



Fourth Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

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| JENNISSEN, Gerard | Flin Flon | N.D.P. |
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, May 11, 1998

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Winnipeg Hospitals Food Services—Privatization

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of H. Nanocowy, R. Bouchie, E. Clarke and others praying that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik) to put an end to the centralization and privatization of Winnipeg hospital food services.

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of M. Lentowich, L. Cann, R. Valez and others praying the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Health to put an end to the centralization and privatization of Winnipeg hospital food services.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mining Reserve Fund

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen), and it complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

WHEREAS mining is a billion dollar industry in Manitoba directly employing more than 4,300 people pumping more than \$240 million in wages alone into the Manitoba economy; and

WHEREAS part of the mining taxes on operating mines goes into the Mining Reserve Fund; and

WHEREAS the Mining Reserve Fund was set up for the welfare and employment of persons residing in a mining community which may be adversely affected by the total or partial suspension or the closing down of mining operations attributable to the depletion of ore deposits; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has withdrawn \$6 million from the Mining Reserve Fund and put this money into general revenue; and

WHEREAS many mining communities having contributed millions of dollars to the provincial economy for many years are now nearing the end of their known ore resources.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Energy and Mines to consider immediately restoring the \$6 million taken from the Mining Reserve Fund.

Winnipeg Hospitals Food Services—Privatization

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), and it complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT the Urban Shared Services Corporation (USSC) has announced plans to privatize laundry, food services and purchasing for the Winnipeg hospitals; and

THAT it is estimated that more than 1,000 health care jobs will be lost over the next year as a result, with many more privatized in the next two or three years; and

THAT under the terms of the contract, Ontario businesses will profit at the expense of Manitoba's health care system; and

THAT after construction of a food assembly warehouse in Winnipeg, chilled, prepared food will be shipped in from Ontario, then assembled and heated before being shipped to the hospitals; and

THAT people who are in the hospital require nutritious and appetizing food; and

THAT the announced savings as a result of the contract have been disputed, and one study by Wintemute Randle Kilimnik indicated that, "A considerable number of studies have compared costs of service delivery in health care between self-operation (public sector) and privatization. Invariably, privatization is more expensive."; and

THAT no one in Manitoba seems to benefit from this contract, especially patients.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Health to put an end to the centralization and privatization of Winnipeg hospital food services.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee of Supply

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Chairperson): 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 Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Environment): Madam Speaker, I wonder if there would be leave to revert to Ministerial Statements and Tabling of Reports.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave of the House to revert to Ministerial Statements and Tabling of Reports? [agreed]

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Environment): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am pleased to table Supplementary Information for Legislative Review for 1998-99 with respect to the Sustainable Development Innovations Fund and with respect to Manitoba Environment.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 45—The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act

Hon. James McCrae (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson), that leave be given to introduce Bill 45, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société d'assurance publique du Manitoba), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, having been advised of the contents of this bill, recommends it to the House. I would like to table the Lieutenant Governor's message.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 54—The Engineering and Geoscientific Professions and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Labour): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), that leave be given to introduce Bill 54, The Engineering and Geoscientific Professions and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur les ingénieurs et les géoscientifiques et modifications corrélatives, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 55—The Certified Applied Science Technologists Act

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Labour): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable

Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), that leave be given to introduce Bill 55, The Certified Applied Science Technologists Act; Loi sur les technologues agréés des sciences appliquées, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

* (1335)

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us today His Excellency John-Alexander Thomoglou, Ambassador of Greece to Canada.

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

**Provincial Court Act
Judicial Appointment Process**

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, in a newspaper article on Friday, the Minister of Justice was quoted as saying that he was the person who initiated adding names to the list for judicial appointments. In this House on Thursday, the minister specifically said, and I quote Hansard in terms of the quote of the minister: this suggestion of the list to be expanded was not made by me; it was a suggestion made by the chairperson of that committee.

I would like to ask the Minister of Justice: was he the one who initiated the expansion of the list or was it the Chief Judge as he has stated in Hansard on Thursday?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, on that particular issue I can indicate that I had raised the issue of bilingual capacity, French-speaking capacity on our courts. I had indicated to the Chief Judge the concern I had over that issue, and we proposed a solution. I certainly indicated that I would be prepared to recommend to my cabinet colleagues the increase of two to three positions in order to accommodate that. As a result of that, certain

discussions followed which in fact led to the Chief Judge taking certain steps, but I might indicate that throughout the course of the discussion with the Chief Judge, I certainly raised no names with the Chief Judge, suggested no names, and did nothing improper in that respect.

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, the minister again contradicted what he said in this House on Thursday: the suggestion that the list was to be expanded to include bilingual candidates in fact was not a suggestion made by me. It was a suggestion made by the chairperson of that committee when she came to me in respect of this particular issue.

So my question to the Minister of Justice: what version of the truth is accurate, the one he just gave us that he initiated the discussion with the Chief Judge, or the answer he gave us to questions we posed to him on Thursday when he said the Chief Judge initiated this proposal to him?

Mr. Toews: Madam Speaker, we had a long conversation on a number of issues, including the particular issue of the bilingual capacity of the court. There were certain things that had to be accommodated in order to achieve that. I was prepared to make recommendations that the number of positions be increased from two to three. At no time did I indicate any names to the Chief Judge. I think that is essentially the process. I indicated to the Chief Judge there were two things that I was primarily concerned about. Number one, that the legislation allow for her to go back to the committee. She indicated yes. Secondly, that she was to obtain the consent of the committee, and she indicated that she would do that. We left that issue at that.

* (1340)

Mr. Doer: I assume that the minister is saying that he was wrong in the House on Thursday and that he is now saying today that he was the one who initiated the issue of other candidates to the Chief Judge who is the chair of the committee.

Madam Speaker, Colleen Suche, president of the Law Society, on May 7 after Question Period stated that the minister received the list he requested and that he asked

that two names be added to the list, one being bilingual. I would like to ask the minister: is Colleen Suche's recollection of the process that took place in the minister's initiation correct?

Mr. Toews: Madam Speaker, Colleen Suche was not there. The Chief Judge, acting as the chair of the nominating committee, was there with me. So I cannot comment on her recollection of a conversation that she had no part of. I certainly indicate that her version of the facts is not the version of the facts that I recall from that conversation.

Mr. Doer: The minister has had two versions of the facts. Version one, on Thursday in this House, was that the Chief Judge initiated the extra names. Version two today, and apparently last Wednesday, was that he initiated the two names. Colleen Suche is saying version two, today's version, is the version that they were told in the committee. She goes on to say, as president of the Law Society, that the minister is trying to subvert the process. He is trying to get around it in a completely inappropriate way. I would like to ask the Minister of Justice: why is he trying to subvert the process, according to a member of the independent committee?

Mr. Toews: Madam Speaker, there was certainly no intention to subvert any process in this respect. The issue was clear. The only person who could go back to the committee was the chair of the committee. The chair of the committee indicated she had the right to go back to the committee to discuss that issue. Secondly, the concern that I had in respect of the consent of the committee was something we specifically discussed. There was no issue in respect of trying to get around the committee. The committee had to consent to anything that needed to be done. I want to indicate again, at no time did I raise any names that should be put forward to the committee.

Mr. Doer: Again, Ms. Suche's recollection and record of the events is consistent with the second version that the minister has given us in the House, not the first one, that he initiated with the Chief Judge the addition of two candidates for the selection of judges after they, the committee, had proposed names to the minister pursuant to the act.

Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the minister: in 1993, the government posted the position for the legal profession that the successful applicant would be fluently bilingual in English and French. Can the minister indicate whether the same process was used in this selection of this list of candidates by the independent committee?

Mr. Toews: Again, it is the chair that does the ads; it is not the government. In fact, in respect of the appointment of Judge Chartier in 1993, the Order-in-Council makes absolutely no comment in respect of whether the position is to be bilingual or not. The advertisement was for a bilingual judge. In this particular case, again, the Order-in-Council makes no reference to whether or not it is bilingual because that is not indicated in the legislation.

What in fact occurred, as a result of discussions that the Chief Judge and I had over a period of four to five months on this issue, was that one of those positions was clearly for a bilingual position. I indicated that, in speaking to my community members in respect of this issue, one of the qualifications that the government was certainly looking to fill was the issue of a bilingual judge. So this was something that was done in the same way it was done in 1993.

* (1345)

Mr. Doer: In the record, it is in writing—one is posted as bilingual, the other one is not—so the minister can give us version two again of the events.

Madam Speaker, one member of the community committee, Ms. Kozminski, says that this was never a criterion, but yet the minister now is saying he met separately, I suppose, with the community members who are, by the way, the Order-in-Council appointments by cabinet. I believe that the individuals on it, Mr. Bottomley, a person appointed by the government, another—I do not know whether it was Alfred MacDonald or Mr. McPherson [phonetic] on this selection committee and Ms. Kozminski. Is the minister saying that he meets separately with the Order-in-Council appointments from the community versus the members of the Law Society, the Bar Association?

He has separate meetings, and on what basis does he proceed with that process?

Mr. Toews: Madam Speaker, that is, in fact, exactly what happened. An appointment was made to meet with all of the representatives that were appointed by government, and two of those people showed up at the meeting. Ms. Kozminski never showed up at that meeting, and I have never talked to Ms. Kozminski about this entire process at all. Indeed, I do not even think I could recognize Ms. Kozminski if I ever saw her.

Provincial Court Act Judicial Appointment Process

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, The Provincial Court Act sets out that the appointment to a vacancy shall be made from a list of candidates that is recommended by a nominating committee. That section came from a recommendation of the Law Reform Commission back in '89 which said: it appears to us that a possible risk of abuse might arise if the Attorney General were allowed to ask for a new list. For example, an Attorney General could ask for a list after list of candidates until one was discovered who was politically suitable.

My question for the minister: would the minister recognize that once the names are presented to him, as we understand at least from his version last week, last Monday, he cannot send the list back explicitly or implicitly? No matter what series of events the minister wants to give to the House today, he cannot send the list back once he has received them. He has broken the law. Would he do the right thing?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): In fact, at no time was that list rejected. In fact, at the end of the meeting with the Chief Judge, when the Chief Judge indicated that she was going back to the committee on the basis of the legislation to seek their consent, I indicated, in fact, that there was never an issue of rejection of the list. Indeed, in the last conversation I had with the Chief Judge on Wednesday, May 6, when she indicated that the committee did not consent to the bilingual issue, then I indicated to her very clearly that I would be proceeding on the basis of the seven names and the two positions.

Minister of Justice Resignation Request

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Does the minister not understand that last week he said he agreed with the Chief Judge's suggestion—and we will take that just for a moment, as if there was some validity to what he said last Thursday, Madam Speaker. Does he not understand that the legislation does not allow for the list to go back even if the Chief Judge thinks she has the power to bring it back, even if the minister thinks the committee can consent to reconsidering? They did their work. They worked over months. They finished their job. They brought the list to the minister. How can he say they wanted to take it back? Would he resign?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): At no time, Madam Speaker, did I suggest they take the list back. There was a proposal that I, in fact, raised to address the issue of a bilingual judge. This was a matter we had discussed for months in terms of getting a bilingual judge to assist the court with their specific issues, and at no time was the list rejected. When the Chief Judge went back to the committee, the government had not rejected that list; I had not rejected that list, and indeed when the committee—[interjection]

* (1350)

Well, Madam Speaker, under the legislation, if there are three positions, then there must be a minimum of nine names and a maximum of 18. In order to meet the obligations of the legislation, that had to be met.

Provincial Court Act Judicial Appointment Process

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, this is getting worse. Would the minister try and explain to Manitobans now how he can say there were three positions open when there was an Order-in-Council for two vacancies? The nominating committee acted on the basis of two vacancies, bilingualism of which was not a qualification. What is this minister trying to play? What is he trying to do and subvert this process? Would he explain that?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I believe that I have

explained it. I have indicated that the proposal that I would recommend to my cabinet colleagues, that there be three positions, is clear. I do not deny that at all. I made that undertaking that I would recommend. In order to meet the obligation of three positions, the legislation is very clear how many names there have to be. At no time was the existing list rejected.

Mr. Mackintosh: Madam Speaker, the Minister of Justice for the Province of Manitoba has just contradicted himself in a most serious way regarding a most serious incident. He has just told the people of Manitoba, in this House where we are to take his word, that there were now three positions open on the Provincial Court of Manitoba. That was not the position that he said last week. He is now telling Manitobans today, because it is Monday I suppose, that he initiated the discussions about a bilingual judge. Last week he said the Chief Judge initiated that. Who are Manitobans to believe, the Chief Judge of Manitoba, the Attorney General of Manitoba, the head of the Bar Association, the head of the Law Society? It cannot be this minister; he changes his tune day after day.

Mr. Toews: Madam Speaker, I have been clear in what the position was in respect of my conversation with the Chief Judge. The issue of a bilingual judge had been discussed with the Chief Judge since the resignation in The Pas of a particular judge, and I cannot remember that date, but the extent of our conversation lasted over a period of months, or our conversations on that issue. The issue of a bilingual judge was raised at the meeting on Monday by me. There is no question about that.

Mr. Mackintosh: Madam Speaker, the Minister of Justice said last Thursday in the House that he thought the suggestion brought by the Chief Judge was reasonable, and I quote: and agreed with her suggestion.

Would the minister today admit that when he said that last Thursday, he was just deliberately misleading the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba and the people because the events that he describes today say that he initiated? Which version today is expedient for the minister?

Mr. Toews: Well, Madam Speaker, that is exactly the problem I posed and the solution that was provided by the Chief Judge, that she said she would go back to the committee.

* (1355)

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, Madam Speaker, I think as members we are prepared, just for a moment, to accept any version.

Regardless of what version, whether it is the version from Wednesday, whether it is the version from Thursday, whether it is the version from today, I ask the minister: does he not recognize that whatever version, he has broken the law? He implicitly or explicitly sent the list back to the nominating committee, totally contrary to the wording of the act and contrary to the spirit and the intent of that section to protect Manitobans from the appearance of patronage that this minister appears to be engaged in?

Mr. Toews: No, Madam Speaker, I do not agree with that. There were two issues—one as to whether or not the legislation allowed the Chief Judge to go back to the committee. It was her opinion that she could go back to the committee, and she did so. The second issue was the issue of the consent of the committee, and that was important. One has to obtain the consent of the committee.

I want to say, those two issues aside, which are very important, at no time did I suggest or raise any names with the Chief Judge. The accusation that the members are now making seems to be shifting. It shifts from the substantive accusation that I somehow raised names, and now they are staying away from that. This week they are changing their story and tack by trying to find some discrepancy in a version of facts that they were not a party to in terms of a conversation.

Court System Independent Review

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Justice, and it is to continue the follow-up with respect to the need for an independent review. There is absolutely no doubt in the minds of most Manitobans that there is a need for

that independent review. The Minister of Justice tends to believe that we should be waiting for the task force from Alberta.

My question is: if the minister recognizes that there are some faults, serious faults in the system, why will he not acknowledge the need for that independent review today?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, the issue of an independent review of the entire court system certainly has to be kept separate and apart from the issues that we have been raising here. One of the things about the independent review is that it requires not just the desire of the Attorney General or the members of cabinet or a particular political party, it requires the input of the judiciary, the members of the legal profession, and indeed most importantly, members of the public. So this is not a process or a path that we embark upon lightly. I agree with the member that there are from time to time problems with the justice system and that we need to address them. The extent to which that review should occur, of course, needs to be carefully considered before any commitment is made.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, then I ask for the minister to make that commitment to start the review in progress. I acknowledge the importance of an independent judiciary, but it does not justify complete total lack of accountability for our judicial system. That is why, again, I specifically ask the minister then: will he take the steps necessary in order to start the process today?

Mr. Toews: Madam Speaker, I always find the advice and comments from the member for Inkster to be helpful, and I will certainly take his thoughts and concerns into consideration in respect of any recommendations that I may give to my fellow cabinet colleagues.

* (1400)

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, given that, will the minister then make a commitment today that some time within the next six months we will see in place an independent review committee that will at the very least come back with recommendations for all political parties inside the Chamber?

Mr. Toews: Madam Speaker, I do not disagree with the need for a review of aspects of our justice system—and I mean that in the broadest sense of the word; I do not want to particularize in respect of any one segment—but I am not yet convinced at this point as to the best mechanism for doing that and to what extent the justice system should be reviewed.

Health Care System Unlicensed Blood Products

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, a protocol and a process has been put in place by the Red Cross for use in Manitoba whereby human serum-albumin, a blood product which is unlicensed, is being used in Manitoba institutions. Caregivers must phone the Red Cross in Ottawa to receive a special emergency drug registration status, then log the use of this unlicensed product into the log books.

Given what has happened in the blood supply and the difficulties of hepatitis C victims and other victims, can the Minister of Health indicate whether or not he has given his approval to the use of these unlicensed blood products in Manitoba?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, the member raises a very interesting question. It is a matter that I must admit to him I am not fully apprised of. I can tell him, though, that the licensing and the process for licensing and use of blood and blood products, as well as pharmaceuticals, rests with the national government, but I would be more than pleased to investigate this particular matter to update him on the process and the reason why that in fact is happening.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, will the minister also confirm that while caregivers register the utilization of these unlicensed blood products, specifically albumin and possibly blood plasma as well, in fact the patients who receive these unlicensed blood products do not provide informed consent to the use of this unlicensed product?

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, in the course of the debate that we have been having around the hepatitis C issue that many members have participated in, it has become, I think, very apparent that in our institutions

today, which up until the creation of the regional health authorities have been run by independent organizations, it is fundamentally important that people receive the necessary information to properly assess the risk of dealing with any blood or blood products or other particular products or procedures. That is one of the, I think, results of the debate that we have been having. I do not believe that is entirely in place today, but it is certainly a suggestion that I intend to be acting on within the new system.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, I can inform the minister that this very question is being asked of the Minister of Health in Ottawa as we speak. I can also inform the minister that we have confirmed from the Red Cross that in fact unlicensed blood-product protocol has been put in place.

I would like the minister to promise to this House that he will come back to this House tomorrow outlining what the procedures are, whether or not approvals have been given for the use of this unlicensed product and what steps have been taken to alert patients who are receiving the unlicensed products that they, in fact, are receiving products that are not licensed.

Mr. Praznik: Madam Speaker, I think it is very important to properly appreciate and divide the responsibilities in each case. The provincial Minister of Health and this minister do not make decisions as to what pharmaceuticals physicians prescribe or make decisions around courses of treatment. That responsibility rests with the regulator of the products that are produced, which is the national government, and it rests with the caregivers and their professional bodies. So, as minister, I do not have a role in those professional decisions.

What I can tell the member, as the trustee of the public in the operation of regional health authorities who are now the owners and operators or the contractors for the vast majority of health care services, that ensuring Manitobans have the right information to participate in decisions around their care is fundamentally important and that with the new Canadian blood agency and our regional health authorities I intend to see steps taken to ensure that that information is provided as we move into the new era of the new Canadian blood system.

Provincial Court Act Judicial Appointment Process

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, we understand that last Monday or so the nominating committee brought to the Minister of Justice the list from which the minister is required by law to appoint the candidate, and in this case two candidates, to the provincial bench. The minister now says, however, that he sent the list back, which by itself is against the law, because he actually wanted a third position to be filled. Would the minister admit that he had no lawful authority whatsoever to pick a third judge; there was no intention of doing that, there was no process in place, that that is simply a ruse for this minister to skirt the law and appoint someone, indeed someone who was suggested? One person only fit the bill for a bilingual judge appointment from the list.

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, I am not going to get into the issue of who or who was not on any particular list because that is totally improper, and I certainly had no—

An Honourable Member: Your inaction was improper.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Toews: Well, you know, again the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) seems to think that he was at that conversation. What I can indicate is that I raised the issue of the bilingual issue; I raised the issue about the recommendation in terms of the additional position for a bilingual judge. The judge made certain suggestions as a consequence of that. My concern was did the legislation authorize that. The Chief Judge's position was yes, it did.

The second issue—and here the member says I am skirting the law, I am somehow avoiding the law. The issue is did the committee consent. The consent of the committee was crucial. The judge had the right. She said to go back, and the committee had to consent.

Mr. Mackintosh: Does the minister not understand, not just the intent but the wording of the act, an act brought in by the members opposite, their own legislation, or does he in fact understand it but wishes

to disregard it? He thinks he is above the law. In either case, will he admit that he is unfit to sit in that position as Minister of Justice with this kind of action?

Mr. Toews: Madam Speaker, I just had occasion to read the newspaper this weekend where a former colleague of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) said that in his day it was just heavy-duty lobbying by cabinet ministers in order to get judges. This government brought in the changes to the law so that it would prevent the kinds of activities that used to go on over on the New Democratic side. So this was the first legislation of its kind in Canada. It is new legislation, and it is very significant legislation. There were conversations that the Chief Judge and I had, and I do not see anything improper in terms of the suggestion that the Chief Judge said and the authority that she had to go back to the committee.

Minister of Justice Resignation Request

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Would the minister, who does not see anything improper about playing ping-pong with the list from the nominating committee, explain to Manitobans how he is to fulfill his legal responsibility to see that the administration of public affairs—I am quoting from the legislation governing his office—is in accordance with law? How can he continue when he breaks the law, Madam Speaker? Will he now resign, do the proper thing?

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, again, the members are trying to raise an issue of process. They have an idea about what specific process should be followed. The concern that I had is that the process was sanctioned by legislation. It was clearly the chair of the committee's position that that process was sanctioned. If there is any question about the process that was followed—it is not a question of breaking the law. It is a question of ensuring through the certiorari remedy to review that, to ensure that the process was correct.

The process, in my opinion, was defensible on the basis of the judge's comments, and my particular concern was at the end of the day did the committee consent.

* (1410)

Minister of Justice Resignation Request

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

Even if we accept in the best light the minister's versions of events today, it is clear, even in the best light, that the minister was attempting to negotiate the terms of the legislation that was brought in by this government with respect to the independent appointment of judges. Given that, I look to the minister in terms of his legal experience, his background and his profession as a lawyer. Does he not recognize that he cannot pass judgment on this situation, given his steps in this regard, that he ought to step aside, he ought to allow the matter to be examined? If it is found that there was nothing inappropriate, then he can step back in, but he can no longer stay as the Attorney General of this province and defend this position.

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, there are many times that I have given legal opinions where many, many lawyers did not agree, and one of those significant ones was when I was counsel to the member for Brandon West (Mr. McCrae) and when the member for Brandon West wanted to bring in the drinking and driving laws. The NDP and Liberals were opposed to those laws, and every lawyer in this province said it was unconstitutional. I said to the minister at that time that the law, our Constitution, permits this, and the member for Brandon West and this government went ahead.

So I am not afraid of giving legislation and views on legislation, and in this particular case there was nothing improper about the process.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, does the Minister of Justice not recognize that he is the chief lawmaker and law administrator of the province, brought in legislation which even given the best light of his defence appears to have been breached, and the Law Society says it has been breached, and contradictory statements, and the Bar Association? Does he not recognize that he can no longer stand up and defend his actions as the Justice minister in the province of Manitoba?

Mr. Toews: Well, now I think we are clearer what the issue is. The issue is one of process. Was the process proper? The remedy for that is to review it, and the review is done through certiorari. If the member feels that there was anything wrong with that process, there is a legal remedy. Take your legal remedy.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, it is perplexing to me that the Minister of Justice, who has stated three separate versions of events and who has been contradicted—how can the Minister of Justice then tell members of the Legislature that they should bring a certiorari application on a decision he made that breached his own legislation brought in by his government? That is the reason why the minister has no choice but to resign and step aside.

Mr. Toews: Well, Madam Speaker, I disagree with the analysis given by the member for Kildonan who is also a lawyer and disagrees with the interpretation that I have provided. I want to indicate—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

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

Mr. Toews: Madam Speaker, the members have indicated that I have given three different versions of events. That is clearly not correct. There was a long conversation, and they are choosing different aspects of a conversation and then saying, because it is three different statements made in three different contexts, there is a contradiction.

My position has been clear. I was the one who raised the particular issue and concern about a bilingual position. I do not disagree with that. The Chief Judge proposed the solution as to what should be done, and that was the context of my answer on Thursday or Wednesday. That is correct. [interjection] All right, Thursday. The member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) indicates that was on Thursday. Well, that is fine. That was the context on that day, and the Chief Judge indicated she would proceed back to the committee.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Speaker's Ruling

Madam Speaker: I have a ruling for the House.

On April 16, 1998, during Question Period, I took under advisement, in order to review Hansard, a point of order. It concerned an answer given by the honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews) to a question asked by the honourable member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh). The point of order raised by the House leader for the official opposition alleged that the minister was not responding to the matter raised and was provoking debate.

