



First Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(Hansard)

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Louise M. Dacquay
Speaker*



Vol. XLV No. 23 - 1:30 p.m., Thursday, June 22, 1995

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

<u>Name</u>	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Party</u>
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise, Hon.	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary	Concordia	N.D.P.
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	P.C.
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	P.C.
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	N.D.P.
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	P.C.
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	N.D.P.
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Lib.
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	P.C.
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane	Osborne	N.D.P.
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	P.C.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn	St. James	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	P.C.
NEWMAN, David	Riel	P.C.
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PITURA, Frank	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
RADCLIFFE, Mike	River Heights	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack, Hon.	Niakwa	P.C.
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Gladstone	P.C.
SALE, Tim	Crescentwood	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin	N.D.P.
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	P.C.
TOEWS, Vic, Hon.	Rosmere	P.C.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, June 22, 1995

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Funding Model for Quality Public Education

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Denise Crofford, Jane Anderson, Patricia Belfour and others requesting the Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. McIntosh) to reconsider the funding model to ensure that Thompson and other communities in this province are able to maintain quality public education.

**PRESENTING REPORTS BY
STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

Committee of Supply

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Chairperson of Committees): Madam Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted certain resolutions, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

**Standing Committee on Law Amendments
First Report**

Mr. David Newman (Vice-Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the First Report of the Committee on Law Amendments.

Your Standing Committee on Law Amendments presents the following as its First Report.

Your committee met on Tuesday, June 20, 1995, at 7 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building to consider Bills referred.

Your committee heard representation on Bills as follows:

Bill 3—The Maintenance Enforcement (Various Acts Amendment) Act; Loi sur l'exécution des ordonnances alimentaires - modification de diverses lois.

*Denise Veilleux and Deryse Côté - Réseau
Jules Gareau - Private Citizen
Don Lee - Private Citizen
Rosella Dyck - Private Citizen
Louise Malenfant - Parents Helping Parents
Marilyn McGonigal - Private Citizen
Irene LaBrosse - Coalition of Custodial Parents
Louise Dyck - Private Citizen
Karen Johnston - The Manitoba Association of Women and the Law
Mike Brentnall - Men's Equalization Inc.
Sharon Spinks - Private Citizen
Kim McCorrison - Private Citizen
Rhonda McCorrison - Private Citizen
Michelle Bonnefoy - Private Citizen
Sue Spiece - Private Citizen
Judith Cornell - Private Citizen
Norma McCormick - Private Citizen
Victoria Lehman - Private Citizen*

Bill 7—The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la ville de Winnipeg

*Councillor Jae Eadie - Ad Hoc Committee on Election Review
Councillor George Fraser - City of Winnipeg*

Your committee has considered:

Bill 3—The Maintenance Enforcement (Various Acts Amendment) Act; Loi sur l'exécution des ordonnances alimentaires - modification de diverses lois

and has agreed to report the same without amendment.

Your committee has also considered:

Bill 7—The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la ville de Winnipeg

and has agreed to report the same with the following amendments:

MOTION:

THAT the following be added after Section 3 of the Bill:

3.1(1) Subsection 97(1) is amended by striking out "Until a person registers as a candidate under subsection (2)," and substituting "Unless a person is registered as a candidate under subsection (2),".

3.1(2) Subsection 97(2) is repealed and the following is substituted:

Registration of prospective candidate

97(2) The returning officer shall register a person who proposes to be a candidate in an election if

(a) during the campaign period and before nominations close, the person makes application for registration in the form required by the returning officer and containing

(i) the name and address of the candidate, the candidate's official agent, the candidate's auditor and any chartered bank or other financial institution in which accounts are to be used by or on behalf of the candidate for the purpose of the election campaign, and the numbers of such accounts; and

(ii) any other information required by the returning officer; and

(b) the returning officer is satisfied that the person is eligible to be nominated in the election.

MOTION:

THAT subsection 7(2) of the Bill be struck out and the following substituted:

7(2) Subsection 100(3) is amended by striking out "an election until he or she files an audited statement" and substituting "until after the next election described in section 89 (Election of Council)".

MOTION:

THAT Legislative Counsel be authorized to change all section numbers and internal references necessary to carry out the amendments adopted by this committee.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

Mr. Newman: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Gladstone (Mr. Rocan), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

* (1335)

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review, 1995-96 Revenue Estimates.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to provide the Sixth Annual Report for the Victims' Assistance Committee and also the Annual Report '93-94 of the Manitoba Criminal Injuries Compensation Board.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery, where we have sixty Grade 5 students from R.H.G. Bonnycastle School under the direction of Mrs. Melanie Vermeyley. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey).

Also, we have forty Grades 5 and 6 students from Rosenfeld School under the direction of Mr. Ed

Klassen. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Penner).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

VLT Revenues Information Release

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Acting Premier.

Madam Speaker, for a number of years now we have been asking the government to release information pertaining to Lotteries in terms of revenue and expenditures by the provincial government.

Madam Speaker, last year we introduced The Lotteries Accountability Act, and we were informed by articles that the Ombudsman had stated material was available to be released publicly but the government had chosen not to release the information to the public.

The government refused to release this information until after the election campaign and today has released some information to the public, but the information in rural Manitoba is after the public hearings that have been scheduled by the government, by the Desjardins committee that they created, and the information for the city of Winnipeg is incomplete insofar as it is a year out of date, and, of course, it coincides very nicely with the timing and introduction of VLTs in Winnipeg for lack of information.

I would like to ask the Deputy Premier, in light of the lack of information, the secrecy of this government, will they release all the information in the city of Winnipeg before the public hearing date of Monday, Madam Speaker, as they should have done before the election, during the election and before the public hearing dates across rural and northern Manitoba?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Act): The information released today does cover the year-end March 31, 1994. That is the

last audited financial statement of the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation. Their year-end is the end of March. They are now working on this year-end.

The member refers to some delays. It did take some time, there was time required to provide the details on not only where the revenue comes from, Madam Speaker, but if he looks at the table that was released today, it also shows very clearly where the revenue flows to as well, what the allocations are back to communities in terms of direct program support, in terms of province-wide program support and in terms of support towards eliminating the deficit here in Manitoba.

We will be providing the same kind of information for March 31, 1995. As I said, the corporation itself has not concluded its audited financial statement. As soon as all information is available for that year-end it will be released, but we are pleased to release this information here today.

* (1340)

Distribution

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Of course, with the way the government has calculated the material on a pro rata basis, it makes a real mockery of their argument for the last year that they had this great computer programming challenge and that is the reason for this secrecy. They could not provide this information to Manitobans because they had to reprogram the computers when they did a simple arithmetic calculation which they held till after the election—shame on the government, Madam Speaker.

I would like to ask the Deputy Premier, in light of the fact that he stated in his press release of July 31, 1991, that all money would be returned to rural Manitoba for economic development—and of course, those signs were over lottery machines throughout Manitoba in rural hotels where some of them are still up—how can the government justify prorating Connie Curran's \$4.8-million U.S. grant and calculating that contribution to Connie Curran's business? How could they justify calculating that as rural economic development consistent with the Deputy Premier's comments?

Hon. James Downey (Deputy Premier): Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition never ceases to amaze me in what he tries to get away with in this Assembly. For a member of a government that would not proclaim The Freedom of Information Act, and it took the election of the Filmon government, the Progressive Conservative government to proclaim The Freedom of Information Act which allows the public the information which falls within the act that they passed but would not proclaim, I find it strange that he is now extremely critical of any government that has moved in as responsible a way as we have.

Madam Speaker, we are, I believe, the only jurisdiction that returns the monies that we return, some 35 percent, I believe it is, to our rural communities. As well, it is clearly understood that the money that goes to deficit reduction allows us to put money into health care facilities, into education facilities and those things that the government are clearly responsible for. We, I think, have been very open and honest with the people of Manitoba, and I think it was demonstrated on the 25th of April of this year.

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, the Deputy Premier, whose press release I could read back to him if he chose to hear it, but I will send him a copy of it, indicated that all proceeds from VLTs would go for rural economic development, a sign of which was in every hotel at one point across rural Manitoba.

Can the Deputy Premier indicate today why his government would prorate grants like Connie Curran's contract to all of rural Manitoba under the breakdown they have provided today? Does the Deputy Premier really believe that rural communities should have paid, in terms of their calculations and their grants, for the \$4.8 million U.S. that this government signed with Connie Curran and consultants?

Mr. Downey: Madam Speaker, I am not going to get into a debate in Question Period. I will clearly state that this government, I believe, lived up to and made sure that the commitments that were made to the people of rural Manitoba have clearly been made as it relates to funding from our Lotteries program, as it relates to living up to a commitment of making sure we live within our means and use the amounts of money that

we have taken from Lotteries to help balance the books of this province so that we can have a climate where investment takes place and jobs are created.

That is what the people of Manitoba asked us to do. That is what we did. They demonstrated their support on the 25th of April of this year.

* (1345)

VLТ Revenues Information Release

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, it is becoming increasingly clear that, while the Conservative Party may have won the election on April 25, they have lost pretty well any integrity they ever had on issues such as this.

I would like to ask the Minister responsible for Lotteries, when he releases this so-called information, 14-month outdated information, conveniently after all three hearings in rural and northern Manitoba and conveniently two months after the election, why the information does not identify the community in which more than \$24 million in VLT revenues has come from?

In fact, why does this information only identify where half the VLT revenues come from in rural Manitoba?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Act): Madam Speaker, I would just encourage the member for Thompson to read the document that he has in his hand and he will clearly see that releasing site-by-site revenue figures would contravene The Freedom of Information Act by jeopardizing the financial confidentiality interest of individual siteholders.

That has been agreed to by the Ombudsman, that has been the approach used by the Statistics Canada model and it is for that very reason that we do not provide communities that have three sites or less the detailed breakdown. That is in the other categories. Communities that have four sites or more are broken

down. All of the revenue sources are outlined. All of the expenditures that go back to those communities are also summarized in the document.

Distribution

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, will the minister perhaps explain further some of the other questionable techniques in this document in terms of revenue identification, including some of the rather bizarre numbers that were used for population in terms of the access of the deficit which, particularly in the case of the town of Selkirk, puts it as being bigger than the city of Portage?

Also, will the minister indicate how he can justify saying that such things as the Connie Curran contract are benefits to rural Manitobans, figures such as the Connie Curran contract and the Winnipeg Jets and a whole series of other things which northern and rural Manitobans are supposed to accept as a benefit for what they pay in VLTs?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Act): Madam Speaker, the distribution of the lottery funds—and we show a program distribution in Manitoba of \$86 million of lottery funds throughout Manitoba—those are in terms of direct supports. It will be Community Places, the Rural Economic Development Initiative.

Those kinds of direct support programs are charged very directly to those communities, but at-large programs, whether it is support for health research in Manitoba, whether it is support for amateur sport or other areas of large program support in our province, we have allocated those on a per-capita basis. I believe that all Manitobans benefit from all of those broad programs that are provided here in our province.

Clearly, the allocation to deficit is something that Manitobans have told us—Canadians are telling governments right across this country, stop deficits, stop running deficits, balance your budgets. That is partly where this money has gone, and that is clearly shown, the support that has come from each and every community in our province, Madam Speaker.

Gaming Commission Additional Hearings

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): My final question to the Minister of Finance who is also Minister responsible for Lotteries: Will he now do the right thing and in terms of the current hearings that are taking place with the working group that is accessing Lotteries, contact the head of the commission and ask that there be hearings rescheduled in rural and northern Manitoba, now that this only partial information is finally available?

Will he make sure that rural and northern Manitobans finally get a say on VLTs and lotteries?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Act): Madam Speaker, I like to think that we always do the right thing on behalf of Manitobans.

In terms of this issue, there is absolutely nothing stopping each and every Manitoban from writing the commission and putting forward their concerns on this issue. Any Manitoban who wants to communicate with the commission can do that. The commission is having public hearings. There is one in Winnipeg this Monday night. The commission itself has indicated that if it feels there is a need for more public hearings, it will do that.

There are all kinds of vehicles to communicate, and anybody who has a concern about this information or any other lottery issue should be communicating either through the public hearings, through contacting the commission, through writing to the commission or whatever. There are all kinds of avenues available to Manitobans to do just that, Madam Speaker.

Personal Care Homes Report Release

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

As a result of a major documentary done approximately a year ago, the Minister of Health set up

yet another commission to study conditions in personal care homes. During the course of the Estimates debate, the minister indicated he had on his desk a final copy of this report.

Can the minister outline and indicate to this House when this report and its recommendations will be made public, so the citizens of Manitoba who have to participate in personal care homes can have some idea about what changes the government is going to introduce?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, because of changes in care levels being experienced in personal care homes and because of concerns arising respecting extended care homes in Manitoba, the Seniors Directorate headed up a review of these residences. That had participation in it from the Health department as well as the Family Services department, and it will be very, very soon that that report will be made public.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, will the minister also indicate whether or not that report will deal with the fact that since 1992-93 government grants to personal care homes have decreased? In fact, funding levels to personal care homes in Manitoba today are \$3 million less than they were in 1992-93?

Can the minister explain whether or not it will deal with those decreasing funding levels as well?

Mr. McCrae: Without accepting anything the honourable member has said in his preamble, Madam Speaker, the report will deal with what it deals with, and it will not be very long before it will be released.

* (1350)

Mr. Chomiak: Can the minister also explain why it is that Manitobans are now paying \$13.8 million more per year out of their own pockets for personal care homes while government grants to personal care homes have dramatically declined?

Can the minister explain, and will that be outlined in the report, as to why Manitobans are paying more while they are getting less from the government?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, over the years the per diem rates for personal care homes have been adjusted by successive governments.

The one thing that I have found is that the Manitoba Health Board has been very responsive to people and their families filing appeals with respect to assessed per diem rates. A number of adjustments have been made, many of them in favour of the resident. That system seems to be working based on an ability to pay for one's care. That system based on a sliding scale seems to be working.

Maintenance Enforcement Act Amendments

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, until the wee hours yesterday several members of this House heard public presentation after public presentation detailing how the government is failing single mothers and their children who rely on the Minister of Justice's department for support payments from noncustodial parents.

My question to the minister is, would she tell Manitobans, especially our single parents and their children, whether it will now immediately reverse its policy to reject the advice of many, including the Coalition of Custodial Parents, that the cancellation of support arrears be stopped and that interest be applied to arrears of support payments?

That is a simple notion, a common right, regarding other debts and court orders.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I am very pleased that we were able to sit and work into the very early hours of the morning to actually pass into third reading what I believe is good news for the women and children of Manitoba. That is the maintenance enforcement bill that this government put together.

That bill, Madam Speaker, was put together based on consultation with representative groups within Manitoba, including representatives from the custodial parents' groups. It was borne of consultation, and it is the toughest legislation in all of Canada.

It is the toughest legislation because it puts together penalties that are not together in any other legislation, penalties such as the revocation of a driver's licence, penalties such as increased jail terms, also penalties in the area of resources. We are able to attach pension benefit credits, Madam Speaker. So this is good news.

The member asks about a very specific amendment, and that is being able to look at interest on arrears. As I said to him this morning in Estimates, as I said on the evening that we were looking at the bill, we have a situation where an individual is failing to pay maintenance, is failing to pay arrears on maintenance and then fails to pay interest.

We decided that we wanted to put together a good law and so what we did was we put in together enhanced penalties not available for other civil debts in this province.

Mr. Mackintosh: That is quite a speech, Madam Speaker. Would the minister explain then why it is this government's policy to reject making the needs of children the first and foremost consideration for the courts when awarding support payments, which was the chief recommendation of the report of the Manitoba Association of Women and the Law?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Speaker, some of these issues were raised for consideration. They are, in fact, very significant and complex possible amendments to the legislation.

What I did on the evening that we heard presentations from the public and what I have said all along is this. We can wait forever to pass this bill if that is what the member wants to do. We can wait forever while additional information is brought forward and is investigated to look at the total effect of that investigation, or, Madam Speaker, what we can do is move ahead with the toughest legislation available in Canada now and leave the door open for future consideration.

That, Madam Speaker, is exactly what this government has done.

* (1355)

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, would the minister explain, after waiting seven years for some action and then only getting a half-hearted effort, why it is this government's policy to further disempower single parents by taking away their right to appeal decisions of court officials on how much and when support payments are to be made by defaulting spouses?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Speaker, this question shows the member's complete lack of understanding that it is, in fact, the maintenance enforcement officer who has carriage of this case now when individuals choose to enroll.

Where individuals choose not to be enrolled in the Maintenance Enforcement Program, they have complete carriage of their own case, but when they decide to enroll in the program, it is to remove from them a sense of vulnerability from perhaps the payer who could exercise a pressure on the payee to take certain actions.

That action—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Justice, to quickly complete her response.

Mrs. Vodrey: That action might, in fact, cause the payee or the recipient to ask for reductions. This now gives the power to the maintenance enforcement officer who right in the legislation will receive information from the recipient.

But, Madam Speaker, I just have to make some comments on the record, because this government did bring forward—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Mackintosh: Madam Speaker, you have been very diligent in ensuring that the rules are followed by members on this side when asking a question. I ask that you also look to the minister when she is answering the questions and enforce Beauchesne's. This is no time for making speeches or engaging in political posturing and raising arguments.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order, indeed the honourable member for St. Johns does have a point of order. I was on my feet reminding the minister that, indeed, I felt the response to the question had been put.

Gaming Commission Additional Hearings

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance.

Finally, we see the veil of secrecy is starting to be lifted. The community-by-community breakdown is absolutely vital information, and I am sure that the Minister of Finance would agree that this is very important information that has finally been released to the public. So is the unedited version of the Volberg report, also the Clients of the AFM Gambling Program and Callers to the Provincial Problem Gambling Help Line: A Statistical Profile.

These are absolutely vital pieces of information that this government has to present to Manitobans—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would remind the honourable member for Inkster, this is not a time for debate. Would the honourable member please pose his question now?

Mr. Lamoureux: Can the Minister of Finance indicate to us that the gambling committee will have the resources necessary if they so desire to have additional public hearings in rural Manitoba given that this information is just starting to be released?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Act): Madam Speaker, we have not put any restrictions on the commission in terms of financial support at this time, or in terms of any direction on the public hearing issue. As the member knows, we have commented in this House that those kinds of decisions are being left to the commission.

We have a lot of confidence in the people on that commission, the 14 individuals who make up a broad cross-section of organizations and communities from

within Manitoba, and clearly they will make the decision whether or not they feel they need to have any more public hearings, and that will not be because of any budgetary restraints imposed by this government.

Access to Information

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, to the Minister of Finance: Does the minister think information like you have released earlier today would have had influence on presentations, in particular from rural Manitobans, given the fact that the rural presentations are currently over? Does he not believe that that would have had an impact on the presentations?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Act): Madam Speaker, I am not sure that question is in order, but if his point is access to information, I have reminded some members in this House before, there is an awful lot of information about lottery dollars, gaming dollars, how they are utilized here in Manitoba, and I would encourage the honourable member to look at documents like the Public Accounts that shows where lottery dollars are utilized. It shows the listing of all of the recipient organizations. I would encourage him to look at the information published by the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation that shows where the lottery dollars are utilized.

So, Madam Speaker, there is an awful lot of information. There is the annual report of the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation. The Auditor herself commented on the quality of the information provided by the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation as being reliable and of high quality and so on. This is just one other element of information that is now available to Manitobans in terms of this entire issue of gaming, and I am sure some individuals and some organizations will find it of some assistance as they move forward with this issue.

* (1400)

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the Minister of Finance is correct. This is one element of very important information that is out there.

My question to the Minister of Finance: Is he prepared today to ensure that additional information that this government does have access to, such as the report from the Addictions Foundation in which the Premier (Mr. Filmon) himself cited when he made reference to the number of suicides as a cost because of the gambling—is the Minister of Finance—

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

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, in response to the identical question, the Premier the other day said we are not imposing any limitations on the access to information by the Desjardins commission, and the feedback that we have had very directly from the commission is that they are extremely pleased with the co-operation they are receiving from the Manitoba Lotteries commission, from the Addictions Foundation, from any organization that they require information from.

So far, that has been the mood of everybody, to provide as much information as possible to this commission so they can come up with the best recommendations they possibly can.

We will follow that approach, the Lotteries Corporation will, the Addictions Foundation will. I would encourage the honourable member to do the same thing. Thank you.

Child Prostitution Procurement Penalties

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, the document entitled *The Filmon Vision, Manitoba Strong* promises that, and here I quote: Anyone convicted of soliciting sex from a prostitute where the person solicited is under the age of 16 will be deemed to be a child abuser and will be required to undergo similar treatment required of other child abusers.

Yet, despite this government's tough talk on child prostitution, on June 20 a Winnipeg man was fined only \$400 after he was caught having sex with a 14-year-old prostitute and as well a charge of procuring a juvenile for sex was stayed by the Crown.

My question to the Minister of Justice is, does the minister consider a stay of charges and a \$400 fine to be adequate treatment for child abuse?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, this government will continue to take a very strong position against prostitution.

I will not comment on the specific case, but, as you know, the penalties or the sentencing, the consequences are provided for by the court. However, I have made it clear in this Chamber and in many other places actually across the country that we consider prostitution, the procurement of a prostitute, particularly with an underage young person, to be such a serious offence that I have asked the federal Minister of Justice to make changes in the Criminal Code for life imprisonment.

Ms. McGifford: How can the minister justify the Crown's staying these serious charges of soliciting sex from juveniles given the rhetoric and promises in her government's election literature?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Speaker, again, I will not comment on the specific case other than to say that all cases are judged on their facts and also, as I have said, sentencing is the responsibility of the judiciary.

However, I can say that this government has made a very serious promise to the people of Manitoba, and we are now in the process of working as a government and co-operating departments to look at how we can now exactly bring that forward and give it effect within the province of Manitoba. I will remind the member of this government's position on procurement of a young person for the purposes of prostitution. We have asked for a life sentence.

Ms. McGifford: Will the minister immediately instruct her department to appeal this sentence? Will she issue a directive to Crown attorneys to ensure that soliciting sex from juveniles is indeed treated seriously in Manitoba courts?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Speaker, I will make it clear again to the member that as Attorney General I will not

be speaking on any—[interjection] The member seems to be asking a very disrespectful question in the House, and she does not have the courtesy to put it on the microphone.

I have made it clear—

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, Madam Speaker, I am just wondering whether it is in order for the Minister of Justice to talk about members who are asking questions are disrespectful to the House.

The member asked a question about a very serious case. If the minister does not wish to answer, she does not have to, but she should not be in any way making any accusation towards the propriety of the question asked by our member. She is doing her job as an opposition member. It is time the government minister did the same thing.

Mrs. Vodrey: On the same point of order, it was not the question the member asked into the microphone. It was the question the member asked when she sat down, not into the microphone, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order by the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), in my opinion, there is no point of order. I did not hear what the reference was made to. There is nothing on the record.

The honourable Minister of Justice likewise does not have a point of order.

Point of Order

Ms. McGifford: On a new point of order, I wish to make the point that I did not say anything when I sat down, not a word.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Osborne does not have a point of order. I have ruled that neither of the previous members had a point of order.

Winnipeg Police Services Additional Officers

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Madam Speaker, the minister has now received a response from the chief of police from the City of Winnipeg, Dale Henry, regarding the province's offer for \$2 million for 40 additional police officers to be in our communities.

My question to the Minister of Justice: Can she guarantee that the province's annual block grant to the city will not be affected, that the program will be continued and that there will be initial start-up expenses included?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I will be happy to try and answer the three questions that were put by the member for St. James.

In Estimates yesterday, I made it very clear that this government is committed to \$2 million, 40 additional police officers for the City of Winnipeg, and we have, in fact, had meetings with the city and Chief Henry to deal with that. There is also an agreement that these 40 officers will be above the complement of officers which are currently there.

However, she asks about the budget line in a grant to the City of Winnipeg. That question is more properly asked to my colleague the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer).

Crime Rate Reduction Strategy

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Does the Minister of Justice believe that the city plan to place an additional two patrol cars and an eight-person crime unit will be enough to curb the increasing crime in Winnipeg?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, the chief of police who was mentioned in the member's previous question is the person responsible for the deployment of officers and also the deployment of resources. What we are doing as a provincial government is making

every effort to continue to assist the Winnipeg Police Services.

That is why we came forward, not with the kind of a grant that the NDP were interested in bringing forward—and that was a conditional contingent grant on the city providing money also—this government came forward with money which we have provided and it was not conditional on the city providing a matching grant.

Ms. Mihychuk: Can this minister guarantee efforts will be increased to halt the escalating youth crime—and we have seen that the degree of youth crime is both increasing in intensity and in number—and like the community police programs in school—

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

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Speaker, we certainly are very interested and concerned about any rise in youth crime in the province and have taken very specific steps to deal with it.

I am very happy to say to the member that there is a very significant decrease in the area of crime in general and youth crime since that party was in government. When that party was in government there was the highest level of crime, of property crime and youth crime, 1987, Madam Speaker, and in fact there has been a decrease since this government with its policies have been in power.

* (1410)

**Canada-U.S. Grain Commission
Canadian Wheat Board**

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, the preliminary report of the Canadian-U.S. joint commission was released today. We on this side of the House are very concerned with the recommendation that states the Canadian Wheat Board should be placed at risk of profit and loss in the marketplace and conduct itself in an equivalent manner. This is a clear indication of the beginning of the dismantling of the Canadian Wheat Board.

I want to ask the Minister of Agriculture what action he is going to take to ensure that the commission and the federal government realize that this is not what the western Canadian farmers want and that this move is going to be devastating for western Canadian farmers.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I reconfirm the statements that have been made in the past with respect to the Canadian Wheat Board, both by myself and the Premier (Mr. Filmon). The specific reference in the report alluded to by the honourable member for Swan River simply means what we have all known for a long time in Canada.

The American chief complaint about the operations of the Canadian Wheat Board has to do with transparency. They maintain that their prices are Minneapolis-based. You look up at the board and you know what wheat is selling for, you know what corn is selling for, you know what durum is selling for. They maintain, wrongly, I might add, that under our system which is a monopoly and secretive, they maintain and what the Americans fear, quite frankly, is significant and ongoing governmental support that supports those prices from time to time.

