in this House. I want to make that absolutely clear, I want to make that absolutely clear that I hope that the contribution—

An Honourable Member: Perfectly clear.

Mr. Downey: Well, if the members would sooner I make it perfectly clear, then I will take a few minutes to do so.

Madam Chairperson, the point is that we have been sent to this Legislative Assembly as members to deal responsibly with issues of the day. We have serious issues. We had an international recession. We have a young group of people out in our society who are looking for, not only governments, but opposition members as well to come forward with constructive ideas. I have not heard a lot of them.

What I heard today was just a resolution condemning the government which did not have any substantive backing to it but, again, brought forward on a partisan political approach from the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen). What we saw was a gamesmanship by the House leader of the opposition in saying that the opposition parties, both of them, were going to vote against the member working from notes that were in communication from her staff to this House, something that has been here from the beginning of the Legislature, I am sure. [interjection]

I am not reflecting on a ruling of the House. I am just merely stating a matter of fact, and I am not reflecting on the decision.

I will complete my comments, Madam Chairperson, by saying that is what the public is fed up with. They are fed up with it to the teeth. They are fed up by saying, you, as elected people, come and deal with the matters of unemployment, deal with the matters of opportunity in this province, and get on with it; quit your bickering. That, today, was demonstrated as to how serious the opposition party is.

I invite them to go to the door when they are going to the by-election and saying, our big issue is, the Minister of Education worked from notes in the answering of questions. We did not mind the answers, mind you. The answers were okay, but we did not like the fact that she was giving us a complete answer. We wanted less than complete information. I cannot understand, Madam Chairperson. Maybe if they do not want to go to the doors, we will give that message for them. I wonder if that would be appropriate, if that is the issue of which they want us to deal with.

Well, I am not going to make it any more petty by continuing to talk. I think there is a message here for the members opposite. What you have enforced today, be prepared to live with if you ever get to government, but be prepared to have your members, when they are delivering something in this House, that someday somebody may rise and question as to whether they should be working from a prepared text.

I do not want it prepared, and my colleague was not working from a prepared text; the context of which you brought it forward is such. Be prepared to live with that if someday somebody wants to enforce that on your members. What you have asked for today, you may well have to live with tomorrow, and that is something that one always has to be regarded.

Madam Chairperson, I totally reject the resolution from the member for Wolseley, who I thought would have not been involved in this kind of petty political playing.

* (1750)

Mr. Manness: Madam Chairperson, it is a pleasure to stand and rise—I do not know whether 10 minutes will do justice to what I have heard over the last hour. I guess what is most apparent is the orchestration that is going on, when I look at the opposition House leaders, when one realizes that they feel like they have something going.

It is the first time in almost a year when these two members talk and they are happy and they are sitting with each other, because they have, they think, the government on the run. You know, it happens once a session, and it happened today. It is the first time this session. They are sitting together. They are smiling because they have the government on the run.

What do they have the government on the run on? They have the Minister of Education, they caught her reading a text. That is what they have the government on the run on.

There have been questions in this House day in and day out on economic matters from the revitalized member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) who finally has asked more questions in the last three weeks than he has in five years in this House.

Madam Chairperson: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Lamoureux: What we caught the government is once again demonstrating that they do not have confidence in the person that sits in the Chair.

Madam Chairperson: The honourable member for Inkster does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Manness: I rise on a point of order. No, I rise up on speaking, because the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) did not read from a prepared text.

An Honourable Member: You were not even here.

Mr. Manness: No, but I listened to my colleagues. You see, we are a united team and when my colleagues tell me that she did not read from a prepared text, she did not read from a prepared text, and it is just that simple.

It is not as simple as watching the House leaders opposite believing they have the government on the run, so much so that the opposition House leader (Mr. Ashton) calls us drop-in membership, or the drop-in government.

This government has been in place now for four years and 11 days, and through that period of time, through two years of minority and two years of majority, slightly, this government has never lost a substantive motion.