Having reviewed the Hansard transcript, I must conclude that there indeed was a point of order. The Minister of Justice should have, in responding to the question, complied with the requirements of Beauséjour Citation 417, that is, he should have responded to the matter raised and should not have provoked debate.

* (1420)

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Rural Development—Master's Degree Program

Mr. Ben Sveinson (La Verendrye): Madam Speaker, our government remains committed to promoting rural development. This is seen in our recent decision to provide Brandon University with \$255,000 in provincial assistance to support its new master's degree program in rural development. This master's program will be the only one of its kind in the prairie region. Taken together with the Rural Development resources available through Assiniboine Community College and the new community outreach desk, this will firmly establish Manitoba as a centre of excellence in this field of study.

The master's program will graduate trained professionals, community leaders and entrepreneurs who will further encourage rural people to initiate and lead local and regional development. It will combine theory and practice, linking students to communities through co-operative education experience programs.

As an outgrowth of Brandon University's strong commitment to community service, students in the

program will join with the faculty to create a community outreach desk. This service will promote greater collaboration and knowledge transfer between the university and rural communities. Rural Manitobans have been working hard expanding the rural economy. By graduating specialists who understand the priorities and challenges facing our rural communities, we can be assured that the economic growth of our rural home towns will continue. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Child Poverty

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Manitoba has been at or near the top in the child poverty ranks since at least 1990, and today, unfortunately, according to the latest National Council of Welfare statistics, we are again No. 1 in child poverty in Canada.

Child poverty in Canada is at a 17-year high, and over 25.5 percent of the children in the province of Manitoba today are poor. This is an incredible, incredible record. We are first overall in child poverty. We are first overall in child poverty rates for two-parent families, the working poor, and we are second by one-half of one percentage point to the province of Newfoundland in child poverty for single-parent families. This is a shameful record in the province of Manitoba, particularly in light of the fact that in 1995 in the Filmon Vision, the Tory platform document, they said, and I quote: our policies reflect an holistic approach to meeting the needs of every child.

Well, the statistics paint a very different picture, do they not, Madam Speaker? I am a member of the NDP child task force which has gone throughout the province of Manitoba in the last few months, and we have heard the same stories. If this government would ever get outside of this building and consult with the people of Manitoba, they would find the same thing, too.

The programs of this government, far from taking an holistic approach to meeting the needs of children, have been cut. The policies of this government have been cuts to programs like foster care, cuts to programs like Access, to friendship centres, lack of community resources, lack of ability of communities throughout this province, north, south, east and west, urban, rural,

and aboriginal to meet the needs of their children, whether they are two-parent families, one-parent families, throughout the province, because of the specific policies of this government which have been to cut programs and to reduce municipalities' abilities to provide support for their children.

How can the minister—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member's time has long expired.

Public Safety and Victims' Rights

Mr. David Faurschou (Portage la Prairie): Madam Speaker, I rise this afternoon on the issue of public safety and that of victims' rights. Recently our Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews) proposed the strongest civil remedies in Canada to be made available to victims of domestic violence and stalking. The proposals are to provide quick, simple and inexpensive access to protection orders that allow for broader preventative orders and compensation from the abuser or stalker for victims' monetary lawsuits. As well, the victims have the right to sue for damages resulting from their stalking. Our government recognizes that safety and security of the individual, our families and our communities are vital to our quality of life. The proposed legislation reflects the recommendations of the Law Reform Commission on stalking and was developed with input from the Lavoie implementation committee.

Madam Speaker, perpetrators of domestic violence and stalking must be sent a clear message that their actions will not be tolerated. No one has the right to intimidate or harass another person. All of us, as legislators, must use every means in our power to ensure that criminals pay the consequences for their criminal act. As well, our government must continue to lobby the federal government to enhance this legislation through the changes in the Criminal Code. Thank you very much.

Youth Merit Awards

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Reid Bewski, a Senior 4 student at the Ethelbert School, who has been selected as one of the

six national winners of the Youth Merit Awards program sponsored by regional cable television. This award recognizes young people who have made a difference in their home towns by their various volunteer activities and their efforts to make their community a better place in which to live. Nominees were judged on their actual activities supported by relevant material, certificates, record of achievement, letters of recognition from people and organizations in the community and newspaper stories.

Reid received his award at the regional school and had received a presentation from a representative of regional cable service. Reid has a genuine love for all types of sports, and it is his interest in working with young people that has been his main motivation to get involved in athletic activities. His involvement in helping with athletic activities in the school has given him the opportunity to show his leadership skills.

Besides being involved with athletics, he has been involved with many other extracurricular activities in his school and in his communities. Reid recognized that his school coach, who was a part-time phys ed teacher, had a very heavy workload and as a result of that he became involved and took on the responsibility to coach various teams in the school, including Grade 5 boys and girls co-ed co-operative soccer teams, Grades 6 and 7 soccer teams and junior boys basketball teams.

He is also very involved in the school and community operating video and sound equipment in approximately 40 different community and school events. He is very involved in the 4-H. It is this skill that led him to use his experience and knowledge in establishing an Internet for the Ethelbert District Development Board and he designed a website to make Ethelbert more accessible to the world. The completion of the project involved approximately 200 hours of volunteer work.

I would also like to extend my congratulations to Bryna Sclater of Waskada, Manitoba, who also received this award.

Irvin Milne

Mr. Denis Rocan (Gladstone): With the loss of the Crow rate transportation subsidy, all producers in

Manitoba and western Canada have been seeking alternative crops and value-added production to supplement their cash receipts.

I would like to share with you the story of a constituent of mine, Mr. Irvin Milne. In 1997, he formed the Mekiwin Corporation. He and his partner saw the opportunity for alternate crop production and a major market for the processed crop in the nutraceutical and pharmaceutical markets. I am pleased the Manitoba government is helping producers and entrepreneurs access this new market. Nutraceuticals such as echinacea, ginseng, and St. John's Wort are surging in demand. Now, with assistance of a REDI grant, the Mekiwin Corporation is conducting a feasibility study aimed at learning the nutrient value and processing methods of horseradish. Several potential uses for horseradish have been discovered in both the pharmaceutical and nutraceutical industries.

Producers across Manitoba are thriving and diversifying in the post-Crow era, and the provincial government, through programs such as the Rural Economic Development Initiative, is helping them take advantage of new and growing markets. Manitoba producers and processors are responsible for one of every nine jobs in this province. The agricultural industry is an integral part of our economy, and I am pleased that we are doing whatever we can to ensure that it remains strong and healthy. Thank you.

* (1430)

ORDERS OF THE DAY

House Business

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I would like to obtain the unanimous consent of the House, notwithstanding the sequence for consideration of Estimates as outlined in Sessional Paper No. 142 tabled on March 24, 1998, and subsequently amended to consider the Estimates of Community Support Programs and then Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Program - Capital in Room 255. Madam Speaker, these changes are to apply for today only.

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent of the House to change the sequence for consideration of

Estimates to consider for today only the Estimates of Community Support Programs and then Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Program - Capital in Room 255? [agreed]

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Labour (Mr. Gilleshammer), 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.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

FAMILY SERVICES

Mr. Chairperson (Gerry McAlpine): Good afternoon. 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 Family Services. When the committee last sat it had been considering item 9.4. Child and Family Services (a) Child and Family Support (1) Child, Family and Community Development on page 56 of the Estimates book.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): When we left off, I had asked the minister a question, so we will await the response.

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): I know we were discussing the whole issue of services to 16- and 17-year-olds, but I cannot remember what the exact question was. So maybe my honourable friend might repeat it to help me focus an answer in the most appropriate fashion possible.

Mr. Martindale: I would be happy to help the minister focus. The question on page 2775 of Hansard was: "what is the minister going to do to make sure that the needs of 16- and 17-year-olds are being met?"

Mrs. Mitchelson: I think if I want to talk about the process, and I do not think I answered this before for my honourable friend, but if indeed there is a family

problem with a 16- or 17-year-old and the family reaches out for some support because they just cannot—they are in the middle of a family crisis—in fact, there are services that do kick in, and through our new emergency services, there is opportunity on a 24-hour basis for families to receive some sort of crisis intervention. That does not always work, and we know that sometimes children have to be removed from a family circumstance. If there is agreement on all sides, a voluntary placement agreement can be entered into whereby supports are received for a period of time outside of the home so that we can try to work with the family and the child involved to see whether there cannot be a satisfactory resolution to reuniting that family.

* (1450)

If in fact a child chooses not to have any association or any contact or any treatment provided by the agency, we know that we have to provide supports through our welfare system to 16- and 17-year-olds. In other instances where there is a determination that there is significant work that needs to be done with a child who does not want to be part of the family situation anymore, the agency enters into an independent living process with 16- and 17-year-olds where they receive certainly food and shelter. That is done on an individual basis, and the workers within the system are required to—cheques are not sent out to these individual children. They come into contact with their caseworker from the agency to receive their payment and their support. Wherever possible, we encourage some participation in formal or informal services to those children, but we cannot force them to participate if they do not want to be involved in any sort of support. Very difficult. We try to encourage very strongly a connection to some sort of support service, but where there is an absolute refusal and they do not want to participate, we ensure that there is still a connection to the child welfare system. But in fact we cannot lock them up and we cannot force them to participate.

It is interesting to note that right across the country there is a different mix of supports that are available. There are some provinces that do not provide any support after the age of 16 to children. There are six jurisdictions across the country that do not provide any support through the child welfare system after children

turn the age of 16. There are five jurisdictions that provide support up to the age of 18, and I guess British Columbia is the only one that provides support up to the age of 19. So it is different across the country.

I would love to see an opportunity everywhere to ensure that there is help and support, but again we cannot force kids to participate if they choose not to.

Mr. Martindale: I thank the minister for her answer. It seems to me that it would be preferable and probably there would be more success if 16- and 17-year-olds participated willingly in either a voluntary placement agreement, or were successfully coping with independent living. Presumably some of them are, maybe most of them are, but what I get are desperate phone calls from parents. I was using as an example a parent, when we left off on Thursday, and I appreciate that one of your staff, Mr. Goodman, offered to help in this particular case. But what I get are very desperate calls from parents saying my son or daughter is on the run, or they are living on the street, or they are engaging in high-risk activities and the only thing that will work is a locked facility for treatment, either for psychological treatment or drug and alcohol abuse, substance abuse treatment. That is not available in Manitoba and so the parents feel that they are at their wits end.

Now another problem is that in several of these instances they asked for help at a much earlier stage and Child and Family Services did not provide the help then, and so, of course, there is a lot of blaming going on about the fact that Child and Family Services was not willing to intervene when it might have been a lot more helpful.

In the case that I began to talk about on Thursday, the individual was sent or referred to the Selkirk healing lodge and the mother said: this is not going to work. This kid is going to go AWOL, and, in fact, the kid went AWOL on Thursday and was returned by the police and over the weekend left the facility again and is back on the street. So what do I say, or what do you say to some very desperate parents out there who care very much for their children and feel that there are no resources for their children because people are saying, including I hear in the minister's answer, there is

nothing we can do if they will not voluntarily accept some sort of plan for them?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I guess there is not any one situation or circumstance within a family that is the same as another. Obviously there are many people that try to do the best job of parenting possible and things still do not work out. I guess the experts that work in the field seem to believe and tell us that a locked facility is not necessarily the answer for these kids.

What they are trying to do is buck the system basically, and the best solution is to try to find some sort of community support like the MacDonald Youth Services, and the support systems that they provide that help an adolescent, a 16- or 17-year-old, develop a trust relationship with someone out there in the community.

We all know that until a child can start to make the right choices or the right decision for themselves, very often forcing them to try to do something that they are not prepared to do is not going to work. We find that in the instance of locked facilities like the Marymounts or the Knowles centres, we have the highest incidence of children running in those facilities. They are just not prepared to be a part of the process of rehabilitating themselves or getting the kinds of support that they need when they are forced to do something.

So I guess I want to say that I am extremely concerned and I feel for parents who are going through the struggle with an older teenager and trying to find the right answers but knowing that locking them up is not necessarily going to be the right answer, that they have to be prepared to be part of a process to help change their lives around. Hopefully, as we put additional resources into the community, like we have been doing with the shutting down of Seven Oaks, and redirecting our focus and resources to crisis intervention, in-home intervention, and short-term placement, when we try to sort things out and help them connect with someone that they can trust and help them turn their lives around, that we are going to see significant success.

I would be very interested in knowing individual specific circumstances around parents who would come forward and say that they have tried to deal through the child welfare system and get help for their families and

their children, and they have not been successful because they have not received the support. That concerns me, and I would certainly want to hear about those instances where that has happened. I would certainly be prepared to look into those individual cases and see what may not have happened that should have happened.

This again is sort of—you know, we have talked in the past about putting more money into child welfare agencies to do the prevention and the intervention versus the protection. There has always been a debate around that, and there are some children, some older children—and maybe they are getting younger—who may take advantage of knowing that there is a protection system in place and if things are not going well at home, almost threaten parents with the fact that they are going to call Child and Family Services because they do not feel they are being well treated at home.

* (1500)

That does happen. I have certainly heard that comment made, and you kind of wonder whether the child welfare system can be the be all and the end all for all families. Can they be the people who do all of the intervention and all of the family support but also be the agency that is there to take your children away when you have been accused of abuse or neglect? I think expanding our community base and looking to other community services in partnership—because you cannot work in isolation of the child welfare system—but if you look at other agencies that can provide the kinds of supports that families need without the threat of your kids being taken away from you if there are accusations made, I think might be part of the solution.

So I hear what my honourable friend is saying, and I am always very concerned that we try to get the best supports in place that we possibly can. I think that because each individual case is so different that we need to look at different solutions for different circumstances and situations.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Chairperson, I thank the minister for being interested and looking into the specifics of the case. I will write to her about the son of my constituent so that she can see whether or not Child and Family Services acted properly or not.

I have in front of me a clipping from the Winnipeg Free Press of Thursday, October 30, 1997, about child care policies, particularly regarding foster homes, and it is based on the Annual Report of the Provincial Ombudsman for 1996. Mr. Barry Tuckett criticized authorities for leaving a three-year-old child in a foster home for a year, despite allegations she was being physically and sexually abused. I think probably the '96 annual report was released some time in '97, and I think this is the same case where the department responded to the Ombudsman's concern. It says: accordingly the department is following up on the broader systemic issues identified in this case.

I am wondering if the minister can tell me what that means and what action has been taken as a result of this specific case, not in this individual case, but what action is being taken to prevent situations like this from happening again. I believe, in this case, the parent alleges, and I think the Ombudsman agreed, that there were a number of instances of abuse. The parent brought this to the attention of the appropriate authorities, and yet the child was not moved.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, it is my understanding that the Ombudsman's comments were comments that said that the agency did not act in an appropriate, timely fashion based on what they had committed to do, that in no instance was he indicating that there was a situation of abuse or that a child was left in an abusive situation, so his comments were related to the timeliness of the plan that the agency said they would follow through on and their, I guess, delay in putting that plan into action and ensuring that the child was moved back home. So I just want to make that clear, that it was not an issue of a child being abused in a situation where that child was not moved, because in those instances that child would have been moved immediately.

What I can indicate to my honourable friend is that since that report we have certainly within my department increased the number of quality assurance reviews that are done and that if, in fact, the case plans that have been put in place by the agency are not followed through on, we ensure that they are complied with. So that is the kind of activity we are reviewing, certainly in a more aggressive way, the plans that the agencies have for children. If we find that they are not

moving as they have indicated they would be, we are following up to ensure that that happens.

Mr. Martindale: There is certainly a disagreement here between the minister and the Ombudsman because the Free Press story of Wednesday, October 29, says: a three-year-old child apprehended by Winnipeg Child and Family Services was left in a foster home for nearly a year despite signs she was being physically and sexually abused, Manitoba's provincial Ombudsman has found.

He said that six different people at the agency and in government were informed about the situation, including the minister's office and the Children's Advocate.

So there is a disagreement here about the specifics of the case, and I know that that particular case was resolved, but I would like to know who is investigating and ensuring that they are dealt with more expeditiously. Is it somebody in the minister's department or in Child and Family Services agencies? Who is responsible?

* (1510)

Mrs. Mitchelson: I will answer the last question first, and it is it our branch that does quality assurance reviews of the agency case files, and if, in fact, we find that there is something lacking, that is brought to the agency's attention and we expect resolution of that. But I do want to indicate that since that article was in the paper, the Ombudsman did call the newspaper and indicated that that was not what he said and that, in fact, there was no issue of abuse.

So he was misquoted and I do not think that the comments my honourable friend read were in quotations. It was the interpretation by the media of what he said and he called to clarify that. Unfortunately, we know from time to time that the media does not always apologize, as we always do when we are wrong, in this Legislature, does not always apologize or correct the record, but he made it clear to them that that was not the case.

Mr. Martindale: I have in front of me an article also from the Free Press. Unfortunately, I do not have the

date, but it says that the Chief Medical Examiner calls for five probes into six deaths. Two of them were children, one of whom was in a Stonewall foster home and died September 14, 1994, and the other was a student who died after becoming entangled in a towel dispenser September 13, '96. I wonder if the minister can tell me if both of those inquests have taken place.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I do not have any detail around those, but if I could get back to my honourable friend on that, I will.

I just want to indicate that the office of the Chief Medical Examiner does fall under the Minister of Justice. I know the issue of the one child who was in foster care would certainly have some bearing on Child and Family Services. The incidence of the child in Stonewall—was it in Stonewall?

Mr. Martindale: I think so.

Mrs. Mitchelson: That would be an issue with the education system, but the Chief Medical Examiner does report through legislation to the Minister of Justice. We can get that information, and I will endeavour to provide it.

Mr. Martindale: Recently the minister announced an initiative to deal with the problem of fetal alcohol syndrome and fetal alcohol effect, I am wondering if the minister can tell me why the group of people who had submitted a proposal did not see their original proposal implemented but, instead, the minister changed it into something that I believe is quite different.

My understanding is that their agency, fetal alcohol syndrome coalition, the Native Women's Transition Centre, Elizabeth Fry Society, Women's Health Clinic, Women's Post Treatment project, the Aboriginal Wellness Centre and other organizations had developed a proposal. It does not seem to have been implemented or, if it was implemented, it is quite different than what was proposed. I would like to ask the minister why?

Mrs. Mitchelson: A more appropriate place for this to be asked would be under the Children and Youth Secretariat initiatives, because it has been them that have been working, but I can indicate to my honourable

friend that, although I do not have staff here, it is a proposal that we are still in the discussion stages on. Many of the initiatives that we have announced through the Child and Youth Secretariat are specific initiatives that deal with a certain part of fetal alcohol or early intervention. That does not mean to say that there will not be more initiatives and other things that might be taking place or announced into the future.

I have had the opportunity to hear about that proposal. It is one of the issues that we believe the federal government should be involved in discussions on. It would be nice to see us lever some dollars from the federal government to augment any support for this initiative. We have not made a final decision, but I am aware of it. We are continuing to work to see whether it is something that should be undertaken, so it has not been ruled out, but the Stop FAS initiative does not indeed replace this initiative. It has a completely different focus. It is talking about residential treatment.

Our Stop FAS initiative is not necessarily residentially focused, but it is focused on intensive work with mentors and support to try to ensure the prevention of a birth of fetal alcohol syndrome or, if one child is born, to prevent the second birth. So there will be more components to fetal alcohol and more initiatives. This one has not been ruled out as an option.

Mr. Martindale: We will certainly ask more questions about that under the Children and Youth Secretariat. Can the minister tell us what is happening with the proposed reorganization for east area of Winnipeg Child and Family Services?

Mrs. Mitchelson: No decision has been made as yet, but there have been extensive community consultations. There is a proposal that has come forward, and we are just looking at the implications of that right now, and no decision has been made yet on the end result.

Mr. Martindale: Can the minister tell us if the original proposal, which was to add the rural area into the department, has been rejected and instead a proposal to have a new agency for the rural part is being developed in its place?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I think all of the community consultation indicated that the preferred option would

be a stand-alone agency rather than a part of regional operations. We have not made a final determination. I guess the key for me in all of this is that there is no less service to the children and families as a result of any change. I want to assure myself that that is the case before any final decision is made.

Mr. Martindale: I think the minister and certainly the board of Winnipeg Child and Family Services received a very strong message from volunteers and staff and area councils in east area that they did not want to be part of the government department. So the minister's answer at this point is a little bit vague. I think people would like to be assured that it will not be transferred to the Regional Operations, because that was their major concern. I think they can live with being an independent agency, but they would be very unhappy if they were transferred to Regional Operations.

What assurance can the minister give that the rural part of east area will not be transferred to Regional Operations?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Well, if we had made the final determination, I would be announcing it today. I know my honourable friend would love to have an answer. I have indicated clearly that we have heard what people have said through community consultations, and that certainly will be taken into consideration in our final decision that is made. But today I am not prepared to make that announcement. I know he would love assurances.

* (1520)

I do want to indicate through him to those in the community that have put in countless volunteer hours in support of some of the more vulnerable and needy children in our community that we have heard what they have had to say. We have listened to them. We understand their concerns, and, ultimately, the final decision that will announced will be a decision that ensures that children and families receive at least the amount of service that they are receiving now. It will not be decreased in any way as a result of any change that is made, if a change is made.

Mr. Martindale: I would like to table a leaflet from east Area. On a rather interesting page, it says:

Survival tools for Child and Family volunteers. One of them is a magnifying glass to figure out our increasingly complex organizational chart. One of the problems that happens when you reorganize is that it affects the morale of staff and volunteers and area councils, and I would hope that this minister would make an announcement soon so that the problems of staff morale or the problem of staff morale would be resolved sooner rather than later. This discussion has been going on for a long time now, and I think a timely decision would be most appropriate.

I would also like to share with the minister some financial information about Winnipeg Child and Family Services that is dated February 28, 1997, and ask the minister if I could get information for the end of March 1998, hopefully, in an identical format. So I would like to pass that to the minister to have a look at.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I see that these are financial statements from Winnipeg Child and Family Services as the agency, and I will certainly pass his request on to the Winnipeg agency. We do not write this for them, and they make that determination on their own. But I will pass on his suggestion.

Mr. Chairperson: 9.4. Child and Family Services (a) Child and Family Support (1) Child, Family and Community Development (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,899,800—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$2,487,500—pass; (c) Maintenance of Children and External Agencies \$113,342,600—pass; (d) The Family Support Innovations Fund \$2,500,000—pass.

9.4.(a)(2) Family Conciliation (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$755,500—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$151,300—pass.

9.4.(a)(3) Family Dispute Services (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$313,400.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thanks. Just before we start if I could just introduce Marlene Bertrand, who is the director of Family Dispute and Family Conciliation.

Mr. Martindale: The minister is probably aware that there was a complaint—well, describing it as a complaint would be an understatement—from a former recipient of service at Osborne House, who was very unhappy with

some things that occurred while she was there and afterwards. She wrote letters to me and, I think, to the minister, and made phone calls to the staff, and I am wondering if the minister could tell me in a general way without breaching confidentiality what the nature of the complaints were and how they were dealt with.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, it is my understanding that at the front line level in the shelter, the staff indicated that she had to leave. What they did not explain to her was what the standards and the process should be, that is, if she decided that that was not the appropriate thing for her to do that she had the ability to appeal to the director of the shelter and, if that appeal was not satisfactory, that she could appeal to the board of the shelter.

Ultimately that did happen and the board did uphold the decision that had initially been made, but the fact was that staff was not aware to inform her or did not inform her that she did have those appeal processes if she was not satisfied with the treatment that she was given. So we have made it clear to the shelters that they must follow the standards and the process. Ultimately, I guess the end result was that the board did uphold the initial decision, but she was not afforded the opportunity to understand what her appeal process could be.

Mr. Martindale: Since it seems that the staff may have omitted certain information, was there any apology or attempt at conciliation in this instance?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Through our offices we offered to meet with staff and the individual that was involved and that was not satisfactory to the individual. She did not want that. I guess the agency has written to her letting her know what the proper process should be, but they in fact have not written a letter of apology. We certainly recommended that to them, and I do not believe they followed through on that.

Mr. Martindale: Could the minister tell me if the guidelines called Family Services Policies that Affect Shelter Clients, and I have a copy of it dated July 14, 1993, are these policy guidelines shared with individuals at shelters and/or were they shared with this individual?

Mrs. Mitchelson: That is public information that is available and in all shelters and it is up to the shelters to make those decisions on how much they would share with individual clients, but it is a public document and they do all have them.

* (1530)

Mr. Martindale: So just to conclude this, it seems to me that the minister is saying that this is a dispute between Osborne House and their former client and that, even though the minister has suggested that Osborne House apologize, they did not, and the minister's position is that she took action or her department took action to see that all shelters were notified so that this does not happen again. Is that correct?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, it has been made clear to shelters that the standards must be followed. In the case of Osborne House they have apparently posted the process for appeal at Osborne House, and we have shared that document with the individual client that raised the issue with us.