So when they refer that the operations of the Wheat Board should be more at a risk of profit and loss, it means that there ought to be transparency that can be readily seen for what grain is trading for and how they are achieving their markets, Madam Speaker.

Recommendations

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, I want to ask the minister if he agrees with the recommendation that says we should allow voluntary producer participation in the Wheat Board and allow Canadian firms to trade on nonwheat and barley under domestic and global contact. This is moving towards a—

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

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, there has been a relative degree of dual marketing, if you like, in existence for a number of

years, but, again, allow me to remind the official critic of the New Democratic Party on this particular subject, these are recommendations that are being made by this blue-ribbon commission consisting of five eminent Canadians, knowledgeable in grain, five Americans. It is now up to governments to respond to them, both in Washington and in Ottawa.

Mr. Goodale was quoted yesterday as saying very clearly that he is continuing support for the Canadian Wheat Board.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Speaker, I want to ask the minister if he accepts the recommendation that programs such as the Gross Revenue Insurance Program and the Canadian Wheat Board initial payment guarantees should also be eliminated. Does he accept this? What steps is he going to take to get the message to the federal government that this is not what western Canadian farmers have asked for?

Mr. Enns: Madam Speaker, I want to assure the honourable member that, having had the privilege of being briefed by one of our Canadian commissioners Dr. Clay Gilson late yesterday afternoon on the release that was made today, I am very comfortable that the Canadian Wheat Board, as such, is simply not on the table for any negotiating position. Furthermore, some of the issues that she refers to, we regard and will continue to regard as purely domestic matters, and it is for us to make our decisions on these matters.

However there are linkages. If the Americans move on their E program, the Export Enhancement Program, we are prepared to move on certain programs. We all would benefit and the taxpayers in all our countries, not just in this country, in Canada and in Europe, would benefit if we downsized the rate of subsidization.

Forest Fires Leaf Rapids Evacuation

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Acting Minister responsible for EMO and the Manitoba Disaster Board.

The residents of Leaf Rapids were forced to evacuate this week. Some residents were evacuated to Lynn

Lake and over 500 were evacuated to Thompson. Now that the fire appears to be contained and the Leaf Rapids residents will likely be returning home in a day or two, will the government consider allowing some of the Leaf Rapids evacuees now in Thompson to remain in Thompson rather than asking them to travel to The Pas, which is an extra eight hours driving?

Hon. James Downey (Deputy Premier): Madam Speaker, I want to, first of all, clearly indicate that the minister, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Praznik) are making sure today that the people who have had to be evacuated—are involved in a one-on-one basis to make sure the people and the residents who have been affected are being looked after adequately and that any concerns they may have can be dealt with directly.

I thank the member for the opportunity to put that on the record. I will take the specifics of the question as notice for my colleague, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Jennissen: Madam Speaker, my supplementary question to the same minister is, are the agreements with municipalities flexible enough to deal with the rapidly changing weather conditions in the North and the need to minimize the shifting around of the evacuees?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): Madam Speaker, we have a committee set up, basically government has, of our top officials who meet at ten o'clock every day and assess the situation in terms of weather conditions, which way the winds are going, where the fires are. They then make a decision and recommendation as to whether there should be a red alert in terms of communities that could be affected adversely or not. They also at the same time assess for the communities that have been evacuated, whether there is a possibility that it is safe enough for them to go back.

Certainly it would be irresponsible if they allowed people to go back before the situation was well in hand.

This is an ongoing process. They meet every day at ten o'clock in the morning, do an assessment and make their recommendations based on that.

On top of that, we have people who are very much involved with the whole process out there, are on top of it. If the circumstances change within the 24 hours, they address that as well.

Highway 391 Dust Control

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, my last supplementary is to the Minister of Highways.

Since Highway 391 was so dusty this week that residents evacuating Leaf Rapids had some trouble getting out, will the Minister of Highways ensure that proper dust control will be in place in time to benefit the evacuees returning home to Leaf Rapids and South Indian Lake?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Madam Speaker, I will inquire with the department about the current dust-control operations they are doing and determine if it is adequate for the circumstance. We will probably talk about it this afternoon again in Estimates.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Rupertsland, for one very short question.

Fire Prevention Fund First Nations Communities

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupertsland): I would like to ask the Minister of Labour why, when the property insurance premiums are collected from all Manitobans, including First Nations facilities and people's homes, is none of that 1.25 percent designated for the fire prevention fund used to assure the access to these same services by the First Nations communities of this province?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Labour): Thank you very much for that question. I will take that question as notice.

Mr. Robinson: Madam Speaker, my second question I would like to ask the minister is: Property insurance premiums paid by Manitoba First Nations councils and residents are pooled with those of all non-First Nations

people, and the Department of Labour receives that 1.25 percent towards the implementation of The Fires Prevention Act. I would like to ask the Minister of Labour why the government is prepared to accept and use this hidden tax paid by First Nations for which they receive no benefit.

Mr. Toews: The question is an interesting one, and I will take that as notice.

Madam Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

* (1420)

Speaker's Ruling

Madam Speaker: I have a ruling for the House.

On Friday, June 9, 1995, during a point of order raised about a nonpolitical statement being made, the Leader of the official opposition (Mr. Doer) raised another point of order claiming that I had recognized the honourable member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) on the original point of order.

I undertook to review Hansard and report back to the House. Hansard does not show that I recognized the member on a point of order. I have listened to the audio tape, and it does indeed show that I recognized the honourable member for St. Johns, but I did not indicate that I was recognizing him on a point of order. I did not hear the member say that he was seeking the floor on a point of order which may have been due to the general disorder in the House at the time.

I would ask all honourable members who are seeking the floor on a point of order to so indicate when they are recognized. This would be sincerely appreciated by the Chair and would help in the smooth functioning of the House.

NONPOLITICAL STATEMENTS

Popular Theatre Alliance

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): I ask leave to make a nonpolitical statement.

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

Ms. McGifford: On Saturday, June 24 at 3 p.m. in Cinematheque, 100 Arthur Street, the Popular Theatre Alliance is launching its new video entitled *The Waiting Room*. The subject of the video is women and mental illness, and it features the theatre troupe *Acting Out*. The public is welcome. Personally, I encourage members of the Assembly to attend the performance to support the Popular Theatre Alliance and the troupe *Acting Out*.

Secondly, on Sunday, June 25 at 3 p.m., again in Cinematheque, 100 Arthur Street, the Popular Theatre Alliance will launch a second video, this time on the immigrant experience entitled *How Do You Do*. The video explores the immigrant experience and employment. The theatre group is *Dreamsharers*. Again, I encourage members to attend the performance, support these dedicated artists and their contribution to our cultural community. Thank you.

43rd Annual Negev Dinner

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, may I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable member for Kildonan have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Chomiak: I am very pleased to rise today to make a nonpolitical statement. I should have done it yesterday, but I was unable because of illness to actually speak.

I wanted to commemorate the outstanding success of the 1995 Negev Dinner that was held recently, the 43rd such dinner. Wednesday's dinner which was attended by the member for Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon), myself, as well—the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) was forced to stay in the Chamber because of other commitments.

The 1995 Negev Dinner was dedicated to the survivors of the holocaust, the 50th anniversary. It was

a very moving occasion as it generally is. I wish to commemorate the organizers of the dinner. I wish to commemorate all of the survivors—there was an outstanding booklet published that had individual biographical accounts—who live in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, of the holocaust—I believe they number something like 275 survivors, 400-and-some-odd children as well as a number of grandchildren—as well as commemorate a ceremony where there was a lighting of a candle to commemorate the survivors of the holocaust by the grandchildren and the great-grandchildren of the holocaust victims.

There was also an outstanding presentation by an individual who represented the survivors of the holocaust, Mariam Spinak who came to the podium and delivered a most moving discussion about her experiences. I just want to quote from the dinner program what it says about her. Mariam's efforts and contributions reflect her feelings of appreciation for having found peace. Were it not for the memories, life would be perfect.

I also would like to quote an outstanding presentation made by Mr. Arnold Frieman with respect to this program where he very eloquently described his life as a survivor and some of the efforts that have subsequently followed and ended with the phrase—we hear it over and over again at events like this: never again.

I would like to commemorate all of the organizers of this particular event for the outstanding work they have done in the community as well as their contributions to the Jewish National Fund which goes to projects in Israel, as well as the head table for their contribution, Joe Schlesinger who provided a very moving testimonial speech and to all of the organizers and, most particularly, to the survivors, children of the survivors and the grandchildren of the survivors and for the memory that will live on hopefully forever so that an event like this will never have to be celebrated again. Thank you.

Retirement—Brandon Police Chief

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I would also seek leave to make a nonpolitical statement.

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable member for Brandon West have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. McCrae: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and to my colleagues.

It is not so often that we rise under the order of business for nonpolitical statements to express a level of disappointment, but I am disappointed today to pass on to honourable members that Chief Brian Scott of the Brandon police service is retiring. We have been extremely fortunate in the city of Brandon to have the services of Chief Scott over the past seven and a half years.

Chief Scott has demonstrated a strong sense of responsibility to his duty and to our community, and that has been demonstrated in his commitment. Chief Scott demonstrates every day that he goes to work a high standard of achievement and expects high standards of all of the members of the Brandon police service. Indeed, that has resulted in the accreditation of the Brandon police service by an international accreditation agency, thanks to the initiative of Chief Brian Scott.

In a word, Chief Scott is a professional, Madam Speaker. He has worked well not only with myself as a Justice minister. When I became Justice minister, it was around the same time as Chief Scott became the chief of police, and we had a very, very cordial and fruitful working relationship.

My colleague the honourable Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) advises me that that tradition has continued under her leadership as Minister of Justice with such things, for example, Madam Speaker, as the significant enhancement of services to victims in the city of Brandon.

So I think all of the people of Brandon and far beyond and certainly myself and members of my family, when Brian and Marilyn Scott retire to British Columbia, we will have all had to say goodbye and bon voyage to some very, very good friends.

* (1430)

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. James McCrae (Acting Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, would you be so kind as to call for second reading Bills 20 and 23.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 20—The Child and Family Services Amendment Act

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mr. Gilleshammer), that Bill 20, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfant et à la famille, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to make a few brief comments this afternoon on Bill 20, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act.

* (1430)

Madam Speaker, this amendment is necessary to enable The Child and Family Services Act to comply with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and with the recent decision of the Supreme Court of Canada.

On January 27, 1995, the Supreme Court issued a ruling on a case in Ontario relating to state intervention where parents deny their children lifesaving medical treatment. The court ruled that providing such care to children against the wishes of parents is a justified infringement on religious freedom provided that such medical treatment is justified before a judge.

The Ontario legislation has this procedural requirement, but the Manitoba Child and Family Services Act does not.

We have been advised that our act must be changed if its provisions regarding authorization of medical treatment for all children in agency care are to remain in force.

The amendments in Bill 20 do two things, Madam Speaker. They will change The Child and Family Services Act to make it consistent with the requirement set down in the Supreme Court ruling.

They will also bring the act's lifesaving medical care provisions into line with The Health Care Directives Act with respect to obtaining consent from a child 16 years of age or older.

With these brief comments, Madam Speaker, I recommend this bill for support and passage by all members of this House. Thank you.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I move, seconded by the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 23—The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson), that Bill 23, The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-maladie), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act deals solely with administrative provisions of The Health Services Insurance Act.

It will provide protection from liability for members of the Manitoba Health Board, the Medical Review Committee and the Formal Inquiry Committee who carry out their responsibilities in good faith.

It will clarify the administrative provisions dealing with the investigation of irregular billing practices by practitioners and permit the Medical Review and Formal Inquiry committees to fulfill their mandate to ensure that appropriate billing practices are enforced.

This bill will also extend the time within which Manitoba Health can prosecute for offences committed under the act. The time will be increased from six months to two years from the time that the offence was committed or evidence of the offence became known.

Finally, the bill will clarify the regulatory powers respecting the maintenance of residents' trust funds by personal care homes to ensure our ability to continue enforcing the current regulation dealing with such matters.

I commend this bill to the attention and support of all honourable members.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I move, seconded by the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

House Business

Hon. James McCrae (Acting Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, on a matter of House business, by leave, the sequence for the consideration of Estimates to be discussed in Room 255 is to be amended as follows:

Immediately following the completion of the consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Natural Resources, the Estimates of the Department of Housing and Home Renovation Program - Capital will be considered. The sequence for Room 255 will then be as follows: Natural Resources, Housing, Home Renovation Program - Capital, Status of Women, Energy and Mines.

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable acting government House leader have leave to change the sequence of House business for consideration of the Estimates? [agreed]

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns), that Madam 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 La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson) in the Chair for the Department of Highways and Transportation, Community Support Programs, Employee Benefits and Other Payments, Canada-Manitoba Enabling Vote, Allowance for Losses and Expenditures Incurred by Crown Corporations and Other Provincial Entities, Allowance for Salary Accruals, Internal Reform, Workforce Adjustment and General Salary Increases, and Urban Economic Development Initiatives; the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) in the Chair for the departments of Natural Resources and Housing; and the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) in the Chair for the Department of Justice.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Ben Sveinson): Order please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

This afternoon, this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 254 will resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Highways and Transportation. When the committee last sat, it had been considering Item 2.(n) Policy, Planning and Development (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits, on page 90 of the Estimates book and on page 65 of the yellow supplement book. Shall the item pass?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Could I just add some more information to the record. We were talking this morning about Winnipeg Airport Authority, and we do not quite know what the membership was. I could just quickly give an indication.

Members appointed by Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, there are two, one member appointed by Winnipeg 2000, one member appointed by the St. James-Assiniboia Chamber of Commerce, three members appointed by the City of Winnipeg, one

member appointed by the R.M. of St. Andrews, one member appointed by the R.M. of Rosser, three members appointed by the federal government, one member appointed by the provincial government.

Directors appointed by the board, they have appointed Alexa Campbell from the Consumers' Association of Canada and Dr. Barry Prentice from the University of Manitoba, and, in addition, we are told that they have the full intention, with one vacant board position, of appointing a labour representative. That is their intention. That is all we have been told, is they are in the process of naming a labour representative.

So you have a Consumers' Association representative and a labour representative. One is on, and one is going to be appointed, is what we are told.

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): A few years ago, I believe, there were headquarters of 11 major trucking firms in Winnipeg. Now that is down, I believe—pardon me, nine out of 11 were headquartered in Winnipeg. Now that is down to about six out of I do not know how many. That seems to be a rather disturbing trend.

Does this mean we are losing trucking volume? Why are these headquarters moving?

Mr. Findlay: My basic belief in the trucking industry in terms of job creation, it is thriving. I think the figures where we had eight out of the largest trucking companies in Canada, in Manitoba, eight out of 13, it is now six out of 10, but the number of trucks and tonnes hauled and drivers employed is steadily rising.

I am sure that the member is aware that there has been over the last year quite a number of comments coming from the trucking firms. They cannot get enough drivers. It is a fair process to get what is called a driver today because you have to have experience, and they want two or three years of driving experience with a clean record. That is the kind of person they want for insurance purposes, but there is a steady, steady demand for truck drivers.

Any of the trucking company executives I have talked to, they have constant—they have more loads on

the books than they can manage. So the owner-operator has lots of options in terms of working for somebody. No, I think that by and large the trucking industry is very strong.

In terms of the international haul, the U.S. haul, our carriers have expanded and done very, very well competitively in terms of sourcing loads in the U.S. and hauling into the U.S. Some of our carriers which are stationed here may only drive 15 percent of their miles in Canada. The other 85 percent are driven south of the line.

* (1440)

I do not think those numbers that the member used shows any decline. In fact, it shows a strengthening of the strong ones, and the number of truck-driving jobs has expanded.

I think that companies have made a very concerted effort to be sure that the conditions under which the drivers operate, particularly, come to Christmas time, they make very sure that they are home, that they get home.

They buy them plane tickets, or whatever, to allow them to get home, so that they will be home for that holiday period, because, let us face it, our trucks are all over North America at any given point, and the demand of the people who are paying the cost of the shipment is that the product get there on time and on a steady basis, but, no, I feel it is doing real well.

Mr. Jennissen: I have a whole series of questions to ask on Policy, Planning and Development, but I think in order to speed it up, I am not going to ask anymore in the section, but my honourable colleague, I do believe, has a couple more.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): When I was asking questions before, Mr. Chairperson, relating to the railways, an oversight on my part, I forgot to ask questions about the VIA Rail employment levels.

As a result of the arbitrator's recent ruling this month relating to the railway contracts with their employees,

we learned that VIA Rail is being allowed to cut some 422 jobs nationwide.

Now, can the minister tell me, has he had any indication from VIA on how many, if any, of those jobs will be lost in the province of Manitoba?

Mr. Findlay: No, I do not have any information.

Mr. Reid: Well, the minister indicated, I believe, that he met with VIA in May. Did that question get asked of VIA in May?

Mr. Findlay: As I said earlier, staff were involved at the meeting in May in Toronto at a TAC meeting, I believe it was, and, no, that question was not asked.

Mr. Reid: So we did not ask the question of how many employees potentially could be lost in Manitoba from VIA. We did not ask the question of CN when we met with them two weeks ago, how many employees are going to be lost in Manitoba and what the long-term job prospects are going to be and what the future of the main shop operations are going to be.

So we have essentially let the railways off the hook without asking them any of the hard questions that need to be asked to ensure that we have some idea on where at least rail transportation is going within the province of Manitoba. Is there a reason why we did not ask those questions?

Mr. Findlay: I think, as I said to the member this morning, any company that has got confidential information would be foolish to tell it to anybody. We ask all kinds of questions. We seek to get as much information as we can. We support the principle. We want to be well considered in the process of their job reductions. We do not want to be negatively impacted. The member full well knows that no company is going to say, well, our plans are this and that; do you agree?

We want to be considered as a place to do business, and we have done a lot of things in government to make it attractive, and that is well respected by the people who are making those decisions. You cannot run companies from this table or from any government,

and that is just the bottom line. We will do well, I can assure the member, in the process.

We have a grave concern about Churchill and what will happen there. That has been a topic of considerable discussion. I have some comfort from CN that there is not going to be a big shoe fall.

So there are a lot of questions on the table. If you supply a good environment, and somebody has a lot of goods to move, and you have an attractive rate to offer them, the jobs will be there. You cannot create jobs when there is not work or an opportunity to deliver a service.

Mr. Reid: Well, I believe in recent comments that were made by Mr. Tellier, who is the head of CN Rail. He indicated that since 1995, it is supposed to be the third and final year of the job reductions, the rationalization of staff in the CN system, and that means there is another, potentially, I believe, 2,800 jobs, if I recall correctly, jobs that are going to be lost across Canada this year.

I mean, if the minister or his staff people did not ask the question, are we going to be once again reactive to the loss of some of those 2,800 jobs in the province of Manitoba? Mr. Tellier, at the same time, has also indicated that there is going to be ongoing and continuing layoffs, so we have no idea, from what the minister is telling me, of what is going to happen in 1996 or '97 or '98 as far as employment is concerned.

I think in fairness to the people that are doing these jobs, they would like to know what the future holds for them, so that it would help them to make some of the decisions affecting their own personal lives, too. They are being kept hanging out there now for a period of time, and it is quite distressing for the families that are involved.

That is one of the reasons why I am asking these questions here, because these people would like to know what the future holds for them. If the minister has that information or if he has not asked that question of how many of those 2,800 jobs are going to be lost in Manitoba, I find it strange that we would not have asked that question.

Mr. Findlay: Well, I hope the member would appreciate that there is no such thing as absolute job security for anybody in this world today. Every bank employee, every trucker, every welder, every federal civil servant would like to know what his future is. They have families, they have considerations, to use the member's words, and they need to have the security of knowing what their future is.

That is not possible in today's world. We would all like to know that, not only just the CN Rail workers that the member is talking about. We would like to know it for everybody, and the way you can assure your future is in first-rate performance in an overall society, and I think Canada does well in that.

I have already told the member, in the process of the decision making that Mr. Tellier is going through, I have said very pointedly, we do not want to be negatively impacted in any greater sense than any other jurisdiction. I have said that straight to his face. He says, do not worry; in the context of what you have done for the rail industry, you will not be.

It does not mean we will not have job reductions, but we will not have any greater percentage than other locations in the country. I cannot ask an individual to offer anymore than that. You might like to have more, but we are living in a real world today, and I cannot go to the credit union centre and say, I want to know what every employee across Manitoba is going to be treated like over the next five years, or to the trucking firms or to the federal government and say, I want to be sure that there will be no layoffs in Manitoba. That is not a reasonable question. We might like to know the answer, but it is not a reasonable question.

* (1450)

What I have done, as I have told the member, is secured new-generation type jobs for Manitoba in the customer service centre, which if we would have sat on our hands could have easily gone elsewhere, but we pursued them and got them here, but the member fails to recognize or appreciate there is any value in that.

Mr. Reid: Well, I will repeat for the minister's information again, if he can show me one job that has

been transferred to the province of Manitoba into that new function that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) went to the photo opportunity for, then I will retract my previous words, but there has not been one new job come here, not one new person come here to fill those jobs to this point in time.

Mr. Findlay: The member must appreciate that there are eight centres across the country and they are in the process of being moved here, transferred here, jobs to employees who will be transferred from other activities and then there will be other employees undoubtedly hired that are not currently members of CN. That growth will occur.

The member is trying to make a negative situation out of a very positive opportunity. He would really be on a case if that was happening in Alberta. He would really be on a case. It is happening here, but he wants to ignore that there is a positive there. It is unfortunate because it is not constructive to trying to help people have employment opportunities in Manitoba.

Mr. Reid: How many Canadian rail traffic controllers do we have in the province of Manitoba?

Mr. Findlay: Canadian—

Mr. Reid: —rail traffic controllers, jobs. How many are in the province of Manitoba?

Mr. Findlay: We do not have the number.

Mr. Reid: I did not think the minister would have the number because his department has not done the research to determine how many jobs we are going to be losing with that function when it transfers out of the province of Manitoba. We are going to have a negative net position in jobs when the CRTC people transfer out of the province of Manitoba in comparison to the jobs the minister is talking about with the customer call centre here. We are going to be in a negative position. We are going to lose jobs, the net result.

That is what I have been trying to tell you now for a year. It is not helping us any. You bring some jobs in in one function, but we lose more in the other and a photo opportunity is not helping these people.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Chairman, as I have told the member several times now, I have had assurance from senior, senior officials, CN, to the absolute contrary. So on that we will obviously have different opinions for a long time to come.

Mr. Reid: I suppose we will have a difference of opinion with the minister on that one and time will tell whether or not there is any gain in jobs, but at the current time there is not.

Can the minister tell me, since the federal government just tabled their deregulation bill, their form of the Staggers Act with respect to railway regulation, is the minister anticipating that he is going to make a presentation with respect to that legislation?

Mr. Findlay: Certainly we are giving strong consideration to making presentation on a variety of elements in it.

Mr. Reid: Can the minister indicate what portions of the legislation he has difficulties with?

Mr. Findlay: Staff are now looking at the various aspects of it. We will make decisions on where we need to make representation and we will be waiting for input from other people who want us to make representation on one element or another, but we will look into the overall thing.

Mr. Reid: Can the minister tell me, since it is my understanding that there will be significant impacts upon the various municipalities of the province, will the minister's department be asking for input from the stakeholders, including the municipalities and producers—

Mr. Findlay: Impact in what context?

Mr. Reid: —since this deregulation bill will allow the railways to have unfettered abandonment of the branch lines in one aspect of this?

Mr. Findlay: Loss of municipal tax.

Mr. Reid: Right, from that aspect, but also from the producers' point of view where they will not have

access to the rail lines, will obviously have to haul further, will the producers and the municipalities as two groups at least be asked to have some input into the minister's presentation?

Mr. Findlay: Dealing with the municipalities from the standpoint of road impact, municipalities of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta have all made representation to have consideration out of that \$300 million adjustment fund of the federal government, of which Minister Goodale is in charge of, as we have as a province and as Saskatchewan and Alberta have, consideration to offset the impact of additional road wear and tear created by less rail lines.

We have also made strong consideration on any rail line that CN or CP no longer want to operate, it will be made available forthright for short-line operation, the idea being to keep the grains travelling on a rail going to the main line. We want to reduce the impact on municipal provincial roads by short lines and at the same time where there are abandonments to have consideration for municipal road infrastructure support and provincial road infrastructure.

Mr. Reid: The minister referenced the \$300 million as far as the Crow buy-out money, we will call it the WGTA buy-out adjustment fund. Do we have any indication of how much of that money will be coming to the province of Manitoba for upgrading of roads?

Mr. Findlay: The only numbers we have yet, and the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) used them in the House the other day and they have been in the rural newspapers. I would have to say they are probably not official, but they talk in terms of compensation for pooling costs for Saskatchewan-Manitoba farmers of around \$100 million to \$120 million, about \$40 million for adjustment expenses for the dehyd industry, alfalfa dehyd industry. That leaves approximately \$150 million, in very round figures, available for road infrastructure impacts for municipalities and the three provincial governments in the West. There has been no additional breakdown on that, on any of those figures.

Mr. Reid: Have we made representation to the federal government, considering that there is \$150 million, of which I believe \$20 million of it is supposed to go to

administration, which boggles the mind—how we can spend \$20 million out of a \$300-million fund for administration in such a short period of time.

First off, why are we spending \$20 million? Why is the federal government spending \$20 million on administration when that should be coming to the provinces to put into their programs? Why is it we are at this point in time where we are only two months away, or less, from the elimination of the Crow and the WGTA, and yet we have no idea what benefit is going to come to the province as far as funding transfers.

Mr. Findlay: I think the member is confusing the \$300-million adjustment fund with the \$1.6 billion of Crow payout money, buy-out money, whatever you want to call it. As for the administration, it will be, probably, fairly involved, but I am not going to give any excuses for why the federal government has been so slow in this whole process. This whole process is to kick in August 1 of this year, and they just barely tabled the bill Tuesday of this week—two days ago.

We have not seen it yet. I do not know how they will have it passed and in effect by August 1, with the tremendous amount of detail unresolved and a tremendous amount of impact on farmers, railroads, trucking companies and grain companies.

They are all up in the air in terms of what is going to be the impact on them, where do they fit in the bigger picture, who has so-called protection, who is left without protection. There is a multitude of unanswered questions, and they have been dragging this process on for several months, knowing for, at least the last year, they were targeting August 1.