An Honourable Member: You just lost one.

Mr. Manness: I said a substantive motion. Yes, and there are going to be those days where the

Liberals and the NDP come together again and embrace each other; it will not happen that much but it will happen, of course, on a Monday or a Tuesday. It will happen, of course, on a day when the executive benches do not appear to be that full and then they will come together and they will embrace. They will start approximately 1:30 in the afternoon. They will come together and they will say, hey, this is our chance. Today is the day, let us embarrass the government. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) who has not laid one glove on the Premier in four years, he is going to sit in his place and he is going to smile and he is going to grin because he figures today he may be going to cash one in and today is going to be the big day.

You know, Madam Chairperson, today was the big day. We lost 24 to 25, and we lost because the members opposite accused our Minister of Education of reading from a prepared text. For that they want us to resign. For that they want us to go to the people. For that they want to be able to say that we cannot govern.

I am interested to know, and I will be watching how long this new embrace between the Liberals and the NDP will last. How long? Will it be gone by eight o'clock tonight? Maybe it will not. Maybe it will last till midnight, but like Cinderella will be home at midnight, I can tell you this embrace, this new affection, will be over. It will be over before the end of this week.

An Honourable Member: When are we going to be allowed to vote on it?

Mr. Manness: Madam Chairperson, well, the member says now, when are we going to allow a vote? I think that this is such a stimulating debate, we may want to keep this up. We will have to caucus this, will we not? I am sure the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), who has not had a chance to debate an issue now for at least three days, would love to get into this debate.

Madam Chairperson, more importantly than that, the motion of condemnation as to the government's giving or caring towards community colleges, I have sat on Treasury Board through the development of five budgets, and I can tell—[interjection] I hear a member say, I am the one. I do not know what he means by that, but I can tell you we spend a considerable time, not only on all educational matters, but certainly on the community colleges.

I want to tell you what we inherited. We inherited in the community colleges at least a dozen if not 20 courses where the number of enrollments was either between a half dozen or a dozen for a whole session, necessitating still a full collection of course instructors. We inherited course instruction in areas where there was not a demand, where the market said—and the members opposite said, we are in love with the free market. No. I am certainly not in love with the free market.

I can tell you there were courses being perpetuated in the community colleges that had been there for 30 years, and yet there were graduates who were leaving those courses today and out of 10 or 20 of them, maybe two or three could get jobs.

An Honourable Member: A 90 percent success rate.

Mr. Manness: Oh, the member says 90 percent. Of course, he takes the global success rate, but we are talking specifically now about a dozen courses, whereas the government before us did not have the courage because, of course, all they did was go to the banker and ask for more money to perpetuate these courses.

Finally, a government came along and a minister came along, the former minister and now our new minister said, times are changed. There is tremendous demand in aerospace, and we should begin to move our resources into some engineering courses, into some management courses, some advanced management courses. We asked the Minister of Education, and the Treasury Board said, well, what should we do? Should we just add on add on, add on, or should we do some evaluations? Should we do some removal of those courses that are no longer demanded by the market?

You know what we did? We took out some courses. You know, Madam Chairperson, what we did? Yes, we pulled out a couple million dollars, and it was a tough year in '91-92. This year, '92-93, we are reinstituting courses that the marketplace wants, and I say courses that society needs if we are going to maintain our standard of living. That is the decision behind the decisions made with respect to community colleges.

Yet the members opposite sit there in glee because they won one 24 to 25, but what did they win? Do they care about the community colleges? Do they care about restructuring? Do they care

about training for tomorrow for wealth creation? They do not care one bit.

Madam Chairperson, all they care about, as the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Downey) said, is playing petty politics, trying to catch, supposedly, the government unaware. They did not catch

anybody. This will be their only success, and what success will it be?

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. The hour being 6 p.m., I am interrupting the proceedings. This committee will reconvene at 8 p.m. this evening.

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Tuesday, May 19, 1992

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