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Mr. Chair, I have a few questions that I want to ask about Family Dispute Services. Just to begin, in the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review under Expected Results, one of the expected results is the implementation of annual agency reviews to monitor efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. I am a little unclear as to what this means. At least my question is, I had understood there already were annual agency reviews to monitor efficiency and effectiveness of services, but the Expected Results suggest to me that it is only now they would be implemented.

Mrs. Mitchelson: No, this is not new. It is something that is ongoing on a year-by-year basis. What happens, I suppose as shelters were set up or resource centres, we wrote the standards and developed a service-and-purchase agreement with those individual facilities and sort of looked at a time frame—and it might have been over a year, depending on the individual circumstance—until they felt they could be up to speed and live up to the standards, and then on a year-by-year basis we do an audit for compliance. I am pleased to say that I think in 90 percent of our facilities, they are 90 percent

compliant with the standards. So I think it is a pretty good process.

Ms. McGifford: I wonder if the minister could give me a little bit of information about the audit. Is it done in-house or do people go from Family Disputes to work with the directors and staff in the various agencies? I wonder how much time it takes approximately.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I think the question was as far as the annual compliance reviews, who does that and how long does it take. Is that the question that was asked?

Mr. Peter Dyck, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Ms. McGifford: Well, it was a little bit more complicated than that. What I wondered is if an agency completed this review by itself or if somebody went into the agency and worked with the staff in the agency to complete the review or exactly what the process was. How is it done?

Mrs. Mitchelson: It is done with our department and with the agency, so it is done together, and it usually takes about a day or a day and a half to complete that process.

Ms. McGifford: This is done on an annual basis, so that annually all of the agencies funded by Family Disputes are visited by a staffperson from Family Disputes who spends about one-and-a-half days in each agency completing this annual agency review.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I am informed that in the first year, yes, staff from the department would go in and work with the agency, and it might take a day and a half, and they would look at all of the issues.

Subsequent to that, in the second year they might only look at the outstanding issues. There would be somebody who would visit with the agency, but if there were some outstanding issues or they were not compliant, we would look at one or two areas of activity and try to see that there had been an improvement in those areas, unless, of course, there was some significant change in the organization or there had been some significant identified problem during that previous year. It might take a little more

time and effort, but the first yearly visit is probably the most intense. Then we would look at, in subsequent years, some of the outstanding issues that they wanted help with.

Ms. McGifford: Then, Mr. Chair, I understand “first year” to be the first year that there is an extensive and intensive annual agency review. I hope I am correct in that understanding. I wonder if the minister, without reference to any specific agency, could give us an example of what noncompliance and/or problem areas might be?

* (1540)

Mrs. Mitchelson: We provide a standards manual to any new organization that might be starting up. That standards manual, of course, was written with significant input from the community so we have standards. As a result of that we provide the standards, but we do not write the policy for each individual facility. They write their own policies. In that first yearly review, we would look at the policies that were written across the board, and if their policy around—and, I guess, I can give an example of retaining records or destruction of records. If in fact they wrote a policy that might not be appropriate or adequate, we would help them to revise that piece of their policy and ensure that in subsequent years that might be a piece we would look at and ensure that they had revised their policy and were doing it in a consistent and appropriate way that would reflect the standards right across the system. So that is an example of one specific area that might be an issue that we would want to follow up on.

Ms. McGifford: Actually, the minister talking about the destruction of records brought up an issue for me and that was the Carosella case. I am sure the minister is familiar with the case where a convicted rapist was—no, I do know whether he was convicted; I should not say that. A man named Carosella, the case was dismissed because a women's resource centre in Ontario had destroyed counselling records hoping to prevent those records from being subpoenaed. So, I guess, I am not really asking the minister a question, but it is interesting in view of what you brought up.

It would be a very difficult time to be working in a resource centre or a centre that offers counselling on dealing with the pressure of counselling records and not

knowing whether those records might be subpoenaed at any time. So what I did want to ask the minister was if she is aware of how centres are dealing with this problem, or have there been policies that have attempted to come to terms with this problem?

Mrs. Mitchelson: We have brought in individuals with special expertise to do workshops with resource centres and shelters around the issue of records and collection of records and have had training from Crown attorneys and members of the private bar to try to ensure that we have a process that protects the records in a confidential way but has them there. We have not experienced anything like that in Manitoba. We are trying to be proactive about ensuring that there is an understanding right throughout the system on how important record keeping and that kind of thing is.

Ms. McGifford: I wanted to get back to the question of effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability, and just ask very briefly a couple of other things. Are agencies funded by Family Disputes still required to make quarterly financial reports?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, most of their agencies require quarterly annual reports. If they are very small agencies, sometimes it might be a yearly report or six months.

Ms. McGifford: That method required, if I remember correctly, not simply a financial report, but included I think some statistical reporting and some other information. I am judging then—perhaps the minister can correct me—that there was a decision made that this was not sufficient to ensure accountability, and that is why the annual agency review process was initiated.

Mrs. Mitchelson: It is my understanding that it was the service providers in the community that really wanted standards in place, and they drove that process. In discussion with them around how those standards should be implemented, they requested the yearly review for compliance. It was not done as a result of lack of accountability.

* (1550)

Ms. McGifford: I have a copy of the grants to external agencies for 1998 and 1999. I am pleased to see that

there have been some small increases in grants to those organizations that provide services for women. My understanding is that in, I believe it was, '96-97, there was an across-the-board two percent cut to these agencies; is that correct?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, that is correct. I think that was an overall, general government direction where all agencies were cut two percent.

Ms. McGifford: I have not worked out the percentages. Is it a restoration of that two percent?

Mrs. Mitchelson: There was a slight increase in last year's budget, and a slight increase in this year's budget, and it works out not quite to the two percent, but almost.

Ms. McGifford: So, Mr. Chair, in 1998-99, then we are slightly below the grants that existed in '96-97?

Mrs. Mitchelson: My honourable friend is correct. In some agencies there has not been an increase, and they might be funded slightly under what they were funded in '96-97 still, but the reality is that we have increased and started some new agencies that are funded like Alpha House, like Nor'west Co-op Community Health Centre. Those were agencies that had no funding, and they are being funded now. The Francophone treatment programs, L'Entre-temps and Pluri-elles and the Laurel Centre have received funding. There was no funding at all for those.

So we have increased the services for women, and we have not included in this the other half million dollars that has been allocated for responses to the Lavoie inquiry, which will see additional funding again in the community. So the final decisions have not been made on the funding to address Lavoie, but there will be more money in the system as a result of those decisions.

Ms. McGifford: I am a bit confused. Did I hear the minister say that the Laurel Centre and Pluri-elles were only recently funded. Because—maybe I will just leave it at that.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Excuse me, Mr. Chairperson. They have been funded, but they got significantly increased funding this last year.

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, the Pluri-elles increase from last year is \$3,000, not even quite \$3,000. It does not seem to me it is a significant increase. I do not really want to dwell a whole lot on that.

What I would like to ask the minister is: when I look to the different women's resource centres and see the grants, I see on my list that the Evergreen Women's Resource Centre is receiving \$37,900, and the Lakeshore Women's Resource Centre is receiving the same amount of money. Now I know that the minister knows we have read petitions for Evergreen Women's Resource Centre in the House, did several of these. We certainly have spoken to these women. They are quite adamant that the grant is simply not enough. They feel that they are doing the work of any urban or northern women's resource centre and that they have huge geographic areas that they are responsible for. I wonder why their grants are so low, and if the minister has any plans to increase that funding substantially as these women believe they need in order to perform their duty.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I know there has been a lot of discussion around the Evergreen Women's Resource Centre. They were originally funded as a crisis office and they have expanded their mandate and want to, and I guess have become, a resource centre. We have indicated—and we have put more money into them—until we can work with them and determine what kind of facility they should be. We have put more money in to keep them operational till September and we are working with them. I would hope that we will have a resolve to the issues that have been raised by that time.

Ms. McGifford: I thank the minister for that answer. I hope so too. I notice as well that Fort Garry Women's Resource Centre gets a sum of money which is quite different from that of the North End Women's Centre, which is quite different from that of the Immigrant Women's Association of Manitoba or the Northern Women's Resource Service. I wonder how these grants are determined and why some of them are so much higher and some of them so much lower. I wonder if there is a policy, or what is it?

* (1600)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, yes, there are inequities in the system. I guess it goes back from the

beginning of time as these facilities were set up, the Northern Women's Resource centre are serving more clients than the Fort Garry Women's Resource Centre, so received more funding. We are trying to get some sort of standard and work towards some standard across the system, but we are not there yet. The Northern Women's Resource centre gets additional money for the northern allowance. So there are inequities, and they are small inequities, I understand, but we are working towards some consistent standard, consistent model.

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chairperson, the reason I brought up that question is because I have been asked for it by women in the community. I am not arguing for any centre. I am just bringing up the question.

The minister said that the Northern Women's Resource centre got money for a northern allowance, but they appear to have the lowest amount of money out of all the women's resource centres, other than the Evergreen and the Lakeshore. Then by the minister's own argument, I am assuming that the Immigrant Women's Association of Manitoba has the most clients because they get the most money.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, the explanation, I know the grant looks smaller in the Northern Women's Resource centre, but they also, on top of this grant, receive per diems for a safe house. That is not included in this number, so it would be more rather than less as a result of that.

As far as the Immigrant Women's Association, I guess this is a long-standing grant that precedes our government. My understanding is that it is as a result of a bit of a broader mandate in the immigrant community. They work with a lot of different languages and cultures. As I said, we are looking at trying to ensure, as we move towards more equitable funding, that we look at all of the grants and try to ensure some rationale.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Dyck): The hour being four o'clock, is it the will of the committee to have a five-minute break?

An Honourable Member: Can we finish this line?

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Dyck): Okay.

Ms. McGifford: I know that we were all very disturbed at the break-in at the Parkland Crisis Centre this winter when one of the employees was assaulted and raped. I just want to table for the minister's interest—perhaps, she already has this—but it was a letter written by the Executive Director Ellen Wood to all Manitoba provincial shelters, boards of directors, staff and supporters. It appeared in a newsletter that I received, and I thought the minister might be interested in seeing the letter. Maybe she has seen it.

But I did want to ask a question about protection and safety in shelters. I wonder if that is being investigated, whether there are policies currently, and if there is any light the minister could shed on this really terrible situation.

Mrs. Mitchelson: If I might just indicate that on a yearly basis the Department of Housing, who is responsible for I think all but one of their in-housing units, all but one shelter—[interjection] Oh, they are all in-housing units, okay—do a walk through with the shelter staff and identify security and maintenance issues. My understanding is that if there has been a request for maintenance or security that Housing has never refused to accommodate or provide additional security items if they were requested. There also is a 24-hour Manitoba Housing line, a 24-hour call system if there are any issues around security or equipment that are not working properly.

Right now we have additional people besides Manitoba Housing staff that are doing a walk through of all of our facilities. They have experts in security and local policing authorities, and our departmental staff are involved in that. So far we have gone through about half of the shelters, and we will be continuing to finish the rest in a very expeditious way. I can indicate that additional security cameras have been placed in the Dauphin facility. So that is one step that has been taken.

If I can indicate, from time to time Housing has recommended that safety grills or bars be put on certain windows, and shelters from time to time have felt that it is not something that they have wanted to do for their own reasons. So there have been some of those issues that we need to get sorted out.

Ms. McGifford: I can imagine being a woman in a shelter not wanting to be behind bars, probably having lived at least metaphorically behind bars before she turned up at a shelter.

I believe there is a standards manual for shelters, and I wondered if in that standards manual there are policies on safety precautions and safety plans, et cetera, for shelters.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Our standards manual from the Department of Family Services is more program and administrative. There is a standards manual for the Department of Housing that is more facility related, so that would talk about maintenance and security. That is a standards manual that is followed for the annual maintenance and safety checks that are done by the Department of Housing. But in all of our workshops or sessions with shelters, the issue of security is one that receives high priority.

* (1610)

Ms. McGifford: I wonder if there are any plans on the part of this government to increase the length of stay in shelters. I believe that the current length of stay is 10 days, and I know that in the NDP Task Force on Violence Against Women, we recommended an increase up to 30 days. I think we have made the point that 10 days is sometimes a very, very short period for a woman who has been in a domestic abuse situation and who has to make major decisions about life, lifestyle and changes, and I wonder if the minister has any plans to increase the length of stay.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

Mrs. Mitchelson: We do not really have any set length of stay. It is as long as that individual person needs to move on or get back—I do not want to say get back to a normal life—but that 10 days is not the maximum stay. Ten days administratively we have to report to income security, but in fact if there is a requirement on an individual basis for the stay to be 30 days or 40 days, that is what will happen. It is on an individual case-by-case basis. There is some administrative function and reporting that happens at the 10-day period, but that is not the maximum length of stay.

Mr. Chairperson: 9.4. Child and Family Services (a) Child and Family Support (3) Family Dispute Services (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$313,400—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$68,500—pass; (c) External Agencies \$6,240,400—pass.

9.4. Child and Family Services (b) Children's Special Services.

Is it the will of the committee that we take a five-minute recess and resume here at 4:15 p.m.? [agreed]

The committee recessed at 4:14 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 4:30 p.m.

* (1630)

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. When the committee recessed, we were on 9.4. Child and Family Services (b) Children's Special Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$311,300.

Mr. Martindale: The minister will be aware that the parents of children who receive funding under Children's Special Services are an activist bunch. At a recent public meeting I said that they were very good advocates for their children. The minister will be aware of some of the public meetings that they have had because her staff were in attendance. They have been concerned, not only about receiving services from this department and funding in this department, but also the special education review in the Department of Education.

I would like to ask the minister how much of the increase, and I think the increase is about \$547,000, is going to agencies and how much is going to individuals.

Mrs. Mitchelson: At the outset, I would just like to introduce Eleanor Chornoboy who is the director of Children's Special Services.

All of it is going to individuals.

Mr. Martindale: Can the minister tell us if it is going for respite or other services, and how much is going for what kind of services?

Mrs. Mitchelson: We are estimating that another 300 children and families should be able to be served with the additional resources. A lot of that will go to respite, but there are other services, and it is on an individual, case-by-case basis as we assess the needs of the family, whether it be equipment, child development, supplies, respite, all of those things will be taken into consideration. But it is based on an individual assessment.

Mr. Chairperson: 9.4. Child and Family Services (b) Children's Special Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$311,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$298,000—pass; (d) Financial Assistance and External Agencies \$9,390,800—pass.

9.4. Child and Family Services (c) Child Day Care (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,097,400.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I would like to introduce Kathy Reid who is the director of Child Day Care.

Mr. Chairperson: I thank the honourable minister.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Chairperson, I wrote to the minister on January 13, 1998, and I hope the minister did not notice but I actually—my name is spelled wrong on this letter; I hope I did not type that letter.

An Honourable Member: You signed it, though, did you not?

Mr. Martindale: Although I signed it, I guess I cannot blame my staff. I have to take responsibility for it.

I was asking for a current list of child care centres and homes which have provisional licences, and I am wondering if the minister has that list for me. I enclosed a copy of, I think, the first page of a rather old list from August 17, 1989, and I am wondering if I could get a current list.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I do not have a list of the individual centres by name, but I have the numbers here. I could

provide that other list, but do you want me to read the numbers? Okay. The total number of licensed centres in the province is 526, and, at the present date and time—this would be as of March 13, 1998—211 of those centres had provisional licences. Those are the centres. As far as the homes go, there are 496 homes—no, pardon me, 534 licensed homes, and of those, as of March 13, 1998, 38 of those had provisional licences.

Mr. Martindale: I would like to ask the minister that, if she has more stats, maybe she could either table it or provide that list to me. If she could provide at some future time the entire list of provisional licences by name of centre, I would appreciate that..

Mrs. Mitchelson: Sure, we can do that. My honourable friend needs to understand that it is a rotating list. In many instances they are given a few months to comply for whatever reason; they might have been issued a provisional licence. So, as soon as they comply, they are taken off the list, but there might be someone else that comes on. So it could be outdated as soon as it is developed.

Mr. Martindale: I could probably ask a lot of questions about provisional licences. It is really quite shocking that 40 percent of licensed child care centres have a provisional licence; and, according to the Manitoba Child Care Association and a memo that they wrote on May 4, 1998, one of the reasons for that, according to them, is the difficulty in finding trained staff to meet the licensing requirements. They believe that one of the reasons for that is the inadequate salaries. So I suppose we could debate that and I could ask a lot of questions on that, but we are running out of time.

I note from the August 17, 1989, list of provisional licences that frequently one of the reasons that centres and homes were given provisional licences was that they had to either complete a fire inspection report or they had to comply with fire inspection reports. I am wondering if that is still the case in 1998, if some homes have a provisional licence and some centres have a provisional licence because they have to first comply with fire inspection reports.

Mrs. Mitchelson: It is my understanding that they are pretty well up to date as we speak. There may be the odd instance where there is a provisional licence because of that, but my understanding is that, because they may be checked for their licence and the Fire Commissioner is scheduled to come within a couple of weeks to do that inspection, there is a provisional licence put in place at that time. They are, within a few weeks, up to speed because the fire inspection has taken place. So it is that lag time that creates the odd instance where a fire inspection would be the reason for a conditional licence or provisional licence.

Mr. Martindale: I could ask lots of questions about the Fire Commissioner's office and fire department inspections, but I need to give my colleague the member for Osborne some time for questions. So maybe I will sum up some of my concerns and concerns of people in the child care community, and first of all, I guess, point out that some inspections are done by the Fire Commissioner's office and some done by fire departments. Some of these fire departments are volunteer fire departments, and sometimes people are well trained; sometimes they are not; sometimes inspections happen; sometimes, I am told, they do not.

Mr. Mervin Tweed, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

My understanding is that in some cases reports have been issued, and it has taken months or even years to comply with those reports. This really is a totally inadequate situation to have a number of different systems for inspections and to not have people comply as speedily as possible. When one talks to people in the child care community, they discover that there are limitations on people's ability to comply. For example, were an inspector to require putting in a sprinkler system, a child care centre could not afford it. It used to be that they got quite substantial grants from Community Places. Those grants have been going down in recent years. There is no capital budget from this department for improvements to buildings and equipment, and basically any stringent or expensive requirements would be a hardship on child care centres, not that they should not comply, but it may be a hardship when they do comply.

I think one of the things that this minister and her department could do would be to put in a capital budget for child care centres like there is in Saskatchewan, I

think a million dollars a year, so that when orders are issued and compliance is an issue, there is an ability to upgrade centres. I am wondering if the minister could comment. I guess there have been a lot of implied questions here, but give the minister a chance to reply.

Mrs. Mitchelson: When the Fire Commissioner does go out and make a report, he makes a recommendation on how long the centre has to comply. We base our licensing on that. I know that it is not years and years but that we work with them to try to ensure that compliance is as expedient as possible.

Around the issue of comparing us with Saskatchewan and putting a capital fund in place, I do know that there are places like the Winnipeg Foundation that do pick up some capital costs, and people can apply to the Winnipeg Foundation. They can apply to Community Places, and I know that child care centres certainly have received and I am very supportive of them receiving Community Places' dollars for upgrading.

I do want to indicate, though, that our budget for daycare is up over \$45 million, where Saskatchewan's, I believe, is only around \$17 million or \$18 million. So, in their daycare budget line, they can include a million for capital, and that certainly does not bring them up to any significant kind of support as compared to Manitoba for daycare. I will just leave my comments there.

Mr. Martindale: Could the minister tell me when fire inspections were done and reports issued at Three Bears Day Care in Pine Falls prior to the fire in 1996?

Mrs. Mitchelson: At this point in time I am really not at liberty to comment. This is a case that is before the courts, and there are criminal charges that may be pending, so I would be more than prepared to discuss this issue at length once that process is finished.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Chairperson, I am not interested in asking any questions that have to do with the day of the fire or any events or court cases subsequent. My questions are about fire inspections before this tragedy happened.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Legal advice that I have been given indicates clearly that I should not discuss anything that

deals with Three Bears in a public forum until the process of investigation and charges are finished, so I am not at liberty to discuss that kind of detail at this point. It may have some bearing on the investigation.

Point of Order

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Chairperson, I would really like to introduce a resolution at this point, but I would be depriving other critics of time in Estimates. So, instead, what I would like to do now is raise a point of order and ask either you or Madam Speaker to rule on it. I would like to refer to Beaudesne's 505, 509, 510 and 511 and point out that this is a convention not a rule, and that in the past Speakers have said that it is up to members how they handle these matters. So I disagree with the Minister of Family Services, and I would like to see the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 254 ask the Chair to ask the minister to answer these questions.

I would point out that when we tried to raise questions about the Fire Commissioner's office under the Department of Labour, the Minister of Labour (Mr. Gilleshammer) suggested it would be more appropriate to ask these questions in Family Services. Now we are in Family Services, and this minister is stonewalling and refusing to answer questions about events that happened, for example fire inspections, in 1991.

I am very disappointed that the minister is using this argument to refuse to answer questions. Rather than read into Hansard the Beaudesne's numbers that I have cited, I know that the Speaker can look them up and make a ruling accordingly.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Tweed): The honourable minister, on the point of order.

* (1650)

Mrs. Mitchelson: I just would like to also make some comments on the point of order and indicate that legal counsel certainly has advised us that not only because of the criminal proceedings that are presently underway but the issue of potential civil proceedings that we have been advised not to make any comments on this issue.

So I suppose you could take the point of order under advisement and bring back a ruling, but I think it is

rather unfair to have a request from the opposition sort of go against what we have been advised legally is the correct course of action to pursue.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Tweed): I will take the advice that has been given to me by the staff here. The fact is that I will take it under advisement and report back to this committee on a ruling.

* * *

Ms. McGifford: I wanted to thank the minister and Mr. Langtry and Ms. Boulet for the briefing on the extra money in child care. On April 8 my colleague for Burrows and I were briefed and I certainly appreciated that. However, as a result of that, I am in a little bit of a statistical quandary. Maybe I could ask a couple of questions here. I believe that that day Mr. Langtry told us that there were 620 child care facilities in the province, and today I heard the minister mention the number 526. If I look in the blue book, one of the expected results is the licensing of approximately 1,070 child care facilities, and I am sure that there is a very logical answer, but I do not know what it is.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Langtry does not quite recall what number he used at that briefing, but there is a total of 1,060 facilities; 526 are centres and 534 are homes.

Ms. McGifford: I thought that there was a logical explanation. Mr. Langtry also told us that day that there were approximately 20,000 child care spaces in the province. I understand that I suppose it would be the year '97-98, there were 8,800 subsidized spaces and that with the additional money there will be a potential for 9,800 subsidized spaces. Is that correct?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes.

Ms. McGifford: My question then is: will the total number of spaces remain constant at 20,000 or will the number of spaces increase? Will the spaces be subsumed into that current 20,000? Will there be new daycares?

Mrs. Mitchelson: There certainly could be the possibility that there will be an expansion of centres or homes as a result. I guess it will all depend on whether full-fee paying parents have a requirement for the same

number of spaces into the future, because there are many spaces that are licensed that parents pay the full cost for. What we are saying is that we need another 1,000 subsidized spaces. They may be in current facilities, if there are facilities that are not full, or they may be in new homes or new centres that might be created. We have also got some money to test some innovative new and flexible ways of delivering service, and that might be in a totally new kind of facility. We do not know that yet until proposals come forward. So expectation is that we will see more licensed spaces in the system. What mix that will be, we do not know.

You know, as working parents require those facilities, if they are full fee paying and they stay in the same numbers, if we need to find another thousand subsidized spaces you may see expansion of some centres, creation of new homes or some other model that might look at flexibility.

Ms. McGifford: I wonder if the minister or her staff have any information on how many families or how many children are currently on waiting lists for child care.

Mrs. Mitchelson: There is no central registry within my department for people waiting for facilities. I think the whole issue of letting the subsidy follow the child will certainly go a long way to address part of the issue of wait lists because, if, in fact, a centre has more space but they did not have enough subsidized spaces, they can receive additional subsidized spaces in their facilities, so they may have children on a wait list.

Today that will be accommodated through the subsidy following the child. There are from time to time families that register on several lists in several different centres waiting for a space to free up. So we do not keep a central registry or inventory. If we have calls to our office, we try to accommodate by helping people know what is available in their community, in their neighbourhood, but then they make the arrangements based on what is in the best interests of their family situation.