We are really just two months away. It is astounding, and I am almost amazed that there has not been an outcry from the people that are going to be affected. Maybe they are all keeping quiet, hoping this thing will never really happen.

Mr. Reid: I believe there was a report that was out earlier this year with respect to the bayline—and since this has been, historically, grain-related, even though it provides other services to the various communities along the way—that the federal government was

anticipating kicking in, I think, some \$27 million, I believe was the figure, for the upgrade of the line.

* (1500)

Can the minister tell me if there has been any progress on any of those monies forthcoming from the federal government to upgrade the bayline, since it is my understanding that the bayline may move towards either a short-line or a regional-line operation?

Mr. Findlay: The \$27-million figure that we all saw—it was in *The Globe and Mail* one day—over the course of time, it was found to have had no substance. It was thought to have been a reliable source that was quoted but it turned out it was not. That money was to have come out of that \$300-million adjustment fund. That is the way it was set up, but there has been no substance to that report.

The task force, as the member knows, became the Gateway North interim committee, and they have sent that concept proposal to the federal government with no response yet. It went in May 12, I believe it was, and no response yet. In fact, it went to—Lloyd Axworthy is who it went to. Yet, nobody has a response back from them. In fact, the same day it was delivered to our Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), Saskatchewan's Minister of Economic Development and Lloyd Axworthy. It is asking for federal response and commitment on several items—no response yet.

Mr. Reid: I suppose we will have to wait, then, and see what comes out of the Gateway North proposal and whether or not there is going to be any federal participation, financially speaking, towards that project.

Mr. Findlay: Several people looking at business opportunities associated with using the bayline or the port are reasonably optimistic that there is real opportunity there, and I think I said earlier, they have got together some \$50,000 for a feasibility study, but they cannot do that. There is no point in doing that till they get some indication of where the federal government is going to go in terms of the requests made of them. If they are positive responses, they will be off and running. If they are lukewarm or negative, it is hard to say what the response will be.

There is a lot of optimism out there that there is real opportunity in moving special crops out, I think the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen) mentioned, or coming in from a mine in Newfoundland. Conceptually, those things are all possible, and what else? Who knows? There are lots of other things that can happen if the fundamental line and the port are given an opportunity to operate in some viable context.

Mr. Reid: Are there other short-line opportunities being developed in the province of Manitoba? I believe a year ago there was some discussion about a line down by I think it was Waskada. I do not believe that that has progressed to this point of time, at least as far as I am aware. Are there any other possibilities being talked about at this time with the departmental staff, the minister, by members of the public or other companies?

Mr. Findlay: There has been talk, as the member mentioned, of Lyleton sub. There certainly has been talk about the Rosburn line, and it was advertised for alternate means of use of the line. The successful bidder ended up being a trucking company. I am not sure just where that contract is at between the trucking company and CN. At this stage, there are no other ones that are actively being pursued that we are aware of as short lines. That idea will not really surface until one or the other of the rail lines make a comment that this line is available for short line. That is when the rubber will hit the road.

Mr. Reid: I take it then that it is likely that the railways are waiting until the deregulation bill goes through until they make their intentions known.

A question related to the CN line east out of Winnipeg. Last year the department put on hold its plans to build an underpass under the rail line at Provincial Trunk Highway 15 and the CN mainline because there was some question about the long-term future of that rail line. Can the minister tell me, what is the status of that line and that project at this time?

Mr. Findlay: The idea that that CN line would not be used again in the future came up during the discussion about the CN-CP merger. The CP offer came forward and then all that discussion collapsed. Now that they

are into the commercialization, we do not have a clue what their plans are on that line. I do not think anybody will know until the commercialization is complete and the new board or owners make some study or make some statement on it.

For us, in terms of highway development, not in terms of the northeast Perimeter, we are not going to spend money on an underpass. We are going to do it at grade level crossing there until such time as there is a better comfort zone as to whether the line will be there for the long term or it will not be. Right now, to our knowledge we are totally in limbo about that.

Mr. Reid: Just on that point that the minister raised during my last question. Since the CN is going to be privatized by way of the federal government legislation, what is to stop the two railroads, the two mainline railroads that will be in Canada, CP and CN, from merging their rail line services once CN becomes privatized?

Mr. Findlay: I think there are two catches for anybody who would want to see that happen. One is that in the commercialization they stated that no one entity could own more than 15 percent. For instance, CP could not come and buy them out completely.

The other thing is the Competitions Act. They would have to go over those ropes, and so far I think the attitude in Canada is that people want two railroads. It remains to be seen whether somebody would try to do that, the new owner or owners would try to do that. As I said earlier, we do not see that as being beneficial for shippers' interests or western Canadian interests at all. We were not happy with the proposal of CP buying CN, and we are glad that it did not materialize. In the event that it was attempted again, we would not consider it positive for shipping services by rail in Manitoba.

Mr. Jennissen: I am prepared to pass 15.(2)(1)

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: 15.2 Highways and Transportation Programs (n) Policy, Planning and Development (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,657,700—pass; 15.2(n)(2) Other Expenditures \$432,300—pass.

15.2 Highways and Transportation Programs (p) Driver and Vehicle Licensing (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits.

Mr. Jennissen: Under the vehicle inspection program, this is a constituency question that a constituent, actually two of them, asked me to raise, and I think this is probably the appropriate time.

* (1510)

The gentleman owns a pumpout system, a sewage system, he hauls liquid sewage from the various cabins around Cranberry Portage. It is within about a two- to three-kilometre radius. His argument is that he is forced to—first of all the size of the vehicle is I would guess the tank to be between 500 and 1,000 gallons. It is not huge, but it is over a ton, obviously. He has to inspect that vehicle every year. He says that it is time-consuming and it is costly. His argument is it is not necessary every year, and the reasoning he uses, and it makes sense to me, is that farmers do not have to do this. They have vehicles, three-ton, five-ton, they go much longer distances and they are exempt from inspection. Why would he not be exempt? I am just asking the question.

Mr. Findlay: Can I ask what kind of plate does he have on the truck?

Mr. Jennissen: I am sorry, I do not remember.

Mr. Findlay: The whole purpose of the annual inspection for commercial vehicles is to improve safety on the road, to give the driving public some comfort that those commercial vehicles that are coming towards them have undergone some degree of annual safety inspection. There is a strong belief that will improve safety of vehicles on the road.

The member says that farmers are exempt. They presented a strong argument that the majority of their miles are not on the main highways. They are on the municipal roads. They do not travel at anywhere near the highway speeds, and the amount of miles they put on per year is very low. It would be impossible to administer a program where a whole bunch of selective individuals were given special treatment. I think the

bottom line for us is to be sure that there is safety on the roads.

In dealing with the farm community, I did ask the department, can you prove that there have been accidents created by farm vehicles because of lack of proper safety aspects of the vehicle, whether it is tires or lights or turn signals or whatever it is? The statistics did not exist. So I have told the farm community, you will continue to be subject to spot inspections. If an inspector or a police officer stops you on the road for whatever reason and he does an inspection on you and he finds you have faulty equipment, you are on the hook right then and there. Nothing changes for you, as has been in the past.

Also, in the event that there is an increased incidence of accidents related to farm vehicles and it could be tied to the fact they did not do the proper safety maintenance on their vehicles, we will roll them into the legislation. On that basis they were given exclusion for the period of time to continue to prove that they are good actors. As long as they remember that and are responsible in keeping their vehicles safe, it will be okay.

For every individual like myself who is a farmer, we always face a liability if we have a vehicle on the road that did not have turn signals and we caused an accident because of that. The liability comes back on me. We are driven to be sure that our vehicles are safe. That is where it sits now, and I think the public is better served by having all commercial vehicles go through the annual inspection.

Mr. Jennissen: Well, there was a similar case in Cranberry where the gentleman owns a fairly large truck and he hauls wood commercially but only about four or five loads in the fall. He feels, again, if they inspect it every five years, that will make a lot of sense. Most of the driving is done off the main highways, the same as with the sewage truck. The argument keeps coming back that farmers seem to be getting preferential treatment—another example of how northerners get shafted.

Mr. Findlay: Well, I cannot help the member feel any better. That is just the way it is at this point in time. I

just say to the member that the more inspections we have on vehicles, the safer it is for the public at large in general.

Mr. Jennissen: My question is with regard to photo cards, and I thought they were an excellent idea, by the way. Am I correct in assuming that they are renewed every two years?

An Honourable Member: Four.

Mr. Jennissen: Every four years. Okay.

Mr. Findlay: Initially, it was every two years, but now that we are into the full cycle it is every four years.

Mr. Jennissen: That makes a lot more sense because I was hoping they would go every five years or so. Okay, four years.

One other question—I think you may have answered it partially a day or so earlier—is with regard to licence plates. There is some move to put two licences on every vehicle. That is in the works, let us say, within a year or two?

Mr. Findlay: The decision has not been made. As I said to the member, there has been a lot of representation, all in favour of two licence plates. It makes all kinds of common sense.

I just remind him that it was the previous administration that went from two down to one. Now you are back asking for two, so okay.

Mr. Jennissen: I guess the question could be: Was the previous administration progressive?

Mr. Findlay: Okay, no, it was not.

Mr. Jennissen: I beg to differ—[interjection]—but anyway I am still begging to differ.

I would like to pass this.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 2. Highways and Transportation Programs (p) Driver and Vehicle Licensing (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits

\$10,859,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$5,364,000—pass; (3) Manitoba Public Insurance Cost-Sharing Agreement \$3,672,100—pass.

2.(q) Boards and Committees (1) Motor Transport Board (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$299,300.

Mr. Jennissen: I basically have just one question in order to speed it up a little bit.

Under corrective measures on carriers for breaches of regulations, any idea on the numbers of breaches we are talking about in a year? Under Activity Identification, the last one says: Initiates corrective measures on carriers for breaches of regulations. Are we talking huge numbers of breaches?

Mr. Findlay: There were 22 show-cause items or cases brought forward. Out of the 22, 21 resulted in an imposition of fines and board costs totalling \$47,800, and one was just given a reprimand.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: 2.(q) Boards and Committees (1) Motor Transport Board (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$299,300—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$136,000—pass.

(2) Highway Traffic Board (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$216,900—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$63,700—pass.

(3) Licence Suspension Appeal Board and Medical Review Committee (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits —\$216,900—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$88,300—pass.

(4) Taxicab Board (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$295,900—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$82,800—pass.

Resolution 15.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$55,175,800 for Highways and Transportation, Highways and Transportation Programs, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

* (1520)

3. Infrastructure Works, Operating (a) Maintenance Program \$56,545,100—pass.

(b) Mechanical Equipment Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$7,512,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$15,436,800—pass; (3) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$25,853,600)—pass.

Expenditures Related to Capital (c) Construction and Upgrading of Provincial Trunk Highways, Provincial Roads and Related Projects Provincial Programming (including Manitoba's share of Strategic Highway Improvement Program) \$96,900,000—pass; Canada's Share of Strategic Highway Improvement Program \$6,100,000—pass.

(d) Aid to Cities, Towns and Villages \$1,300,000—pass.

(e) Work in Local Government Districts and Unorganized Territory \$3,760,000—pass.

(f) Rural Municipal Bridge Assistance Program \$400,000—pass.

(g) Other Projects \$2,552,100—pass.

Resolution 15.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$164,653,300 for Highways and Transportation, Infrastructure Works, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

The last item to be considered for the Estimates of the Department of Highways and Transportation is item 1.(a) Minister's Salary—\$22,800.

At this point, we request the minister's staff to leave the table for the consideration of this item.

Item 1.(a).

Mr. Reid: I have one last question. I cannot let this section go by without asking this question, Mr. Chairperson. Is the minister contemplating any changes in fees or regulatory matters for the Taxicab Board this year?

Mr. Findlay: No, I, as minister, am not contemplating any. I cannot speak for the board in terms of the degree of independence in which they operate, but I am not aware of any change in fees, no.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: 1.(a).

Mr. Jennissen: I am sorry. I am not sure this is the appropriate time to ask it, but this went a little bit fast for me. Again, it is on the Taxicab Board. If I am past the item do not answer it, but the Administrative Support has gone up tremendously. There were three salary year—this is on page 75, and I was going to ask that question. From last year to this year, some \$47,000 for the three positions and that is over \$15,700 a person. It seems awfully high. I am just wondering about some information on that.

Mr. Findlay: I cannot give it to you. I would have to get it from staff.

An Honourable Member: Yes, I should have caught it earlier. I am sorry.

Mr. Findlay: There is obviously some good explanation. Whether it is a—[interjection] There might be a severance involved there, a buy out or whatever that caused it to jump. I will find out.

Mr. Jennissen: No further questions.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 1.(a) Minister's Salary \$22,800—pass.

Resolution 15.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$5,301,700 for Highways and Transportation, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

This completes the Estimates of the Department of Highways and Transportation.

The next set of Estimates that will be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply are the Estimates of the Department of Community Support Programs.

Shall we briefly recess to allow the minister and the critics the opportunity to prepare for the commencement of the next set of Estimates, and should we leave the clock running? Agreed? [agreed]

COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Ben Sveinsson): The next set of Estimates to be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply are the Estimates for the Community Support Programs on page 25 of the Estimates book. Does the minister responsible have an opening statement?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Chairman, a very brief one. I am pleased to have the opportunity to make some opening remarks, and I will be joined shortly by Mr. Jim Berry who is the Director of the Lotteries Distribution System.

The role of the Community Support Programs is threefold; firstly, it provides management and co-ordination of lottery fund disbursements through government departments.

Secondly, it provides access to community organizations seeking information on lottery funding and, as well, may provide grant assistance to organizations who do not meet normal funding criteria within the system. Its third component is to monitor and evaluate the nonprofit community organizations who receive lottery funding to ensure compliance to the original objectives of these organizations.

Community Support Programs provide an accountable, efficient, accessible and flexible system in the distribution of lottery funds to enhance the quality of life for all Manitobans.

With those very brief opening comments, I will be pleased to take any questions.

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

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I just want to indicate that we will be asking numerous questions on Lotteries issues. We have today. We will be in the future, as well, but not under this particular item. We look forward to the Lotteries Foundation report being brought in because we have been waiting close to two years and there are a lot of questions we will be asking.

* (1550)

Just one question before we are prepared to pass this line just so we can anticipate a bit down the line. I am wondering if the minister is also going to be responsible for the urban economic initiatives because I will be having some questions on that.

Mr. Stefanson: Yes, I will be, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Ashton: We will be passing this.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: 1. Community Support Programs (a) Lotteries Distribution System (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$98,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$27,300—pass; (3) Grants \$267,200—pass.

(b) Festival du Voyageur \$323,000—pass.

(c) Folk Arts Council of Winnipeg \$304,000—pass.

(d) United Way of Winnipeg \$2,238,700—pass.

(e) Valley Agricultural Society \$64,000—pass.

(f) Harness and Quarterhorse Racing Support \$395,000—pass.

(g) Winnipeg Convention Centre - Capital—pass.

(h) Manitoba Community Services Council \$2,000,000—pass.

(j) Winnipeg Football Club \$350,000—pass.

Resolution 33.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$6,067,800 for Community Support Programs for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

This concludes the Estimates for Community Support Programs.

The next Estimates to be considered are the Estimates for the Employee Benefits and Other Payments.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS AND OTHER PAYMENTS

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Ben Sveinson): The next set of Estimates to be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply are the Estimates for Employee Benefits and Other Payments on page 47 of the Estimates book.

Does the minister responsible have an opening statement?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Chairman, not really. This is an ongoing cost of government for our entire employee benefits package that are listed in some detail here. Any adjustments on costs are attributable to adjustments on, basically, I would think on rates being charged by other levels of government, the federal government or the plans themselves.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Does the critic for the official opposition have an opening statement?

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): No.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We thank the member.

1. Employee Benefits and other Payments \$33,720,500—pass.

Resolution 6.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$33,720,500 for Employee Benefits and Other Payments for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

CANADA-MANITOBA ENABLING VOTE

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Ben Sveinson): The next set of Estimates to be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply are the Estimates for the Canada-Manitoba Enabling Vote on page 143 of the Estimates book. Does the minister responsible have an opening statement?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): No, I do not, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We thank the minister.

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

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): No.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We thank the member.

1. Canada-Manitoba Enabling Vote (a) Partnership Agreement in Tourism (1) Operating \$29,700—pass; (2) Capital \$226,200—pass.

(b) Winnipeg Development Agreement (1) Operating \$1,500,000—pass; (2) Capital \$1,500,000—pass.

(c) Agreement on Agricultural Sustainability (1) Operating \$389,000—pass; (2) Capital \$66,000—pass.

(d) Partnership Agreement on Municipal Water Infrastructure - Capital \$825,000—pass.

(e) Communications Technology Research and industry Development Agreement - Operating \$257,500—pass.

(f) General Agreement on the Promotion of Official Languages - Operating \$200,000—pass.

Resolution 26.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$4,993,400 for Canada-Manitoba Enabling Vote for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

This concludes the Estimates for the Canada-Manitoba Enabling Vote.

OTHER APPROPRIATIONS

Allowance for Losses and Expenditures Incurred by Crown Corporations and Other Provincial Entities

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Ben Sveinson): The next Estimates to be considered are the Estimates for Allowance for Losses and Expenditures Incurred by Crown Corporations and Other Provincial Entities on page 145 of the Estimates book.

Does the minister responsible have an opening statement?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister charged with the administration of The Crown Corporations Public Review and Accountability Act): No, I do not.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We thank the minister.

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

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): No.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We thank the member.

Item 1. \$1,000,000. Shall the item pass? The item is accordingly passed. No.

Item 2. Allowance for Losses and Expenditures Incurred by Crown Corporations and Other Provincial Entities \$875,000—pass.

I should clarify that 1. Aboriginal Justice Initiatives was not passed.

Resolution 27.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$875,000 for Other Appropriations, Allowance for Losses and Expenditures Incurred by Crown Corporations and Other Provincial Entities, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

This concludes the Estimates for Allowance for Losses and Expenditures Incurred by Crown Corporations and Other Provincial Entities.

Allowance for Salary Accruals

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Ben Sveinson): The next set of Estimates to be considered are the Estimates for Allowance for Salary Accruals on page 145 of the Estimates book.

Does the minister responsible have an opening statement?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): No, I do not.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We thank the minister.

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

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): No.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We thank the member.

Item 3. Allowance for Salary Accruals \$300,000—pass.

Resolution 27.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$300,000 for Other Appropriations, Allowance for Salary Accruals, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

This concludes the Estimates for Allowance for Salary Accruals.

Internal Reform, Workforce Adjustment and General Salary Increases

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Ben Sveinson): The next set of Estimates to be considered are the Estimates for Internal Reform, Workforce Adjustment and General Salary Increases on page 146 of the Estimates book.

Does the minister responsible have an opening statement?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): No, I do not, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We thank the minister.

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

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): No.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We thank the member.

Item 6. Internal Reform, Workforce Adjustment and General Salary Increases (a) Internal Reform and

Workforce Adjustment \$4,000,000—pass; (b) General Salary Increases—pass; Less: Allocated to Departments—pass.

Resolution 27.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$4,000,000 for Other Appropriations, Internal Reform, Workforce Adjustment and General Salary Increases, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

This concludes the Estimates for Internal Reform, Workforce Adjustment and General Salary Increases.

LOTTERIES FUNDED APPROPRIATIONS

Urban Economic Development Initiatives

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Ben Sveinson): The next set of Estimates to be considered are the Estimates for Urban Economic Development Initiatives on page 146 of the Estimates book.

Does the minister responsible have an opening statement?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): No, I do not, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We thank the minister.

* (1600)

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

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I just want to indicate I have a number of questions relating to line 27(f), so we can probably pass the other items and then I can raise the questions at that point.

An Honourable Member: That is where we are right now.

Mr. Ashton: I would like to ask the minister, what portion of this particular line is being allocated for the Winnipeg Jets and for the construction of the new arena?

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Chairman, for the current fiscal year 1995-96, the allocation that was provided from this account to cover losses of the Winnipeg Jets is \$1,891,304 to date.

Now, that was with the expectation of covering losses for approximately three months, the period April, May and June of 1995, depending on what happens with the Spirit of Manitoba.

If this new agreement is concluded on August 15, there will be the requirement to fund our share of the losses for another month and a half. That amount has not been quantified as of yet. We are currently in the process of determining precisely what that amount might be, and again at this stage, there is the capacity to cover that additional requirement from within this allocation.

I would be more than pleased to provide the member with what has been allocated to date out of the \$12,500,000, so he would have a sense that there still is capacity to cover that additional month and a half share of losses that the province is responsible for.

Mr. Ashton: In addition to the \$1.89 million that has been allocated for the losses, is there any allocation in this particular section for the construction of the new arena?

Mr. Stefanson: At this stage, no, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Ashton: Where will the allocation for the construction of the new arena take place? Specifically, where will the government be finding the \$37.5 million, or whatever its latest figure is, that it has committed? The minister can correct me on the exact amount of the commitment, but where will that be coming from if it is not from this particular line?

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Chairman, at this stage, as the member knows, the commitment, if a new facility is built, is \$37 million from the provincial government. We do have the ability to allocate that over three budget years, in '95-96, '96-97 and '97-98, because of the building being ready for occupancy in the fall of 1997.

Therefore, for this budget year, based on discussions we have had with the federal government, if the facility does proceed, we will have the ability to direct approximately \$11 million from the infrastructure agreement, from the project, that being the provincial share that was basically originally allocated for the Kenaston underpass.

I think, as the member knows, the federal Liberal government has indicated they are prepared to support the facility with what they outlined as \$20 million, and they have suggested that they would be looking to fund their share of approximately the majority of the \$15 million from within the infrastructure agreement, as well, so that allocation will be the vast majority of what is required for this budget year.

If there is any additional requirement beyond that, we would be looking at what sources of funding we would use to provide that additional funding.

Mr. Ashton: Yes, has that already been included in the infrastructure line that we will be dealing with presumably just in a few minutes, or would that \$11 million be found in some other way, shape or form?

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Chairperson, it is basically already included because when we prepared our budget, we prepared our budget on the basis of the original terms of the infrastructure agreement. If the member recalls, the original terms, I believe, were in the first year, which was last year. In 1994-95, we were to spend 35 percent of the total infrastructure program; in 1995-96, to spend 50 percent, and the most that could be spilled over to year three of the infrastructure program was 15 percent of the program.

In the most recent federal budget, the current federal government changed that. They turned a three-year program into a five-year program, but having said that, when we provided our budget, we provided 50 percent of our requirement for the entire infrastructure agreement, and that was at the stage with the expectation that Kenaston might still be going forward and/or there would be other projects to provide funding for to meet the terms of the original infrastructure program.

When we get to that line item, you will see that we have budgeted \$34,200,000 on the infrastructure program. That is basically 50 percent of our original commitment under the entire program, which was approximately \$68 million. So it is a long way of saying yes to the member's question, that the amount is effectively budgeted for in our infrastructure allocation this year.

Mr. Ashton: So the short answer then is that \$11 million out of the \$34,200,000 will be this year's allocation for the Winnipeg arena.

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Chairman, yes, if a facility is determined to be built, we have the capacity to provide \$11 million from within the infrastructure agreement.

Depending on construction time lines, requirements and so on, there might be the need for us to provide some additional support, but that would be determined as we would move forward with actually building the facility, but we do have \$11 million available in the infrastructure line, which is just under one-third of the capital cost requirements of the provincial contribution of \$37 million.

Mr. Ashton: So we have identified \$1.89 million for losses for the Winnipeg Jets under Urban Economic Initiatives and \$11 million out of the \$34-million infrastructure allocation.

Are there any other areas under which either the losses or the construction of the new arena would be funded in this year's budget?

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Chairman, the answer is no, certainly not at this time. That does not preclude any discussions that might take place either with the City of Winnipeg or with the federal government or any requirements that might arise in terms of, as I say, the scheduling and the cash flow requirements and so on, but at this point in time, the answer is no.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Chairperson, I think our position is very clear on this.

We have stated our opposition to the loss agreement, and we are seeing again in this year, at a time when

times are tough, that we are looking at a \$1.89-million allocation out of this particular line item for the losses of the Jets, and we are looking at a further \$11 million that would come out of this year's budget from infrastructure, which we feel is absolutely wrong.

The government itself promised in the election it would allocate no more than \$10 million. In fact, it is breaking that promise in this year alone, and once we deal with the next line item that will effectively have been dealt with. We will be seeing the government break in one year alone its election promise in terms of that. We are seeing the continuing saga of the people of Manitoba paying under this line item for \$1.8, 9-million worth of losses of the Winnipeg Jets, not the first time the losses have been covered. We will see in terms of the negotiations over the next number of weeks where this will proceed from here.

I say to the minister that this government does not have the support of the people of Manitoba for what it is doing. It said one thing in the election and it is doing another thing today, and that just will not wash. Quite frankly, this Conservative Party may have won the election on April 25, but I think it lost a lot of its integrity, what integrity it had left, on a number of issues, including the Winnipeg Jets.

* (1610)

In fact, for that reason I move that line 27(f) Urban Economic Initiatives be reduced by \$1,891,304 that is allocated for Winnipeg Jets operating losses.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: It has been moved by the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), seconded by the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), that line 27.7 Urban Economic Initiatives be reduced by \$1,891,304, that is allocated for Winnipeg Jets operating losses.

Is there any debate on the motion?

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Chairman, I obviously disagree with almost everything that the member for Thompson said. I do not think that comes as any surprise to anybody around this table. The member is moving a motion to delete the funding of the provincial share of

Jets losses for this next quarter of just over \$1.8 million.

I do want to remind the honourable member that even under this interim agreement by the end of June of this year we will have funded losses from the provincial government of between \$9 million and \$10 million, but over that same period of time in terms of direct revenue to the Treasury of the government of Manitoba, direct taxation revenue that has come into our Treasury is in excess of \$17 million.

So even funding those losses, there has been a net benefit to our Treasury of approximately \$8 million that would not have been here had we not entered the agreement back in 1991 and the team had been able to sell and relocate.

Part of the idea of the interim agreement was to allow Manitobans to make a decision, a long-term decision whether or not professional hockey could remain here in our city and in our province to give private individuals, the private sector to come forward to find a solution and to put forward a contribution to keep the team here in Manitoba. That is happening with the offer that has been put forward by the Spirit of Manitoba and accepted by the current owners of the Winnipeg Jets Hockey Club.

But in terms of the economics of this interim agreement, to date there has been \$8 million of additional revenue to the Treasury of our government. There is a \$50-million economic impact by having the Jets here in Manitoba. They directly and indirectly created between 1,000 and 1,400 jobs.

If a new arena is built in our province, during construction there will be 2,000 jobs created and just during the construction alone there would be \$10 million of direct taxes to the provincial government. The federal government, during construction, would receive \$20 million of direct taxes.

So the interim agreement has allowed us to get to the stage of determining whether or not there is a long-term solution. There has been a net gain to our Treasury of approximately \$8 million, and I would hope that everybody opposes this motion put forward by the

member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), because it is just absolutely the inappropriate and incorrect thing to do.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Chair, I move that the question be put.

Point of Order

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): On a point of order, Mr. Chairperson, I have indicated to the Chair that I, too, would like to speak, and I would hope that the member for Wellington is not trying to limit my ability to at least comment on this very important issue.

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

Mr. Ashton: If I can be of assistance, we would have no problem in putting the motion after the member for Inkster being allowed to speak.

You will probably have to do it by leave since there is a motion on the floor, but we certainly—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The honourable member for Wellington withdraws it for now. She will have to repute it. The honourable member for Wellington is then deferring the vote until after the member for Inkster has spoken. The honourable member for Wellington is deferring moving that the question be put.

* * *

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, I am not attempting to try to hide anything. I have a number of questions that I would like to pose to the minister with regard to that. I understand that it has been deferred.

That is not going to limit my ability to ask questions, is that correct, Mr. Chairperson?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: What?

Mr. Lamoureux: The deferment that is being suggested is not going to limit my number of questions. I have a series of questions that I would like to ask. Is that correct?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Does the member for Inkster wish to make comments on the motion?

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, I have a number of comments that I would like to put on the record with respect to the motion. I also have some questions that I would like to be able to put to the minister even in regard to the motion itself.

The member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) has moved that the question now be put. I want to make sure that the member for Wellington understands what is happening is you are moving a closure. You are not allowing me the opportunity to ask questions. That is what I want to make sure of, Mr. Chairperson, that we do not have the member for Wellington telling me that I cannot speak to this particular motion or ask questions.

An Honourable Member: You were just recognized to speak—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. Right now the motion that the question be now put was deferred until after the member for Inkster spoke to the motion. It has to be to the motion. If the member wishes to ask questions on the line itself then you will have to wait until after the motion has been dealt with. The member for Inkster can indeed make comments on the main motion itself.

Mr. Lamoureux: Am I allowed, because of the deferral, to ask questions regarding the motion?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The honourable member will have to make his comments that would be directed to the motion. However, if the member does have a question we will have to rule on that question as to whether the question is in order or not.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, from what I understand, then, as long as the question I pose is related to the motion itself, I would be allowed to continue asking questions. Is that correct?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The honourable member has to pose his questions to the motion and then we will rule on it.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, this has been a very interesting discussion and debate that has occurred. What I would like to be able to do is to reflect a bit in terms of the discussions that I had. There were many different discussions, quite frankly, during the election and even prior to the election dealing with the Winnipeg Jets and the Winnipeg arena.

I felt personally that this is an issue which we have to be able to deal with. The best way to do that, of course, is to get a better understanding from our constituents that we represent in terms of where it is they would like to see government spend money.

I respect the argument that the New Democratic Party puts forward when they say, look, we just came out of a provincial election; the government gave the impression that we were going to be spending \$10 million, and then within days of the election we saw a significant increase of that \$10-million commitment. That causes a great deal of concern. There is no doubt about that.

* (1620)

I was, like every one of us, out canvassing during the election. You cannot underestimate the amount of discussion that occurred at the doors regarding this issue. Personally, within my area, I can honestly say that in the last four or five days it seemed that every third or fourth door someone was wanting to talk about the Winnipeg Jets or the arena, at least at times it appeared that way. I do not know, maybe it was because they were listening to CJOB, Vic Grant, or it seems at times, you know, if there is a topical topic on the radio that discussion would then occur at the door. It was the last few days of the campaign, four or five days I should say, in which this was an issue that was brought up consistently.

Individuals were concerned about saving the Winnipeg Jets. For me personally, I look at it as not only an issue of the Winnipeg Jets, that if in fact you are building a facility and this facility, whether it costs \$10 million or \$37 million from the public tax purse, it should not be built and there is absolutely no doubt in my mind, it should not be built if the ongoing

operational cost of this particular facility cannot be maintained if the Winnipeg Jets were not going to remain in the city of Winnipeg.

I think we have to look at the broader picture, that it is not just a facility to accommodate the Winnipeg Jets. There is no doubt that the Winnipeg Jets would play a very significant and be a major tenant of a new building wherever it might be built. It looks, or at least it appears to be being built around The Forks area.

When I talked during the election to the people that I was seeking support from, I was quite clear. I indicated that at no point in time should we as a government look at subsidizing the ongoing operational cost of an NHL franchise.

I believe that en masse, a vast majority, even the individuals who said, look, we want to save the Winnipeg Jets, a vast majority of those people did not believe that we should be supporting or subsidizing directly the ongoing losses of the Winnipeg Jets.

They look at it and they say, well, look, here you have education, you have health care and so many other government programs that are out there, many of which are being cut back on. They shared the opinion that I have in terms of priorities. For me, I indicated that I would not support any sort of a deal that would have seen the province of Manitoba entering into an agreement that would have seen public dollars being directly spent on the ongoing losses of the Winnipeg Jets.

Now, with respect to the facility itself, I argued that any facility, and I am not entirely convinced, and this is one of the reasons why I wanted to ask the minister some questions with respect to this, even to this day that the arena facility that is being proposed is in fact the facility that we should be moving towards.

Just recently, for example, I met with, I believe it was Rick Koswin. He has this multiplex proposal. We were not necessarily privileged to have the same sort of debate that occurred within City Hall when individuals were able to articulate and ask questions. Some of the caucuses had different types of presentations. I know we had presentations and so forth with respect to the

facilities. But when I talk to my constituents I try to separate the two issues, the operational, ongoing costs of the Winnipeg Jets as opposed to the actual costs of a facility.

I tried to suggest to the constituents, or the electorate at that time, that they need to be treated at least in most part as two separate issues because, ultimately, this government cannot guarantee that we are going to have an NHL franchise 15 years from now.

If we build a facility we can virtually guarantee that we are going to have that facility 15 years from now. I think that it has to be demonstrated that in fact whatever facility is built is going to be something that would be feasible whether or not we have an NHL franchise in Winnipeg or not.

That is why I have taken the time, not only prior to the election or during the election but also after the election, to sit down, to go over a proposal in which I believe—and again, because we have not had that same sort of dialogue or questions, that I think that the government should at least assure itself in its own mind that it is not making a mistake by trying to forge ahead in too quick of a fashion by ruling out what could be potentially a better idea.

I had a meeting shortly after the election in which I invited constituents. I sent out numerous letters, actually it was quite a few letters, inviting people to attend a meeting to express their concerns about a new facility and the Winnipeg Jets. The consensus that was there at that time was that, look, let us be realistic and look at the facility first and foremost even though a minority—I believe there was only one, possibly two individuals at that particular open invitation that said that they were not necessarily Winnipeg Jets fans, if you like. But through that particular meeting one of the individuals in attendance said, you know, you should be phoning this Mr. Koswin, because he has, in this individual's mind, an excellent idea, an idea that has not been followed up on.

I remember a presentation that our caucus had received from, and I am sure it was Mr. Koswin, with this superplex proposal which would have seen I believe it was a football stadium along with an arena

facility. I think it even suggested that we buy the Winnipeg Jets.

At the time of the presentation I thought it was fairly thorough and so forth. I did not think it was the way to go. But because it was a constituent and he made this suggestion to at least talk to Mr. Koswin, I made the commitment. I went ahead and made the phone call. I met with the individual, along with Harold Neufeld—everyone knows Harold Neufeld. He actually showed up at the constituency office with him and indicates that we have to—[interjection] Well, many members of the Chamber had a lot of respect for Mr. Neufeld. I for one had a great deal of respect for Mr. Neufeld.

An Honourable Member: There are some in the government that did not.

Mr. Lamoureux: A lot of people within the government at the time obviously did not. But, Mr. Chairperson, I digress somewhat.

Mr. Neufeld attended this meeting with Mr. Koswin, and I said, you know Harold—it is parliamentary for me to call him Harold because he is no longer the MLA—if I go to the Legislative Chamber and I say, hey look, you know, the government is going in the wrong direction. We should not be building this arena when we almost have the shovel in the ground. How is it possible that we can actually do something of this nature?

Some of the things were said that were off the record so I am going to respect those comments, but Mr. Neufeld indicated to me that it is time maybe that politicians have to be a bit more long term in their thinking in doing what they believe is right. He felt, and even though he was not able to go through all of the numbers, on the surface a multipurpose facility could potentially bring in additional revenues, would have more services, more opportunities to offer to all Manitobans. What he had heard and understood of the multiplex package that was being presented was that in fact it was something that was fairly feasible, and he thought it was something which we should be looking at.

* (1630)

He was also realistic enough to believe that, look, we have gone so far it would take quite a bit in order to change the city and the province and the national government from looking at a multiplex.

I sat through that particular discussion. I was given a video tape of the proposal. It is a three-minute video tape, and if the minister has never seen it I still have it downstairs in my office. I would be more than happy to make it available. The information that he gave me was actually fairly impressive. He gave me three, four documents. One of them—and you will have to excuse me for not knowing the name because it is not my expertise—was from a company that has built more sports venues than any other company in North America.

It is a fairly impressive package that this particular individual has put together. It says with the multiplex there is in fact—I always have to be careful because everything I say is on record obviously—but I believe he even made reference to I think it is called the Alamo. I could be wrong. It is something of that nature, and I will provide that for the minister if in fact he is interested. I have it just downstairs. Possibly prior to the vote—

Some Honourable Members: Why do you not go get it? Go get it.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please.

Mr. Lamoureux: I will ensure that all of the documents that were provided to me are in fact—[interjection] No, it is not foolish. I am not going to try to put words in the mouth of the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), but what I will do is I will make the commitment to get the package that was provided to me at my constituency office by Mr. Neufeld and Mr. Koswin, and I will get it to the minister by tomorrow. If he does not have it tomorrow morning at nine o'clock, give my office a call and I will walk it down myself or bring it to Question Period.

Even this video that is supplied looks as if it is a fairly well-detailed plan. It was interesting, after I received it I brought it up with my colleague from The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) and his response was, a couple

of days later he says, Kevin, or the member for Inkster—I cannot say my first name I take it. But my colleague from The Maples makes reference to the fact that now he has been approached. I guess word had gotten around that I had looked at something; now someone else had brought something to the member for Maples.

But there is a purpose as to why I am bringing this up. Here is the purpose. Here is the reason and it is very important. It is. Here we are talking about a significant expenditure of public dollars, and I do not believe—I should not say I do not believe—I want to feel assured that in fact this government and in particular the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) have done their homework, that we are not trying to expedite a proposal because it is going to save the Winnipeg Jets.

If in fact there are other proposals—like part of this particular proposal is that it was not going to spend any tax dollars. Well, I do not have the resources to be able to investigate, to go over the numbers. It has a lot to do with the motion, because what the motion is doing is it is reducing the amount of dollars that are being committed to a new facility.

Mr. Chairperson, if one looks at it one could say, are there other proposals that would cost less? Maybe the government would be able to fulfill its commitment. This is in fact what this particular individual was putting forward. I want to feel assured in my mind, because this is an excellent opportunity to do that, to seek that assurance, that in fact the government has gone over the many different proposals that are out there, not proposals that are specifically designed to save the Winnipeg Jets, but specifically designed to provide a facility in Winnipeg that would serve all Manitobans.

I am not entirely convinced that the Premier nor City Hall has done just that. I am attempting to seek that assurance from the Minister of Finance. You know, I was asked the question in terms of what about the federal government's role? There is no doubt the federal government has a role.

I was quoted in one article with respect to what should the federal government's role be?

Quite frankly, I look at this as a very important issue to Manitobans and believe very firmly that this is an issue which the Province of Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg have to establish in terms of priorities. In fact the province and the city establish this as a high priority, then in fact the federal government does have a responsibility in terms of providing resources.

Why do I say that, Mr. Chairperson? Because quite simply when I look at it, through infrastructure money, we have seen the federal government acknowledge other priorities of other provincial governments and municipalities and have allocated out resources to them also.

Well, if we in the province of Manitoba believe that this is a priority, then, yes, the federal government does have a responsibility in terms of allocating out financial resources to us. It makes sense for them to do that.

You know, I was listening when the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) made reference, or maybe it was the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), to infrastructure dollars, and we are going to get on to the infrastructure financing.

You remember last year, I do not know if it was in November, when we had the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer) standing up, saying, let us can the [interjection]—No, the bridge project over in, I believe it was in Charleswood, the Kenaston underpass. The NDP stood up day after day. I believe they even used the suggestion, and I am sure the member for Thompson would correct me if I am wrong, but the Leader of the New Democratic Party said, let us put that money into the construction of an arena—[interjection] Well, this is dealing with the motion, what we are talking about, sure.

Well, Mr. Chairperson, if I had the time and the research, I believe there was even an article that was printed a couple of years ago, and I will attempt, if the member for Thompson really wants me to challenge, challenge it, where the Leader of the New Democratic Party was quoted as saying of something, well, let us just get this thing over with and build the arena. I will try and find that particular quote. I believe I would have retained that.

I have a special file for the New Democratic Party, as I do for the Conservative Party, because, I, like everyone, want to make sure that there is a certain amount of consistency in policy making in government and also in terms of the opposition party.

When I look at it, I say that, yes, there is a great deal of political points that could be scored on this particular issue, but I want to go back to what Mr. Neufeld had told me, and you know something, Mr. Chairperson, I think that maybe one of the things we should do is we should have other individuals listen to some of the things, not all of the things. I disagree with a lot of the things the former member for Rossmere or Mr. Neufeld had to say.

I think one thing that did sink in for me was the fact that, look, we have to ensure that whatever it is that government ultimately does decide to build is in fact in Manitoban's best interest, not only in terms of the short term but the long term. This is the reason why when I look at the motion that has been brought forward, and I am glad the New Democrats brought forward this motion, because what it does, Mr. Chairperson, is it indicates that the New Democrats are also concerned. They have indicated that through questions about a commitment from this government of saying \$10 million.

Well, I look at it, and I say I want and I am seeking, looking for that assurance from the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) that in fact he, in particular, along with the Premier (Mr. Filmon) is not looking for the short-term solution for the Winnipeg Jets by saying we are going to secure the Winnipeg Jets here by just building a new hockey arena. Even though the Premier would argue, and I would be disappointed if he not, equally with the Minister of Finance, if the arena is just for the Winnipeg Jets, because quite frankly that would be a mistake if in fact that were the case.

There are many wonderful things that a new facility could bring forward for the province of Manitoba. I cannot recall the last time I went to a Winnipeg Jets' game right offhand. It would have been years ago. I cannot even recall if I was an MLA when I went to it quite frankly, but I have been—[interjection] Just seven years. I wish it were more, but only seven years for an

MLA, but I have been to the facility. It was, I believe, the Ice Capades, a nice family event. We really enjoyed it. I did have opportunity even to go up into the rafters.

* (1640)

I do not know how many people inside the Chamber have actually been in the rafters in the arena. Some of us are somewhat height sick, you know, but I tell you it is almost like mountain climbing is what many constituents have told me because I really do not believe I have been into the rafters as one individual that attended my meeting after the election. There was a consensus that was at that meeting, and that is that you know we do have a current facility, and there is no doubt about that, but there is a great deal of concern in terms of what that facility actually has to offer, not only just for the Winnipeg Jets but other venues that come. Individuals are very reluctant to even go to an event because of the mountain climb that they might have to incur.

I cannot take credit for the mountain climb. This is something which someone brought up at the meeting that I had.

One of the commitments that I indicated to them was that whatever does get constructed, it is very important to me and, I believe, very important to the Liberal Party, and I would hope that it would be equally important to all members of the Chamber. I think it is. This new facility, even if it is just the arena, is not just looked upon as a new home for the Winnipeg Jets, but rather a facility that is going to be able to provide many different events in the future for all Manitobans, Mr. Chairperson.

I think that is really important, and I would hope that the Minister of Finance, along with the Premier (Mr. Filmon), is keeping that first and foremost on the top of their minds. I would be quite disappointed, and I know my constituents would be very disappointed, if that were not the case. In fact, one of the things that I would like to be able to do is that, because I did make a commitment to the group that I met with after the election, once we do have more material that is being made—that has been a problem. As an elected official,

as an MLA, I was not really provided the type of information that I would have liked to have when I went to my constituents to try to be able to explain, here is the current status.

I think that is somewhat problematic in the sense that, as a local representative, I want to do what I can to ensure that in fact these people are—these people, I do not want to sound insensitive—that my constituents are kept informed. For those individuals who are interested and want to be kept informed, I want to be able to provide that service. Unfortunately, I do not believe that we have been provided the type of information that we could have been provided, and I hope that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) or this government will start providing us information.

I know, and I am prepared to even provide the Minister of Finance if he likes, the names of at least five individuals who attended this particular meeting so that he can send them information if he does not want to release it to me. Mind you, I would suggest they would probably bring it to me, but they are definitely very interested and wanted me to send them follow-up information. That is, in fact, what I intend on doing, Mr. Chairperson, and why I felt that it was important to be able to get on the record and talk about this because it is, in fact, a great deal of money that we are talking about.

We are talking about \$111 million of which almost all of it is there. Some of it still has to be found, but, as I am sure all of us heard, taxpayers want us to spend what tax dollars we collect in the best way that we can. I cannot blame individuals who are out there that are concerned about cutbacks. There was at least one individual at that particular meeting that brought up the issue of health care and education cuts, and they say, look, I hear of cuts in health care, I hear of cuts in education, how can we really afford to build a new facility? I am very sympathetic to those arguments, very sympathetic.

But I am also of the opinion that there are many benefits to be achieved if in fact we can build something in which there are going to be both long-term and short-term benefits and that might enhance our opportunities to be able to better finance and better

take care of those other social programs that government offered. That is why when someone says to me, look, this is a great deal of money, and should we be spending it, I say, yes, it is a great deal of money. Should we be spending it? Well, we have to make sure that government knows what it is in fact doing, and the best way that we can ensure that is happening is through sitting around a table and posing questions.

I was actually anticipating on waiting till concurrence before I was going to be asking these questions, and that is why I am somewhat glad that the motion was in fact passed because now it does provide me to ask a number—[interjection]

Well, I know it has not been passed yet, but there has been a motion. I did not mean to imply that the motion has been passed. I do not want to assume that the motion is going to be passed or that it is going to fail, but what it does—[interjection]

Well, the member for Wellington assumes that I have not made up my mind on this particular issue. I am somewhat disappointed. The member for Wellington should know that— [interjection] Well, I hope to get a number of questions off and that will—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. I am having a little bit of a hard time hearing the member for Inkster.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, I do want to indicate to the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) and the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) that we will vote on this, and you will be able to see how we are going to be voting. I do not understand why they would be complaining.

I see that I am running out of time, and I do have a very important question that I want to pose to the Minister of Finance, having given some background in terms of where it is that I am coming from, and depending on the response that the minister gives, hopefully—[interjection] No response?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The honourable member for Inkster can only make comments to the motion.

The honourable minister cannot answer a question that you want to put at this time.

Point of Order

Mr. Lamoureux: On a point of order then, Mr. Chairperson. Because it is a very important amendment, can I ask anyone questions regarding this? Can I ask the mover of the amendment?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. Let me just explain here. The honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) at this point cannot pose a question that the minister may answer. However, you can ask the question and after the motion put forward by the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) is dealt with, then the minister may answer the question, depending of course if this motion is passed or turned down.

Mr. Lamoureux: Just for clarification, Mr. Chairperson, I was under the understanding—and that is one of the reasons why I wanted to explain in detail what I just finished explaining, that I could in fact ask questions. To make it clear, I am not allowed to ask questions because the member for Wellington moved that the question now be put?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: You can ask the question. The only problem is the question cannot be answered at this point.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, for clarification, is that because there is a motion on the floor that the question now be put? Is that the reason why I cannot ask any questions?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: That is right.

Mr. Lamoureux: Having said that, Mr. Chairperson, I guess I am somewhat disappointed because I did want to be able to ask a number of questions, but I can wait until after the vote on this particular line. I am sure that we will get other opportunities—or I will get another opportunity to be able to ask some questions. I hope that we will get the vote done with—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable member for Inkster's time is up.

It has been moved by the member for Wellington that the question be now put. This is a nondebatable motion and, if adopted, means that we will proceed to a vote on the motion moved by the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

Voice Vote

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: All those in favour of the member for Wellington's (Ms. Barrett) motion that the question be put, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: All those against, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: It is my opinion the Nays have it.

Formal Vote

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I request a recorded vote.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Is there a member to support that?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The honourable member for Wellington.

We shall now recess to the Chamber for a formal vote.

NATURAL RESOURCES

* (1440)

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson (Gerry McAlpine): 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 Natural Resources. When the committee last sat, it had been considering item 12.3 Resource Programs (a) Water Resources (1) Administration (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits on page 117 of the main Estimates book. Shall this item pass? The item is accordingly passed. No, it is not, I have to read it first.

Item 3. Resource Programs (a) Water Resources (1) Administration (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$370,800—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$385,500—pass; (c) Grant Assistance \$25,000—pass.

3.(a)(2) Water Licensing and Approvals (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$615,300—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$32,400—pass.

3.(a)(3) Water Management (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,215,900—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$134,000—pass; (c) Waterway Maintenance \$3,818,000—pass.

3.(a)(4) Hydrotechnical Services (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,446,000.

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): I just have a couple of quick questions about the situation involving a dam out at Swan Lake. I was better organized when I was late. I will attempt to go by memory.

I have received a submission or a request from the Pembina Valley Protection Association. They have some concerns surrounding the dam at Swan Lake, and my understanding is that the minister has undertaken a commitment to a survey in the area. Can he enlighten me on the status of that survey?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Chairman, maybe just so I get a better feel for it, if the member could clarify a little bit what the concern is, because the member knows that there are the trilakes, there are three lakes. There is Pelican, basically, where we have a structure built, and that is working well; we have made a commitment to do the structure on Rock Lake; and on Swan Lake, we have a group there as well. There is an advisory group of municipalities that basically have been asking for—first of all, Rock Lake, we agreed on the Rock

Lake end of it. I think the plan is in place and we are working on that.

There was also representation made to me to do Swan at the same time as we did Rock Lake, but we are not advanced as far with Swan Lake as we are with Rock Lake. There is also—because of the people living around the lake there we have to or we are trying to get a comfort level as to what the level should be in terms of the structure. I am wondering if the member could clarify if this is what his concern is.

Mr. Struthers: Yes, you have answered the part about the survey and that would be at Rock Lake. My understanding though is that there is an obstruction at Swan Lake that is causing the problems for agricultural people upstream from Swan Lake. There is a slab of cement across the river. There are no gates within this dam, and the water is flowing over the dam, but it is seen as an obstruction in clearing that water out along the Pembina River.

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, to the member, I was out there last year having meetings onsite with them related to the advisory group on the Rock Lake thing. At the same time, we then took and travelled and personally viewed the bridge which is there where the Swan Lake exits into the ongoing river.

There is not a dam in place really that I am aware of but there is some work that was done, I do not know whether by Highways or something like that, in terms of building up a berm on both sides. The opening, if I can recall correctly, was wide open in terms of the flow out of there. Now, I am not quite sure. Staff is not quite sure either as to whether we have a structure there. I do not think we have a structure there.

There have been a variety of suggestions made from time to time, including the member for that area, the former Speaker, who has been very concerned about the project. Our concern has been all the time that, our information basically tells us to construct a concrete weir, which is not there. It would be about \$620,000 to do the job right with a proper structure, but we still do not know to what extent we would want to increase the water levels because of the impact it has upstream from this point where the water flows out of Swan.

I do not know how to explain this. When you are there you can explain, because there are certain people that are being affected that have cottages and properties against the lake. This is one reason why over the years, I guess, Swan has really not moved forward.

We have done it piecemeal now. Like I say, we have done Pelican. We are in the process with Rock, where we have an agreement, we know that we are doing it, we are going to be doing it. Even there we had long discussions but, ultimately, we finally came to accept the recommendations of the councils and the committees over there. There is still an individual there who is not very happy with it and, on Swan, we still did not have that comfort level in terms of, how high do the people in the municipalities basically want that level to be?

Everybody has their own view and this is again coming back to almost like the Dauphin Lake group, you know, you have different views on it and stuff of that nature, but I am not quite sure in my mind, I did not think we had a structure there, nothing that I could recall thinking back being there last summer and our information staff is not quite sure.

If the member can maybe outline specifically the problem, I will try and get detailed information for him on that project, okay?

Mr. Struthers: The complaint that I was made aware of was that there was a structure that was in the river that was backing up the flow from Swan Lake back through, I suppose, it is the Pembina River to Rock Lake and flooded conditions were in between Rock Lake and Swan Lake.

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I am trying to think now, there was one place where there was, not a concrete structure, there was a rock weir that was in there, but I think that is between Rock and Swan, somewhere along the line. I am not sure. I am wondering if I could maybe be helpful to the member if he could follow through with his contact and itemize on paper maybe the concern that he has, and then I will get the detailed information from my people out in the field so that I can address specifically what he is requesting.

Mr. Struthers: I think the material that I was privy to, at least part of it was letters from the Pembina Valley Protection Association to various ministers, including Natural Resources. So I think the information is probably already in his hand some place, but I will undertake to look further into that concern.

I wonder if part of the concern is the dam that Ducks Unlimited has constructed in the area and whether the request has been to review the water licence that was given to Ducks Unlimited several years ago.

*(1450)

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, the only place where Ducks Unlimited is involved with is at the Pelican Lake, where that structure is and where they control the level, but that is not what the member is referring to. We have trilakes, there are three, there is Pelican, Rock and Swan. The statement that I made at the time, when I was out there last year, that we would not make any movement until we had co-operation from the affected landowners and the municipalities, that is why we are trying to get appeal for that as to what level they would want it on Swan.