Ms. McGifford: Well, Mr. Chair, I am not quite so convinced that people will, that these spaces will—what am I trying to say—I am trying to say that very recently the Manitoba Child Care Association did a really quite

rough survey and found from 37 facilities, 35 of them in Winnipeg and two rural, that the approximate number of children on a waiting list was 872. Now I do know that people double register their children because they are very anxious to find spaces, but it seems an inordinate number from just that small number of facilities. So I am disturbed about the number of children in Manitoba who may be awaiting child care, and I wonder if the minister's department has any plans to determine the numbers of children requiring child care. It would seem to me that in order to meet the needs of the people of Manitoba, we really do need to know how many children need the care. So I would like to ask the minister what plans she has.

Mrs. Mitchelson: We are not experiencing the kinds of calls that would indicate that we are not meeting the needs of families through our system. If we were getting many, many calls on a regular basis that said that people could not find space in the system, we would certainly have concern.

I cannot indicate whether there was double booking in the instances where there were 800 children on wait lists, whether people found other places and support and there were names on lists that were not deleted because people had found other accommodation. I do not know, but I do know that through our intake process, everyone that calls in and raises an issue around finding a space, we seem to be able to help and address. So all I can indicate from our experience is that we are not receiving a significant number of calls from people who have not been able to find support for their children.

Ms. McGifford: So perhaps the Manitoba Child Care Association should phone in with their 872 children who were apparently on this waiting list, and they will find spaces for these children.

I wonder if the minister's department is doing any work to predict future child care requirements, if there are any long-term strategies to survey the province and see where we may need child care centres, in what area? What is the long-term strategy for child care?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I think we have tried to change our system significantly in this last budget process, well, major regulatory changes that will look at flexibility.

You know, one of the things that we have always said in Manitoba is that we need more flexibility for people who work shift work, who work weekends, and that is one of the reasons that we have put some money in to test some new ways of delivering child care that might meet those flexible needs of families that do not need the traditional nine-to-five or seven-to-six child care.

So we will continue to assess. We are working with the child care community, by the way, and with our regulatory review committee, which includes parents and users of child care, to try and determine what the needs are on an ongoing basis. We will have to try to adapt our program and make it flexible and change it as we need changes to try to ensure that, as the economy continues to improve and as we see more individuals entering the workforce, the kind of care that they need is available.

I do not think we can set down a policy today that will meet the needs of two years from now, necessarily. I think what we have to do is keep in tune with what people are telling us, ensure that we have the flexibility there for the kinds of jobs that are being created. If they happen to be 24-hour care, if we need flexible care, we will need to adapt. I think we have made significant change and shown that we have listened through the fact-finding mission and through the regulatory changes that we have made today. But that process is not stopping now. We are continuing to meet as a committee, we are continuing to identify the issues, and year by year we will have to address those issues, whether it be through regulatory changes or changes in funding to accommodate the needs of working families.

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable member for Osborne, for a very quick question.

Ms. McGifford: With respect, Mr. Chair, my point was precisely that we do need a long-term strategy, and I asked the minister what strategies were in place. I appreciate the need for flexibility, but my interest is in predicating the future and what strategies or policies—

* (1700)

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The hour being 5 p.m., time for private members' hour. Committee rise.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Mr. Chairperson (Ben Sveinson): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This afternoon, this section of the Committee of Supply will be considering the Estimates for the Community Support Programs. Does the minister responsible have an opening statement?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Yes, I do, Mr. Chairman, a relatively brief opening statement.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to make some brief opening remarks on the 1998-99 expenditure Estimates for Community Support Programs. The role of Community Support Programs is threefold; firstly, it provides management and co-ordination of grants through government departments; secondly, it provides access to community organizations seeking information on funding and, as well, may provide grant assistance to organizations who do not meet normal funding criteria within the system; and, its third component is to monitor and evaluate the nonprofit community organizations who do receive funding to ensure compliance to the original objectives of these organizations.

Community Support Programs provides an accountable, efficient, accessible and flexible system to support nonprofit organizations in the context of quality of life development. Through Community Support Programs, the government of Manitoba is able to support such diverse cultural and tourism attractions as the Festival du Voyageur, Folklorama and the Manitoba Stampede. It, as well, provides funds to cover the administrative and fundraising costs for the United Way campaigns throughout Manitoba.

Festival du Voyageur provides a unique showcase for Manitoba's French-Canadian heritage while attracting over 200,000 spectators and participants. Festival du Voyageur supports 140 jobs and adds over \$5.3 million to Manitoba's gross domestic product annually. Folklorama boasts the largest multicultural festival of its kind in the world with its various pavilions celebrating the rich ethnocultural mix of Manitoba's population. Folklorama was named the organization best depicting Canadian culture by the World Tourism Organization and a few years ago was named as the No.

1 tourist attraction in Canada by the American Bus Association. With its 20,000 volunteers, Folklorama directly and indirectly adds \$10.8 million to Manitoba's tourism economy.

* (1440)

The Manitoba Stampede in Morris, Manitoba, is one of Canada's top rodeos. It provides the opportunity for Manitoba's up and coming rodeo riders to compete with the best in the world right here at home. In 1997, it attracted over 40,000 people through its gates, with 10,000 of those being visitors from outside Manitoba, making it one of the largest annual tourist attractions in the province.

The United Way was able to raise and distribute over \$10 million for more than 68 agencies in 1997. Because all administrative and fundraising costs of the United Way are covered by funds provided through Community Support Programs, its volunteers are able to guarantee that every dollar donated flows directly to the beneficiary agencies involved.

In a related area, Community Support Programs, in partnership with the Manitoba Government Employees' Union, provide staff-related funding in support of the government employees' All Charities campaign. In 1997, this campaign raised over \$880,000 from Manitoba government employees' contributions in aid of the charitable organizations of their choice.

Mr. Chairman, today I am pleased to have been able to highlight just some of the groups and organizations who benefit from funding through Community Support Programs. As the minister responsible for Community Support Programs, I am proud to ensure these funds are being used for the benefit of all Manitobans to enhance the quality of life in communities large and small throughout our province.

I thank you for the chance to say a few words. I look forward to answering any questions.

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

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): No, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Chairperson: At this point, we would invite the minister's staff to join us at the table, and we request that the minister introduce the staff members present.

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Chairman, joining me is Mr. Jim Berry, who is the director of the Community Support Programs.

Mr. Chairperson: We are now on page 24 in the Estimates book, item 33.1. Community Support Programs (a) Administration and Grants (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$189,300.

Mr. Sale: Mr. Chairperson, I have a few detailed questions. I hope the minister is in a position to answer them all as these Estimates are being considered on very short notice, so it may be that he needs to consult before being able to answer some of them.

I want to ask about the United Way level of expenditure. It is odd—I am not making a pejorative statement—but it seems strange that the Estimates for last year and the Estimates for this year are absolutely numerically identical, and yet the purpose of the grant is to cover all of the costs of the United Way. It would seem strange to me that the costs are identical in two years within \$100. Could the minister explain whether indeed it is all administrative costs or whether it is a grant in aid of administrative costs?

Mr. Stefanson: I appreciate the member's opening comments that there may be some instances because of short notice, I will have to provide additional information. In this particular case, the administrative cost for the United Way of Winnipeg, and I believe some 22 other agencies throughout rural Manitoba are covered. This does cover all of the administrative costs. The reality being we have ongoing discussions with the United Way and they ensure that they live within the amount of money provided. So the member refers to the fact the number being the same; obviously, the United Way will make adjustments within their overall administrative expenditures to be sure that they are living within the amount of money that is provided to them.

Mr. Sale: Mr. Chairperson, this may seem like a minor point, and it probably in a sense is, but I was on the United Way board when this arrangement was

approved. I guess that would be somewhere around 1970. Oh, it must be about 1975 or '74, or somewhere in there when we first approved it. It was very clearly at that point to be a recovery of administrative costs. That would imply a submission and an audit, or a vetting or an approval, and then a reimbursement much like we used to do under the Canada Assistance Plan, where there would be a bill submitted. Indeed it might come to pass, as it did in many cases, that some aspects of the bill might not be approved. This does not seem to be the case, and I cannot tell from Public Accounts, because Public Accounts as the minister knows are rolled up in a different way. So you cannot go back and look at the previous year as to what was actually spent because it is not revealed. So that was, in fact, going to be one of my other questions. I would invite the minister's comment on that.

Mr. Stefanson: My understanding is back in '89, a funding analysis was done, and at that point in time five-year agreements were put in place starting in 1990 with many entities, of which the United Way was one of them. During that five-year period, there was a holdback provision that was provided at the back end of the process after verification and analysis of all of the financial information. That agreement expired in 1995, and we do have new agreements with many organizations, again, of which the United Way is one.

The current agreement with the United Way does run until the year 2000. As the member indicated, it is to cover the administrative and campaign fundraising costs under the five-year agreement, but the funding is reviewed every year, so we receive a budget at the beginning of the year from the United Way. We then pay them on the basis of a monthly payment equivalent to one-twelfth of the funding provided. Then, basically, a form of audit is done at the end of the process in terms of getting their audited financial statements and doing a review of their administrative costs and ensuring that it complies with the original intent and the original agreement that the funding would cover all of the administrative and fundraising costs.

So to date, Mr. Chairman, that has worked very well. The United Way are living within those agreements, and the amount of money being provided is covering those administrative and fundraising costs.

Mr. Sale: Thank you, that was a helpful answer. The difficulty, as the minister knows, is that when you are into these kinds of programs, you cannot get anything out of Public Accounts. It does not tell you how the monies were spent. It just tells you, in reference to budget, whether it was over or under in a number of headings, and the headings bear no resemblance to the headings in the Estimates book. It is an issue I have raised in Public Accounts. The minister has responded to, I think, not in an unfriendly manner. It simply is not possible to go from budget to Public Accounts and make any sense from an accountability perspective as to whether the government has done anything other than live within the total envelope approved which, of course, it must do.

* (1450)

Again, for the record, and the minister may not be able to support this request, but I would request again for the record that where an Estimates expenditure budget is approved in the amount—this year, for example, \$6,254,000, that the Public Accounts, if they must retain the same roll-up that they have now, should at least have an additional roll-up that allows us to examine what monies were provided to the various groups from (a) to (j) and whether or not there were any recoveries or overexpenditures in any of the subcategories.

It is very difficult for opposition, at least, to approve Estimates which have headings and then to see in Public Accounts none of those headings. You really have no idea whether the grants, as anticipated, were paid or whether other grants were paid. The minister may or may not have a comment on that. It is a request I have made before.

Mr. Stefanson: I do not have a copy of our most recent annual report here, but I certainly believe that that report provides most, if not all, of the information the member is referring to, but having said that, he raises a valid point in terms of the amount of detail in Public Accounts. I think even though we have not agreed on everything, we have made various improvements in terms of some of the reporting of Public Accounts. We are always interested in looking at ways to do that, so I will certainly take his comments in this area seriously and determine whether or not

there is other information we should provide in the Public Accounts.

I think one part of our reporting relationship that maybe is not as well utilized by all members of the Legislature, without pointing fingers at any one individual or party, often is a lot of our annual reports that do provide fairly extensive information in terms of comparing actual expenditures to budgeted and, obviously, then provide a significant amount of information about the overall performance either of that department or that area of expenditure.

Mr. Sale: I thank the minister for that. He, of course, is quite right that I did not pull the annual report, and I should have probably done that in the few minutes we had after we got notice of these Estimates, but that is probably a very reasonable response.

It is also true, though, that government departments do not—there is no process for dealing with annual reports, and that is also something the Provincial Auditor and the minister and others have struggled with, as to whether there ought to be a process for dealing with annual reports in our annual review of government activities.

I want to ask about item (g). I believe that the Community Services Council is administered by the United Way on behalf of government in effect. It is a separate organization housed within the United Way's—at least it was, so let me just clarify whether that is still the case, and I have another couple of questions about that.

Mr. Chairperson: Is it now the will of the committee, then, to move around within the Estimates? [interjection]

Mr. Sale: Could we just consider it all as a whole? Sorry, I was never ever on (a); I was on (d).

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable member for Crescentwood, then, to put his question.

Mr. Sale: Mr. Chairperson, can we agree that we will consider this 33.1. as a whole as opposed to an (a) and (b)?

Mr. Stefanson: I agree, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay, it is agreed.

Mr. Sale: Could the minister clarify who administers the Manitoba Community Services Council? In the past, I believe it was administered, at least initially, by the United Way and was, at least, housed in the same building and shared some staff services. What is the current status of that organization?

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Chairman, the member is correct that the Manitoba Community Services Council was brought into being in 1983 as an offshoot of the United Way at that time. Its role is to fund worthy Manitoba nonprofit organizations which serve the social and community service area.

However, in 1990, at the same time that separate agreements were entered into with various organizations that we have already discussed, an agreement was entered into with the Manitoba Community Services Council. They now have their own staff and, obviously, function on very much of a stand-alone basis, and they do operate at arm's length from government through that funding agreement that they have with the province of Manitoba.

The members, I believe, are appointed for a three-year term with an option to stay if they hold elected office, and the 17 members of the council are appointed by a committee made up of the past chairperson of the Manitoba Community Services Council, along with a representative from the Province of Manitoba and two individuals who are not members and who are active as members of province-wide nonprofit organizations. In addition, the chairperson appoints two members of the Manitoba Community Services Council to this committee. So that is the nature of the organization and the process for the appointment of board members.

Mr. Sale: Mr. Chairperson, then, is the minister saying that this council essentially has no membership beyond the legal meaning of the directors who are also members? That is, it is not a membership organization, it is a self-appointing body that government has an agreement with, but it is not representative of the groups to whom it gives money except insofar as it might draw directors from it, but there is no

membership, no controlling or voting or policymaking role. It is a freestanding, separate corporate body as a nonprofit corporation.

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Chairman, the member for Crescentwood's (Mr. Sale) description is an accurate one. Having said that, various organizations will put forward names, but it is not done on a formal basis. Names are not necessarily selected to the Manitoba Community Services Council from a list provided by the organizations, but, again, because of the relationships with different organizations, it is not uncommon for representatives from a particular organization to be at least submitting names to this nomination committee, so there is, I believe, on an overall basis a good working relationship. But the member's description is accurate that these bodies do not get to appoint members directly to the council, and there is no requirement to choose members from any particular service organizations.

Mr. Sale: How many staff does MCSC have at the present time?

* (1500)

Mr. Stefanson: I am told that their staffing complement is one executive director and three support staff. Beyond that, they then contract for any particular expertise or any work that is required. But that will be one of those questions that I will ensure I have provided accurate information and get back to the member.

Mr. Sale: Does the council receive any other funds from any other sources that it disburses?

Mr. Stefanson: The council receives, as noted in the Estimates, \$1,980,000 of cash for allocation to service organizations. They also allocate bingo events with a value of \$800,000. So, in effect, they are distributing almost \$2.8 million, and the agreement with them is that their administrative costs cannot exceed 10 percent of their budget. So, again, I can certainly undertake to provide additional information in that area, but there are limitations on how much can be spent on administration to ensure that the maximum amount is ultimately going out to these other service organizations and community projects.

Mr. Sale: This is not an area that I have had critic responsibilities for, so I may be quite ignorant here; probably am. Does this organization put out an annual report?

Mr. Stefanson: Yes, they do, and I believe that the amount of detail provided in the annual report goes so far as to list every organization that receives support from the Manitoba Community Services Council. So it is very comprehensive in terms of that kind of review to see what organizations are being supported.

Mr. Sale: I thank the minister for that. I must look up that annual report, because it is not one that I am familiar with.

To then return to the United Way because, in my mind, these were linked, although I now understand that they have been separate for some years, if I am not mistaken, in the minister's opening remarks, he indicated the United Way raised and distributed in total across the province—the various United Ways—somewhat in excess of \$10 million this year. That would suggest that the administrative costs are around 20 percent or 22 percent, depending on how much over \$10 million it was. That is a high percentage.

When I was a board member of the United Way, we prided ourselves on having admin expenses in the 7 percent region. No United Way in Canada at that point of any size—some of the small ones had higher proportions, as you might expect—but no United Way of any size had expenditures of over 10 percent for administration. There was quite a competition, in fact, at the management level and the board levels of United Ways across the country to keep expenditures for administration at under 10 percent for the obvious reason that donors do not like their money to be going to administration. They want them to go to the charities that they think they are supporting.

That was the selling feature of this agreement in the first place. It was a sanitizing of lottery money, which everyone had some concern about, or bingo money or whatever it was at the time—I guess it was lotteries at that time—and it was also a kind of cachet for the United Way to be able to say that every dollar you give goes to the charities.

For the historical record, there were two of us who voted against that agreement. I was one of them at that point, on principle. I do not like lotteries; I never have. When you start using them to fund public services, it has always made me twitchy, so the minister knows where I stand personally at least on that, at that point some, what, 24 years ago.

Does the minister consider the level of administrative cost to be a concern at the present time?

Mr. Peter Dyck, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Mr. Stefanson: First of all, I am told that the reference to \$10 million, I believe, is Winnipeg only, so that figure would be slightly higher as a result of province-wide donations. Having said that, the member is still accurate in terms of the ballpark of total administrative percentages.

We have this discussion every year with the United Way, and really their objective is similar to ours: to try and ensure that the maximum numbers of dollars go out to the other organizations, to the community support initiatives that are funded through the United Way. So we are in agreement with the objective. They point to various issues that do put pressure on some of their administrative costs—the whole issue of fundraising and the competitiveness of fundraising right across Canada today in terms of all kinds of organizations from service groups to arts and cultural groups and so on. So that is one area of pressure on their administrative costs, but I am certainly prepared to get as much information in terms of a more detailed breakdown of the various components and share that with the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale). I am sure he would then willingly provide his comments as to whether or not he sees any areas of concern with more detailed information.

He is correct. As a percentage, it is at the upper end relative to many other organizations. But I think what would be most helpful for him might well be if I provide a greater breakdown of the various components of those administrative costs.

* (1510)

Mr. Sale: I thank the minister for that. I would say honestly I do not particularly want to have that

information because the United Way actually does a very good job of putting its budget out, and it has an audited statement every year. It is clear they are spending their money on administrative costs. It is not a suggestion that they are spending it inappropriately. It is just that I wonder if it is a good idea to keep the costs for disbursing the funds to MCSC to 10 percent. I wonder whether it would not be wise to put a ceiling on the United Way of some percentage that reflected the fact that it has to raise the money as well as disburse it, rather than leaving the amount apparently open-ended. Apparently there is no cap, and it may just be time to think about whether there is a limit to which they should agree and not go over. I leave that for the minister to consider.

It may not be a wise thing, but it just strikes me that when your fundraising and distributing costs are getting over 20 percent—Revenue Canada, for example, has a guideline that says that 20 percent is the maximum that Revenue Canada generally likes to see. I know this would not be breaching that because this money is not being receipted back to donors, so it is not a Revenue Canada issue, but that is a guideline that they think is reasonable. Many other United Ways in Canada would have to live within that general guideline. It would be interesting to know what other United Ways across the country are spending in total in terms of their fundraising costs. I do not have that information. I just raise it more as a matter of accountability than anything else. I do not necessarily need a response to that, but if the minister wishes to comment.

Mr. Stefanson: I do not really disagree with any of the comments made by the member for Crescentwood. I think we do agree that the United Way does a good job, and it is not a matter of suggesting that they are not spending their administrative dollars appropriately or that they do not have requirements at this level. But I think his suggestions are appropriate ones, that we always want to ensure that they do compare favourably with other organizations, and if they have unique requirements, that we are aware of them and we recognize them, and so on. There might well be some very compelling reasons why the administrative costs here are higher than other organizations, possibly like the Community Services Council, but if that is the case we should be well aware of that and recognize that. So

I do not disagree with his comments. We will follow up with some of the suggestions.

Mr. Sale: Mr. Chairperson, the grants to the Festival du Voyageur and Folk Arts Council of Winnipeg, both major tourist attractions and, I think, in many ways even more important because they engage the huge number of Winnipeggers in community building and community celebrating, I think they are at least as important for that reason as they are for their tourist attraction function. I think that how you build a city's and a community's sense of who it is, is to define ways to come together around celebrating gifts and diversity. So these are excellent, almost whether or not they gather a lot of tourists from outside the city, they are worth it in their own right for ourselves to lift up our gifts and our diversity.

I wonder whether these organizations are receiving other grants from other departments of government and if the minister could indicate what the total receipts for Folk Arts and Festival du Voyageur are from the various government departments, because I believe that Culture Heritage has a function here. I think there are other groups that also provide funding to them.

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Chairman, I will have to get some more details, but my recollection with both of these organizations—the Festival du Voyageur and the Folk Arts Council—is this is the only area that provides what I will call core support or base support for these organizations. Having said that, I believe both of them at various times have had support for specific initiatives whether they are tourism-related initiatives or other kinds of projects.

I am just looking at the annual report for the Folk Arts Council of Manitoba, and there is a separate line item for the support from the province provided in this area, and there is no indication of any other provincial support. Having said that, there are other categories that there could be some support outlined in other grants and so on. So my recollection is this is the core support for their ongoing requirements but that both of these organizations may well have received other forms of support over the last few years. I am certainly prepared to follow up and determine within the last year or two or whatever period of time that these organizations may have received some other forms of support.

Mr. Sale: Could I ask the same question for the Valley Agricultural Society, if the minister could just add that one, as well, to that list? I believe that is the Morden or the Manitoba Stampede at—was it Carman? Morden?

An Honourable Member: Morris.

Mr. Sale: Morris. Thank you. Morris. We will get it right yet. My apologies.

Mr. Stefanson: Yes, I will, and I would make exactly the same comments that certainly as far as I am aware sitting here today, this is the only area of this kind of support, but that is not to say they might not have received some support for a particular initiative. I will certainly do that with all three of these organizations, go back over the last couple of years and see if there were any specific initiatives supported by government.

Mr. Sale: If we could look, Mr. Chairperson, at (f), this was an area in which new legislation was passed. I think last year was the change so that the transparency was increased in terms of the support for harness and flat racing in Manitoba. This probably is—I do not know if this is the first year that this has appeared this way, but I think the total remitted is something over \$3 million, if the minister could indicate the total remitted under the parimutuel levy in addition to this grant.

Mr. Stefanson: The member is correct. I believe it was last year that the legislation was changed and the parimutuel tax was eliminated. The old process was that we would collect the parimutuel tax and we would basically rebate it back to the industry through the Horse Racing Commission. I would have to get him the precise number of what the last full year was. I think it was a little less than \$3 million, if I recall, probably. I was going to say about \$2.6 million or \$2.7 million, but I certainly would stand to be corrected. I think we are in agreement that that is the range of where the parimutuel levy was. That is no longer the case, as the member knows. There is now a levy that goes directly from the wagering at Assiniboia Downs to the Horse Racing Commission to cover their costs.

This allocation here, I think as the member knows, is really the support only for the quarter horse racing and the standardbred racing. The majority of this has been in place for several years, again, with the majority of it

being allocated to the Great Western Harness Racing Circuit that takes place throughout rural Manitoba. I would have to get the precise number of how many communities they go to again. My recollection is that they were in the 11 or 12 range in terms of numbers of communities and in the numbers of event days and so on. So really the majority of this funding is historical for those two areas, although there has been some slight upward adjustment in the last few years as the harness racing industry has continually looked for a more permanent venue.

* (1520)

Mr. Sale: The reason I raise it is because I think, as the minister knows, the viability of this circuit and harness racing is very much dependent on the viability of Assiniboia Downs, in a significant measure, although this is a small circuit that moves around. Nevertheless, the harness racing business that feeds that, at least historically, has used Assiniboia Downs as a very major place for its training and quartering, and there has been a fall or a winter meet there which provides that kind of underlying viability. At least that was my understanding from Mr. Johnson's report that harness racing was very much dependent on the Downs.

My understanding most recently is that betting at the Downs is declining again. It was blamed last year on the flood which may indeed have had some bearing on betting at the Downs, but I think more importantly across North America, racing in smaller centres has been less and less viable, and numbers of tracks have closed.

As the most recent report in the Winnipeg Free Press a week or so ago noted, the age of everybody involved in that industry seems to be increasing, the average age. Mind you, all of our ages are increasing, but we hope on average we are not getting older as a society, but the average age of those involved is increasing apparently. The volume of money bet is down, and the only reason that the Downs survive is because they have a very special deal with VLT revenue that allows them to take a much higher proportion of the VLT take than a hotel or any other private facility in Manitoba.

So I wonder whether or not there is any process for reviewing this grant and whether the minister has a

view as to how this industry is faring in Manitoba at the present time and whether or not we are going to be facing a continuing declining base for this industry in the future.

Mr. Stefanson: I just want to correct one point on the whole issue of harness racing. They have not raced at Assiniboia Downs for at least one, if not two, years, and part of what they have been working on is an extended meet, I believe, at Portage la Prairie. They did that last year and I believe they did it the year before with a view to try and find a permanent home for harness racing that is not necessarily Assiniboia Downs, so that certainly has been the case the last year or two.