I am still a little confused as to—the member mentions a cement weir, and the member mentions Ducks Unlimited, and that to me does not add up. So I am wondering if he could maybe, by checking his information and putting it in writing to me personally, we will get him the detailed information on it. I am prepared to then discuss it further with him at any given time, if that is acceptable.

Mr. Struthers: Yes, that sounds fair. I have about a billion more questions to ask in the area of Water Resources, but time is not going to permit me to do it, I do not think. But over the course of the next period of time, I probably will be able to ask a lot more questions and I appreciate the answers I have been getting.

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I can appreciate the concern the member has, that the area of water is such a big and important and complex issue that we could probably spend days debating it. I want to maybe assure the member that I put very, very high value on

anything that happens in the province with water, whether it is aquifers underneath or rivers, et cetera.

We are hoping, I am hoping very strongly to move forward and develop some policy based on our water policies, and I think the member maybe has a book of the water policies. If not, I will make sure he gets one, but in conjunction with that, to develop some water retention and water usage programs, we have ongoing pressure for irrigation and, at the same time, I think we have to start looking, contrary to just doing drainage work, we have to start looking at keeping water back for flood protection as well as usage.

As these things evolve I will try and make the member as apprised as I can of things as they come forward and we can always discuss these at any time during the year. It does not have to be in the course of session or things of that nature. I am in my office virtually year-round anyway. If the member comes in and has some concerns we can sit down, he can maybe, if it would be helpful, maybe itemize three, four, five, six issues at a time. We will set up a time and he can drop in and if I can get a little advance notice we can set up a time and I can try to address some of the concerns for him just to be helpful to him.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: Item 3.(a)(4) Hydrotechnical Services (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,446,000—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$391,400—pass; (c) Canada-Manitoba Agreement for Water Quality Surveys \$286,900—pass.

Item 3. Resource Programs (b) Parks and Natural Areas (1) Administration (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$379,500.

Mr. Struthers: Under this section, I was interested in reading about a feasibility study as a special operating agency for a parks program. I am not familiar with what a special operating agency is, so I might want to start with an explanation of that.

Mr. Driedger: First of all, a special operating agency, the government has embarked on this over the last number of years and has established a few of them. I could maybe give an example. The government vehicle garage is set up as a special operating agency.

What that basically means is that all services, because it is a service to a department or a service organization, all the services they provide to the various departments are charged out at cost so there is no deficit within that system.

Under the Pineland Nursery, which is our tree plantation that we have out at Hadashville, we are now establishing that as a special operating agency which basically means they can cost recover all their total operations. So they can actually go out and bid on other provinces for the selling of seedlings. Organizations that they sell to, they can cost recover. That is what is meant by special operating agency. That group or segment of a service industry has to recover their total costs, so it is not a liability anymore. The government has been moving in that direction on various elements of that.

I say that as background, if the member is asking whether we have a special operating agency for parks, we are not at that point. There is discussion on it and basically what the concept would be. That is further down the pike somewhere along the line, and we are not there because we have other things we have to take—and I believe first we have to proclaim the parks act, which was passed in '93. We are in that long convoluted process of getting input from the public. I believe that would have to be done first before we would ever get down to the point of talking any further about a special operating agency for a park.

Ultimately, let us say, if we wanted to use the concept for the Whiteshell area, where the cottage owners are, the services that we provide, that we recover those costs through charges, whatever the case may be. That would be sort of the concept that we are developing, but we are not in that process at this time. There are some outside discussions, but we are not moving on it yet.

Mr. Struthers: It says here there is a feasibility study going on. Is there a date for when that feasibility study would be complete or are you expecting a report by a certain time?

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, my deputy tells me we are looking at possibly late summer, maybe fall, to get

sort of a preliminary report coming forward in terms of some ideas. I personally have not been involved with it to any degree, and I am going to be very slow and cautious because, like I say, my first priority in the department would be under the parks end of it to get the parks act proclaimed.

I think our target date is next spring sometime really, if we get all the consultation done. To further clarify to the member that when the parks act was passed, it gave us the then-part of the concept was going to be to set up classes and categories of parks, parks that were basically where there is no commercial development allowed, no cottage development, basically virgin wilderness parks, and then we have parks where we allow cottage development, and then we have some parks that we do not allow anything. That is where we allow commercial development—Falcon being one, West Hawk. We have five classes. Then within the classes we also have categories as to what would be allowed.

This is sort of going to be brought before the public, because we have well over a hundred parks of varying sizes. When we think of a provincial park we think of something like Falcon or West Hawk or Birds Hill or Grand Beach, the provincial parks. We have many, many in much smaller categories right down to roadside parks. We want to classify these and then establish under the categories what is allowed in these. It is a major undertaking. I have been a little frustrated that we have not been moving faster, but there is an awful lot of work that has to be done.

That consultation is going to be starting in July, approximately at that time, when they will be going out advertising and asking for input from the general public. All the stakeholders then can come forward. I have used that approach. I think it is a good approach. The member probably is aware of the criticism that some of the communities up north have made with the four parks that we announced and have said repeatedly that those four parks as well will come under that kind of scrutiny, that people basically can come and say this is what should happen or not happen in these parks.

I am not prepared to revisit or to cancel the parks. They are established. How we deal with them and

what we do with, for example, the concerns of the aboriginal groups that say traditional hunting rights, these are not affected, nor will anything be affected if there is going to be treaty land entitlement allocations out of that. I have said this many times as well. If there are lands like that, we will take and move them out of the park.

Just to allay some of the concerns of some of his colleagues, the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) and some of the others that have raised some concerns with that, I just want to say that process will apply there as well, and everybody is going to have a chance to get involved.

* (1500)

I think possibly why there was not more involvement and it was sort of a reaction after we announced was the fact that I guess people did not really pay that much attention when the first initial notices were sent out in terms of what we were trying to do. This gives everybody another kick at the cat, so to speak.

I could go on in terms of the parks about the federal park, the national park that is being established at Churchill, and what we are doing with the national park, what we call the Lowlands Park. The member is probably aware of it. We had three areas that were under consideration. If he wants further information on that I can embellish on that in terms of the process where it is at right now.

I just thought, I am replying based on the member saying, you know, the special operating agency but I gave him a little bit of a background right away.

Mr. Struthers: I just love it when I ask one question and I get my next three answered. That saves me some time. The only concern I have in what you had just said to me was that you were talking about aboriginal land entitlements and the public hearings and you prefaced it all by saying that the parks will be there. I think one of the concerns that comes forward is, if you have already made up your mind that the parks are going to be there and these are the boundaries of the parks, then why are we going through all the public hearings if you are not willing to change anything?

One of the sentiments that I have been aware of is that they should have been looking at settling up on land entitlements before we started drawing the boundaries of provincial parks.

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, let me just maybe give a little bit of background again to the member that the treaty land entitlement process has been going for a hundred years—not quite that bad, I guess—but for a long, long time. If we had wanted to wait with many of the decisions till that is totally resolved, I do not think the member or myself both would have the patience for that. However, just in defence of the process that we took with the established parks, notices were sent out, and I tabled the list in the House in terms of how many aboriginal groups were all sent information based on what we were going to do. There were individuals who responded or groups that responded, and we responded again and allayed their fears. So it is basically a bit of a misunderstanding that they did not have any input or opportunity.

However, they will again have that chance and if there are things that they want to bring forward—the member says, well, we cannot change—we can change whatever we want, I suppose, based on the rationale and the reason for it, but the parks are now established. They are there. That does not mean that the aboriginal people want for treaty land entitlement a block out of there, we will take and exempt that. What can be done one way can be done the other way as well. But those parks are established.

Now if they want to say, well, we do not want any hunting or fishing in there by anybody, we can do that. All they have to do is come through the process and tell us what they want or if they want hunting and fishing for their traditional uses out there, no problem. So there is enough latitude in the way we have established these parks that whatever they want to do can still be done. So I have encouraged them many, many times when they have been critical about the way we did things that you had your chance but the door is not shut. You can come back when we do the process, and you can come and make your views known and we will try and accommodate as best we can.

Mr. Struthers: I have no more questions here.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: Item 3. Resource Programs (b) Parks and Natural Areas (1) Administration (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$379,500—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$343,400—pass; (c) Grant Assistance \$131,500—pass.

3.(b) Parks and Natural Areas (2) Planning and Development (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$644,200—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$188,400—pass.

3.(b) Parks and Natural Areas (3) Park Districts (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$405,800—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$41,000—pass.

3.(b) Parks and Natural Areas (4) Park Operations and Maintenance (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$9,260,800.

Mr. Struthers: I would like to get an indication a little bit about what is happening with the cottagers and the whole question of the Florence-Nora road that has been talked about in the Whiteshell Park. My worry is that we are using public dollars to build a private road in a public provincial park. I certainly hope that is not the direction that the park is taking. I think there is some evidence that leads me to believe that that may in fact be the case.

Could the minister update me on just what is going on with that road?

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I could probably give a little bit of background. Initially, when this issue first started up was—as the member is probably aware—when CN basically cut back services under VIA at that time which provided a service for these people to these lakes. Well, they did not really cut it off. What they did, they gave them one car a week or something like that and it was creating a real problem.

Right or wrong, somewhere along the line in the past there was provision made that these people could establish cottages there and have service to it. When the feds made that decision, these people were left in the lurch where they could either walk in—take a half a day to walk into the lakeshore—either they could fly in which they could not afford. I was then the Minister of Highways and Transportation, and they came and

asked what the possibilities, whether we would insist on trying to put pressure on the federal government to participate because there is the Florence-Nora ones but also the ones in Ontario that have the same problem, you know. Mostly these are Manitoba citizens.

At that time, being the Minister of Highways and Transportation, we offered technical assistance in terms of we brought one of our specialists in from up north that was qualified to designate roads, things of that nature, used him to sort of maybe outline a road. I also wrote in support of this group to the federal minister and talked to him personally about the fact that I felt there was some commitment that should be made by the federal government towards assisting these people to be able to continue utilizing their cottages. Progress was very, very slow.

Ultimately, the federal government said, well, there was an environmental process as well that had to be gone through. So application was made to the Department of Environment and they went through all kinds of—and the group met with the various lobby groups and environmental groups. You know, there was a lot of liaison went on. Ultimately, the hearing process proceeded and a licence was issued for them to be able to build a road after they had addressed the concerns in terms of impact environmentally on the wilderness area, how close do they get to cottages and some other trails, et cetera. All these things were sort of worked out with an understanding, and based on that the Minister of Environment issued a licence.

Now there was talk initially, many discussions took place, as to whether there should be any provincial money. We always said it is a federal responsibility and it is the private people that have the cottages, their responsibility. To date there has been no commitment in terms of monies for the construction of the road. It is considered a private road.

I would have to update myself as to exactly what the environmental licence reads and that, but the Minister of Highways, after the member raised a question the other day, I checked with him. There is no commitment from Highways, though I was privy to discussions prior to me moving to Natural Resources almost two years ago.

You know, they have always wanted some participation and we have always said, you go and see the federal minister, and the federal minister sometimes made reference back and said, why could this not be part of the infrastructure program, whatever the case may be.

There is no commitment from the provincial government from my perspective, or from the Minister of Highways, in terms of financial participation on that road. That is sort of the status of where it is at right now.

Mr. Struthers: The environmental licence that was given for the construction of this road, was that from the provincial government or was that a federal government okay on the environmental licence?

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, that licence is a provincial environmental licence. There is no requirement really for a federal responsibility, but the federal minister at some time—and they have been changing a few times, the federal ministers. This initially happened under the Mulroney government when the first activities were made and there were three different ministers under that administration that already played a role.

* (1510)

This is a long, long history that has been involved here, so the environment licence is basically the Manitoba licence. One of the requirements for even the feds to do any discussion at all was that the environmental requirements would be addressed and met, and ultimately the licence was issued after a long protractive period.

Mr. Struthers: This is where my problem comes in in this whole matter. My understanding is that the environmental licence was granted this spring or February and that the environmental licence was contingent upon getting federal money. Yet the federal government back in August of '94 had said that they were not going to put any money into it. I do not understand how an environmental licence was granted to go ahead with the construction of the road given that one of the contingencies was federal money.

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, that comes as a surprise to me. I do not think that is my recollection of it, and certainly not staff, that there was any new condition. I can try and get a copy of it. The environmental minister would have a better idea, but I am sure that would not be one of the conditions in there.

My recollection, if I can recall, was basically the province issued the licence. It is just like when we talk of any other development, the environmental department issues the licence but it is not related to funding at all. I would be surprised if there was this funding condition in there, because that would be separate. Really, I do not know if we have ever done that, whether that has ever been done by the Department of Environment.

I have not seen the licence, but I am prepared to take and see whether there is anything. I doubt whether it would be in there unless the member can correct me.

Mr. Struthers: Just in case I am right, I would ask then that somebody in your department look this up and investigate and report back to me at some time.

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I will ask my ADM to maybe contact the environmental people and get a clarification on how the licence reads.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: Item 3. Resource Programs (b) Parks and Natural Areas (4) Park Operations and Maintenance (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$9,260,800—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$2,979,900—pass.

3.(b)(5) Support Services (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$175,900.

Mr. Struthers: Under Support Services I notice in your Expected Results that it says there: Produce a recreational travel guide for one provincial park. I would be interested to know which park, and are there any plans for such guides in other parks?

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I do not know what really that means in there. I do not know whether staff knows what it means in there. When you look at the amount of material that basically is printed I cannot

really—produce a recreational travel guide for one provincial park. I would have to assume that maybe it was for Lake Mantario area where we have, let us see, the hiking trails and stuff of that nature. That is the only thing I can assume at this point. I will have to get details.

You know, tongue in cheek, I will have to tell the member I will have to get back to him. My deputy says he recalls that there was one park where we were trying to do some specific kind of a recreational guide, travel guide, but he does not remember the park. We will respond back. We will take that as notice and get back to you, okay?

Mr. Struthers: There was some other information—this is not connected with this line I suppose—that I asked for yesterday that I would be waiting for as well. Is there anything new on that?

Mr. Driedger: No. I remember making commitments to the member in terms of the structural—the regional offices, et cetera. We do not have all that. We just have not had enough time to get that all packaged together. My ADM has made note of every one of your requests, and it will all be itemized and come forward to you.

An Honourable Member: Two weeks, Sunday.

Mr. Driedger: No, it will be sooner than that.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: Item 3.(b)(5) Support Services (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$175,900—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$50,300—pass.

3.(c) Policy Co-ordination (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$909,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$235,900—pass; (3) Grant Assistance \$17,200—pass.

3.(d) Forestry (1) Administration (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$456,400—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$306,200—pass; (c) Grant Assistance \$275,800—pass.

3.(d)(2) Forest Resource Surveys (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$713,800—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$140,600—pass.

3.(d)(3) Forest Landscape Management (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$790,500—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$898,100—pass.

3.(d)(4) Forest Economics and Marketing (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$312,400.

Mr. Struthers: I have just a couple of questions concerning Louisiana-Pacific. I noticed, as I read the forest management licence, that it was your signature that was on it, so I feel pretty safe in asking the questions here as opposed to in Environment Estimates. It does deal with the environmental controls that are at Louisiana-Pacific that are being put into the plan right now in Minitonas. What technology is going into controlling emissions from the plant?

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, this is not passing the buck, but on the emissions end of it, this is where I just do not have the knowledge or information, because we do not play a role in the emissions end of it.

Our involvement with the environmental process and licences is based on the forest management plan that is developed between our department and Louisiana-Pacific in terms of how they will take and do the cutting; how they will take and do the restoration of the forest, et cetera; and that we leave room, that we leave proper zones for rivers for fish, the fish reproduction, the fishing, for wildlife that we channel so that they do not do the clear cut all over the place. That is all part of a forest management plan that we get involved in.

Unfortunately, on the emissions and on the plant end of it, I am totally disadvantaged and have no role there. So I cannot help the member on that.

Mr. Struthers: Okay, I will hold my questions till a different time then, except that—no, I will hold that one too. Never mind.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: Item 3. Resource Programs (d) Forestry (4) Forest Economics and Marketing (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$312,400—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$30,300—pass.

(5) Pineland Forest Nursery (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits; (b) Other Expenditures.

Mr. Struthers: Yes, we touched on this just briefly this morning. I received a good explanation of what an SOA is, and I am not sure that I understand the benefits of converting the Pineland forestry into a special operating agency.

* (1520)

Mr. Driedger: Well, part of the rationale that government uses when establishing a special operating agency is that where services are provided to various departments or organizations or even outside organizations like Repap or Abitibi where we have forest management plans—the challenge is that by making them a special operating agency you get the efficiency out of it. The challenge is for the people who are involved with this they can take and have their own initiative in terms of being more efficient, whereas prior to this there was always, you know, it is part of the big government system and efficiency was not there.

By doing it this way, by and large, we get much more production out of it, and they take ownership of the whole thing, and it gives them a lot of flexibility. It is a cost recovery. You know, there is more independence, more flexibility for them and less administration costs. That is what government is looking at because we now have groups of people who basically work together as a team, almost like the private sector, and still have the protection of basically being part of government, but they have to operate cost efficiently among themselves. That is why if the member looks at the top of page 119 where there is no cost affiliated in that, that means there is no dollars going in. They have to be efficient on their own.

Mr. Struthers: How many people worked at the Pineland Nursery when it was part of your department? How many people were employed there?

Mr. Driedger: I think during the summer months we run approximately 50, more or less. It varies because at certain times depending on when the planting that takes place or in winter time at a certain time when they do the packaging and the freezing of them, it is quite an operation. If the member ever has an opportunity, our operator out there his name is Richard

Cameron. If he ever gets into that area and if he wants to make a point of it, Richard is very receptive. He is our CEO or director of the operations out there, and he will give him a great insight into exactly what is happening. It is just a fantastic operation.

The employment varies. At certain times when they do the packaging, the freezing of the seedlings, we have more than 50, 60 people operating there. At certain times it varies, it drops down. There is not a stable figure on that, unfortunately. That is why I am inviting the member to maybe go down to give him a good bird's eye view. I do not know whether he has ever had the opportunity to be up in that area. It is at Hadashville down No. 1, and it is just a great operation.

Mr. Struthers: No, I have not been to the nursery. I have been to Hadashville, but someday maybe I will just do that. The deputy minister was one step ahead of me there with one of his comments. My concern would be that fewer people would be employed there now than what was previously the case. Will there be any reductions in the number of people working at the nursery?

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, it is not intended that there would be any reductions. But under the special operating agency they have to find the efficiency end of it in there. I would expect that probably there would be with the latitude that we have given them maybe more employment than less because they are now bidding on projects and supplying on the open market. So it gives them an opportunity to even expand.

Mr. Struthers: Is there any public money at all going into the nursery now, or are they totally separate from the public purse?

Mr. Driedger: When we set up the special operating agency the one thing to make sure that they find their feet under them to operate efficiently, we guarantee that we as government would buy 10 million seedlings for the next three years. They still have to provide it at cost, but we give them that guarantee. After that, if they cannot get the market and we can buy them cheaper somewhere else, tough beans. But I have to say that they feel very confident. The people themselves feel comfortable with being a special

operating agency. In fact, they have just landed a big contract in Ontario. So that is basically what the challenge is of it.

Everybody takes ownership of it and wants to make it work. Maybe, Mr. Chairman, if I could still continue, it was basically people like Richard Cameron and his people who felt that they were being hindered to some degree by the government bureaucracy and the system and basically requested that they be given the opportunity to do that. As we negotiated the whole process, that is where the guarantee came in—put three years to buy 10 million seedlings, because we use them anyway. I mean, we were supplying them till now, and this is the guarantee that we gave them. They feel very comfortable. They are off and running.

Mr. Struthers: What about buildings or land or equipment, supplies, anything that was there before, did that just turn over to the nursery or was there a price for that? How would that work?

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, there was a total management plan developed, and all the values of buildings and assets, equipment, and there is lots out there, it was all part of the process as developed in the management plan for it. So it is not that they have been disadvantaged or terribly advantaged. It was a business plan basically that was developed, and these things were all taken into consideration.

Mr. Struthers: So the provincial government then never received anything from private people in terms of money for the capital and the buildings and equipment.

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, the business plan, by and large, in establishing the SOA, these are assets that ultimately they can use to take and borrow money on and expand, let us say, if they wanted to expand.

The assets belonged to the special operating agency. It is almost like private sector, but it is still not private sector. I do not know how to clarify that further, but everything that was there, every tractor, every building with, you know, all the planting equipment, et cetera—and we have some pretty sophisticated, nice equipment there. You know, the gathering of cones, it is a real art these things.

That is why I am encouraging the member, not to get off the subject, but to go down there and look because, if you gather cones in northern Manitoba, for example, and you try and seed them in the south, your success ratio is going to be very poor even if it is black spruce to black spruce.

But if you take and gather the seedlings of black spruce in northern Manitoba and then, you know, return—as you take the seed or whatever the case may be, you develop it to seedlings, you move it back. In fact they freeze it. It is being flown in in wintertime, stored in caches up there, and then, in springtime, when the time comes, we move crews in there.

Basically it is tendered for either through the companies or partly government, whatever the case may be. They get out there and move in and plant the trees. It is quite an art.

One very often thinks, well, it is a matter of just planting a tree and away you go. It is a real science, and so these people take great pride in what they are doing. So, again, I encourage the member to go.

Mr. Struthers: These special agencies, are they part of the private sector?

Mr. Driedger: No, Mr. Chairman, they are not private sector. This is basically operating under government, an arm of government, almost like a Crown corporation, similar to a Crown corporation. I mean, we still have the authority. If they do not operate efficiently, government can step in and take over the operations of it, but this gives them, as a unit, the flexibility to operate as they see fit, giving them the flexibility of decision making, responsibility of decisions, et cetera.

That is the part that actually intrigues government to some degree and intrigues the people that are in there. They do not have to come and run and report to us all the time. They ask permission to do certain things. They make decisions, run the place. If they are not going to run it, well, of course, we have the option of moving back in there and dealing with it.

Mr. Struthers: When the Pineland Nursery turns a profit, where does the profit go?

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, the profit, if there is profit and we hope there will be, would stay within this special operating agency. They could then use that for upgrading of equipment, expansion, et cetera. My deputy tells me that if they would be profitable enough, if they wanted to, they could even pay dividends to their employees out of that special operating agency.

Mr. Struthers: Do they pay taxes?

Mr. Driedger: I think I put wrong information on the record. I want to correct it right away.

The profits or the dividends come back to government. Dividends come back to government.

As for the other question that the member asked, as is the case with most government property when it is within a local government district, as in this case, or a rural municipality, governments pay grant in lieu of taxes, and that goes either to the LGD or the municipality. That would be the case here with the Pineland Nursery as well. I believe the LGD of Reynolds basically would be the benefactor there, but that would not have changed from—because it is a special operating agency, that was done before, where a government then paid grant in lieu of taxes and it would continue on that basis to the LGD.

Mr. Struthers: Are there any groups out there in competition with the Pineland Nursery? Are there any small, private-sector people doing the same sort of work?

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, there are a variety of nurseries throughout the province even closer to the city, but they specialize in a different type of nursery: shrubs, specialized trees, et cetera. They are not in this category basically. This would be more in the line of Indian Head, the kind of nursery that the feds have out there. We had a nursery up at The Pas, which has been closed down, and we were agonizing how to—my deputy informs me that there is only one competitor along these lines, and that would be the Long Plain band. They have a long-term commitment through the

federal government to provide seedlings for various—you have the federal parks, federal lands, et cetera. They have a long-term lead contract for that, but that would be the only one that would be in a competitive position in this category.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: Item 3.(d)(5) Pineland Forest Nursery (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits; (b) Other Expenditures.

3.(d)(6) Forest Renewal \$4,754,600—pass.

3.(d)(7) Canada-Manitoba Partnership Agreement in Forestry.

Mr. Struthers: Is there any plan to carry on the services that were formerly provided through this program? I know a lot of students ended up getting jobs for the summer out of this. I think they would like to know.

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, first of all, this is a sad, sad story. I think it was a sad day for Manitoba when the federal government discontinued the cost-shared arrangements that we had in the forestry agreement, because it was a very substantive program to us, dealing with the woodlot programs, et cetera.

(Mr. Peter Dyck, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

We had a lot of research, and the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) made reference to some of that the other day already. As the line shows here, there is no further participation. The question was raised exactly, what the impact of that is, I think we are working on that. We are continuing the program.

I am told by my staff that the forest renewal is continuing at the same level, but there are some things that obviously we cannot participate and do the full shot as we did under the feds, and that has to do with research, that has to do with some grants, et cetera.

So it is really in my view, as I mentioned to the member for Crescentwood, a sad state of affairs when our resources which are so valuable to us and to all Canadians and Manitobans that this is an area where we start taking and really cutting back. I think the

impact of it is something that is going to be felt a long ways down the track and we will all rue and regret the day that this happened.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Dyck): Item 3.(d)(7) Canada-Manitoba Partnership Agreement in Forestry—pass.

3.(e) Fisheries (1) Administration (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$196,500.

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Just very briefly, Mr. Chairperson, following up with my questions the other day, has the minister had a chance to consider whether some strategy that involved other provinces and some public information might be effective in hoping to bring to the attention of the federal government the error of their ways in cutting the federal role in fisheries research?

This may not be exactly the right line but I did want to ask the minister the follow-up question.

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, the member raised it with me the other day, and I told him at that time I was not quite sure exactly what we were doing.

Based on the question that he raised, we are gathering the information that we can. We are also comparing and looking at what other provinces have done to see whether we can take jointly with them, get more support in terms of putting the pressure on the federal government, and I will take and give a written response to the member if that is adequate once we have a little bit more detail. I do not have enough of it now that I feel comfortable in putting too much on the record.

I am told that my director of fisheries, Dr. Joe O'Connor, is meeting with federal officials right now, so once we have sorted this out a little better, I will give a more definitive position to the member in writing.

Mr. Sale: Mr. Chairperson, I thank the minister very much for that. I think that he could count on the support of at least our members in the House in taking a very strong stand against what I think is clearly both

short- and long-range stupidity on the part of the current federal government.

Mr. Driedger: Yes, I thank the member for that. I am just going to say that I think it is important that we all should get support from the other provinces. I will be looking for that endorsement from them and may be working together in terms of developing some strategy as to how we put the pressure on.

Without wanting to sound dejected, despondent, we will have to have a good plan. Otherwise, I do not see just by screaming, do not do it, that anything will happen. We will have to maybe develop the benefits in such a way that there is going to be an understanding. Maybe we can appeal to the common sense in terms of making it happen. I will try and give an update on that and if there is any further advice the member wants to give at that time, I am prepared to accept that.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Dyck): Moving on then, item 3. Resource Programs (e) Fisheries (1) Administration (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$196,500—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$172,600—pass.

3.(e)(2) Fish Culture (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$592,800—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$300,400—pass.

3.(e)(3) Fisheries Habitat Management (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$323,400—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$71,500—pass.

3.(e)(4) Sport and Commercial Fishing Management (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits.

*(1540)

Mr. Struthers: I notice that there is going to be—the Central Region and commercial fishermen would develop and implement a comprehensive Lake Winnipeg Management Plan.

I am wondering if there are any moves in that direction for Lake Winnipegosis.

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, the member keeps reading stuff here that, you know, I have to go back and

check exactly what we have said from time to time. I want to tell staff, watch what you write here from now on so that I do not get confused all the time.

Just for clarification, "In conjunction with the Central Region and commercial fishermen, develop and implement a comprehensive Lake Winnipeg Management Plan by May 1995." Is that what the member is referring to?

Mr. Struthers: I was asking in terms of Lake Winnipegosis. The minister is aware of some very grave difficulties in the fishing industry in Lake Winnipegosis and I was wondering if there was any move towards a plan for that lake as well.

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I want to say to the member that even before we started dealing with the Lake Winnipeg group that we already had been having active discussions with the advisory group from out of Lake Winnipegosis; it is where we put the challenge to work together with them. They voluntarily basically levied on their own quota a certain percentage that everybody had to pay. We have gone into a cost-sharing arrangement with the Lake Winnipegosis people—you have the north end and the south end there—and put the challenge to them and gave them the option.

(Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

In fact, depending on when we get through here today, I think we have some representatives coming from that area to talk to us again because we have entered into an agreement with them for the fish hatchery end of it and the management of it.

If the member is aware of Lake Winnipegosis, and he probably is, there used to, at one time, be where we had these rearing lakes in various areas. A lot of money was spent, and invariably since I came into office they were always critical, the commercial fishermen, that government did not know what they were doing. So we put the onus on them and they are basically running the fish hatcheries. They are running a rearing lake out there as well, and it is just peaceful all of a sudden because the onus is on them. We basically give our approval, work with them in terms of making sure that

it makes sense, but we let them take the ownership of many of these things and we feel very comfortable with that. So there is one going for Lake Winnipegosis, just like we are trying to develop the strategy for Lake Winnipeg.

Ultimately we want to do this even on the sports fishing end of it in other communities. Anybody who shows interest and wants to work with us, we are prepared to develop virtually any potential fish rearing under the program. We have just got into it a little over a year, and I am really looking forward based on the additional funding that we got.

I just want to mention, Mr. Chairman, that initially there was under the fish stamp which basically set up the fish enhancement program, we have an additional \$100,000 in there. We have \$350,000 to spend under the fish enhancement program which we then take and share with municipalities, organizations, commercial fishermen groups. We do not care who. If they come up with a good plan we cost-share with them and give them ownership of it to some degree.

So I am very enthused and elated with the response we are getting from many of the organizations, and I am looking forward to gradually expanding this substantively.

Mr. Struthers: What are the groups that you are meeting with later today?

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, could you clarify? Who am I meeting with in the Lake Winnipegosis area?

Mr. Struthers: The representatives of what groups?

Mr. Driedger: We met with the north end group and we also met with the south end of Lake Winnipegosis group and then put the challenge to them that they should work it out as to where they wanted it. My understanding is that Parker Burrell and the advisory group from up north have come to an agreement with the southern people and that the fish hatchery is going to be in the south portion of Lake Winnipegosis.

It is surprising what you can do when you make them responsible and say, you decide where you want it, I do

not care where you want it and they manage to work it out. But when you have the kind of pain that the people in Lake Winnipegosis have gone through in terms of the deletion of the fishing industry out there, they are almost desperate and willing to do anything. Not that a person should have to get that desperate before you want to co-operate, but certainly there is a sense of co-operation among themselves.

If the member knows anything about commercial fishermen, to get them to come to an understanding is quite an accomplishment, and they have come to that.

So I am very pleased, you know, when you put the onus on them that they basically have responsibility of making the decisions, and I am there to play with them.

Mr. Struthers: I am wondering if he can give me some figures. How much money has flowed from his department to the Swan Valley Sport Fishing Enhancement group and how much to the Intermountain Sport Fishing Enhancement group.

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I do not have that. We have flowed money to them. The special amounts, I would have to get the details of that, and I am prepared to do that. I think in most cases the maximum that we look at is \$25,000 for any project. The limit that we do in terms of a cost-sharing is \$25,000.

Now, on some of these fish hatcheries what we have basically looked at doing, if they have enough organizations, other than one, we will maybe fund two of them just to give them the extra shot in terms of getting the money. The two specific areas that the member has referred to, we will have that information—you know, we have to go back to the records and get it.

Mr. Struthers: That will be a yearly figure for Swan Valley and for Intermountain, and I would also be interested in knowing how much money would come from your department to the Winnipegosis commercial fishermen, a group that they have there.

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, to the member, I will get you a list of—basically, it is not private information. It is open information, the funding that we do towards various organizations. So any of the information that

he wants related to his area there, I am prepared to provide that and will forward that.

Mr. Struthers: That would be appreciated. I also understand that any money that comes to the sport fishing groups has to be matched by the sport fishing group. Does the same apply to the commercial fishermen at Winnipegosis?

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, yes, what we do, the policy that we have is basically that it has to be cost-shared.

Now that does not necessarily mean dollar for cash dollar. It could be in kind in terms of doing the work, et cetera, so that it is basically sharing but, in some cases, where some people are hard pressed for the cash, using the commercial fishermen, for example, they undertake to take and catch the spawning fish, and the work that they do, this is all considered part and parcel of sharing.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: Item 3. Resource Programs (e) Fisheries (4) Sport and Commercial Fishing Management (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$450,500—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$80,500—pass.

3.(e)(5) Northern Fishermen's Freight Assistance \$250,000—pass.

3.(e)(6) Fisheries Enhancement Initiative \$350,000—pass.

3.(f) Wildlife (1) Administration (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$441,200.

* (1550)

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Chairman, the other day we were into elk management, and I had asked the minister about an elk advisory board and where that board fit in, whether it was a board of government, whether that board was still in existence and whether or not it was receiving any funds.

I would like the minister to indicate whether they have been able to find that information.

Mr. Driedger: I was afraid the member would get into elk stories again. Staff has some information. They are just digging it up, and I will try and get it right away.

Ms. Wowchuk: I do not want to belabour the issue of elk, but there is a really serious situation that has arisen in my constituency, and the family that is bothered by elk, Don and Marilyn Gade, have written to the minister. They had a really serious situation where the elk kept destroying their hay, and they had called and called on the Resources department to deal with this problem. They had some assistance. They ended up with having a crop insurance claim and are very frustrated because they are only getting a percentage of their hay covered.

In fact, out of desperation, these people shot an elk and are now being charged with this, and it is very serious. I know the minister has received this information. I would ask whether or not he has responded to Mr. and Mrs. Gade and whether he has been able to resolve the problem and answer the many questions that they have asked as to how they should deal with this situation.

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, let me first go back to the Elk Management Board which is set up in Swan River. The Elk Management Board is comprised of 12 to 15 members. They are from different groups, game and fur associations, Chamber of Commerce. We, from time to time, have some of our NROs attending these meetings, but they are nonvoting members; they are basically only advice givers or there for information. Other groups that basically attend, I guess, and are part of it are Louisiana-Pacific, Repap, who wish to be kept informed because they affect the habitat to some degree.

Basically, to clarify the financial participation, secretarial assistance is provided to the board from the department. Fulford is the chairman, and the board was developed in response to elk depredation and with the support of the minister. The board makes recommendations to the department. It is not our board. It is a private board, and they make recommendations. The minister and the department have the option then to either accept recommendations or not.

I want to deal with the Elk Management Board first. This is sort of a private board there, and let me just see what I have here. I have a list of the people that are on it. I do not know whether that is important to the member or not.

Ms. Wowchuk: How much money do you give them?

Mr. Driedger: We do not give them any money other than—what we do is provide the secretarial service. There is no other funding that is taking place. I know that the group has asked me for certain licences and privileges in terms of raising that as part of fundraising that has not taken place, you can tell her that.

Now, to deal with the second portion of the problem that she raised with the particular case where an individual was so frustrated with the damage done by elk and where that individual took the law into his own hands and shot an elk and, as a result, has been charged, I know of the circumstances. It is on my desk. We have not resolved the issue yet. I am just asking the member whether she has any advice or input that she will want to give me at this time. It is a very difficult situation.

Ms. Wowchuk: In fact, I do not have the advice for the minister. I am seeking his advice, and, in fact, I have some very serious questions that have been posed to me that I will be referring to the minister in the hopes that his department can find a way to address these issues.

So he will be receiving a letter from me on behalf of Mr. and Mrs. Gade, seeking some very specific advice on how they can take this matter into their own hands since they are not getting the help they need from the department. So I will look forward to an answer from the minister to those questions which he will be receiving in a day or two.

Mr. Driedger: Just to make sure I can clarify, the member from Swan River said that she will write me details and make some recommendations, but that has not happened yet. I look forward to that, and once I have that—because I am having a difficult time resolving this. I would like to be fair and reasonable. At same time, the member knows the implications of

allowing this to happen, and, you know, where do you finally draw the line on it? So I look forward to the information that she will be sending to me, and, once a decision is made, I will definitely keep her informed.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: Item 3. Resource Programs (f) Wildlife (1) Administration (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$441,200—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$288,400—pass; (c) Grant Assistance \$160,000—pass.

3.(f)(2) Game and Fur Management (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$493,400—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$254,900—pass; (c) Grant Assistance \$89,900—pass.

3.(f)(3) Habitat and Land Management (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$432,000—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$290,000—pass; (c) Canada-Manitoba Agreement on Agricultural Sustainability \$516,000—pass.

3.(f)(4) Nongame and Endangered Species Management (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$461,000—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$95,200—pass.

3.(f)(5) Canada-Manitoba Waterfowl Damage Prevention Agreement (a) \$331,500—pass.

3.(g) Sustainable Development Co-ordination Unit \$232,400—pass.

3.(h) Habitat Enhancement Fund \$50,000—pass.

3.(j) Conservation Data Centre \$50,000—pass.

3.(k) Snowmobile Network Opportunities Fund \$175,000—pass.

Resolution 12.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$40,312,200 for Natural Resources, Resource Programs, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

Item 4. Land Information Centre (a) Administration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$676,700—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$472,800—pass; (3) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$18,000)—(pass).

4.(b) Crown Lands Operations (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$421,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$1,134,600—pass.

4.(c) Crown Lands Registry (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$193,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$180,800—pass.

4.(d) Survey Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,368,000.

Mr. Struthers: For the last five minutes, as we have been going through here, I had about a billion questions, but I am going to have to leave them until a later date—just a billion.

Under the area of Survey Services, I am wondering if the minister can explain to me the relationship between his department and Linnet Graphics.

Mr. Driedger: Maybe just to clarify this for the member, the Survey Services and Linnet are two different entities. The survey thing is basically just the survey of land, and Linnet is basically the information system. It is on the next page under Land Information Systems, on page 122. That is where we, under Linnet, gather the information based on land, the geographical, the topographical, all this information that we gather under Linnet. Surveys is a different component. It is not the Linnet thing.

Maybe, if the member has some further questions on the surveyor or on Linnet, then I will try and clarify some of that.

* (1600)

Mr. Struthers: My questions will deal more with the Linnet side of it. I think I understand what goes on in Survey Services of Natural Resources. What I am interested in is the relationship between the department and Linnet. Is Linnet Graphics—could I consider it a special operating agency?

(Mr. Peter Dyck, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

Mr. Driedger: Getting into Linnet, Linnet is basically a private company, and the composition of that

company is: ID Engineering group owns 38 percent of it; and SNC of Montreal owns 38 percent; and the Manitoba government owns 24 percent. That is the composition of the ownership. The role of the provincial government with regard to Linnet, we have a two-fold objective with regard to the activities of the Linnet Geomatics.

The first objective has been to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its land-related programs through improved availability and access to land-related information. Secondly, utilizing this activity, the province wishes to create an export-driven geographic information system, which is GIS in Manitoba, and that Geomatics is the vehicle through which the province wants to accomplish these objectives. What are the funding arrangements with Linnet? The province has signed a three-year contract with Linnet, ending in 1996-97. Linnet will submit an invoice within 30 days at the end of each quarter for work during that quarter, providing the work is that which was agreed to in the work plan which was established before the start of each year. The province will then make progress payments, less a 20 percent holdback.

So we are a 24 percent owner of the Linnet company, but we basically do funding through it, and we provide information through our land information services. We have much information on there. It is in conjunction with the private sector that this is being developed. This information then is being made available to the general public in terms of environmental things that people would want to do. If a company wants to establish, we have all this information that they then draw out and basically use. It is a bit of a complex jungle, really, in terms of how it is done, but, ultimately, almost like the firefighting, everything fits together and makes sense in terms of providing the information.

I think the way we are moving on this thing, we are probably almost leaders in terms of developing this kind of information technology. I am just trying to check here, Mr. Chairman, as to what other things there would be at this time that would maybe help a little bit. I can just say that the City of Winnipeg and Manitoba Hydro have companies that basically have contracts with Linnet. I know that Manitoba Crop Insurance is

utilizing a lot of the information for their programs and geographic information. I know that, ultimately, as a private sector, that they have sold their information bank and system to Saskatchewan Crop Insurance and are looking at selling their technology and some of the information on a national and international scale. So ultimately the intention would be that this is going to be a profit-making organization.

At the present time, the people that are the directors on here are working with even South Pacific countries. Venezuela, was that not one? Many of these other countries are basically looking at using this kind of system, buying the system from us in terms of providing that information. It is a very complex type of thing. When I sit down with my professionals on this, they sort of make it exciting to listen to the things that are happening on this thing. It is new technology, using the kind of equipment that is available. A lot of information is being fed into these things.

I have to plead a little bit of ignorance because I am not necessarily a computer whiz; in fact, I am computer illiterate. I mean, somebody has to explain to me exactly how all these things always work. I have the confidence that with the professional people, some of the good people that I have, we are on the right track and that this is a very positive move.

Mr. Struthers: That was very helpful. What was the situation before the contract with Linnet was signed? Actually, what year did they sign that contract? What happened before the contract with Linnet? How was the work being done then?

(Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

Mr. Driedger: Under my Land Information branch, basically we developed our own information banks, I suppose, very limited and not very professional. What has happened, for example, we would have the forestry information as a separate entity. We would have the water information. We would have the various components all separate. Now this is all being put into a massive central system that basically makes this information available in terms of the geographical terrain, soil conditions, all these things that we used to have in little pockets all the time. Each department, I

am just talking my department, but we have other departments that all did the same thing, all had their little pockets of information.

What we have done under Linnet, we have coordinated the whole approach from all the government departments plus the private sector. We have this land bank of information there that is related to all the things. For example, ultimately—it will never be completed—but we could have every telephone wire, hydro wire, every sewer pipe in the city, every road, you know, everything could be documented in part of the information machine that can be pulled out.

If somebody wanted to do something at the Department of Highways, for example, wants to build a highway, the information as to the soil conditions, the type of terrain they are in, all these things that are—I am not trying to oversimplify it, but there is such a complex amount of information that can now all be put together and be pulled out by those people that need it. So before where you had all these little pockets of information, it is now into a system where you can take and punch the necessary keys, I am told, and here comes the information that you require. That is sort of the concept of the new technology in terms of Land Related Information services.

* (1610)

Mr. Struthers: I wonder how many people, within your department, or maybe it is a fair statement to wonder how many people in provincial government were displaced as Linnet Graphics takes over the work that is being done? Maybe it is not fair to ask about the whole government, maybe just within the Department of Natural Resources.

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Chairman, I am told that no individual has been displaced or replaced because of this. We used to have all the various components, like I say, the information was accumulated and is still there. What this basically does is it brings it altogether. So there is nobody that has lost anything or lost a job or stuff like that. These components are still all important, the only thing is that it now comes under an umbrella organization where it is all stored basically. Am I right?—I want to make sure.

I can maybe just give a little bit of further background. This concept with Linnet was developed even by the previous administration prior to us taking government in '88. The concept was already being worked on in terms of the storage shed, if we could call it that in layman's language. It has been slow coming along because it is very complex. It is definitely coming along and looking more positive all the time.

Mr. Struthers: I was not suspicious before, but now that you are comparing it to the last NDP administration I have got to think there must be something up here. [interjection]

What about companies who were doing surveying work with the provincial government previous to the signing of this contract, which I do not know what date it was yet? I hope that I could find out what date the contract started. What about companies in the private sector who are working with the Department of Natural Resources with survey work? What has happened to their workload as a result of this amalgamation, or whatever word you want to call it?

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Chairman I want to repeat again. The survey element of it has nothing to do with the land information bank that we are working on. Under the survey end of it, and I want to make sure the member understands that it is separate from Linnet. You cannot combine the two. Under the survey system that is under my department, we do the survey work for the Department of Highways, Department of Northern Affairs, certainly for my department when we have Crown lands and subdivisions in the northern parts of the province or wherever we do these things. That is separate, no relationship to the Land Information Bank. Basically, our department does the survey work for the government.

Mr. Struthers: What year was the three-year contract signed?

Mr. Driedger: Is the member back to Linnet now?

Mr. Struthers: Yes.

Mr. Driedger: The initial contract was signed in 1993-94, a three-year contract with the option of

renewal or not renewal. So the program terminates in 1996-97. At that time there will be a re-evaluation as to the effectiveness of it and the partnerships and whether things are still on track. It has been a slow, evolving thing. There used to be different pairs in there; I, T and T used to have a role in it, am I correct? My deputy chairs a government group from the various departments, so all of them have a role to play in it to develop the work plan for each year. When that agreement is over at the end of 1996-97, then the group will again evaluate and decide whether our participation will continue in that.

Mr. Struthers: At that point, I am interested in what the options would be. Would one be to go back the way it was before 1993? Would another option be to look at other Linnets? Are there other companies who could perform the same function as Linnet?

Mr. Driedger: Because we are 24 percent owner, we would hope that the company ultimately would make money, that there would be profit in it for the government as well. We certainly would not want to, with the storage system that is there, go back and disseminate it again. I think efforts would be made to either negotiate or come to some understanding that there would be continued availability of the storage bank or storage shed, if I can use layman's language. This would continue to operate under some pretext or other.

Mr. Struthers: The provincial government is into this arrangement for the tune of 24 percent. Presumably, then, that would mean if there were profits to be made, the province would recoup 24 percent of those profits. If there were losses, the province would cover 24 percent of the losses then. Am I correct?

Mr. Driedger: That is correct.

Mr. Struthers: Does Linnet Graphics pay taxes?

Mr. Driedger: The member asked whether Linnet pays taxes. They would pay taxes like any other corporation.

Mr. Struthers: Does the Manitoba government pay a quarter of those taxes?

Mr. Driedger: Being a shareholder in there, we have no option, but I suppose we cannot say, well, our 28 percent is, you know, we are not paying that. Being a shareholder in the corporation, whatever the corporation has to pay under their structure, they pay that, and if there is profit or if there are expenses, we are all part of that, and we do not segregate our portion of it out.

Mr. Struthers: I do not have any more questions.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: Item 4. Land Information Centre (d) Survey Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,368,000-pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$473,300-pass.

4.(e) Remote Sensing (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$431,700-pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$113,300-pass; (3) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations, deficit (\$23,700).

4.(f) Distribution Centre (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$355,700-pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$263,700-pass; (3) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations, deficit (\$170,000).

4.(g) Land Information Systems (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$588,800-pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$659,500-pass.

Resolution 12.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$5,672,400 for Natural Resources, Land Information Centre, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

Item 5. Expenditures Related To Capital (a) Equipment and Infrastructure \$538,400-pass.

5.(b) Water Projects \$2,211,600.

* (1620)

Mr. Struthers: Just quickly, the amount that is listed under Capital Expenditures for Water Projects, I am wondering if there is a list of projects that I could be privy to in the next little while, say, over the next budget year, that the department will be constructing?

Mr. Driedger: Under Water Projects, these are basically my capital drainage projects that I made reference to, and we have a capital program, aside from the miscellaneous, where we do all kinds of little works, and I will not give the member necessary all that, but the ones where we have, that addresses the capital projects, I will get him a list of that if that is acceptable?

We will do the same thing under the Parks capital programs because, now, I want to clarify to the member that I am not going to give him the details of where we are spending \$150 so that they can chop down a couple of trees or stuff like that. I want to try and address the capital portion of it so that he has an understanding where the capital goes, whether it is an electrical contract within a certain park, you know, updating the electricity, or whether we do a new bay somewhere or upgrade the roads within a provincial park. I will take and provide those two lists for water projects and park facilities.

Mr. Struthers: That is exactly what I was asking for, and thank you.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: Item 5. Expenditures Related To Capital (b) Water Projects \$2,211,600-pass; (c) Park Facilities \$3,102,300-pass.

Resolution 12.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$5,852,300 for Natural Resources, Expenditures Related to Capital, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

Item 6. Lotteries Funded Programs (a) Special Conservation and Endangered Species Fund \$450,000-pass.

Resolution 12.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$450,000 for Natural Resources, Lotteries Funded Programs, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

This last item to be considered for the Estimates of the Department of Natural Resources is item 1.(a) Minister's Salary on page 115 of the main Estimates book.

At this point we request that the minister's staff leave the table for the consideration of this item.

Item 1.(a) Minister's Salary \$22,800—pass.

Resolution 12.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$4,552,000 for Natural Resources, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

This now completes the Estimates of the Department of Natural Resources sitting in Room 255.

The next set of Estimates to be considered in this section of the Committee of Supply sitting in Room 255 are the Estimates for the Department of Housing.

* (1630)

HOUSING

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson (Gerry McAlpine): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will be considering the Estimates of the Department of Housing. Does the honourable Minister of Housing have an opening statement.

Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister of Housing): I am pleased to present the 1995-96 spending Estimates for Manitoba Housing.

The Department of Housing has a three-fold mandate: to enhance the affordability of and accessibility to a suitable and adequate supply of housing for Manitobans, particularly those of low and moderate incomes, and those with specialized needs; also to maintain and improve the quality of the existing aging housing stock; and to facilitate the housing market while otherwise limiting intervention measures to situations where it is deemed essential to the public interest.

Over the course of its history, Manitoba Housing has provided close to 21,000 units of subsidized housing to ensure that the housing needs of Manitobans are met. Its portfolio is comprised of elderly and family housing, housing for nonelderly single individuals, crisis shelters

for victims of family violence, and housing for individuals and groups with special needs. While the major portion of the housing stock is directly owned by Manitoba Housing, the portfolio also includes projects which have been financed through Manitoba Housing, which are owned and/or managed by private nonprofit organizations.

In addition to the housing projects which have been developed by or with the assistance of Manitoba Housing, the department's Shelter Allowance programs house or subsidize close to 6,000 elderly and family renters in private rental accommodation throughout the province. Over 93,000 Manitoba renters have benefited from shelter allowances since the program was implemented in the early 1980s.

Even with our activities in these areas, however, there is a continuing need for housing assistance in Manitoba. Of the 380,000 households in the province, it is estimated that almost 11 percent are in core housing need. That represents 41,000 households who are unable to obtain suitable and adequate housing at average market rents without spending more than 30 percent of their household income on shelter.

More than two-thirds of those households in need are located in Winnipeg, with about 14 percent located in other urban centres, and 18 percent in rural areas. Of these households in need, renters are more than twice as likely to be in need as homeowners, and the largest clientele group in need is family households. For two-thirds of those households in core need, affordability is their only housing problem. Our ability to meet this continued housing need has been significantly reduced in recent years. Although housing is typically an area of provincial responsibility, provincial housing policies have been, and continue to be, heavily influenced by federal housing policies and expenditures.

The federal government through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation has cost-shared with the province in funding the majority of social housing activity in Manitoba. Unfortunately, the federal government's decision to terminate delivery of new social housing across Canada, effective January 1, 1994, has had a significant impact on our ability to meet the housing needs of Manitobans.

Both the previous and the current federal governments advanced a cap on social housing expenditures, indicating that a major priority was the maintenance of existing social housing stock, and funding for any initiatives had to come from savings generated to improve deficiencies in the administration and management of the existing social housing portfolio across Canada.

With the introduction of the 1995 budget, however, the federal government has effectively terminated the potential for any significant new cost-shared initiatives by the provinces. The federal budget reduced the overall social housing budget across Canada by a total of \$270 million over the next three years. Further, the provision for only \$13 million nationally to be used for additional maintenance of the existing housing stock over the next three years significantly weakens the previous federal commitment to the existing housing portfolio in the longer term.

The Department of Housing is faced with two major challenges over the next year. Firstly, we must continue to exert influence over how federal housing dollars will be expended across Canada. Secondly, we must do all in our power to ensure that any savings generated within the existing framework in Manitoba will continue to be invested in this province. Our success in meeting this second challenge will provide the resources necessary to protect our Housing portfolio.

The last 30 years has witnessed a major investment on the part of the government and taxpayers of this province. The area of property management therefore cannot be overlooked as it relates to the department's mandate to maintain and improve its existing housing assets.

The major problems facing Manitoba Housing are similar to those facing any large diverse property management entity, to operate in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible, thereby generating sufficient financial resources to maintain units at an acceptable standard. Considerable progress has been made since 1992 when responsibility for this social housing portfolio was amalgamated under a single entity. By standardizing operating practices and

procedures, Manitobans have fair and equitable access and treatment in all communities throughout the province.

Initiatives have been undertaken to enhance the efficiency of tenancy processing, rent calculation and collection and arrears control functions. It should be remembered that the bulk of the Housing portfolio amounting to two-thirds of the units was developed prior to 1978. Given that these units are greater than 20 years in age, reinvestment is now necessary to maintain physical integrity and condition of the portfolio. Staff have completely inspected the Housing portfolio in some detail to establish the current condition of each project and to develop a long-range plan for its maintenance and improvement.