This funding, as I have already mentioned, of \$501,000 is now a consolidation of funding from the provincial government, some that used to be in different departments. I know Agriculture had a small allocation that they made to this particular area for harness breeders and so on. It is now all consolidated into this one line item, and, as I said at the outset, it really supports just the harness racing and the quarterhorse racing and primarily the Great Western Circuit at the 12 communities.

So this part of the industry is now very much separate and distinct from the thoroughbred which is, of course, the industry that is at Assiniboia Downs, and I am sure the member will have the chance to get into it in some greater detail with my colleague the Minister of Industry (Mr. Downey) because the Manitoba Horse Racing Commission still falls under his area of responsibilities.

But my understanding is that wagering is more or less flat the last year. There might have been a slight dip, but it had more or less stabilized, although I have to admit that most of what I picked up in the last few weeks has been through the media. The Winnipeg Free Press wrote an extensive article a week or two ago talking about the upcoming season. I believe they are up to some thousand horses which is either, I do not know if it is at a record level, but they are back to the kinds of levels that they have had in prior years, and, certainly, the old facility and the industry and so on appears to be doing better than most in Canada. There

are several reasons for it. Certainly, the support provided through the VLTs is part of that.

I think the thoroughbred industry and Assiniboia Downs recognize that. But at the end of the day, this sector, this industry, makes a very significant contribution to our economy; directly and indirectly, I believe provides employment for well in excess of a thousand people. As the member himself indicated, it goes well beyond just Assiniboia Downs. It goes out into many communities right across our province in terms of the breeding and raising of horses and so on.

So it is a significant industry within our province, and a way of life for many people in our province. But I thought it was important to make the distinction that now exists between the harness and the quarter horse, the racing support and that industry with what is happening in Assiniboia Downs and the thoroughbred industry.

Mr. Sale: I thank the minister for that clarification. When I last talked about this issue in Estimates a year ago, at that time apparently the question was still out as to whether they would re-establish at Assiniboia Downs or not. I am interested to know that they have kind of decided to go their separate ways, so that, I hope, is a good thing for both parts of the industry.

I wanted to just ask on (j), Mr. Chairperson, Council of Community Centres, is this a new grant or is this a transfer in from another appropriation that was made under another appropriation in other years? It looks like a new grant.

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Chairman, this did change last year and at the request of the General Council of Winnipeg Community Centres and with the concurrence of the Manitoba Community Services Council that we already discussed, the Winnipeg Community Centres now deal directly with the General Council when making funding applications. It used to be through the Manitoba Community Services Council.

So under the terms of a three-year agreement that is now in place between the government and the General Council of Winnipeg Community Centres, the province provides the GCWCC with \$200,000 in assistance annually, of which \$50,000 are for programs for youth

at risk and \$150,000 is for capital projects. The new agreement frees up approximately \$143,000 per year that the Manitoba Community Services Council can now use to fund other agencies.

So, in effect, the money is no longer funded from the Community Services Council, but that money was not clawed back from the council. Their group total funding was left at the same amount, allowing them to have an extra \$143,000 to provide support to other agencies, recognizing the amount of requests that that organization receives, and at the same time, the funding under this category was topped up to \$200,000 in terms of support for the General Council of Winnipeg Community Centres, in large part to fund this new initiative of programs for youth at risk, which I know are now being run at several community centres throughout Winnipeg.

So the Manitoba Community Services Council, while relinquishing its responsibility to fund community centres in Winnipeg, does remain the funding agent for nonprofit groups throughout Manitoba. So it was with the support of all of those organizations, and certainly my understanding is it is working very well, and the General Council of Winnipeg Community Centres is very pleased with the arrangement and pleased to be dealing, in this case, directly with government.

Mr. Sale: So, Mr. Chairperson, just to be clear about the math that the minister was referring to, was the previous year's grant within the Manitoba Community Services Council for community centres approximately \$143,000, and this year it has been raised to \$200,000? Is that what I am to take from the minister's comments?

* (1530)

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Chairman, the change actually took place in 1997-98. So even though the Estimates here show, as the member indicated, the appearance of a new grant in 1998-99, the actual change did occur in '97-98 whereby \$200,000 was provided directly to the General Council of Winnipeg Community Centres, and no money was clawed back from the Community Services Council. If you go back to 1996-97, the funding provided by the Community Services Council to the Winnipeg community centres was approximately \$143,000. So I think that is clear. It is just that the

change actually did take place subsequent to the actual budget in '97-98, but that was the first year where the agreement was entered into, and the \$200,000 was provided directly to the General Council of Winnipeg Community Centres.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

Mr. Sale: I am not at all being critical of that; I was just trying to understand whether the implication here was that there had been an increase over the last couple of years for community centres in Winnipeg, and I think the minister referenced a youth-at-risk initiative which is a good initiative. I am certainly glad to see that kind of preventive programming going, but I was just trying to clarify whether there had been an increase and the approximate magnitude of it.

Mr. Stefanson: The short answer is yes, there has been an increase. The average funding was \$143,000 up to 1996-97. Starting in '97-98, the funding is now \$200,000, so the increase was approximately \$57,000 starting last year.

Mr. Sale: Mr. Chairperson, I would not have assumed that the Manitoba Community Services Council would fund only Winnipeg community centres, but it would be clear that the Winnipeg council would only fund community centres in Winnipeg. Is there funding for community centres in other communities continuing under that council, or do they not fund any centres outside Winnipeg?

Mr. Stefanson: Outside of Winnipeg, there is no comparable organization to the General Council of Winnipeg Community Centres, so individual community centres can make application to the Manitoba Community Services Council, and they still do. Then those applications are reviewed by the Manitoba Community Services Council, and by looking at the annual report, we can certainly see what community centres outside of Winnipeg receive support from the council. So that opportunity is there for them to get support.

Mr. Sale: Mr. Chairperson, the minister referenced a program, youth-at-risk program. I do not know whether that is its name and particularly whether it is a Justice

initiative or whether it is a Family Services initiative. Whose initiative is that program?

Mr. Stefanson: It is a program of the General Council of Winnipeg Community Centres utilizing community centres throughout Winnipeg and providing some funding from this source. I would have to find out for the member what they are calling the program, and I certainly can do that. I know they have informed community centres across our city of the program and the opportunity to access some support from the General Council of Winnipeg Community Centres, but it is a program basically launched and organized by the GCWCC.

Mr. Sale: I had seen references to this at (i)(4). I think I may be unique in my riding in that I have four different community clubs in my riding and a piece of a fifth, so I have a lot of community clubs. I have seen references to the program, but I did not know it was a Winnipeg council initiative. I was thinking it was a government initiative of some other kind. So that is good.

Mr. Chairperson, I have no other questions in this area, with one exception. That is back up in (a) under Administration. I believe the minister may have indicated that there were three staff. That is certainly indicated in the Supplementary Information. Could the minister indicate who are the staff and what are the different positions that are within that three?

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Jim Berry, seated beside me, is the director of this area, and so that is one of the positions. Mr. Ted Wilton is the associate director. Joyce Narine is the administrative support, secretarial. That is the total of the three positions outlined in the detailed Estimates.

Mr. Sale: Mr. Chairperson, what are the classifications of Mr. Berry and Mr. Wilton?

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Chairman, I will undertake to provide that detail for the member.

Mr. Chairperson: 33.1. Community Support Programs (a) Administration and Grants (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$189,300—pass; 1.(a)(2) Other Expenditures \$31,900—pass; 1.(a)(3) Grants \$318,700.

Mr. Sale: Mr. Chairperson, in this area are there separate grants that are to a myriad of little organizations? The big ones are detailed. Is this a list of very small grants?

Mr. Stefanson: The short answer is yes. The largest grant provided is the one I referred to in my opening comments to provide staff-related funding for the All Charities campaign within government, and that is about \$90,000 out of this allocation. The rest would be a series of smaller grants.

Mr. Sale: Mr. Chairperson, could the minister supply the committee with a list of these grants? It is a little bit, if not—"misleading" is not the right word, but it is a little strange to have a subcategory of Grants in part (a) Administration and Grants, and then to list specific grants, some of which are quite modest, such as the Valley Agricultural Society, which is approximately half of what the All Charities campaign cost was. It just seems like a strange way to present it. Perhaps the minister could give us a list of all of the disbursements under that line, if he would.

Mr. Stefanson: The reason for the breakdown in the detailed Estimates is historical, because those are all of the organizations that had agreements from 1990 to 1995, and then they had renewed agreements. So that is why they are listed, even though as the member points out, Valley Ag at \$50,000 is roughly half of the All Charities. The All Charities was never a separate funding agreement with the government.

* (1540)

I certainly have no problem providing the detailed breakdown of what was done in 1997-98, and, as I have indicated, the largest commitment moving forward for this year is the support from the All Charities campaign.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 33.1. Community Support Programs (a) Administration and Grants (3) Grants \$318,700—pass; 1.(b) Festival du Voyageur \$319,800—pass; 1.(c) Folk Arts Council of Winnipeg \$301,000—pass; 1.(d) United Way \$2,216,300—pass; 1.(e) Valley Agricultural Society \$50,000—pass; 1.(f) Harness and Quarterhorse Racing Support \$501,100—pass; 1.(g) Manitoba Community Services Council \$1,980,000—pass; 1.(h) Winnipeg Football Club \$346,500—pass;

1.(j) General Council of Winnipeg Community Centres (1) Grants \$200,000—pass; (2) Less: Recoverable from Urban Economic Development Initiatives (\$200,000)—pass.

Resolution 33.1: RESOLVED that it be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$6,254,600 for the Community Support Programs for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1999.

This completes the Estimates for the Community Support Programs

The next set of Estimates that will be considered are the Estimates for the Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Program. Shall we briefly recess to prepare for these Estimates? [interjection] We do not need to, so we will go right on.

CANADA-MANITOBA INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

Mr. Chairperson (Ben Sveinson): The committee will please come to order. This afternoon this section of the Committee of Supply will be considering the Estimates for the Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Program. Does the minister responsible have an opening statement?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Yes, I do, Mr. Chairman.

I will be relatively brief, Mr. Chairman. Four years ago, Manitoba was among the first provinces to sign the initial \$204-million agreement consisting of equal contributions of one-third each from the federal and provincial governments and local partners. In 1997, Manitoba was again amongst the first provinces to sign a \$41-million top-up agreement with the federal government, bringing the total commitment by all partners for the Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Works Program to \$245 million.

Manitoba continues to deliver the top-up funding in a timely fashion to maximize jobs and construction in the coming months. Of the over 600 infrastructure works projects, some 425 are now complete, and over \$66 million has flowed in Manitoba—that is the provincial share only—together with the federal

government and our third-party partners, and that amounts to nearly \$200 million. As a result, roughly 4,300 jobs are being created; that is both direct onsite and offsite jobs.

Program funds were allocated to ensure fair and equitable distribution right across our province, and as such, one-third of the funding was allocated each to the City of Winnipeg and to rural Manitoba, and one-third was allocated to strategic projects benefiting the entire province. There has been a series of recent announcements, and I am sure we will get into some of the details over the course of the next while. Manitoba's approach has been a flexible approach, enhancing basic infrastructure, creating short- and long-term jobs and also creating new economic opportunities for tomorrow.

We have funded a number of traditional projects like sewer, water, roads, gas, and those currently account for roughly three-quarters of the projects and funding. There have been some innovative projects supporting the arts, culture, the information highway, recreation and community facilities and education, and those account for about 25 percent of the projects.

In all respects, the Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Works Program has been an acknowledged success. Manitoba continues to be a strong proponent of a new national infrastructure initiative, at least equal in value to the first.

We are extremely disappointed in the federal government's failure to provide leadership in the area of infrastructure renewal, an area where the critical shortfall and much needed improvements are well documented. Under the initial program, we received over 800 applications requesting some \$1 billion. Without reopening the application process for the top-up last year, at least another \$50 million in applications was received. All partners, including local governments and industry members have expressed overwhelming support and willingness to participate in a second or new program. Manitoba will continue to press strongly for an ongoing long-term infrastructure commitment from the federal government.

As recently as December 1997, I presented an all-province and territory consensus proposal to federal

Finance Minister Paul Martin. The consensus called for a renewal of the program based on an October 1997 update of the Premiers' proposed guidelines from their 1996 annual conference in Jasper. To date, unfortunately, we are still awaiting a response from the federal government to the above efforts, but we will continue to press.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my brief remarks. I look forward to any questions.

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

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. I just very briefly would say that, historically, our party has supported the infrastructure program from its inception and welcomed the countercyclical spending which it provided.

Interesting to note that when Manitoba approved this program, it was running a very substantial deficit. It still saw that as an important thing to do in spite of the fact that these were clearly discretionary dollars that could have not been spent if the government was hide-bound into a balanced budget kind of legislation which would have prevented that from happening. They presumably would not have breached their legislation. They would have then deprived Manitoba of some \$200 million on a roughly 2-to-1 leverage, which is not bad leverage in anybody's books.

So I think these kinds of programs have been the stock and trade of governments of every stripe across this country, and really across the western world in times of recession when demand weakens to the point where it threatens the economy and the livelihood of both individuals and companies. Governments at all levels and of all stripes, as I said, have taken advantage often of weaker prices to accomplish very substantial improvements and investments in infrastructure, sustaining demand in the economy and creating or sustaining employment, which otherwise was very much at risk. The wisdom of using this approach can be seen in much of the public infrastructure that we still continue to enjoy.

Most Manitobans will remember that Riding Mountain National Park was essentially a make-work

project during the 1930s in the Depression with work gangs, working often under what were close to forced labour conditions. Other circumstances were not quite as bad as that. But that was perhaps the first expression of that kind of major works program modelled on the United States approach during the Depression, reluctantly modelled, by the way, because R.B. Bennett did not approve of such things. There was a great deal of pressure that had to be brought to bear to get any kind of federal government action during that recession.

* (1550)

I think governments at all levels learned from the recession of the 1930s that when demand falls fatally, a spiral ensues of deflation that ultimately ends either in disaster or in major public intervention as has happened in times since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

The depression/recession of the early 1990s, which gave birth to this infrastructure program and its predecessors, was in many ways as severe. Had it not been for the public safety nets that had been erected by governments, again, of all stripes, our circumstances in the 1990s recession would have been much more severe than they were. I think that our party, along with all others, recognizes that in such times governments have to sustain demand in ways that are wise and provide meaningful investments for everybody. So I think this program was a success. We believed at the time it was an appropriate program and we supported it. We continue to support its winding down, I guess at this point, after achieving no small contribution to our capital infrastructure in Manitoba.

For the most part, I think, with a very few exceptions, the projects that were undertaken have been in themselves valuable as well as valuable for the work and the demand that they have provided in our Manitoba economy. So I am glad the government agreed that it was useful and worthwhile to incur a level of deficit that it otherwise would not have incurred. I just commend to the minister to put that into his historical memory and to remember it when times turn around again, as they surely will. They always have, and I do not think that the law of economics has been repealed yet.

We hope that we have all learned that balancing budgets and balancing budgets over economic cycles is extremely important and that no government of any level can afford to run up an increasing level of debt relative to its gross domestic product. On the other hand, to think that all government debt no matter how incurred is bad is, I think, to turn most economics on its head and not to recognize that, were it not for wise investment throughout our 130-some years as a province, we would not have the public works, the hospitals, the roads, the parks that we have today.

We should recognize more often that our capital infrastructure has a depreciated value in excess of \$12 billion at the present time so that when we talk about our debt of \$6.4 billion, we have paid-for, depreciated assets in excess of \$12 billion. Yes, of course, it would be difficult to sell the highway from Neepawa to Gladstone or wherever. There is probably not a market out there for that highway at the present time, but it has a real economic value. If one doubts that, all one has to do is to look at how toll roads have been successful in the United States and in other parts of the country where in fact the economic rent of a highway can be calculated, though we do not want to go down that path. I think it is a myth to suggest that the built infrastructure of a province has no recognizable economic value. That, clearly, is not the case.

With those comments, I am glad to have a brief discussion of the infrastructure program, and I commend the government for having agreed to run up further expenses to take part in this program because the benefits have clearly outweighed the costs in terms of some recovery from recession and some purchasing of some valuable assets that otherwise would not be in place.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the member. At this point, we would invite the minister's staff to join us at the table, and we would request that the minister introduce the staff members in attendance.

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Chairman, joining me is the director of the Infrastructure Secretariat, Jill Vogan; Debbie Berthon, the finance officer for the secretariat; Carol Harvey, Communications; and, Zane Hartman, engineer.

Mr. Chairperson: We are now on page 135, in the Estimates Book, item 27.3. Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Program - Capital, \$12,700,000.

Mr. Sale: What is the final wind-down date for expenditure of the remaining amounts in this program, Mr. Chairperson?

Mr. Stefanson: The final date for approval of any of the last projects is October 31 of this year, 1998, and all payments have to have been made by March 31 of the year 2000.

Mr. Sale: They have to be Y2K compliant, obviously, if we are going to make that last date. That is going to be an important date.

Mr. Chairperson, the minister indicated that under the total agreement, something approaching \$200 million was spent in total. Is that approximately correct?

Mr. Stefanson: The original agreement was approximately \$204 million, and then with the top-up that was announced subsequent to that, that was another \$41 million in total. So the total agreement with the top-up is approximately \$245 million.

Mr. Sale: Mr. Chairperson, these are always complex processes of agreeing on which projects will be done and who gets to put them forward and who gets the final say. Is there any plan on the part of the government of Manitoba to undertake an evaluation, a report of this overall project in terms of the degree to which Manitoba's objectives were met, other learnings we might have for future programs? What are the plans?

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Chairman, I think what was one of the strengths of our program—and it was modelled in other jurisdictions—was early on we did set up the provincial local consultative committee which had two representatives from the Union of Manitoba Municipalities and two representatives from the Manitoba Association of Urban Municipalities, along with the executive director from each of those organizations. So when I mentioned in my opening remarks that the first program was \$204 million, but that \$60 million was allocated for traditional projects outside of Winnipeg, we accepted all of the

recommendations of that committee for the \$60 million outside of Winnipeg. That was a very comprehensive process with applications and review done by that committee and looking at regional fairness and so on.

Mr. Chairman, \$60 million was also allocated to Winnipeg, and again we accepted the recommendations from the City of Winnipeg. They had a blend of streets and some other projects and community centres and sewer and water projects and so on. Then we had the \$84 million, which was the strategic, which was, again, an application process, and decisions on those projects were primarily made by the federal government and the provincial government, based on a review of the project. So that process worked very well.

* (1600)

When it came to the top-up of the \$41 million, because of the short time frame and the limited amount of money, we did not go back into a detailed application process, knowing that for the first \$204-million program, we had a billion dollars of requests. We thought it would be unrealistic to go back out for a comprehensive application process and end up with 10 times the applications, and communities going through that process with very little likelihood of having their projects approved. So, after some discussions with some organizations, we allocated \$14 million for streets, residential streets here in Winnipeg—ended up being a very successful program in Winnipeg—and allocated \$14 million for highways outside of Winnipeg, again using the same committee to prioritize the highways outside of Winnipeg. So they again looked for regional representation in balance and so on. We had \$13 million left for Strategic Initiatives.

I think one of the strengths of our program has been the inclusiveness of the municipal organizations in our province. When it came to the analysis, we have done audits on individual projects in terms of confirming, obviously, the expenditures, the jobs created, and so on, and certainly our audits of individual projects have indicated that the projects have been very successful and have resulted in what we all wanted to see take place.

We also did participate in the national review that was done by the federal government and certainly have

had access to that review on an overall basis. The national review, of course, did projects on a national basis and maybe did eight or 10 individual projects within Manitoba, and then came to their conclusions about the success of the overall projects.

So I think both at the front end and at the back end there have been appropriate processes in place to choose the right projects in the first place, and then to ensure that we did select the right projects and that they ended up accomplishing what we all had expected.

Mr. Sale: Mr. Chairperson, was there any overlap accidentally, through the flood we had last year, of things that were done under the Canada-Manitoba program which then overlapped into the flood damage areas?

Mr. Stefanson: No, Mr. Chairman, there was no overlap, and certainly that was watched very closely to ensure that there would be no overlap for obvious reasons. Some of the damage done was covered 90 percent under the federal program for disaster financial assistance, and it would have not made any sense to be doing those under a program like this. That was certainly something that was watched very closely by the secretariat to ensure that we did not end up doing projects in this area that would be more appropriately dealt with under the Disaster Financial Assistance or some other area.

Mr. Sale: The reason I ask is that there is a famous street in Fort Garry which made the worst street in the city list. I think Ms. Vogan will know the street which I am referring to—coming from the Wildewood Club to north to west up to the highway. It happens to be the street I live on as well, and, somewhat to my surprise, it was done under the Canada-Manitoba Agreement, I understand, but it took a terrible pounding because of the building of the Great Wall of China down beyond the Wildewood Club. So I was just a little puzzled as to whether that then was recovered in some way or whether I was misinformed that it was done under the urban streets portion of the Canada-Manitoba Agreement?

Mr. Stefanson: Again, I think there was a very clear distinction. I am told that there was some work done, if we are talking about the same roadway, under the Disaster Financial Assistance funding with the federal

government. But on that same street further down, there was some curb renewal work that was done under the Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Works, under the Welfare to Work component of the program, which was separate and distinct from any damage that was done or any work that was done as a result of the flood. So, again, I think the first question—my point at that point in time was that the secretariat and others in government have been very careful to make that very clear distinction in terms of what would qualify under Disaster Financial Assistance or flood related and what we have done under the infrastructure program.

Mr. Sale: I just want to ask the minister one question—kind of future. Is there any intention or is there a process whereby these kinds of initiatives become structured—what the right word is whether they become structured in a way that they are available in future circumstances, or are they always one off programs that have to be sort of developed and designed at the time?

Mr. Stefanson: I think the member knows we, like all provincial governments I am sure would, welcome a long-term commitment. A fundamental program not unlike a CHST or some equivalent dedicated to infrastructure in Canada, particularly, when you look at issues like the fact that the federal government derives some, I think, it is \$280 million or thereabouts in gasoline tax out of our province alone, and today they put back absolutely nothing into our highway system. So that would be the ideal.

Having said that, the reality has been that we have had some success getting agreements, and we did have the success of this Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Agreement, and that really has been the focus, and support of all provinces now is to have a renewed program. That has been presented at Premiers' meetings; it has been presented at Finance ministers' meetings; I believe Highways ministers' meetings; and it really does have the support of all other provinces across Canada, irrespective of the political stripes of the governments in those provinces, that we all see the merits of the program and have been united in terms of our call for a renewed program at, at least, the same level.

The first program was a \$6-billion program with provinces putting in \$2 billion, the federal government

\$2 billion, and the third partner \$2 billion. We have all gone on record as saying we support a program at the same level. It is somewhat frustrating, I think, for all provincial governments, and for municipalities and for other organizations, that the federal government was prepared to come into this program back in 1993-94, saw the merits of it in terms of job creation, economic benefits to our communities, the importance of investing in our infrastructure, but for various reasons have been unwilling to renew the agreement.

* (1610)

So it is something that we continue to press, municipalities will continue to press, and we certainly encourage people at every opportunity to press the federal government of the merits to, at a minimum, another five-year agreement being put in place with all of the provinces.

Mr. Sale: Mr. Chairperson, the minister referred to in excess of a billion dollars worth of requests. Have those requests been catalogued and any sort of economic assessment made of them? I am thinking specifically of the fact that, for example, with a—and the minister knows this better than I do—but with a road, it has a normal life, say, of 40 years, but if you do not do some significant maintenance on it after 20 years, your costs have a kind of geometric component to them that after 30 years it is far more expensive to fix it even in current value terms than it would have been to fix it after 20 years.

Are we accumulating, in a nonpartisan way, a list of where we are at in our infrastructure in Manitoba? Because my sense—not as an accountant or an engineer—but my sense is that across the country and across, well, across the United States, as well—it is even more visible when you drive down there—we built up a very, very extensive infrastructure in the 1950s and 1960s which we have not been able or not been willing to maintain.

The structural problems that we have in our water systems, in our roads, in our airports, sewage systems, even though we take some pride in the things we do accomplish my sense is that those who know are telling us that we are falling farther and farther behind every year. We are not even keeping pace with a reasonable investment in our public infrastructure, and that of

course is one of the reasons why I suspect that accountants like the minister are suggesting that we ought to move to a different way of accounting for our capital in the public sector, so that we would more clearly reflect depreciation in various structures over various appropriate periods of time, so that we would have a sense of what we needed to be investing in order just to maintain the very extensive infrastructure we have.