At the same time, because we share a common concern with respect to the safety of women and children within our projects, a review of the landscaping and lighting on building sites was undertaken with the intent of noting and trying to correct immediately if possible any blind spots or areas that require improvement. As landscaping is renewed or major upgrading to sites is performed, this objective continues to receive every consideration.

Where possible, staff consults tenants on capital maintenance programs in order to maximize the benefits of scarce capital resources and to allow tenants a voice in their project development. Further, a proactive communication program has been initiated to provide mayors and councillors in each community with information on work being undertaken. Typical modernization and improvement work includes interior and exterior refits, upgrading ventilation, repairing or replacing roofs, replacing doors and windows, correcting site drainage and grading and landscaping repairs.

Activities undertaken to upgrade and maintain the housing stock, improve energy efficiency, repair deterioration, modernize heating and mechanical systems, prolong the useful life of the units and generally improve the quality of public housing.

Over the past two years, an average of \$6.5 million has been expended annually for modernization and

improvement activities. We will continue to strive for and make progress toward operational efficiencies in the management of the roughly 21,000 social housing units throughout the province. These endeavours will include the continuing enhancement of tenant and community involvement in the management process and the development of short-term and long-range plans to meet the continuing challenge for the maintenance and renovation of aging housing stocks.

The Department of Housing recognizes that housing is an integral part of the social and economic development of this province and that adequate and affordable housing has a fundamental influence on the health and well-being of individuals and of the community as a whole. Through our ongoing commitment to and involvement in housing activities, the department will continue to address the challenges of ensuring access to an adequate standard of housing and equity in housing opportunities for all Manitobans.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: We thank the honourable Minister of Housing for those comments.

Does the official opposition critic, the honourable member for Radisson have any opening comments?

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Considering that we are nearing the end of the departments being considered, I will simply ask questions and will not make an opening statement.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: We thank the critic for those remarks.

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 the consideration of the next line.

* (1640)

Before we do, we invite the minister's staff to join us at the table, and we ask the minister to introduce his staff that will be present.

Mr. Reimer: Mr. Chairperson, I would like to introduce Jim Beaulieu, who is the Deputy Minister in the Department of Housing; Gary Julius, who is the Executive Director of Finance and Operations with the Department of Housing; Ken Cassin, Director of Program Development & Support with the department; and Ron Fallis, the Executive Director of the Manitoba Housing Authority.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: We will now proceed to line 1. Administration and Finance (b) Executive Support.

Ms. Cerilli: Having never had the opportunity to meet a number of the minister's staff previously, you just ran through the list of names, but I do not know who is who. So I would just ask for him to—

Mr. Reimer: Jim Beaulieu, Gary Julius, Ron Fallis and Ken Cassin.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: We will now proceed to line 1. Administration and Finance (b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits on page 93 of the main Estimates book. Shall the item pass?

Ms. Cerilli: I am just clarifying for the Chairperson, I am working predominantly from the Supplementary Estimates book. So is the minister, and it looks like that is also the strategy for the staff.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: Just for clarification, do we wish to go line by line or page by page? What is the will of the committee?

Ms. Cerilli: I would prefer not to at this point. I think that, again, because we only have a few hours available to this department I will just deal with the issues I want to deal with and we can move on.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: Is that agreed, committee? [agreed]

So we will have general discussion on the Estimates of the Department of Housing. Each line eventually will be passed in accordance with the main Estimates book.

Ms. Cerilli: Mr. Chairperson, I think, given even the minister's opening statement, the bulk of the work in this department is in public housing and then some of the support programs for other low-income housing. So I just want to ask a few questions about what is happening with Manitoba Housing Authority properties.

One of the things that I have been concerned about is that the vacancy rate in a number of the properties is quite high. I know that the minister and I had the opportunity to visit the Lord Selkirk Park, which has a vacancy rate of over 50 percent.

So I guess just to start, I would like for the minister to give some explanation and clarify what the vacancy rates are for the different regions of the city and the province in the Manitoba Housing Authority properties.

Mr. Reimer: In looking at units instead of a percentage, there are 13,065 units. This is out of the districts that range right from Gimli right through to Winnipeg. We are talking about 13 districts. So in the 13 districts we have a total of 13,065 units. The vacancy rate in that amount is just over 1,100 units. I guess between eight and nine percent, more or less, overall. They would vary by district and in certain areas. As the member mentioned, in the area that we were, it was a very high percentage. Overall, throughout all of Manitoba, it is between eight and nine percent.

Ms. Cerilli: Where else are there vacancy rates, other than the Lord Selkirk Park housing development of over 10 percent?

Mr. Reimer: On the individual projects, we can get those figures for the member. I will give you a bit of an indication of the current situation. As of March 1995, the vacancy rates for housing throughout Manitoba was actually 8.5 percent. The national average is 8.8, so we are just a little bit lower.

In Winnipeg there are just over 1,000 vacant units, 1,033, which is 8.6 percent. Vacant units in the North, there are 117, which represents 10.6 percent. In rural central, there are 178 units, which represents 7.4 percent; and in rural south there are 242 units, which

represents 8.1 percent. The housing developments that the member is referring to, I am sure that we can get those figures on an individual basis.

Ms. Cerilli: The vacancy rate for the Transcona area?

Mr. Reimer: It is actually a very low percentage actually in Transcona—pardon me, in that region—I should not say just Transcona because it is in a specific region. But in that region there are 1,915 units and there is only a 44-unit vacancy which is just over 3 percent or around 3 percent. So that is a very low ratio in that particular area.

In the Lord Selkirk area, there are 95 vacancies out of 314 units in that particular complex that the member was asking about. It also appears that number has been growing in the last little while too, up to 95, mainly because of social problems.

Ms. Cerilli: That is in the Lord Selkirk Park; it has been growing. You commented that it is 95 vacant out of a possible 314 units, so that is not 50 percent then.

One of the things that I have been looking at is comparing the vacancy rate in the public area to the private rental market and this gives me a little bit less concern—these numbers that I have just received—than what I was figuring out from some of the visits we had made and the other numbers. Especially in Transcona, I know that recently there was a private vacancy rate of around 3 percent. So it seems like there is more of an equilibrium between public housing availability as well as private.

I am wondering if the department does this kind of comparison. It seems like then we may be able to say there are specific problems targeted in developments like the Lord Selkirk Park, but there is not a general trend in the urban core area with public housing, or if the minister can correct me, maybe there is. Does the department look at this?

* (1650)

Mr. Reimer: In looking at the analysis of the housing stock that is available, one of the highest percentages of vacancies are in the bachelor units themselves. That is

basically on a regional basis, but that seems to be where the biggest vacancy is within this whole system.

It has just been pointed out to me, of the units that are vacant, which is just over 1,100 units, 453 of them are bachelor suites themselves. It seems to be a problem, as pointed out, not only within the social housing stock, but also in the private stock. That is their highest vacancy rate also.

Ms. Cerilli: Has that always been the trend or is this something new? Has it always been more difficult to rent the properties that are bachelor units, or is this a new trend?

Mr. Reimer: It has been a growing area of vacancies within the housing stock, mainly because of the fact that when the public housing market came into being in an aggressive manner, a lot of the suites that were built because of the time and the direction that was implemented at that time were of the bachelor-type of suites.

It seems to be a concern because of the age of the stock. It is going towards the realization that the units are small and the people are looking at a bigger type of unit.

Ms. Cerilli: Do you think that part of the problem is—because I understand there is a wait for larger family dwellings, family-sized dwellings. There is a wait for public housing. Is that not the case, that if you want to get particularly up above a two-bedroom, that there is a waiting list in certain districts?

Mr. Reimer: It has been pointed out that, a lot of the time what happens is, it is a mismatch in a sense of the expectation of where the people want to be located and the availability of the units in that particular area. There are cases, there are vacancies right now in certain areas of the city that are three-, four-bedroom units, but because of the location and the social mix, the units are not being filled because of a desire for the people to be in a certain area.

Ms. Cerilli: What you are telling me is that there are vacancies in those larger units, but is that in the Lord Selkirk Park area or are there vacancies elsewhere?

Mr. Reimer: It has been pointed out that the larger units that are referred to are in the Gilbert Park area, and in Lord Selkirk there are four-bedroom units that are vacant, too.

Ms. Cerilli: I wonder if this has anything to do with the price, if there has been any comparison done to see if the availability and the cost for bachelor suites in public housing are compatible with the same kind of accommodation in the private sector. With that, if you go to the larger units, more than two bedrooms, then we do not have the same cost difference.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. We will interrupt the committee of Housing for some important business in the Chamber. We will recess for whatever time it takes.

JUSTICE

Mr. Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): Will the Committee of Supply come to order, please. This section of the Committee of Supply has been dealing with the Estimates in the Department of Justice.

Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber at this time.

We are on resolution 4.4 (b) Adult Corrections.

* (1440)

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): I wonder if I can just have a moment; I left a file in the caucus office.

Before Oral Questions today, the minister tabled two annual reports: one for the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board to the year ending March 31, '94; the other one for the Victims Assistance Committee to the year ending March 31, '93.

Aside from the lateness of the Victims Assistance Committee report, which is inexcusable in my view, these reports were tabled shortly or within hours after this committee considered these two divisions. It is my view that that is an affront to the process of this Legislature and to this committee; and, indeed, it follows a pattern established by the timing of the

tabling of the vehicle impoundment registry annual report, which, I believe, was tabled on the sitting after the Committee of Supply considered the Estimates.

I would like the minister to explain to this committee why she thinks it is appropriate that the annual reports of areas in the Department of Justice be tabled immediately after their consideration in Supply?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I am not sure what the member is suggesting in the asking of this question; however, it is my effort to provide to him information that I am to table in the Legislature.

In the process of consideration of Estimates, only he knows where he is going to go each day. If he wants to share that with me, give me some idea if something is available to me, I would certainly try to accommodate him, but I honestly have no idea where that member plans to go in the process of Estimates.

My obligation, however, is to be here to answer questions that are put forward in Estimates, which I have done for this past many hours and certainly am prepared to stay as many hours as are required by the member. In addition to that, I am also more than prepared to submit the annual reports to the Legislature and have been doing so on quite a regular basis to make sure that is accomplished. If the member has some other point he would like to raise, then I am sure he will do it.

Mr. Mackintosh: Perhaps the minister can clarify when she had available to the Legislature for tabling the report of the Victims Assistance Committee and the report of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am not able to provide that information to the member now; however, those two reports were brought to my attention today to table, and I did so.

If there is something which the member would like to inquire about, I will do my best to answer him or he can ask me, whatever he feels he may have missed. I will attempt to provide him with the information now or in a follow-up.

But, as I have said, the process of going through the Estimates is really within his control; where we proceed is within his control. I do not have any indication from him and never have of where he is planning to go or proceed.

I assume as we cover each area, he is asking the questions that he believes are important, but I am not going anywhere. I am here. I am more than pleased to try and provide for the member information that will be helpful to him if it is available to me, and I can do that now or at another time.

It is not uncommon for the member to write me letters during the course of the year, even at times when we are not sitting, and ask for certain information to be provided, and I certainly have tried to do that. So, if the member has any further questions on those reports, if those questions could be forwarded to me, I will be more than happy to answer them.

Mr. Mackintosh: I will be looking very carefully at this pattern, and I will want to see this minister, in particular, ensure that the reports pertaining to her department are tabled in this House in advance of the beginning of the review of departmental Estimates.

In particular, I look forward to her answers to questions made earlier as to when her office has received reports. I believe the question related to the Human Rights Commission and the Legal Aid Society to ensure that those reports are tabled immediately in the House as is required by law.

My list of issues before we left, that we thought we could deal with this afternoon, began with the Beausejour Justice Committee or whatever the name is, but the pilot project in Beausejour, which resembled for adults a youth justice committee system, I am wondering if the minister can advise the committee whether that project is still ongoing.

*(1450)

Mrs. Vodrey: The answer is yes.

Mr. Mackintosh: Can the minister tell the committee how this committee is operating in terms of what kinds

of offences are being—or what kinds of charges are being referred to the committee? By the way, if she could say what the official name of this project is?

Mrs. Vodrey: The name of the committee, I believe, is the Beausejour and District Justice Committee. This was part of a pilot project that we undertook.

The committee has a formal agreement with Prosecutions to deal with adults being diverted from formal court action. The kinds of adults who are eligible must meet strict criteria. The kinds of offences are summary conviction types of offences. The individual must admit to the offence, and the individual must be willing to make restitution.

Bill C-41 passed in the Parliament of Canada last week does make a provision for this type of adult diversion.

Mr. Mackintosh: Who comprises the committee?

Mrs. Vodrey: The committee is comprised of community members from the local area, and it is chaired by a lawyer from Beausejour.

Mr. Mackintosh: How are the members of the committee found? Is there a search committee, or is there advertising in the papers, or do you have to be in a certain position to be appointed or elected to the committee?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am told that various agencies get notices of the intention to establish such a committee. Sometimes there are also public notices which are put forward. People then, who have an expressed interest, come together, and their first task is to develop a constitution. Then, when that is done, there is a formal agreement signed between that group and the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Mackintosh: So I take it then that the composition of this justice committee is similar to that of other youth justice committees? There are no particular positions in the community that are appointed to the justice committee?

Mrs. Vodrey: That is correct. There are no particular positions within the community which are required or are appointed.

Mr. Mackintosh: Is this committee the only one of its kind in Manitoba?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am told, no, this is not the only group. There are approximately four or five other committees which have formal agreements with Prosecutions to deal with adult diversion.

Mr. Mackintosh: Would the minister list those other committees?

Mrs. Vodrey: I do not have those available today, but I will see that the member receives them.

Mr. Mackintosh: Are these other committees new? Can the minister tell the committee roughly when these committees came into being?

Mrs. Vodrey: Some of the committees have been in existence for quite some time, but the movement into adult diversion is relatively new. I am told that it has been done approximately two years.

Mr. Mackintosh: Does the minister know whether there are other adult committees in the works?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am told that at the moment, no, but we do expect as a result of the passage of Bill C-41 that there will be some additional interest.

Mr. Mackintosh: Has there been any study done of the effectiveness of these kinds of committees, especially considering the relapse rate of offenders?

* (1500)

Mrs. Vodrey: I am told that there has been an informal review of young offenders and, for those young offenders who have qualified for the program, obviously nonhigh-risk young offenders, I am told that the success rate is in the range of 70 percent or higher, as high as 80 percent or slightly higher.

There is not any, at the moment, research that we are aware of right now, today, in the area of adults.

Mr. Mackintosh: I suppose the only statistic you can compare this to to determine whether this is an effective system to reduce relapse would be the relapse rate of lower-risk offenders going through the court system.

I am wondering if the minister can tell the committee how one judges whether 70 percent or 80 percent is a good number or not.

Mrs. Vodrey: One of the measurements of success would be for those young people who do not return, and so we are looking at a success rate of 70 percent or slightly better as being a fairly good success rate. However, it is true that we do not yet know whether those young offenders return as adult offenders.

But that is one measure, that they have not returned, certainly as young offenders, so we see that as one area of success.

The other part of the success, I believe, is the community opportunity to become involved. The community has expressed an interest to become involved at various points of the justice system. This is one way, and youth justice committees were one way that the community can become involved directly and see that they can perhaps have an influence over the ongoing behaviour of the person who is before them.

If we were looking at success, we might look at those two areas as possible ways to measure the success.

Mr. Mackintosh: Does the Beausejour committee, for example, receive referrals directly from the police?

Mrs. Vodrey: To the best of our knowledge, I am told that the referral comes this way; from the police to the Crown, from the Crown to the youth justice committee. However, that is to the best of our knowledge at this point.

Mr. Mackintosh: The minister announced, I believe through the throne speech of the last session, that she or the government was considering—I think to use the

minister's words—a more rigorous confinement in adult facilities. Would the minister tell the committee whether any changes have taken place in the adult correctional facilities now, following on that announcement?

* (1510)

Mrs. Vodrey: We did announce as a government that we would be moving to rigorous confinement in Adult Corrections. We had spent the first part of my time as Justice minister really looking at some of the changes in the youth area, but it certainly seemed important that there should also be changes in the adult area.

There seemed to be periods of inmate idleness. Because we have inmates who are basically short stayers with us, they are sentenced to two years less a day or any time less than that, I was very concerned and our government was very concerned that they retain a sense of kind of the inner time clock of what is required for people when they live outside in the community, and that is that they have a sense of getting up and going to work and dealing with any interests or recreation after that had happened.

So we started to make changes within the adult institution to make it more challenging for inmates serving their sentences and also to much more closely resemble what life is like when they return back to the community. And that is an important part as well, because we are dealing with individuals who will return to the community, and we want to make sure that they have not lost the life skills or coping skills because their regime within the institution is not one that resembles what it is in the community. Rigorous confinement has meant more spartan conditions. It has meant reduced privileges. It has meant structured work programs as well as clear rules and consequences for negative behaviour. Some of the basic components of rigorous confinement that have been implemented in all of the institutions are the following.

First of all, a reduction in inmate idleness and increased work activities for inmates. Work programs have been increased, but we are looking at developing a prison industry strategy as a long-term objective to create more stable and more intensive work programs

and focusing on self-sufficiency to offset costs as well as possibly some generation of revenue.

We are also looking at, secondly, increased community service work. The number of inmate work crews have been increased, and Corrections has been proactive in working with local communities to identify projects that the community would like to have done.

Thirdly, there has been a reduction in inmate privileges at all of the institutions. TV access has been restricted to evenings and weekends for adults. There has been an elimination of recreation during the workday. There is restricted access to telephone calls and restriction of institution visits to evenings and weekends.

Fourthly, there have been changes to the earned remission system. Instead of automatically awarding remission, Adult Corrections has implemented a policy that requires inmates to earn remission for industries and positive behaviour. Inmates refusing to participate in mandatory programs or who display negative behaviour will serve longer sentences. The earned remission will simply not be available to those people.

In the area of reading materials that are available within the institutions, it has been a concern of this government, first of all, that no pornographic material be within the institutions. It seemed also, because we had some people within our institutions who are there because of domestic violence or sexual assault, that there should be a much stricter set of restrictions placed, and so now there are simply no materials which deal with what some might consider pornographic material. Even those available over the counter to other people, those are not allowed now within our institutions.

Finally, there is a reduction of temporary absences. No temporary absences will be granted unless there is a low risk to the community or at least a manageable risk using very intensive supervision, and inmates with violent records certainly will have to have increased consideration for any temporary absences.

Mr. Mackintosh: With regard to an issue we discussed at length with the member for Wellington last

go-around, the programming for abusers, for male abusers, can the minister tell the committee whether there is now in place a long-term treatment intervention program for male abusers?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, yes, the long-term program has been established. There were two pilot groups which have gone through the long-term programming. There is now another group, a third group, which is going through the long-term programming.

Mr. Mackintosh: Can the minister tell the committee the date the pilot committees began—I guess, programs began?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told that the groups were formed in December '94, that meetings began taking place in January '95, and the groups are six months in length. The third group which I spoke about now being in progress began in mid-June.

Mr. Mackintosh: How many individuals are in each program?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told that there are 10 or 12 individuals to a group.

Mr. Mackintosh: Can the minister tell the committee how many hours each program has?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, the hours of programming for the long-term group are 138 hours. If you met for three hours once a week, that would be approximately 46 weeks; by meeting twice a week, the program is six months in length.

Mr. Mackintosh: Can the minister provide in writing the program details, in other words, the objectives and what the format of the program is? I wonder if she has a copy with her.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, we do not have that with us. I can attempt to provide it to him orally, but I am certainly prepared to provide him with something in writing regarding that.

Mr. Mackintosh: Would the minister then put on the record a description of the program and how it is

delivered, and who it is delivered by and how it is funded? For example, is it delivered directly by staff of the department, or is it delivered by community agents?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I will provide more detailed information to the member, but what I have available to tell him now is that the program, the long-term program to deal with domestic abuse, spousal abuse, is a program which looks at education and also therapeutic techniques. It has a requirement of having offenders examine their own personal life—some insight is required—and their relationships and also their risk behaviour, so there is an element, I understand, in the person, again, gaining some insight into their behaviour. The educational side of the program would assist in trying to understand and perhaps cope with this behaviour, change the behaviour in the future.

There are approximately 250 staff within Corrections Division who are trained in the area of domestic abuse counselling. The training program they received was an eight-day long program. We also train volunteers as well as our staff within Corrections and we do hire some private counsellors to assist us.

Mr. Mackintosh: Is it the intention of the government to continue this programming using in-house staff, or is it the intention to contract out and make arrangements for the delivery of the program through community agencies, whatever they might be?

Mrs. Vodrey: Our intention is to continue the mixed delivery. We like to involve the community, where possible. However, we do have trained staff who are also available to us.

* (1520)

Mr. Mackintosh: I would like the minister to provide a more detailed description of the program, including details as to the different components of the program, the different themes that are dealt with during the course of the program.

I just had two other questions. Does the minister have available figures showing the number of inmates in adult facilities, including at Portage, who would not be in there but for the nonpayment of fines?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, we do not have that number here. We would estimate that it is small. However, we are not sure if we can actually get that number because it requires some systems capability. However, we will look into it and do our best.

Mr. Mackintosh: It would be a valuable statistic to have. I am just wondering if the minister, given the advice available to her today, can estimate what in their best collective judgment the percentage would be of those individuals.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I understand that the member is interested in this, but really it is very difficult for the staff to try and make that guess or estimate also being aware that this goes into the records of Hansard. So if he would be willing, we will see if that information is available. As I said, I also have been cautioned with the system's ability to be able to acquire it, but we will do our best to look into it for him.

Mr. Mackintosh: Regarding the sex offender notification scheme that is being implemented, it was our information that two high-risk sex offenders may have come into Manitoba after release from institutions outside of the province and that the police had not been notified of their presence in the city. I am wondering if the minister has informed herself on the facts.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, the committee has certainly some independence in this area. Any referrals would go directly to the committee. There are two ways in which referrals may reach the committee: one is through Corrections, the other is through police. The police entry point is also where community members may approach the police with their concerns and then the police, based on their information, may decide to refer it or not. Because referrals go directly to the committee, I am not able to confirm to the member his question. I am told meeting dates and, obviously, an outcome if there is to be the release of any information about that individual. So I am not able to provide that information to him today.

Mr. Mackintosh: What assurances can the minister give that individuals released from institutions outside of Manitoba will be known to officials, so that this

notification committee can have the opportunity of considering the offender?

Mrs. Vodrey: The assurances I am able to provide are that federal corrections is a partner on the community notification committee and process. They have been fully co-operative, and Headingley or our provincial Corrections is also a partner as well. We have asked the federal government for a federal tracking system for high-risk offenders, people very likely, or considered likely, to offend again.

When I was at the Ministers of Justice meeting, I made the point, particularly in relation to pedophiles, that treatment is sometimes not always effective. It may be effective in the short term but perhaps not in the long term, or it may not be that effective.

Where we have people released who have served their sentence within our institutions, we still need some way to be able to track those individuals across Canada. I proposed, in fact, a fairly specific scheme where there would be an application to the court by Corrections, and it would be the responsibility of a judge to make that determination, whether or not this individual would be part of this long-term tracking system. The individual would have an opportunity to apply to the court to have themselves removed from the tracking system based on certain criteria.

But, in relation to this tracking system, the federal government will have to demonstrate leadership because it is a tracking system which would be required across all of Canada.

Mr. Mackintosh: Does the minister have an indication as to when the Sarah Kelly inquest report will be made available?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am told that we do not have an indication of a release time. All we have been told, I am informed, is that it will take some time, but we do not have any way to know exactly what that means.

Mr. Mackintosh: Did the minister have any staff present to review the evidence as it went in at the inquest?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, we had a Crown attorney and also Corrections officials. I can tell the member also that now we have established an interdepartmental committee of Health, Family Services and Justice to look at how we can share important information.

* (1530)

Mr. Mackintosh: Who is represented on the committee?

Mrs. Vodrey: Can I just ask the member, is he asking which departments are on the committee or how many representatives from each area? I did tell him that the committee is made up interdepartmentally of representatives from Health, Family Services and Justice.

Mr. Mackintosh: No, I would like to know what positions are on that interdepartmental committee, what level, for example, in the bureaucracy is represented.

Mrs. Vodrey: From Corrections, it is area directors, and I understand directors of medical health, director of family services. This directors' level reports to a steering committee of assistant deputy ministers. The Crown is also represented, and the purpose of the group is to develop a protocol to provide for adequate sharing of information.

Mr. Mackintosh: Pass.

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): I just have some questions in regards to Adult Corrections. First of all, in regards to the sick leave at the different Adult Corrections facilities, I do not know if it is possible, if the information is available, but I guess per capita or according to the number of staff, what is the level of sick leave being taken at different Adult Corrections facilities in Manitoba?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am prepared to provide the information to the member and to tell him that, in the information that I will provide, it is sick leave, including all sick leave, both long term and short term, and the sort of day kinds of leave. So in the numbers that are provided it will have to be viewed with that in mind.

Mr. Kowalski: Will I get it before next Estimates? What I am looking for, just to make sure that the information that is going to be given out meets the purposes, is to look at sick leave as an indication of morale in the different correctional facilities.

I would like to see—I do not know if it will be as a percentage of staff hours or staff years to be useful, and the comparison to previous years to see if there is any indication that sick leave is increasing in any one correctional facility over previous years, and also if sick leave is higher per staff year in one correctional facility over another as an indication of morale, because morale is a pretty subjective matter.

Mrs. Vodrey: We will certainly provide the information, but I would caution the member that the statistics provided also include compassionate leave, also include parental leave, and so it will be very difficult, it seems to me, to try and then suggest that the numbers provided are actually tied to morale when it would be incidental in, certainly, cases of compassionate leave to tie number of days absent to a morale issue when it is really related to something altogether different, or the parental leave when it is related to something altogether different.

Mr. Kowalski: Yes, I understand that in itself. It is only one indicator. There are explanations. Also, looking for a pattern over years because, as a critic, of course, a critic often attracts phone calls and letters of complaint from staff, and quite often the question of morale is raised, and because that is subjective, I do not know if their opinions about morale in any correctional facility are a true reflection. Is it just because their morale is down?