My sense, and I am sure it is shared by the minister, is that in spite of everybody's good intentions and hard work, our public infrastructure is still running down and, in some places, running down at an alarming rate. There gets to be an escalating requirement rather than a straight line requirement that can be met at any time. There gets to be more of a geometric requirement that, if it is not met, it really becomes expensive to do so. So I wonder the degree to which the minister is preparing that kind of case and whether he would be prepared to share with us his views about that problem.

Mr. Stefanson: Interesting question. I guess splitting it to the applications, if I may speak to it for a minute; then I will come to the broader issue. The applications back in 1994 were made primarily by municipalities, some nonprofit groups, and some private groups, so there were major components that really were not even on those lists, like provincial highways. But moving to the broader issue, there are various amounts of work that have and are being done. Certainly Highways—and I think you have seen some coverage even through the media—has done the kind of assessment and is doing the kind of assessment in Manitoba and on a national basis in terms of the state of the highways, the requirements, the financial requirements, the whole issue of the timing of when the investment should be made in the highway as opposed to what the cost will become if you leave it too long. All of that kind of information is becoming much better in our province and much better on a national basis. So, yes, we are doing that as it relates to provincial highways.

I know organizations like the Infrastructure Council of Manitoba and others have also done fairly extensive work in some of these areas. I think on an individual municipal basis, various degrees of work will be—the City of Winnipeg, as certainly in the past, put out information relative to what they believe their needs are

in terms of sewer and water, residential streets and so on, again quantifying it, quantifying the timing of it, and so on. I think individual smaller municipalities across our province have also done it; they had a good understanding and appreciation of the needs of their municipal roads and any other infrastructure that they are responsible for.

Certainly the quality of information, I believe, has improved significantly over the last several years to help governments make those kinds of decisions as to where to be investing the dollars that are available, recognizing that the demand and the need continues to exceed the amount of dollars allocated every year on a national basis. That does become a compelling argument to bring the federal government to the table, that provincial governments are making significant investments. Municipal governments are making significant investments. The one partner that is sorely lacking is the federal government, and I think all of that information only helps us to make our case to them. Hopefully, particularly now that they are in their era of surpluses, and this discussion around the fiscal dividend of the federal government, one of the priority areas should be for the federal government to be investing in the infrastructure of Canada, particularly areas like our national highways. So the quality of information is much, much better and allows government, I believe, to make those kinds of decisions on a more informed basis relative to the areas of greatest need.

Mr. Sale: Just to have one last question, a specific one in regard to The Forks area. Are there Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure grants going into any aspects of the ongoing development of The Forks process? Could the minister identify what those are?

* (1620)

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Chairman, there have been some projects supported at or near The Forks. The dollars I will provide are the gross dollars representing all partners. One, the Manitoba Theatre for Young People, received support to the total level of \$750,000. There is The Forks Festival Park which has received support of \$1.5 million. That is an area that is going to be used, I am told, extensively during the Pan American Games amongst other kinds of events and gatherings that would take place. At The Forks, Festival Park will

become the focal point for evening celebrations during the games, a site for entertainment, ceremonies to recognize medalists, and other highlights. So those are some aspects of the Festival Park.

We also provided some support for the Manitoba Children's Museum in terms of their infrastructure gallery. That is to a total of \$40,000. Adjacent to The Forks, just announced in the last week or so was the support for a baseball facility which will be, of course, for Riverside Park. It will be the home for the Winnipeg Goldeyes, utilized by amateur baseball, utilized by other community organizations. As well, it will have a youth component to it, and the total contribution there is \$4.5 million. Of course, it will be utilized for the Pan American Games as the site for baseball.

The last one is The Forks Commemorative Plaza which is \$1.2 million which I am told is basically complete in The Forks adjacent to or nearby to the Children's Museum. So those are some of the projects that have been supported. I believe that is a comprehensive list, but we will certainly review the listing, and if we have missed anything we will provide the member with details on any other project relative to The Forks that was funded from the infrastructure program.

Mr. Sale: Mr. Chairperson, the baseball issue has come in for lots of controversy, but I think the unique feature of this is that the agreement puts that stadium essentially in private hands for all intents and purposes. Would this be the only infrastructure grant that has effectively been a transfer to a private organization? A private, for-profit organization I should say.

Mr. Stefanson: The member is right. This is an example where something was done with the private sector. The total project, I believe, is going to be about \$11 million. The City of Winnipeg, if I recall correctly, is making a contribution of \$1 million, and the Pan Am Games themselves are making a contribution of about \$800,000, again if I recall correctly. The rest, of course, is coming from the private sector, so it is a good example of a private-public partnership.

There have been at least a couple of others under the Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Agreement, although

the majority are done with nonprofit organizations, but the most significant public-private partnership was the whole rural gasification with Centra Gas, which was a project of a magnitude of about \$22 million, \$23 million, again where it was the federal government, the provincial government and Centra Gas being primarily the one-third-each partners, although in various initiatives the municipalities also were making contributions. So, at the end of the day, against the total projects, in the case of the provincial government, I believe the level of support was in the 20 to 23 percent range of the total project. So, even if the Canada-Manitoba is one-third, one-third, one-third, by the time we factored in the private sector, the municipal support and the customer support for gasification initiatives, provincial government support ended up being just over or in approximately the 20 percent range. So that would be the most significant private-public partnership, and I believe there might have been one or two other ones.

Mr. Sale: Mr. Chairperson, at the time that the agreement was signed with Mr. Katz and the city, I think it indicated that public sector subsidies or grants or however we want to characterize them were a little over half of the cost of the park, and the private money was the remainder. What is the residual agreement should the private sector project fail, for example, the franchise be unable to continue? How is the government's investment protected here, or has this asset been transferred permanently to the private sector?

Mr. Stefanson: First of all, the agreement has not been concluded with Riverside Park Management Inc., of which the president is Mr. Sam Katz, but the proposal does call for an \$11-million facility of which the numbers that I did give were accurate: the federal government would put in \$1.5 million; the provincial government, \$1.5 million; the City of Winnipeg, \$1 million in cash; and the Pan Am Games, \$800,000. So \$4.8 million would come from those sources, and the remaining \$6.2 million would come from private funds for a total of \$11 million. Our funding is provided on basically a receipted basis, so proponents normally have to come up, in many cases, with interim funding to build their facility or complete their project or have trade suppliers or others carrying everything right up until the point of completion and paying it and applying

for their money, so we end up with a completed facility, which is what our objective is here.

We have also indicated that the conditions we would attach to this would be related to access for the Pan Am Games and access to community utilization. The City of Winnipeg has raised the same issue of access to community utilization, whether it is amateur baseball and/or other events, whether The Festival du Voyageur or some other organization wants access to it. So our agreement will cover off those components, and certainly the City of Winnipeg will have a separate agreement with this organization because the land is being leased I believe for—the best information I have at this point is the land is being leased I believe—I am not sure what the final term was agreed to with the city, but there will be an agreement with the city. I think I am repeating myself. The city has the same concerns as we do about accessing and so on. Through our collective agreements, we will be sure that those kinds of conditions are covered off.

Ultimately, the management agreement is really with the City of Winnipeg. We believe that the key is to have the facility. It will be put to use for professional baseball; it will be put to use by amateur baseball; it will be put to use by the community; it will be an outstanding facility for the Pan Am Games. I think Manitoba has shown that they can support professional baseball at a level like an A team, and hopefully the team that is currently here continues and plays for many, many years, and everything works out. Having said that, I think most important is that we have a facility that will allow it to continue to be here in one form or another. So our priority is to put in place a facility that will have excellent community use and will meet a need in a particular area for many years to come, whether it is with Riverside Park and Mr. Katz or whomever. We fully expect it to be with Riverside Park and Mr. Katz for many years, but one never knows what the future holds.

Mr. Sale: I am looking forward to having a hot dog and a cold drink in the stands on a nice summer evening I think as much as anybody else does. I think it is going to be a very nice place to have that kind of summer facility.

* (1630)

My question is: do we have, as the public sector, for example, a right of refusal if the Goldeyes or the franchise does not make it? The minister knows that Manitoba has had a history of semipro and proball over 60 or so years at least, probably more than that, 80 years. They used to play across the street from here where the Great-West Life building now is. I think we have to expect that things will change. Do we have any protection in the investment we have made at that site to have right of first refusal or whatever would be the appropriate mechanism to protect the public's investment of 40 percent or 45 percent of that cost of that facility?

Mr. Stefanson: I think it is important to split the issues here from the federal government's perspective, and our perspective is we recognize the benefits and the need for a facility like this, and that is where our money is being directed. Under the sequence of payments, the facility has to be built for the proponent to receive the money from the federal government or the provincial government, so that is our objective. Certainly, once a quality facility worth \$11 million at that location is built, it will be a facility that will benefit Winnipeg and Manitoba. It is an outstanding location and will be a great venue for baseball and for other community events.

The City of Winnipeg is entering a separate agreement, I am told, relative to the leasing of the land with the proponent, and I am sure, as a result of that, that this facility is sitting on their land. They will have various conditions attached relative to what happens if something were to go wrong at the facility. So I think it is important to separate those responsibilities, and what our objective is as a provincial government, along with the federal government, is to see this kind of a facility built in downtown Winnipeg.

We believe it will benefit baseball, it will benefit communities, groups and so on, and it will benefit our downtown. If you think that, whatever their ultimate average attendance, their seating capacity will be 7,500, and I believe they play some 42 games, the Goldeyes alone—and I am not counting playoffs—so if you think of 40 to 45 games at whatever their ultimate average attendance is, whether it is 4,000 or 5,000 or 6,000 or 7,500, that certainly will bring a lot of people to downtown Winnipeg on a regular basis and will benefit

not only The Forks but many aspects of downtown Winnipeg.

Mr. Sale: I thank the minister. I understand that what he is saying is that it is not the province's place to take this kind of position in terms of agreement down into the future, but that is something the city should and probably will be doing because it is the lessor of the land.

I also concur entirely with him that the more we can do to bring people into the downtown for positive experiences and events, the less anxiety people have about our downtown and the more there will be economic renewal. I think that this is another reason why I have always believed that the public sector has a partnership role to play in the renewal of our urban core. Unlike some of his colleagues, but like the minister, I have always been a supporter of the urban renewal programs that we have entered into over the years. I appreciate his comments on that, and I agree with him.

I am looking forward to that ballpark bringing in lots of people to that beautiful area of our city as we continue to build on the legacy of a previous NDP government and a previous mayor and previous federal officials who started the process of the renewal of The Forks site several governments ago. So I think that is important that that kind of thing goes on through governments of all different types, and I am glad that it is continuing.

I have no further questions in this area. I do not know if my colleague has any. I am prepared to pass the Estimates.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 27.3. Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Program - Capital \$12,700,000-pass.

Resolution 27.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$12,700,000 for Other Appropriations, Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Program - Capital, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1999.

This completes the Estimates for Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Program. Shall we recess? [agreed]

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Mr. Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): Would the Committee of Supply come to order, please. This section of the Committee of Supply has been dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training. Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber at this time.

We are on Resolution 16.2. School Programs (d) Program Development (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits, still.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): I have for tabling the fee-for-service payments that were requested the last time we sat. I have three copies for the Chamber.

I was about to answer a question for the member when we met last time, and I am ready to resume here. The question was regarding reading difficulties or preventing reading difficulties in young children, and from a report on the National Research Council, there were questions about the prevention of reading difficulties. Current difficulties in reading largely originate from rising demands for literacy, not from declining absolute levels of literacy. In a technical society the demands for higher literacy are ever increasing, creating more grievous consequences for those who fall short.

The National Academy of Sciences was asked to examine the prevention of reading difficulties by conducting a study of the effectiveness of interventions for young children who were at risk of having problems learning to read. Much of the research they did focused on children at risk for learning to read, but much of the instructional research encompasses populations of students with varying degrees of risk.

Good instruction seems to transcend characteristics of children's vulnerability for failure, and I think that is the key point to note. The identical mix of instructional materials and strategies does not work for every child. Effective teachers are able to craft a special mix of instructional ingredients for every child they work with. There is, however, a common menu of materials, strategies and environments from which effective teachers make choices. Our curriculum addresses this.

There is little evidence that children experiencing difficulties learning to read, even those with identifiable learning disabilities, need radically different sorts of supports than children at low risk, although they may need much more intensive support. Excellent instruction is the very best intervention for children who demonstrate problems learning to read. Our curriculum and differentiated instruction document are helpful in this regard.

* (1440)

The majority of reading problems faced by today's adolescents and adults could have been avoided or resolved in the early years of childhood, and that is why we introduced early literacy intervention and that is why we are working so hard on the early years, including, through the Child and Youth Secretariat, on preschool years as a preventative measure for children at risk of being illiterate or having less than adequate literacy standards. Key elements that all children need in order to become good readers include learning letters and sounds, how to read for meaning, opportunities to practise reading many types of books, and more intensive and systematic individualized instruction for those that need it.

In terms of Reading and Writing Immersion, which was asked about the other day, this is a decision-making literacy development project. In June of '92, Manitoba Education and Training approved and funded the Reading and Writing Immersion project for three schools in Whitehorse Plain School Division No. 20, the Hutterian Bon Homme Colony School, St. François Xavier School and St. Laurent School. Funding was accessed from the Student Support Grant program, and the division provided additional funding for additional teachers from the funded schools and two other schools, Hutterian Maxwell Colony School, Hutterian James Valley Colony School, in order that they could also participate in the project.

The project was identical to a program funded in the Winnipeg School Division No. 1 at David Livingstone School and St. James-Assiniboia School Division No. 2 at Brooklands School. Those were funded previously, but those were not continued beyond the three years that the program was funded.

Reading and Writing Immersion was designed to assist early years teachers in becoming more effective in working with students who were "at risk of failing" to develop the reading and writing performance goals expected of them. The resource teacher from each school participated in the program because it was envisioned that the consultative, collaborative nature of their role would serve to build an ethos or climate for collective language arts efforts in each school. The project included resource teachers, Grades 1 to 3 teachers and two Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba, staff members who facilitated the professional development activities.

The activities included study workshops, study groups and site visits to each other's classrooms. The study groups and workshops involve the discussion or presentation of whole language issues, procedures and materials related to the teaching of reading and writing skills, the development of reading and writing objectives, the assessment of reading and writing skills, classroom management strategies, the effectiveness of procedures being tried in the classroom, miscue analysis, and other project-related matters.

The site-visit component consisted of participants establishing the goals and purposes for the site visits and observations. These included the university staff observing the participants using project strategies with the students they identified as being at risk, and demonstrating instructional strategies and assessing student performance. This allowed the teachers to view the modelling of a variety of teaching techniques. The teachers were debriefed after each site visit. The observation sessions were also used to provide participants with constructive feedback regarding their instruction and to assist with the analysis of student performance. The evaluation of the project indicated that the students did benefit from the project in varying degrees. They either had obtained the objectives set out for them, or they had improved in certain ways and were on their way to obtaining the objectives.

Data was collected from the following sources: from student portfolios; student journals; printing books; writing folders; anecdotal observations; reading, writing, spelling continuums; Dolch word lists; letter identification tests; the Marie Clay signature; and reading log books.

The Reading and Writing Immersion projects resulted in positive outcomes for students. It operated with provincial funding for three years and continued on its own for several years after. Doctor Gerald Bravi retired from the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba one year ago, and he is unavailable to provide follow-up support or facilitate the introduction of this approach in other schools across the province. There is, therefore, no infrastructure to support the ongoing implementation of this program.

Reading and Writing Immersion and Reading Recovery have a great deal in common with what research has suggested are effective early university intervention approaches. White Horse Plain has made a decision to introduce the Reading Recovery Program in the upcoming school year. The characteristics of the early literacy intervention approaches that research has indicated Reading Recovery and Reading and Writing Immersion have in common include—these would go not just for those two, but for others as well. The research review indicated characteristics common to successful early literacy intervention programs, plural. I am making specific reference to these two, but it could apply to others as well. These characteristics could apply to others as well.

They are: dependence on a strong, effective program of regular classroom reading instruction is recognized; reading for meaning is an overriding consideration; intervention instruction is frequent, regular and of sufficient duration to make a difference; pupil to teacher ratio is kept very small; fluency is a major goal; word-learning activities are used to help children become very familiar with print; fluency is a major goal; books are selected and introduced so as to ensure that students are successful in reading them; writing is used to teach, reinforce and extend word identification skills; teacher decision making is required, but within a well-defined sequence of instructional activities; instruction is fast paced; activities completed at home extend student opportunities for reading; assessment is meaningful, practical, efficient and ongoing; teacher training is practical and ongoing; teachers believe in their early intervention program and in their students' ability to learn; pupils build confidence and come to see themselves as readers and authors.

Those common characteristics are found in Reading Recovery. They were also found in the Reading and

Writing Immersion and may be found in other programs as yet unidentified to us.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): I think the question that my colleague the member for St. James (Ms. Mihychuk) had raised at the end of last time was related to the funding of Reading Recovery programs this year, the Estimates for which we are looking. The minister has given us a list of criteria which may be applied to other programs which may apply for funding under that program.

My understanding is that no program has been successful this year in convincing the minister that they are similar enough to Reading Recovery. I wonder if the minister could tell me whether that is the case or not. I am also interested in the allocation of moneys under the Reading Recovery Program. I am sure the minister is aware that there is certainly much discomfort in some parts of the field at the allocation so far only of money to Reading Recovery, when some divisions may feel that they have programs which are relatively appropriate for their own children in ways that perhaps Reading Recovery may or may not be, and they are not eligible to apply because they have not been in Reading Recovery before. So what the current Reading Recovery funding does is to reward those who began early, rather than to deal with the issue on the basis of need across the province.

So I think really there are two concerns that have been expressed to me, and one is that latter, that it is not necessarily looking at need, it is looking at those who are into the program early and rewarding those, and, secondly, it seems to be very difficult for people to demonstrate that their program is anywhere close to Reading Recovery in terms of its methods and some questioning that those methods are not always appropriate for all students.

* (1450)

Mrs. McIntosh: The member is quite right that the success rate, no one at the time we last made a decision on this had shown us a greater success rate than Reading Recovery and Reading and Writing Immersion, and it is the success rate we are looking at.

We can have all kinds of programs appear on paper that sound wonderful in theory. We are looking at the

actual success rate. Has this program taken children at risk and turned them into readers? If the answer is yes, then we consider it has a success rate. If the answer is no, then why would we fund it?

So we are looking for results, and we are quite prepared to examine any program that lays forward a claim to have the same success rate and the same results. We currently have four divisions that are exploring other programs, and we have not made decisions on them yet, so it is too early to say what our final decision will be for the year to come, because final decisions as yet have not been made. We have four divisions, as I indicate, exploring other programs that they feel may have a success rate as well, and if that is so, then they could expect to be funded.

Therefore I say to the member that what she is really concerned about is is the department funding programs that have a proven success rate, or is the minister and her department prepared to fund programs even if they do not have a proven track record of success, just to say they have been funding an early literacy program.

I think that the answer is quite clear. We will fund programs that have the demonstrated success rate. Without the extra money we put in this year, nobody would have had extra funding for this, so this will inspire people to either adopt one of the two successful programs or produce a program that also is successful. They may be able to build upon something they are doing that has a limited degree of success and turn it into a successful program, and we will fund it.

The early literacy intervention funding provides support for three program categories in Grade 1. The first is Reading Recovery programs. We say we will fund those automatically. The second, this is in answer to the member's question, are you only funding those two and refusing to look at others? We are saying, first, we will fund Reading Recovery. Secondly, we will fund externally developed early literacy intervention programs that, and I quote, have clearly demonstrated success in increasing the reading and writing proficiency of the lowest students in Grade 1 as shown in the research literature. Thirdly, we will fund internally developed early literacy intervention programs that again, and I quote, have clearly demonstrated success in increasing the reading and

writing proficiency of the lowest-achieving students in Grade 1 as shown through the funding application process.

So those are the three categories. One is identified as a known program, and the other two, set down criteria. Any program that can fit those criteria will be funded. So it is not limited to two, and as I say, we have four divisions right now that are exploring other options that they believe have high success rates and will be examining those for final decisions. If they meet the same success rate, and they are able to show conclusively they have taken the lowest-achieving students in Grade 1 and turned them into successful readers within that first period of Grade 1, they too will be granted funding.

Ms. Friesen: I wonder if the minister could be a bit more precise. Success rate, does it mean a 50 percent success rate with lower achieving students in Grade 1? Is it 20 percent, is it 10 percent? First of all, so what is the rate that the minister is looking for that is comparable to Reading Recovery?

Secondly, who determines that rate? Suppose for example a division sent in a proposal which said, yes, we do have this success rate. How does the minister evaluate that or judge that? What kind of documentation is required?

Thirdly, the minister has given examples from Grade 1. Is that the only level at which these programs will be judged, for example, if a program does it between Grade 1 and Grade 2, or does it from kindergarten to Grade 1? I wondered why the minister has particularly stressed Grade 1. Is that the only level at which reading programs will be judged?

Mrs. McIntosh: Yes, Grade 1 is the level because Grade 1 is the earliest level for formal reading programs. That is where we begin funding. Grade 1 is the legal age for beginning of school in Manitoba. We have other programs that are going to be coming in through the Children and Youth Secretariat that will be targeted at early intervention preschool, but for school, which is what the Department of Education is responsible for, we will begin at our beginning point which is Grade 1. It is imperative that we begin at that first stage of our responsibility because if you leave it

till Grade 2, as the member has indicated, do we leave it till Grade 2? No, we have lost a year if we do that.

So the early years experience are important, and things are being done there, but in terms of the Department of Education, we begin with our starting measuring point which is Grade 1, and we look for, with a reading recovery rate, a 75 percent success rate. That is measured on students taking the Reading Recovery Program which is about 15 weeks, and at the end of 15 weeks, 75 percent of the students in Reading Recovery are able to return to the Grade 1 classroom and be caught up with their colleagues and able to carry on at the same pace as their colleagues.

We consider that a success rate, that they are up to par and able to function at par after 15 weeks of Reading Recovery sessions, and if somebody else has a program that can take an at-risk underachiever, the lowest-achieving students in Grade 1, and in 15 weeks of a program have a 75 percent success rate, that those students are fully capable of performing at par, at the same level of speed as all the other students in the class, we would consider that an equivalent success rate. But a success rate that says, if you start this program in one grade, Grade 1, by Grade 3 you will be 50 percent caught up is not a strong enough success rate to satisfy the criteria.

The research that we have looked at is all very clear, that you can make the most profound difference for students in Grade 1, and the earlier you capture them in Grade 1, the stronger the reinforcement is, and that is why we begin by just taking the lowest-achieving students in Grade 1.

For those schools that do not have Reading Recovery, we made a decision to fund the most successful programs. For those schools whose programs do not meet the criteria and they wish to find successful programs, this is a stronger incentive for them to look for successful programs, whatever they may be, and this year it did mean that not all divisions would be funded because not all divisions had high success rate programs, but the minute they get them they will be funded.

So we see it, in part, as we are putting our money where the most effective use can be made, and we are

encouraging divisions at the same time to look for the more highly successful programs to utilize with their students. We are not limiting them to Reading Recovery. It is just that Reading Recovery has such an outstanding, well-known rate of success that it is one that has been picked up by many divisions, but there may be others that are equally successful, and we would embrace them as well.

* (1500)

We have provided advice to school divisions regarding effective approaches they can make to reading, as some of those approaches are other than Reading Recovery, so we have advised them about other effective approaches, not intending to limit them but also recognizing that here is an internationally renowned program that has been noticed, has been observed and is worthy of implementation. Therefore we are encouraging it quite openly.

We also know that Reading Recovery has the infrastructure that will keep the program operating over the long term which is something else that is to be sought after, because programs that end with a particular individual leaving or that are not sustainable will not be able to function well over the long term.

So the sustainability of Reading Recovery is an added feature. It is not one that was required, but it certainly enhances it. However, there are no programs that have been documented that show the long-term success that this particular Reading Recovery Program does.

Ms. Friesen: I asked the minister previously how success is documented. For example, somebody who wants to apply with a different kind of program, how must they document their success? Reading Recovery presumably has a certain type of reporting format. How will the minister know how a different kind of program has established success in the same way, a 75 percent return to class?

Mrs. McIntosh: Basically, Mr. Chairman, we would ask the division to include information on pre- and post-assessment data for the individual student and how this data will be compared to the class average. So you should see in the data, the statistics and the evaluation that comes in on a particular student that they were, in

fact, amongst the lowest-achieving students in the class and 15 weeks later were working at the class average with no difficulty.

We would ask for supporting assessment data to confirm both of those. In the application process, school divisions are asked to submit all their outcome data, and a small team of early literacy staff in the department reviews all the data when it is submitted.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, so in order to apply for a grant this year that is not a Reading Recovery one, the division would have had to have collected this data in that format in the past year. Is the minister looking for one year's experience, or is she looking for a longer experience in order to give a grant for something which is not Reading Recovery?

Mrs. McIntosh: It could be a one-year base from that division's own experience or a recognized research base from another jurisdiction. In other words, they would not have had to necessarily have gone through the program in their own division if they had a research base that was proven.

For example, a division could say we are going to have a Reading Recovery Program. They may not have it this year and they are applying for one, but because the research data on Reading Recovery is known and recognized, they would qualify. Similarly, if there is a research base that is credible and valid, that could also be accepted in place of a one-year base of actual experience or a longer base of actual experience in that division.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, could the minister give us the names of recognized research-based programs that would be acceptable to the minister?

Mrs. McIntosh: To date, no one is applying based on a research base. They have all been applying based on locally developed or externally developed programs. You know, we had indicated that they could have internally developed early literacy programs, provided they met the criteria for success, or externally developed programs, but nobody has yet submitted anything with a research base outside of their own ability to develop or some other form of external development that has not yet been made known to us.

So we do not know if any of the names that are going to be submitted will include an outside research database, or, if it does, if those names would be known to us, or if the research credibility was high, we do not know which ones they are going to use.

Ms. Friesen: Well, let me repeat my question to the minister. Which research-based programs would be acceptable to the department?

People in the divisions feel like they are playing Russian roulette here. They do not know what is acceptable. They do not know which research base the minister is going to accept, so it is a—I do not know what the right phrase is, but Catch 22. When the minister set up these criteria, she presumably had in mind that there were other research-based program which would be acceptable. Reading Recovery, obviously, is the favourite one, and it is very effective for some students. What are the other ones that the minister would accept? Could she name them?

Mrs. McIntosh: Yes, I can, Mr. Chairman. I would be interested to know which divisions feel as if they are playing Russian roulette because I could correspond with them directly and let them know the criteria, which I have already read into the record, that would form a research base. I thought the member was asking about particular researchers who had done work on early intervention when she asked her question, but, in terms of the research base, it is quite clear and it has been spelled out.

I wonder, again, if the member could clarify which divisions feel as if they are playing Russian roulette. I will make absolutely certain they get these characteristics because my feedback had led me to believe that divisions understood the criteria upon which they can base a program. If we have failed to alert them all, certainly those who feel they have been playing Russian roulette deserve the correct information, which has been sent apparently to all divisions. Perhaps in her next question she could clarify that so that I can serve the people of Manitoba better, as I know she would like me to do.

*(1510)

We have these characteristics that are common to successful early intervention programs, and it is this body of research against which programs would measure their effectiveness. One is that a dependence on a strong, effective program of regular classroom reading instruction is recognized; reading for meaning is an overriding consideration; intervention instruction is frequent, regular and of sufficient duration to make a difference; pupil-to-teacher ratio is kept very small; fluency is a major goal; word learning activities are used to help children become very familiar and comfortable with print.

I have read these under characteristics. These are research review characteristics common to successful early intervention programs.

I will just finish the list up again for the second time to make sure that people are aware of it: books are selected and introduced so as to ensure that students are successful in reading them; writing is used to teach, reinforce and extend word identification skills; teacher decision making is required, but within a well-defined sequence of instructional activities; instruction is fast paced; activities completed at home extend student opportunities for reading; assessment is meaningful, practical, efficient and ongoing; teacher training is practical and ongoing. This last one I emphasized the other day, as well, as critically important: teachers believe in their early intervention program, and teachers believe in their students' ability to learn, and, in this way, pupils build confidence and come to see themselves as readers and authors.

That last one is so critical to success, and I know it is often not agreed to by members opposite who believe, rather, that a student who is disadvantaged should be seen differently, and teachers should not necessarily have the same hopes and expectations for them. Yet this is a very important part of the program—

Point of Order

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, the minister is again putting words into other people's mouths. They are not true. The minister should stick to what she knows, and she should continue repeating what it is she has already put on the record once on Reading Recovery. I am

quite prepared to sit and listen to it, but the minister should recognize that she is repeating.

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

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable minister, to conclude her remarks.

Mrs. McIntosh: The department would review the information and data that a division would submit. We have not issued a list. Reading Recovery works. We know that. Many divisions are also convinced of this. They have seen the success of youngsters learning to read. Divisions must make decisions regarding which programs they apply for. We have identified Reading Recovery because it has the best track record, and it is sustainable over the long term.

At meetings with superintendents in each region, the majority were enthusiastic about Reading Recovery and indicated their wish to implement this program. It is the one of choice. But in terms of the research, we have twice now provided for the member the research review characteristics common to successful early intervention programs, one of the important considerations being high expectations for students, which is the hallmark of our New Directions which is the guiding principle of Mr. Manness's Blueprint for Education, which is the whole reason behind standards tests that are kept rigorous and relevant for inner city students, ESL students, disadvantaged students, et cetera.

I am delighted that the member has finally acknowledged that she has those high expectations for those so-called disadvantaged students and will expect them to be well prepared for standards exams with no dummying down of the exams for them, because she shares with Mr. Manness and Mrs. McIntosh and the Filmon government high expectations for students. I am thrilled to have that in the record and will quote her far and wide on that because, to date, it has never been acknowledged in this Chamber. So it is a significant thing to have acknowledged.

I really appreciate that support for the basic principle of New Directions coming from the official opposition. It will make good headlines in the "NDP supports New Directions philosophy" which is very—

Points of Order

Ms. Friesen: I think probably I have two points of order. I think the minister is referring to members of the Chamber by their—what is the word I need?

An Honourable Member: Proper names.

Ms. Friesen: By their proper names, right. Mr. Manness is a past member and that is fair enough, but I think otherwise members are usually referred to by their names.

Secondly, I am always glad for the minister to quote me, particularly when she quotes me accurately.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, I do not believe it was a point of order.

Yes, Mr. Chairman, I did refer by name, and I should not have. I should have said my predecessor, the previous Minister of Education, in bringing down New Directions, absolutely said basic is high expectations for students which the NDP at that time vigorously fought. We will—

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, that is absolutely wrong. Will the minister stick to what she knows.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. Can I clear up the first one? Thank you.

Mrs. McIntosh: Great. This is wonderful support for New Directions. It thrills me—

Mr. Chairperson: Okay, the first point of order was cleared up. The honourable—

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, I just do not see the point of this. It is so stupid, Linda, really.

Mrs. McIntosh: Oh, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Friesen: Stick to the point.

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable—

Mrs. McIntosh: I think the member is out of order, Mr. Chair. She has got . . .

Ms. Friesen: Right, I am.

Mr. Chairperson: Would the committee like to take a five-minute recess?

The committee recessed at 3:17 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 3:33 p.m.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The committee will come to order. Before we proceed, may I advise members that members posing questions or ministers answering questions do have up to 30 minutes to reply. I would appreciate it, even if we do not always agree with those answers, if we do try to listen to them, and if we do not agree with the questions, we might want to just listen to them and reply later.

Points of order should be raised when there—what do you call that word again? [interjection] A breach of the rules. Not necessarily to clarify a matter that is being brought forward by a member. The honourable minister, to conclude her remarks.

Mrs. McIntosh: I did refer to people by name which was a breach of the rules, and I should refer by position, which I will be careful to do.

In terms of the Reading Recovery, just to conclude that response, not only do we have data about the success of Reading Recovery in other jurisdictions, we have data about success in Manitoba schools. I just would like to indicate some of the schools that have already experienced success with the program, and this is based upon the data that I referred to as prior- and post-assessment data. I should indicate that funding for Reading Recovery is intended to support the salaries of Reading Recovery, to support the costs of the intensive training and implementation of other early literacy

intervention programs that have demonstrated success and are targeted at the lowest-achieving Grade 1 students.

But in terms of the schools in Manitoba that have already implemented the Reading Recovery Program in this year, 1997-98, the following schools are participating. In the Brandon School Division we have New Era, Valleyview, George Fitton, Betty Gibson, Kirkcaldy Heights, King George, Meadows, O'Kelly, Riverview, Fleming, Linden Lanes, Alexander, Green Acres, Riverheights, Waverly Park, St. Augustine, J.R. Reed.

In the Turtle Mountain School Division we have Killarney.

We have individual band-operated schools, Sioux Valley and Peguis Central School.

In St. James-Assiniboia we have Assiniboine, Athlone, Bannatyne, Brooklands, Buchanan, Crestview, Heritage, Lakewood, Linwood, Phoenix, Robert Browning, Sansome, Stevenson, Strathmillan, Voyageur.

In the Winnipeg School Division No. 1 we have Brock-Corydon, Faraday, Harrow, LaVerendrye, Queenston, Ralph Brown, Wellington, Fort Rouge.

In the Interlake School Division we have R.W. Bobby Bend, Stony Mountain, Warren, Woodlands, Teulon Elementary.

In Morris-MacDonald we have Rosenort, Starbuck, Oak Bluff, Lowe Farm, J.A. Cuddy, Morris.

In Pembina Valley we have Manitou Elementary.

In Mountain School Division we have St. Claude Elementary.

In the Seine River School Division we have Dawson Trail, Parc La Salle, Ile des Chenes.

In Portage la Prairie we have Crescentview.

In St. Boniface we have Niakwa Place.

In Transcona-Springfield we have Anola Elementary, Bernie Wolfe, Dugald Elementary, École Centrale, Margaret Underhill, Harold Hatcher, Joseph Teres, Oakbank Elementary, Radisson, Wayoata, Westview.

In Lord Selkirk we have Mapleton.

In Agassiz School Division we have Beausejour Elementary.

In Fort Garry School Division we have Bonnycastle, Chancellor, Whyte Ridge, Oakenwald, École Crane, Dalhousie, Ryerson, Bairdmore.

In Assiniboine South we have Dieppe, Pacific Junction, Beaverlodge, Royal, Beaumont, Westgrove, École Tuxedo Park, River West Park, Linden Meadows, Laidlaw, Van Welleghem.

Those are some of the schools that have experience in Reading Recovery and the success rate that we discussed.

Superintendents in some school divisions first heard about Reading Recovery from their teachers or from parents or from the school boards. They heard about the success and the success that we are prepared to build upon. We have not limited those who can demonstrate success with other programs. We do know, however, that here is a program that works, and it works well. It has worked well in Manitoba; it has worked well in Ontario; it has worked well in New Zealand; it has worked well in other parts of the world.

Reading Recovery began with a number of study groups in Brandon and St. James-Assiniboia, began here in Manitoba. These study groups were examining the works of Marie Clay, spelled as if it were Marie, and they began implementing her strategies and found them to be successful and then became interested in the, quote, real, authentic, original Reading Recovery Program as implemented in New Zealand. And they spoke to their principals, student services administrators and superintendents, who, in turn, approached the department.

We have since been to Toronto to meet with the Institute of Reading Recovery for Canada there, have met with the head people there, sat in on some of the

train-the-trainer models, watched students at work. I have had the privilege of watching at-risk students go through the one on one through the one-way mirrors that are provided for researchers and observers, and I have personally seen the progress that has been made. We were privileged two years ago to have the Western Institute of Reading Recovery begin here in Manitoba for western Canada, which is a rather significant achievement for this province because it does draw interest from across the west. That has been very helpful for us as leaders in education in the west and has also been very talked about a great deal by ministers of Education and the Council of Ministers of Education when we meet, as we do regularly throughout the year. So the program is spreading as it becomes more well known, as the success rates are published. As the research data is compiled, more and more people are taking a look at this particular program.

Because we have included it does not mean we have automatically excluded others, although, as I indicated to the member opposite, we prefer to fund programs with proven success rates rather than just approving a program for the sake of approving a program. Hence, we are encouraging people to look for programs that meet the criteria I have read into the record, which is the research that shows what needs to be done to ensure success with low-achieving students beginning their schooling career and to bring them rapidly up to pace and up to par with their classmates.

High amongst that, as I said, are high expectations from both students and learners. One way that high expectations are built into the student is for the teacher to share those high expectations with the students.

* (1540)

You often hear Reading Recovery teachers saying I know you can do this. That is one thing you will often hear them say to their students. I have confidence in you. I know you are going to achieve. These do seem to be self-fulfilling statements. It was in that regard that I indicated our particular pleasure with this program because that is the fundamental philosophy behind our whole New Directions, that we do have high expectations for students and that we do not say that something is too hard or the standards too high or that

certain students could not possibly be expected to achieve.

The fundamental belief in a student's ability to achieve and the willingness of the trainer to use a wide variety of methods and intensive work with the student to ensure those results are fundamental criteria that the research has shown will lead, along with the other criteria that I listed, to success.

I do not know if staff has anything else they wish to pass on to me here. These are the schools then, Mr. Chairman, and the rest of the schools that are using Reading Recovery right now and the rest of the response that the member had asked for.

Ms. Friesen: I should say, as my colleague for St. James has said before, the issue is not the success of Reading Recovery: fair enough, works well, people are happy with it. The issue is the new funding and how people who have not already been able to, sometimes they believe it is because of finance, but for a number of reasons have not bought into the Reading Recovery Program, feel that they have in a sense been excluded from the second round of funding. That is the concern I was bringing to the minister.

I should say that the term Russian roulette was my term, it was not a term that anybody else used, but I wanted to express the frustration of those divisions who have not been in Reading Recovery before and believe now that they are being excluded from it. That is why I wanted to get from the minister not just the criteria, although I think that is very helpful, the criteria for funding and the means by which that criteria will be evaluated, but I wanted specifically to get from the minister the names of other programs, research-based programs, and there are many. I mean, there are lots of reading programs out there. Some of them have catchy titles. Rat Pack is one that I am familiar with. It is not used in Canada. It, I think, comes out of Australia, and it is used in the United States as well.

So what I was looking for was the names of other programs that would be considered appropriate and would be evaluated well by the department. The minister was not able to do that. I think I made the question quite clear, but my sense is that what the

minister is looking for is an individual application from each school division that meets the 15-weeks criteria of Reading Recovery, has all of the other specific ones that she read, and that to give some guidance to school divisions, there is not a way of giving other names, or she is not prepared to give other names for other research-based programs. There are many out there. I mean, I am sure the minister knows some that are in Grade 1; some that deal with the whole elementary programs. I do not seem to be able to get that from the minister, Mr. Chairman, so maybe we could move on to something else.

I wanted to ask the minister about the old math curriculum. She had undertaken, I think last time, to bring forward an indication, the page numbers, the sections of the old math curriculum, where the students are trained in the description of process. It is one of the new elements in the testing. Again, I am going back to the congruence between testing and curriculum. The minister says they have been tested on the old curriculum. My concern is that the tests are emphasizing the ability to define process literacy. The minister's argument in return has been, well, yes, we have talked about and dealt with literacy across the curriculum. Fair enough.

But the issue of being able to specifically address the process by which you have dealt with a particular problem in mathematics is new. It is one that is welcomed by everybody. That is not the issue. The issue is: have students under the old curriculum been trained to deal with the issue of process, to express themselves, and to express their approach to a problem in terms of process. What I am hearing from some of the teachers in the classroom is that that is not the case. What I am seeing in the minister's evaluations of the test is that that is indeed where students are having difficulty. So I would ask the minister to show me, to point me to the sections of the old mathematics curriculum whereby students are taught that.

The minister had undertaken to do so—and we do not have it here with us today—before I left this line, I wanted to be very clear to the minister in what it was I was looking for, just to remind the minister of that and look forward to that at some later date. We are prepared to pass this line.

Mr. Chairperson: Shall the item pass? The item is accordingly passed. Item 16.2.(d)(2) Other Expenditures \$2,874,200—pass.

Item 16.2.(e) Program Implementation (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$4,861,500.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, I wanted to ask about the At Risk project. The minister last year initiated an At Risk project whereby consultants were hired and some discussions were held with focus groups across the province. Some of the focus groups, I believe, were asked to look at projects for community schools. I wondered if the minister could tell us what the difference is between the community schools project that focus groups were asked to look at and the Saskatchewan community schools program. Is there any difference, or does the minister anticipate that the project will continue to evaluate that same approach?

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, local school divisions have the ability, the right, the opportunity, the responsibility to make decisions on their Students At Risk funding. I am not sure how that compares to what Saskatchewan is doing, but here they can make the determination according to what they believe their students' needs are.

We will take the math question as notice for tomorrow and just for clarification, just to correct a statement that was made about the other programs for Reading Recovery or early intervention for reading, no division has been excluded from the funding. It should be made clear that only two have not yet applied for this year, and they have indicated they will be applying next year. Four have indicated they will be submitting proposals for different programs.

* (1550)

I appreciate her clarifying the remarks about Russian roulette, but she again did not say which divisions believe they are being excluded from funding. Maybe she does not want to state it for the record, but it would be important for us to know which divisions believe they have been excluded from funding because we are not aware of any. She also said there are many other programs like Reading Recovery, and I wonder if she would be willing to share those names of those

programs with us because no one has brought any to our attention yet. We would be very interested in knowing which ones they are so we could then make them known to school divisions as well. I think that would be very much appreciated in the interests of students, in a nonpartisan way, if she could tell us what the names of those other programs are and their success rate so we can share them for the benefit of Manitoba students, and if she could tell us which divisions feel they are being excluded so that we can help them in some way with their applications.

Four divisions have applied for locally developed programs, and they have submitted appropriate student outcome data demonstrating success, and that is being analyzed now. They have not been turned down so I am just curious about that. Somebody has obviously told her that, and it is something we need to know to make sure that (a) the record is not incorrect, and (b) that we can do something to assist. We will give the information on the map for her as requested, and as I say, with the other question about Saskatchewan, I do not know what they do there, but I do know that here that is a local decision.

Ms. Friesen: I do not think the minister understood the question I was posing on the At Risk issue. This was the minister's consultant who has been around—I was talking about the At Risk project—who has met with a number of focus groups and has discussed proposals for dealing with at-risk students. One of the proposals, I believe, that was put to the focus groups, was something which looked very similar to the Saskatchewan community schools program. That is what I was asking the minister. Was it intended that Manitobans begin to look at the Saskatchewan program, or did the minister have something different in mind, and is this the direction that the government is planning to go in dealing with the whole At Risk project?

Mrs. McIntosh: I am pleased the member raised this issue because there, I think, needs to be an indication for the record that that report—and we have since received a letter from the researcher who was floored, I might say that is probably an understatement, at the gross misinterpretation of her report by the members of the official opposition.

Her report indicated confirmation of all the thrusts we were taking in New Directions to overcome some of the long-term problems in the field in terms of students at risk. That request was taken to focus groups for community framework and educational context. The researcher has made it very clear that, as a result of the consultation that she did with the focus groups on the community framework, it became abundantly clear through the recommendations and her advice to us that we were absolutely embarked upon the right direction to resolve some longstanding concerns about students at risk. That was a very encouraging letter to receive.

No doubt there will be more said about this report as time goes on, an internal report for use by government employees, very badly misinterpreted by opposition members who did not have access to the mandate provided to the member or to the researcher or the conclusions the researcher drew, which were basically these: everything that these people were able to identify as problems is being addressed through New Directions, and you are absolutely on the right course and must not be dissuaded from it.

That was something that was a valuable thing to note, and, as I indicated in Question Period, this report confirms for us the problems that we thought were out there that resulted in us evolving our Students At Risk Project, and these, indeed, are the very problems that were identified in the focus groups as we suspected they would be. The seven recommendations are, indeed, ones that we are working upon, those being the establishment of something like the Child and Youth Secretariat and so on and so forth. The member is very familiar with them.

I could go through them all with her. I do not have the document here, but would be pleased to read those seven recommendations and show exactly what we are doing on each of them and how the researcher was able to show that those recommendations, which are all things we are currently doing, were indicated by the field as being the recommendations that would address the problems they identified.

So they identified a whole series of concerns and said that the way you need to address these concerns is to do the seven following things, all of which we were in the process of doing. Confirmation that we had identified

the right problems. Confirmation that our solutions were, in fact, the right ones and that the recommendations confirmed were on the right course. The community framework that we sent out, this is the conceptual framework that we used, and it was developed by our staff. We did look at other models across North America, including, I understand from staff, the province of Saskatchewan.

But we had, within that community framework, depicted the components of a community school framework. Taken together, these components provide the comprehensive range of supports and approaches that are proven to meet the needs of at-risk and struggling learners, and they have various components. They have advisory councils for school leadership or parent councils. They have school effectiveness strategies with parent and community involvement. They have process for ongoing renewal, school plans, affirming school culture and climate, the school team.

Inside that, there is yet another circle of groups: integrated services; community development; the learning program which would include the prevention and early intervention programming at all levels; collaborative, responsible and flexible programming and systems; relevant curricular instruction and assessment practices; parent and community involvement, again, the parent-community partnerships; leadership development; shared use of facilities, which we now have in our pilot program at Polson School; and our side-by-side initiative.

We have a sort of wheel with wheels within wheels that we have drawn out as a model. In the centre, of course, are children and youth, family coming next, community context and educational context, branching all the way out to child and family services, support services, health, justice, et cetera.

In the community school framework, the student is at the centre surrounded by the four key components of the school program, and, very quickly, to repeat: the learning program, the parent and community involvement, integrated services, and community development are the four. These components are planned and evaluated by the school staff and the Advisory Council for School Leadership. They are supported by school effectiveness strategies that

include the development of an effective team, creation of a supportive and affirming school culture and climate, and management of a dynamic process for ongoing renewal. That community framework was what was taken to the focus groups and discussed by them in terms of: what can you identify as ongoing problems or long-term problems? Do you think these things we are doing are on the right track? Would you recommend such vehicles as the way to go?

* (1600)

Indeed, they did just that which is most encouraging. Far from a condemnation of education, as the member is wont to interpret, this is a confirmation that we have identified problems that were long neglected in the educational field and have put in place corrective measures that are currently already underway, not just visioned but functioning in the field. I think that is a good thing. I am very pleased about it and conclude my answer for that portion of the question for now.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, well, if the answer to that study is that we are already doing these things, could the minister tell us if any further action is contemplated?

Mrs. McIntosh: Indeed, Mr. Chairman, much further action is contemplated. Through the Children and Youth Secretariat, we have already seen a number of announcements just within the last month, and that will continue. We have BabyFirst; we have Earlystart. These may not sound like educational programs, but we have benefited from many seminars, workshops, et cetera, talking about the early childhood brain development.

Just a few weeks ago, to give one example, we had Dr. Steinhauser, a leading child psychiatrist from the Toronto area, in to speak to the Children and Youth Secretariat. We have had many such speakers. He talked about the actual brain development in the child from the age of birth to two years. He also discussed the brain-wave activity in the developing fetus, for those who do believe that there is some life prior to birth. That was a very interesting indication as to the care that must be taken of the unborn child for educational purposes six years down the road. So the first two years are key in terms of the development of

the brain, and what happens in that period will impact when the student begins to learn.

The ChildrenFirst Strategic Plan, which we developed in March of 1997, has led to things such as BabyFirst, which is working with the mother and the child to ensure the child is stimulated properly, has proper nutrition, et cetera. The Earlystart is for young people a little older that again builds upon their natural developmental patterns and taking advantage of the most important periods of time for brain development, for learning, et cetera. Those are all being done through the Children and Youth Secretariat, and many of them are being done as part of an educational strategy but funded through Health and Family Services and other agencies. They will impact upon education, and the Education department has worked hard with the Secretariat in that regard.

The ChildrenFirst Strategic Plan articulates the vision for the healthy development and well-being of all our children. It identified three priority areas of policy direction: co-ordinated service delivery, and again I mentioned what we just announced recently, the side-by-side project, the first example being seen in Polson School, community ownership, responsibility and resourcing. We are seeing that through the implementation of advisory councils for school leadership, over 300 now. Where they are functioning well, they are functioning extremely well indeed; amazing things happening.

Where there is resistance, they are getting a little slower to start and we are helping them, and they will soon be—when I say there is resistance, by the school hierarchy, not by the parents. They are all enthusiastic and ready to go and they are after all the children's prime educator and have a vested interest in the success of those children.

The third is structures developed around the needs of the child. The secretariat that we formed, which was one of the recommendations put forward by the focus groups—or they recommended that we indeed should have something like that—has really begun, particularly in the last six months, in a very efficient way to facilitate a co-ordinated and integrated system of services for children, youth, and their families.

Where the needs of children and youth cross departmental mandates and resources, we have seen a number of things. For example, recently Family Services, Justice, and Education provided funding to the Army Cadet League to establish two aboriginal cadet corps in the inner city, the marvellous initiative that will really help to replace the gang mentality and give young people positive activities that will build good characteristics and fill the need to belong to a peer group and have some structure and some organization. We are most enthused about this, and we compliment everyone from His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, who is a patron for this, to everybody else involved with this initiative that is being funded in part by the Children and Youth Secretariat, again a very effective way to offset the lure of gang activity for adolescent and teen children.