So I invite the minister, also, to analyze that data as far as to watch for problems in the correctional facilities as far as morale, and I look forward to receiving that information from the minister.

Another question I had about Adult Corrections was at the Provincial Remand Centre, as far as uniform issues for the uniformed officers there, is there an entitlement each year for a certain number of pants or shirts, or is it as required? How is a uniform given to the uniformed staff at Provincial Remand Centre?

Mrs. Vodrey: In terms of the provision of uniforms, there is a scale of issue, I am told, and it operates this way. There are certain basic elements which are issued, and then those are replaced on an as-needed condition.

* (1540)

Mr. Kowalski: At what level is the determination made? Is it at the supervisory level as to when a new pair of pants is required?

The reason I ask is, I saw one pair of pants that were threadbare, that I would be ashamed to wear, and this person indicated that they had taken it to their supervisor and the supervisor said they were sufficient. So I am just asking, at what level is the decision made as to when an article is in need of replacement?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, it is always very difficult to speak to an individual case, and I do not know the circumstances of that case.

Overall, it is an administrative supervisor who makes that decision. The onus is on staff to come forward to that administrative supervisor when uniforms are torn or frayed. So I am not able to give the member on that specific example any further information. That is the usual practice.

Mr. Kowalski: Yes, I was not expecting the minister to reply to any specific example. I was asking for the policy and procedure. The number of staff years allocated to the Provincial Remand Centre, has it changed in the past year?

Mrs. Vodrey: The staff at the Remand Centre has increased this year by three SYs.

Mr. Kowalski: The staff years—as far as now the configuration other than the addition of those three staff years, has the configuration at the different levels of management been changed at the Provincial Remand Centre?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am informed that there has been no change to the configuration of management at the Winnipeg Remand Centre.

Mr. Kowalski: I just want to confirm a question I believe I asked her in last year's Estimates, and I still keep receiving the same information. I want to be doubly sure that I understand correctly.

When the hearing officer process was first instituted, I am repeatedly told that the Corrections lost one or more staff years from their staff allocation in order to budget for the hearing officers. Where the money came from was that Adult Corrections lost some staff years and transferred to whichever budget area that would cover the hearing officers. Could the minister confirm, as she did last year, that that did not happen, that there was no change in Adult Corrections staff years to facilitate the hearing officers?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I can confirm the answer. The administrative process was for the hearing officers, five permanent SYs were needed, five permanent SYs were transferred from Corrections to Courts, but in return Corrections received five term SYs, and the net effect has been the same.

Mr. Kowalski: I am going to ask some questions about procedures at the Remand Centre.

Are there times of the day when the Remand Centre does not accept prisoners for lockup from any of the police services in Manitoba?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told that, yes, there is a period between 6:45 in the morning and 7:15 in the morning, and that half an hour period is the period in which cells are cleaned.

It is important to clean the cells, as I am told, because within the cells there is often blood and vomit and other things which make it absolutely a requirement to have the cells cleaned at that time.

Mr. Kowalski: At shift changes, at meal times, does the Provincial Remand Centre receive prisoners from the Winnipeg Police Service?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told yes. There is a shift change in that cell cleaning time in the morning, that 6:45 to 7:15 time, but other shift changes, I am told, yes, they continue to accept prisoners.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 4. Corrections (b) Adult Corrections (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$27,543,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$5,374,700—pass; (3) External Agencies and Halfway Houses \$341,700.

Mr. Mackintosh: Are we still on appropriation 4.(b)?

Mr. Chairperson: 4.(b), yes. Item 4.(b)(3) External Agencies and Halfway Houses.

Mr. Mackintosh: I am wondering where that item is on page 63 of the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review.

Mrs. Vodrey: It is included in the line entitled Programs and Grants on 4B in the Supplementary Estimates.

Mr. Mackintosh: Can the minister list what the external agencies are that are being referred to in that line?

* (1550)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, the external agencies are the Native Clan, the John Howard Society, the Elizabeth Fry Society and the John Howard Offender Employment Program. Then there is also the United Church, another to the Native Clan, the St. Norbert Foundation, the Salvation Army, The Pas Friendship Centre.

Mr. Mackintosh: Can the minister explain what the amount is used for at The Pas Friendship Centre?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, yes, that is a contract between The Pas institution and the Friendship Centre in The Pas to deliver culturally appropriate programming within the institution and also to provide a network to re-establish contact with reserves or home communities.

Mr. Mackintosh: Can the minister list the halfway houses that are included in that line?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, the halfway houses are with the Native Clan, St. Norbert Foundation, the United Church and the Salvation Army.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 4.(b)(3) External Agencies and Halfway Houses \$341,700—pass; (4) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$80,000).

Mr. Mackintosh: Can the minister describe where the recoveries are from?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, it is recovery of wages paid to us by other departments for the work of inmate work crews.

Mr. Mackintosh: Can the minister advise what the actual was for '94-95?

Mrs. Vodrey: The amount recovered in '94-95 is \$61,500.

Mr. Mackintosh: Does the minister have that figure for '93-94?

Mrs. Vodrey: The amount for that year was \$62,100.

Mr. Kowalski: Just before we leave this section in the budget, in last year's Estimates, I requested a tour of the youth correctional facility in Portage la Prairie and the Manitoba Youth Centre. I thank the minister and her staff for arranging that.

This year I would like to continue the practice of touring some of the other correctional facilities. I do not want to put an administrative burden on the minister's staff, and I would not abuse the staff's time, but I would like to continue visiting some of the other correctional facilities, specifically Milner Ridge correctional facility and The Pas, Brandon and Dauphin for this year, if at all possible. If the minister could undertake to facilitate those tours, I would appreciate it.

Mrs. Vodrey: Certainly, provided the member is able to have transportation to those facilities, by appointment, we will be happy to arrange a visit.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 4.(c) Correctional Youth Centres (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$9,433,300.

Mr. Mackintosh: Perhaps the minister could also extend that request to myself on appointment and by

arrangement with the minister's office. I would appreciate it.

I also want to put on the record my appreciation for the help of the staff for my visit to the Manitoba Youth Centre. I just want to make sure that is all right with the minister and just put that on the record.

Mrs. Vodrey: I appreciate the comments regarding visits by the member to our youth institutions, and, as I said, provided the member is able to reach his destination by appointment, we will be happy to see that he has a visit to the other institutions.

Mr. Mackintosh: I understand that a fence is currently being constructed around the Agassiz Youth Centre.

Can the minister provide a breakdown of the escapes from that institution for the past four years? I do not want included in those statistics residents who did not return from leaves or absences.

Mrs. Vodrey: The member asked for a four-year period. In '91-92, Agassiz Youth Centre, 15 escapes; '92-93, 11 escapes; '93-94, 28 escapes; '94-95, 33 escapes.

* (1600)

Mr. Mackintosh: Does the minister have a number for the year, April 1, 1995, to date?

(Mr. Mike Radcliffe, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, since April 1 there have been no instances from the Agassiz Youth Centre.

Mr. Mackintosh: Can the minister advise what has been the range of the count at Ridge Point since that camp was established?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, the range has been 11 to 20 individuals.

Mr. Mackintosh: At the minister's announcement in September on changes to Youth Corrections, a daily routine comparing old and new was provided to those

in attendance indicating that organized recreation began at 9:30 p.m. going to 11 p.m.. Would the minister advise whether that is accurate?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, the schedule has been revised. The revision is recreational activities may take place from six in the evening till between 9 p.m. and 9:30 p.m., and at that point there is a half an hour journal time and lights out are at ten o'clock.

Mr. Mackintosh: The wake-up time is noted as 6 a.m. Is that the case for all residents?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, it is the wake-up time for all residents in boot camp. It is not necessarily the time for rising for those who are there on remand or in open custody.

Mr. Mackintosh: What is the wake-up time for those in remand or open custody?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, it is 7 a.m. or 7:15 a.m.

Mr. Mackintosh: Could the minister describe what television services are available to the residents of the youth correctional facilities?

If she has to go facility by facility or level by level, that would be appreciated.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, within the boot camp model, there is no leisure time television. Television is only available for educational purposes. Some television may be used with tapes for behaviour management programs.

Within the open custody, Ridge Point, there is television between 7:30 and 9:30 available for recreation, that being not the boot camp model but the wilderness work camp model.

It is the same on remand as well. It would be some hours of availability in the evening for those on remand and not during the day.

Mr. Mackintosh: What kind of evening programming is available in that instance?

Mrs. Vodrey: May I just clarify with the member, is he asking about television programming or recreational programming?

Mr. Mackintosh: Television programming.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, in those facilities where television is available, I am told that they are screened very carefully. Programming is screened very carefully to avoid any programming which deals with violence or the kind of offences that might bring young people to the institution. Those are not available for young people.

The kinds of programming that would be available would be more programming dealing with kind of prosocial behaviour, the behaviour that we would be looking for young people to engage in when they are in the community.

Mr. Mackintosh: Would the minister tell the committee where the programming is from? What channels are available for example? Is there a satellite dish or is it cable or is it just video tape?

* (1610)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told that there is no satellite reception in our facilities. To our knowledge there is not cable at Agassiz. We would have to check if cable is available at the Youth Centre.

In terms of any movies that might be available to be shown on VHS, movies are screened very carefully. It is extremely limited. The whole ability to watch television as a recreational activity does not sound like it is very attractive because it is extremely limited.

Mr. Mackintosh: What recreational programs are in Agassiz and the Youth Centre?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, the kind of recreational activities available at Agassiz and at the Manitoba Youth Centre are group activities such as baseball, hockey, volleyball. There is also a gym. Then for individuals for recreational activity there are individual table games.

Mr. Mackintosh: Are there pool tables and ping-pong tables in either of the facilities?

Mrs. Vodrey: There are no pool tables or ping-pong tables in the boot camp model. They are, however, available in the remand model.

Mr. Mackintosh: Are they also available to the open-custody residents?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, yes, I am told they are available to open custody.

Mr. Mackintosh: Regarding the school programming in Agassiz and the Youth Centre, the minister described how the school programming is devised. For example, is the Department of Education involved at all in setting up the school program and the curriculum?

Mrs. Vodrey: Within our institutions we follow the provincial curriculum which is set by the Department of Education.

Where we have special courses for residents, things like food services, we make sure that they are accredited. We want students or individuals to be able to transfer their credits when they leave the institutions into an educational setting in the community.

Mr. Mackintosh: Are the learning materials in the institutions the same as those in Winnipeg school divisions?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, what we have is a liaison teacher. The liaison teacher will go to the school division from which the young person has come and make sure that we are aware of the kind of materials which are used for that grade level by that division.

We will acquire those materials or have them loaned to us so that the young people can continue with their studies or at least return to their studies when they return back to the community, because we know many of these young people have become disengaged from school learning. The opportunity within the facilities is to attempt to re-engage them and re-engage them into the kind of process that they would see when they return to their home communities.

In addition, our teachers at the Youth Centre and at Agassiz not only have the certification to teach, but they also are trained in special education because we recognize that many of these young people do have some special learning needs, and this is an opportunity to try and do some remediation in that area.

Mr. Mackintosh: Is there recognition by the teaching staff of the demands of learning disorders within the institutions?

Mrs. Vodrey: I wonder if the member could repeat the question, perhaps elaborate on the question as well.

Having said that the teachers have special education qualifications, I am not quite sure what the follow-up question was regarding learning disorders.

Mr. Mackintosh: Is there programming tailored to suit the needs of each resident considering that some of them may have learning disorders?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, yes, I am told that it is individualized programming for the individual student.

Mr. Mackintosh: Do either of the youth facilities, or Ridge Point for that matter, have laboratory classrooms available, whether it be chemistry or biology or computer?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, we do have computers and computer programs which are available. We have not had students who have been working at the level for chemistry and physics requiring laboratories.

I am told that many of the young people who are there are students who are often at a literacy level of perhaps to a Grade 6 or Grade 7 level.

* (1620)

Mr. Mackintosh: Are there vocational programs offered in either of the institutions?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, the vocational programming which is available is one in food services. Manitoba Youth Centre has that program accredited. Agassiz Youth Centre is working towards their accreditation.

Mr. Mackintosh: Would the minister advise what the range of the count is in her so-called boot camps in the two facilities?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, at Agassiz Youth Centre in the boot camp model as of May '95, 52; at the Manitoba Youth Centre in the boot camp area as of May '95, 52.

Mr. Mackintosh: Who makes a decision as to what area of the facility a resident will be put into and what are the criteria?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, it is the judge who would make that decision in the disposition of open or closed custody.

Mr. Mackintosh: Is the minister then saying that if one is sentenced to closed custody, one is housed in her so-called boot camp?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, that is right. When the sentence is closed custody, the individual then moves into the boot camp.

Mr. Mackintosh: That should be the so-called boot camp.

I notice that the minister—

Point of Order

Mrs. Vodrey: On a point of order, Mr. Chair, the editorial comments of the member, who never supported boot camp from the beginning, I believe, are out of line.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe): The Chair hears the point from the Minister of Justice.

I believe that the members will keep all language parliamentary, and the Chair now recognizes the member for St. Johns.

* * *

Mr. Mackintosh: The minister talks about what different people support. It is obvious this minister

does not support boot camps either because there are no boot camps in Manitoba in any way, shape or form.

In the minister's announcement on the changes to Youth Corrections it states: the programming at Ridge Point will prepare young offenders for reintegration into the community.

Would she tell the committee what the reintegration program is, how it is structured, what its components are?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, there are three parts to this program. The first is a control plan developed by the youth, and it is monitored when the individual is released; secondly, a family intervention plan, crisis intervention where actual counselling is done with the family; and third, a job re-entry or school re-entry portion.

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, can the minister describe what—she has described what the objectives are, I guess, but how is reintegration prepared? I mean, what activities does the youth undergo to prepare for reintegration?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, on the development plan, the young person has to look at what in fact got him into trouble and then has to develop a plan of how to avoid getting into that trouble again. That is the relapse prevention. Then also there are reintegration visits for the young person into the community.

Mr. Mackintosh: What happens during those visits? Where are the visits to?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, the visits are to where the individual will be released to. There are reintegration workers who work with them. They monitor the process. They make sure that the individual abides by the condition of the temporary release.

Mr. Mackintosh: Finally, with regard to the supervision program, is that best dealt with under Community Corrections?

Mrs. Vodrey: We could deal with that component now.

Mr. Mackintosh: Could the minister describe then what changes have taken place with regard to the supervision program? I understand that there have been changes to the Youth Probation Services in east Winnipeg and that there have been some changes at the Manitoba Youth Centre. I am wondering if the minister could describe then the program with those two changes included.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, the way we have done this is we have taken the Release Preparation Unit and the Community Supervision Unit and we have put it together into one unit called the Custody Support Unit. This unit operates under the supervision of an acting director.

We have increased the staff from four to seven who are working in this area. Plus we have three reintegration workers who monitor individuals when they are in the community. That monitoring can take place at any hour whatsoever.

* (1630)

Mr. Mackintosh: Could the minister confirm that the Winnipeg Youth Crime Intervention Team has now been disbanded?

Mrs. Vodrey: No, I cannot confirm that. I would be happy to look into that if the member has some information that he would like to provide to me.

Mr. Mackintosh: It is just my understanding through one of the daily papers that the police were going to disband that. Now I am actually thinking it was regarding the youth gang unit. I think that is what it was. Perhaps that is the minister's understanding as well.

Mrs. Vodrey: I think the member is referring to a recent announcement by the City of Winnipeg Police Services and the RCMP and, I believe, the Brandon Police Service are also a part of this new task force which is focusing on gang activity and other important activity that they have identified.

It did not affect, to my knowledge, the function of the Youth Crime Intervention Team, which is a horizontal

team of sharing of information from schools, Prosecutions and police and so on. I do not believe that affected or closed the youth crime unit of the Winnipeg Police Services either. However, there was an announcement of the formation of this new task force.

Mr. Mackintosh: Is the minister aware as to whether the intervention team is continuing to meet and, if so, when it last met?

Mrs. Vodrey: I cannot give the member a date of the last meeting. I certainly have not heard that it was disbanded. It was my understanding that this is still operating, but I do not have any of the dates.

Mr. Mackintosh: Would the minister describe any activities or any programs, any actions taken by the intervention team since it was formed?

Mrs. Vodrey: I can give the member information on one of the activities which I think was quite important. It was a conference on gang activity. It was a one day conference that was put on for the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police.

In terms of further information, I would be happy to find out for the member. As he knows, the work of that intervention team is multidisciplinary or horizontal as I described it, and it was made up of members of the Winnipeg Police Services, a representative from the Department of Education and representatives from Prosecutions and others. I am happy to look into the activities of that group.

One of the important matters that they were to deal with was, where possible, some information sharing.

Mr. Mackintosh: Would the minister respond to the statement that, since her announcement in September, the residents at Agassiz have been involved in less community work?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, there has been some change in that, when we moved to the boot camp model, which is a closed custody model, there is tighter security, and we want to as careful as we can to avoid, certainly where possible, escapes. However, the open custody model continues to participate in the community, doing

community and park maintenance and road cleanup, for example.

Mr. Mackintosh: Before September, was there a closed custody unit at Agassiz?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, I am told that there were, I believe, two units, and those two units were also under very tight security.

Mr. Mackintosh: Can the minister advise of the total number of residents in the two closed custody units at Agassiz, I guess, for the period before September? What was the count range in the last year?

* (1640)

Mrs. Vodrey: I am told that what we have available from before September is just the global numbers, which would include open and closed custody, which were in the range of the population, about 72 to 85.

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, is the minister aware whether the open custody numbers, open custody count at Agassiz has changed since September?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am told that it does not appear that those numbers have changed very much.

Mr. Mackintosh: Has the total number of beds at Agassiz changed since September?

Mrs. Vodrey: The answer is no.

Mr. Mackintosh: Is the government involved in any actions to establish wilderness camps, in the true sense of the word, in Manitoba?

Mrs. Vodrey: When I made the announcement, I said that we would first look at the facilities that we had begun with. There is an evaluation. The evaluation is expected to be completed at a point in '96. When we have had an opportunity to look at that evaluation, then decisions will be made.

Mr. Mackintosh: Is the government involved in any discussions at all with the First Nations community about the wilderness camps?

Mrs. Vodrey: Some First Nations communities have submitted proposals. The proposals have been reviewed with them. Some First Nations communities have been asked to provide further information. Some who have been asked to provide further information have not done so yet. But they are aware that this is a strategy that we said was a longer term strategy.

We were looking at what we had as a government and then we would be looking at other kinds of proposals which came forward. But decisions have to be made incrementally.

Mr. Mackintosh: Is the minister aware as to whether the departmental officials have advised the First Nations community that the government does not intend to establish any wilderness camps in the next, at least, fiscal year?

Mrs. Vodrey: To my knowledge, the way that it has been put to communities is that there is to be an evaluation first of the facilities that we had begun with. Following that evaluation, decisions will be made.

However, we have not closed the door on discussions, on reviewing proposals, and on letting groups know what is required for proposals to have consideration in the future.

Mr. Mackintosh: I note that there is no breakdown under Other Expenditures for (1) wilderness camps; (2) Ridge Point; and (3) the Intensive Custody Unit of Brandon.

Can the minister advise—first of all, with regard to wilderness camps, is there any appropriation or amount put aside for wilderness camps in the event that something should arise?

Mrs. Vodrey: There are no funds identified separately for further development of wilderness camps in this fiscal year. I believe that was the question.

Mr. Mackintosh: Where are the appropriations for Brandon and Ridge Point?

Mrs. Vodrey: Those appropriations are included within Adult Corrections.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 4. Corrections (c) Correctional Youth Centres (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$9,433,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$985,100—pass.

4.(d) Community Corrections (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$7,350,300.

Mr. Mackintosh: Would the minister advise the number of SYs for probation officers broken down by adult and youth?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am told that that is somewhat a difficult figure. We know that in Winnipeg we have approximately 24 probation officers dedicated to youth, and there are over 40 who are working with adults.

However, throughout the province we have approximately 100 other probation officers who do work with both youth and adults.

I beg your pardon, Mr. Chair, let me correct the record. We have a total of 100 probation officers.

Mr. Mackintosh: It is my understanding that the job of a probation officer includes both the preparation of predisposition reports and supervision. Can the minister tell me if that is correct?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, that is correct.

Mr. Mackintosh: Is there any ongoing review or any review contemplated as to when and how predisposition reports should be ordered and how they are prepared?

* (1650)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, there is a committee ongoing. This has been important because Bill C-37 broadens the scope of the predisposition reports, and I understand that there is a meeting set for the week of July 10. I am not sure of the exact date.

That meeting will involve the Chief Judge and staff from Corrections and Crown attorneys to look at the issue of predisposition reports, the nature of those reports and the preparation of those reports.

Mr. Mackintosh: Have there been any adjustments to the number of probation officers as a result of the demands being placed on them for the preparation of predisposition reports and in light of the increased number of youth on probation? I specified youth.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, there has been some reassignment of work.

One area is in the fine-option area which has allowed the assignment of two staff years to Probation, and also in the administrative area in commitment accounting which has freed up two administrative staff years, and then there has also been reassignment of some Probation people from Adult Corrections into Probation.

Mr. Mackintosh: I have heard that the probation officers are barely keeping above water with the demands being placed on them, and that there are extensive delays in the provision of predisposition reports which is in part causing backlogs in the youth court and slow turnarounds in disposing of cases even on guilty pleas.

I am wondering if the minister has any further plans or the department has plans to deal with this problem.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, we have taken some additional action and that is the inclusion on the agenda of the judges and the probation committee, chaired by Judge Cramer, the issue to look at some possible action and also planning for a modification of the court report format to simplify and reduce preparation time while maintaining the essential content.

Mr. Mackintosh: The minister had been talking about a youth advisory body. I am wondering if the minister could advise of the status of that.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, if the member is referring to the youth council, which we are interested in putting together a representative of youth across the province, we had an individual who was willing to chair that council or committee. We were prepared to work with that individual to identify youth around the province. However, as happens with young people, they do not stay young people forever.

Unfortunately, or I guess fortunately for him, he graduated from high school. In the year that he was appointed he graduated from high school and made the decision to move on in his own working life and was not able, I believe, he did not feel, to then work on the youth council or to feel representative of youth.

We have been examining ways to set up this council because we are very interested and made a commitment following the Summit on Youth Crime and Violence to bring together young people who had a commitment dealing with youth crime and violence and to look at some positive ways that they could influence both to make sure that government was aware of issues which were of importance and be available to the community as well.

The way that we have been dealing with it is through the No Need to Argue program—

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please.

Report

Mr. Ben Sveinson (Deputy Chairperson of Committees): Mr. Chairperson, in the section of the Committee of Supply, meeting in Room 254, considering the Estimates item, Urban Economic Development Initiatives, the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) moved

THAT line 27.7, Urban Economic Development Initiatives, be reduced by \$1,891,304 that is allocated for Winnipeg Jets operating losses.

The member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) then moved that the question be now put.

This motion was defeated on a voice vote. A formal vote was then requested by the honourable member for Thompson and the honourable member for Wellington.

Formal Vote

Mr. Chairperson: A formal vote having been requested, call in the members.

All sections in Chamber for formal vote.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The question before the House is, shall the question be now put?

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 47, Nays 3.

Mr. Chairperson: The motion is accordingly passed.

We will now deal with the main motion. The main motion was a motion brought up by the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) in the section of the Committee of Supply in Room 254.

It has been moved by the honourable member for Thompson

THAT line 27, Urban Economic Development Initiatives, be reduced by \$1,891,304 that is allocated for Winnipeg Jets operating losses.

Voice Vote

Mr. Chairperson: All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Chairperson: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Chairperson: In my opinion, the Nays have it. The motion is defeated.

Formal Vote

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): I request a recorded vote.

Mr. Chairperson: A recorded vote having been requested, call in the members.

Order, please. The question before the House is on the motion by the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton)

THAT line 27, Urban Economic Initiatives, be reduced by \$1,891,304 that is allocated for the Winnipeg Jets operating losses.

All those in favour of the motion, please rise.

The hour being 6 p.m., committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 24, Nays 26.

IN SESSION

Mr. Chairperson: The motion is accordingly defeated.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Marcel Laurendeau): The hour being 6 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. (Friday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, June 22, 1995

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Presenting Petitions		Canada-U.S. Grain Commission Wowchuk; Enns	2387
Funding Model for Quality Public Education Ashton	2377	Forest Fires Jennissen; Downey; Driedger	2388
Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees		Highway 391 Jennissen; Findlay	2389
Committee of Supply Laurendeau	2377	Fire Prevention Fund Robinson; Toews	2389
Standing Committee on Law Amendments, First Report Newman	2377	Speaker's Ruling	2389
Tabling of Reports		Nonpolitical Statements	
1995-96 Revenue Estimates Stefanson	2378	Popular Theatre Alliance McGifford	2389
Annual Reports: Victims' Assistance Committee; Manitoba Criminal Injuries Compensation Board Vodrey	2378	43rd Annual Negev Dinner Chomiak	2390
Oral Questions		Retirement—Brandon Police Chief McCrae	2390
VLT Revenues Doer; Stefanson; Downey Ashton; Stefanson	2379 2380		
Gaming Commission Ashton; Stefanson Lamoureux; Stefanson	2381 2384		
Personal Care Homes Chomiak; McCrae	2381		
Maintenance Enforcement Act Mackintosh; Vodrey	2382		
Child Prostitution McGifford; Vodrey	2385		
Winnipeg Police Services Mihychuk; Vodrey	2386		
Crime Rate Mihychuk; Vodrey	2386		
		ORDERS OF THE DAY	
		Second Readings	
		Bill 20, Child and Family Services Amendment Act Mitchelson	2391
		Bill 23, Health Services Insurance Amendment Act McCrae	2392
		Committee of Supply	
		Highways and Transportation	2393
		Community Support Programs	2402
		Employee Benefits and Other Payments	2403
		Canada-Manitoba Enabling Vote	2403
		Other Appropriations: Allowance for Losses and Expenditures Incurred by Crown Corporations and Other Provincial Entities	2404
		Allowance for Salary Accruals	2404

**Internal Reform, Workforce Adjustment
and General Salary Increases** 2405

Lotteries Funded Appropriations:
Urban Economic Development Initiatives 2405

Natural Resources 2415

Housing 2435

Justice 2439