Those are holistic approaches of prevention and treatment, and they occur at every age and every stage. It is very important that we work together again with Justice, the urban sports camps, and all of these things that we are building upon strengths of the past and bringing in new initiatives as well for the future. So we are keeping the baby and not throwing the baby out with the bathwater as we bring in cross-jurisdictional services.

The school links services initiative, our department, in collaboration with the Children and Youth Secretariat and the Provincial Co-ordination of Services Committee is developing a provincial plan to expand Schooling Services to high-risk areas in the province. These services can either take the form of full-service schools, which is just locating all services within a school, or school links services, which is linking community services with a school or shared service agreements having schools and service systems jointly hire personnel.

Any one of those three approaches will work, depending on the area, and we are in the process of doing that. We have brought in our FAS policy and, again, through the Children and Youth Secretariat, in terms of school planning, Continuous Process for Effective Education is a document that provides schools with the process of addressing the unique needs and challenges of struggling learners. We no longer call them children without hope. We no longer have

low expectations for them. They are struggling learners. They will need extra support and help and more time, but they can achieve. We do have high expectations for them, the basis of our foundation for New Directions.

I am pleased to hear support for high expectations from the member opposite. I was unaware that they have always had those. As stated by the member, statements earlier that said the expectations were too high led me to believe to the contrary. I really do appreciate having that clarified. As far as I am concerned, it will nullify any other statement about the tests are too hard, the standards are too high, you cannot expect children to learn to this level. Those statements I now wipe out from my memory and hear only that the opposition supports high standards for all students, including struggling learners.

* (1610)

I very much appreciate that support. It will help us. I will recall those words to the member, I am sure, in the future. The government of Manitoba presented a vision for education in two documents: New Directions, Renewing Education: A Blueprint for Action; and New Directions, Renewing Education: The Action Plan. The vision was built on the following needs assumptions: to ensure that Manitoba has a solid educational system, because the secure future of our children and our province requires it; education is the passport to our future; education is what will prepare our children and youth to compete successfully in today's competitive world.

The education received by children and youth from kindergarten through senior years is what will determine each student's ability to prosper at post-secondary education and training or in the workforce, including through self-employment. Entrepreneurship is a new facet of the education system that is being emphasized and is an extremely exciting initiative. There are many things going on. Adriano Magnifico over at River East Collegiate—I should not single out a particular teacher, but having visited with him not that long ago and seeing what he is doing with entrepreneurial education is absolutely thrilling. The opportunities for students that in years past were never mentioned are suddenly there.

Renewing education is necessary if our students are to be prepared for the future, and the quality of life for all Manitobans depends upon what happens in our schools. The vision was communicated to Manitobans through six priority areas: essential learning, which is results-based curriculum with outcomes and standards, and in subject areas from kindergarten to Senior 4, for the vast majority of students who would be expected and supported to learn in ways that have not previously occurred in Manitoba, thereby ensuring that greater numbers of students are prepared for a successful future.

Results, that is, student achievement performance, would be the indicator of success and graduation rather than just seat time. Rather than just saying, okay, you have been in school 12 years, time for you to graduate, we would say: regardless of how long you have been here, have you reached the indicators of success? If so, you will now graduate.

School effectiveness. Results are required in classrooms and schools; hence, improvements must be centred in schools.

Parental and community involvement. Children whose parents are involved in their education achieve better results. We all know that. The research on that is mammoth and beyond dispute.

Distance Education and Technology, and I think we have talked about that.

Teacher Education. We are looking—now we have John Didyk, head of Policy and Planning, and research over at the University of Manitoba in the Faculty of Education, I understand, actually teaching some of the components of New Directions, so that student teachers now have the benefit of knowing the new way of things in the schools. This is going to be a great help to new graduates.

The vision of the government of Manitoba has been articulated clearly in all Manitoba Education and Training documents released since A Blueprint for Action. Students who have been socially passed for one or more years do not have all the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to function within a system grounded in the vision of results and accountability.

Social passing keeps a student with a peer group but does not guarantee success, nor does it guarantee self-esteem if they are kept with the peer group and are the underachiever in the peer group.

The educational system has struggled for over 100 years unsuccessfully with these kinds of students and youth. If the vision of the Government of Manitoba is to be realized, this is the cohort of students who from the greater numbers referenced in my comments earlier must come. The economic well-being of our province rests on being successful and educating the students the system has in the past continually failed to educate.

In a Canadian and international context, it has been well documented that aboriginal or indigenous communities and their children have faced barriers resulting from both individual and systemic forms of prejudice and discrimination. It is imperative that all partners in the education system acknowledge the importance of creating more inclusive school environments, curricula, programming, instructional approaches and other practices that respond to the reality of prejudice and discrimination. This necessitates that we examine closely the educational experiences of aboriginal children and all children to develop strategies that will allow aboriginal students to realize their full potential and will help all students develop an appreciation and respect for aboriginal cultures and cultural diversity.

It is equally important to realize this will require ongoing effort and commitment and underscores again the importance of high expectations for all. We do no favour to these historically disadvantaged people to allow them to graduate at a lesser standard because we have had lower expectations for them. That has not done them a favour in the past and it will only increase their disadvantage in the years to come. That is why I am especially pleased to hear the member coming on board with support for high expectations for all students, including our traditionally disadvantaged. This is a thrilling thing for me to hear.

We will create this inclusive school environment. We have put in some changes that will help with that. We have made a commitment in a Foundation for Excellence to develop new criteria that integrates

aboriginal perspectives, reflects the diverse multicultural of Canada and the world, takes an antiracist approach and is gender fair, has knowledge of, and experience in, aboriginal education. That knowledge and experience is one of the criteria upon which teachers are selected for participation in curriculum project teams, reaction panels and other activities. Learning Resources selection process screens all these for new curricula, screens all the resources for bias and inclusiveness, as well as the ongoing staff development of Manitoba Education and Training in School Programs Division.

We have four interrelated and complementary beliefs or values about education and its relevance to the common good. These can be conceptualized as being the belief that all students can learn is the most important guiding principle in all aspects of educational programming and in any school- or classroom-improvement initiative; schools are the locus of change; schools must improve parents in the community to strengthen the education of their children; we must prepare them for the 21st Century.

These are four belief statements in New Directions. The "all students can learn" one is controversial. It has been the subject of dispute here in the House. It has been the subject of dispute amongst some educators in the field. Despite that opposition by the official opposition and others, we do believe that all students can learn and we will focus attention on students, how they learn with the intended developing curricula, programming, school environments, and structural strategies, that latter being most important, and learning resources that respond to the diversity of students in our schools. That leads us to a learner-centred focus in education and school improvement.

We have had to ask ourselves a lot of questions to have schools be the locus of change if we believe that all students can learn. It follows that we must also see to clearly define the essential learning that all students should experience and have opportunities to master, which means we have outcomes-based or results-based education playing a very important role in defining and clarifying our concept of essential learning.

I am going to pause there in case the member has another question and, if I am on topic, I will carry on.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, I was not aware that it worked on the basis of carrying on. I assumed that the opposition asked questions and that the minister answered them.

I wondered if the minister would agree to table four of the reports that she mentioned in the early part of her response. The first one was a strategic plan for children at risk. The second was I think in conjunction with the Children and Youth Secretariat, a provincial plan for school links. The third was an FAS policy that was, I believe, interdepartmental. And fourth was a document which gave advice or had supports for, I am quoting the minister's terminology, struggling learners.

So could the minister agree to table those reports and perhaps we could just confirm that, in fact, I was picking out actual reports rather than perhaps titles or plans to have a report.

* (1620)

Mrs. McIntosh: What was the last one the member mentioned? She mentioned four.

Ms. Friesen: Three was a fetal alcohol syndrome policy or policy document. Fourth was, I could not tell whether it was a document or not, but it was support for struggling learners, and I thought that the minister had indicated that there was a document or a handbook or something for the field.

Mrs. McIntosh: Mr. Chairman, yes, we will bring in information on those four. Just to make sure we have got them correctly now, the FAS initiative, information on how we are dealing with struggling learners. The first two, the ChildrenFirst Strategic Plan, Schooling Services. Schooling Services is actually a group, not a document, and we can bring you information on it.

We will bring those, and I did want to indicate that I simply paused because my answer was getting fairly long. I still have much to say, and sometimes I will give a fairly, what I think is a long, detailed answer which I think is in response to the question, and when I am finished the member says you did not answer the question I asked, so I just paused, but she has indicated to carry on, so I will, just in response to her question on what other things are we going to be doing and why.

Point of Order

Ms. Friesen: Unfortunately, it is not really a point of order, but I wanted to clarify that first document for the minister, because the minister responded with ChildrenFirst, and what I had taken down as notes from her original statement was children at risk strategic plan. My understanding is the ChildrenFirst plan comes from the Children and Youth Secretariat?

Mrs. McIntosh: Yes.

Ms. Friesen: It does, okay. That one I have seen, and that is why I thought when I took down children at risk strategic plan, that there was another document. So I have certainly seen the ChildrenFirst one, so we do not need to talk at cross purposes there.

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable member was quite correct. She did not have a point of order.

* * *

Ms. Friesen: I wanted to ask the minister about the GED qualifications that this section of the department administers. There always arises, it seems to me, each year from somebody who contacts me about the nature of the GED qualification itself as to whether it is still a widely accepted qualification, whether it is the direction the government wants to continue with, whether it is still accepted at Red River, for example, or other community colleges for admission and what the general policy and plan of the department is, and I am thinking now in that movement from secondary to post-secondary education where the GED fits.

I hear from people who are very uncertain as to whether to take a GED qualification because they are not sure as to where it is going to be accepted. Is there a departmental policy paper on this? Is there some congruence between the GED qualification and the admission requirements of community colleges or of other post-secondary institutions, and I am including in that Apprenticeship.

Mrs. McIntosh: Just to complete the previous answer and then I will provide the answer to this most recent question, I had indicated that we have a belief that all students can learn and I had gotten to the point where

I had indicated that if we believe that, then we have to define what essential learning is all about, and I was talking about outcomes-based or results-based education playing an important role in defining and clarifying our concept of what is the essential learning that all students should experience.

The definition of essential learning that all students should experience defines the foundation upon which career and lifelong learning will be built; hence, it is very important.

The development of a common set of standards that can be used for the assessment of student learning provides an important means and tool for gathering consistent information on student achievement that helps schools and teachers to identify areas of strength and areas of weaknesses. This information is a critical element in driving classroom and school improvement actions. It signals a shift to an educational system that seeks to answer why some students are not succeeding and to look for ways in which schools and teachers can continuously reduce the number of students who experience failure.

By failure, I mean not learning. Failure is traditionally perceived as being the mark on the paper, but I submit to you, Mr. Chairman, that many students have been getting A's on their papers and been failing to learn. So it is the true failure that we are discussing here, not the paper pass or the paper failure. We have, for too long, seen passing marks for students who had failed to learn. What a terrible thing we did to them in the education system by doing that, essentially lying to them, giving them false perceptions and unfair, most unfair.

*(1630)

The belief that all students can learn requires educators to examine more closely how students learn and important differences in the student body that are relevant to the learning process. The recognition of student diversity in terms of culture, gender, intelligence, linguistic origins, learning styles, physical characteristics and other factors is a starting point for the development of instructional strategies and school-based approaches that respond to student needs. It is

also an extremely important aspect of curriculum design.

Curriculum development processes and approaches must respond to a student diversity and result in a more inclusive curricula, and we have to include the integration of those items I have mentioned earlier to make the belief that all students can learn a reality. Furthermore, this belief helps us focus our attention on specific groups of students that have historically tended to not experience success in schools, and we have had to ask important questions such as: What are the essential factors that must be addressed in improving opportunities in schools, improving opportunities for success? What are the changes that must be made in school environments, classroom instruction and other elements that respond to the needs of students? How can parents and the community in general help to develop more effective practices and contribute to the improvement of the educational experience?

In a Manitoba context, this suggests that aboriginal education has to be a priority in our efforts to improve all education, because we have so many struggling learners identified in that particular group. Our cumulative experience in looking at schools as the locus for change, our cumulative experience in effecting systemic improvements in education, has highlighted the importance of school-based action.

School-based collaborative change processes that help focus commitment and efforts are at the heart of any systemic change process. This knowledge moves us to look for ways in which schools can be supported in developing and implementing effective school-based change models. School-based planning models that are collaborative and engage teachers and parents in addressing the needs of their students in the community are essential. They provide a means for the identification of strengths and weaknesses, the identification of priorities, and the development of short-term and long-term plans for achieving the desired classroom and school improvements.

Collaborative, school-based staff development approaches are an essential component of school-based change processes and the implementation of school plans. School-based staff development that is informed by the belief that all students can learn suggests that

staff development must be oriented to improve and institute learning and achievement. They also provide a basis for teachers to learn from their students and their colleagues. School-based staff development approaches are key to building the local capacity to improve classroom and school experiences.

Equally important is to recognize that if schools are the locus of change, then principals and administrators must play an important role in facilitating positive school change. Leadership in this context means facilitating school improvement initiatives and building collaborative school cultures and processes. This means a shift from administrators being the managers of schools to being facilitators of learning and collaboration.

The ideal school, the ideal setting, is one in which teachers, students and parents form a learning community that values collaboration. We have said a lot about parental and community involvement. I do not think I need to go through some of the principles there again except that we do know that parents and guardians are a child's first and lifelong teachers, and their involvement has been proven to ensure greater success. Schools where students, where parents are excluded, do not have the same degree of support than those where they are included. That also goes for community members who, where the advisory councils have been embraced, have made wonderful contributions to their schools.

I am preparing students for the 21st Century. All partners in education, regardless of perspective, recognize that the future challenges in the workplace are critical. We are preparing students for careers that in many places do not exist yet. They have not yet been invented, and we have to prepare students to go out into that workforce and function. So we must teach them certain fundamental skills that are transferable, that enable them to adapt, that enable them to be flexible, that enable them to embrace change and move from one career to another because that is undoubtedly what will happen when they graduate, so sustainability is important. Sustainable development, ideas and practices are important.

Students need to be able to learn how to learn so that their learning can be lifelong because it will be constant

in ways that it never was in the past. They have to be innovative. The schools preparing students for the new millennium have to reflect a diversity, have to allow students to move freely. We have to be conscious of the ability for centres of excellence to be created, not just in K to 12 but in post-secondary education, and the knocking down of school boundaries through permeating them, through driving holes in them, through merging functions, through schools of choice which will encourage students to find places where their needs can best be met, the need to develop critical thinking skills to take charge of their learning are also very, very important.

I could go on at some length, but I think I have already said a fair bit. I will just conclude with one final statement on it. We will continue to work with Manitoba teachers to build a strong curricula. For those who criticize curricula, curriculum, curricular changes, remember they are criticizing some of Manitoba's best teachers. I know it is very fashionable for people who oppose the government of Manitoba and who do not like this particular party to say a pox on your curricula, it is terrible. They forget they are really criticizing the master teachers who write the curricula, so if they have a quarrel with the curriculum, they have a quarrel with the teachers, not with the government.

The government supports those teachers. We believe in their abilities. We think they are doing a wonderful job developing curricula, and we hope that the opposition will concur that they have done a good job, they are master teachers in their field. The math curricula, for example, being prepared on an ongoing basis by master teachers, practicing mathematics teachers in Manitoba, and they deserve credit for the fine work they are doing.

If the opposition or others—I do not mean the official opposition, but those who oppose the new curricula—are opposing it because they do not like this government, better they should direct their criticism to something that does not include the unjust criticism of innocent participants.

We will continue focusing our professional development support to the divisions and areas that are identified as priorities. We will problem solve with divisions to develop innovative approaches for things

like Students At Risk. We will take the leadership role, along with the Child and Youth Secretariat, to implement school-linked services, full-service schools or shared-service schools. We will examine our categorical grants to ensure that children benefit from our resources.

A member had asked about GED. That was an opportunity—or those who may not be aware reading Hansard, it was a GED testing program that provided adults, who did not have a high school diploma and they required some type of certification for employment or training purposes, an opportunity to gain a high school equivalency diploma quickly.

* (1640)

In 1997, which is the year we just completed, 1,195 GED candidates were tested. All the candidates wrote the English version of the GED test batteries, and of those tested 961 candidates completed the test battery for the first time; 203 had written the test battery in previous years but did not qualify for the diploma and therefore were retested; 31 candidates did not complete the entire test battery. So of the 1,195 candidates, 787 achieved test scores high enough to qualify for the high school equivalency diploma. This was the GED introduced in Manitoba in 1972, and with the exception of two years, August '91 to July '93 by the Evergreen School Division, it has been administered by the Distance Delivery Unit in the Education department.

The GED testing program falls under an agreement with the Manitoba Education and Training and the GED Testing Service in Washington, D.C. American, but the member supports it, so even though it is American, some things are all right in the States, I guess.

GED provides Manitoba residents who qualify—

Point of Order

Ms. Friesen: It has been quite a long time since I posed this question. I wonder if the minister remembered what the question was. It is not an issue of whether I support it, whether it is American or not American, how many people were in the program, or how many were not. What I asked was—they were

questions about where, in fact, it was being recognized. People who are taking the GED or considering taking the GED have questions about where it will be recognized.

My questions dealt very specifically with the transition from secondary to post-secondary and what the department's plan was, what their concerns were about whether or not this program was recognized or would continue to be recognized.

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable member did not have a point of order; more or less a clarification.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable minister, to conclude her remarks.

Mrs. McIntosh: The GED, as I say, falls under an agreement between Manitoba and Washington, D.C. The GED provides Manitoba residents who qualify under the regulations an opportunity to obtain a Grade 12 equivalency diploma. It is commonly accepted by post-secondary institutions such as community colleges, adult learning centres, employment training centres, employers such as police and fire departments, manufacturing companies and businesses in the private sector; they will hire GED graduates for employment.

It currently operates, through the Distance Delivery Unit, 14 regular GED testing sites throughout Manitoba. It can also arrange for special testing locations as needed, and the intended plan is to continue offering GED testing throughout Manitoba as long as the demand for it is there. We have no intention of disbanding it, and I do not think we have ever indicated that we were. The member's question comes as a bit of a surprise because we have never said that an equivalency diploma was to be removed. But just as a conclusion, the majority of clients who take the GED equivalency tests are adults looking for opportunities to work or for future training.

As mature students, the GED provides them with an avenue to access training programs or college and university entry level opportunities. Since the GED students are generally native students, the vast majority of them, their entry to university is usually under the

mature student entry route. So it has proven to be most helpful. We have always stated that. We have never given any indication whatsoever that it would not be continued, just as we know that we have and will continue to have people entering university as mature students. They are not all necessarily native, it is just they are a large component. But at university level, many students will enter university as mature students. They will have a year to test themselves.

We are also looking at prior learning assessment for students, and we have a person now assigned to prior learning assessment in the post-secondary branch to identify students whose life experience would qualify them for admittance to certain types of learning experiences. Again, as with the GED students, they are generally mature students, and that is being built upon not taken away from. We are building upon it with the establishment of a prior learning assessment officer. I thank the member for the question and the opportunity to clarify this.

Ms. Friesen: I want to clarify specifically whether the minister believes that the GED is recognized as an admission qualification at each of the community colleges in Manitoba.

Mrs. McIntosh: I can provide details to that when we are on the post-secondary side, and I have the colleges and university people here. I can indicate that for many courses the GED would be seen as, as would our prior learning assessment, eligible for admission, but for all courses and all diplomas, I am not sure, I think not, but that we will have to check with the admissions people. As the member knows that colleges and universities can set standards for admissions. It was one of the things that we said was important for the post-secondary institutions to be able to do. So I can provide that for her when we get to that section of the department.

Ms. Friesen: Well, that was, of course, the crux of the question is the department continues to provide this, and that is fair enough, but the issue is: how many institutions are still continuing to recognize it? I am given to understand that not all Manitoba institutions are recognizing it, and that leaves questions in people's minds as to whether this is the direction they should go. Should they go with prior learning assessment, should they go with a simple Grade 12 and go back to school?

People have some confusion as to which would be the best direction for them to take. I wonder if the minister could tell us the cost of the GED testing on the lines that we are looking at in 16.2.(e).

* (1650)

Mrs. McIntosh: I indicated, quite clearly I thought, to the member. She maybe did not hear all my answer, but I did indicate that it is commonly accepted by post-secondary institutions such as community colleges, adult learning centres, employment training centres. I am not able to say if it is for each and every course, but I know that for many of these training institutions, a GED diploma is accepted for certain of their training experiences. I said that. I said it quite clearly. In fact, if she will check Hansard, she will see that I did.

I also indicated that employers such as police and fire departments look for either the high school or this GED diploma for people to have for hiring purposes. As well, I believe, I indicated that many employers look for that. This is an indication to an employer that the person has the equivalent understanding in terms of literacy and computation and general knowledge and life experience that a high school graduate would have. Many employers seek that information. They want to be assured that the person they are about to hire has reached those levels of competency.

The only thing I cannot tell the member right now is if it is always accepted by each post-secondary institution for all their training experiences. For that I would have to have with me the post-secondary side, because the member herself fought valiantly and hard in the Universities Grants Commission to ensure that we upheld the principle of universities in particular having standards that they could set, and that would include admissions, et cetera.

We offer GED to those Manitobans who want to have it. The fee that is charged and covers the cost of the assessment and the administrative costs are in the range of \$28,000, but that is in total and that would be in line 6.(2) Professional Fees. There is still a use for GED, if that is what the member is asking, quite an extensive use for it. Whether the specialized use for certain kinds of post-secondary education that she has identified are

there, I cannot answer at this sitting without talking to those doing admissions at colleges and universities.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, the minister indicated that the GED came out of the Professional Services, is it? I am not quite sure which line she was talking about, but I think she meant Professional Services. Could she tell us what portion of that line is for GED?

Mrs. McIntosh: Sorry, Mr. Chairman, line 6.2 Professional Fees. I am having a little trouble hearing the member. I do not know if it is a microphone thing or—

Mr. Chairperson: We will crank it up a little bit.

Mrs. McIntosh: Okay, thanks. Professional Services it is, I am sorry.

Mr. Chairperson: Yes, the next line.

Ms. Friesen: Yes, and I was asking the minister: what portion of that is allocated to GED?

Mrs. McIntosh: \$28,500.

Mr. Chairperson: Could we have the members in the loge to keep it down just a little bit or entertain their thoughts out in the hallway?

Ms. Friesen: We can pass this line.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 16.2.(e)(1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$4,861,500—pass; 16.2.(e)(2) Other Expenditures \$3,170,400—pass; 16.2(f) Student Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,824,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$704,700—pass.

Resolution 16.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$28,740,100 for Education and Training, School Programs, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1999.

We will now be moving on to Resolution 16.3. Bureau de l'éducation française (a) Division Administration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$136,400.

Did the honourable members want to call it a day, or are we going to try and bring the staff down here? Let us call it a day.

Order, please. The hour now being five o'clock, time for private members' hour. Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

* (1700)

IN SESSION

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

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

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, there have been discussions amongst House leaders and other members, and I suggest that there might be agreement if we were to proceed with Resolution 28, standing in the name of the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), and that Resolution 27, standing in the name of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), would retain its place on the list.

Madam Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to proceed with proposed Resolution 28, standing in the name of the honourable member for Wolseley, and leave Resolution 27, for the member for Swan River, standing in its place? [agreed]

Res. 28—Maintaining Canadian History as a Core Course

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers), that

“WHEREAS the Provincial Government has announced plans to reform the education system; and

“WHEREAS as part of the Provincial Government's changes to the school system Canadian History will cease to become a compulsory program at the Senior III level; and

“WHEREAS the removal of mandatory senior high Canadian History from the compulsory category is a regressive step; and

“WHEREAS many groups, like the Retired Teachers' Association of Manitoba, the Dominion Institute and the Winnipeg School Division #1 have raised concerns about weaknesses in Canadian History and have expressed these concerns to the Provincial Government; and

“WHEREAS Manitoba and Canada are currently facing many social and political challenges, which require our citizens to have an understanding of the social, economic, corporate and labour history of all Canadian people, including First Nations; and

“WHEREAS it is imperative that Canada's future leaders possess an understanding of our past if they are to effectively govern our future; and

“WHEREAS new Canadians want the opportunity to gain a thorough knowledge of the history of their new country; and

“WHEREAS history helps to develop a shared sense of identity in all our citizens, and assists in establishing an emotional bond to our nation.

“THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Provincial Government to consider reversing its policy to make Canadian History an optional subject in Manitoba's high schools.”

Motion presented.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Speaker, it is not often that I can rise to congratulate the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh), but I do so on this occasion because I believe that what she has done in reversing her earlier decision to eliminate compulsory Canadian history, I think, she has done the right thing. I think she showed some common sense. As always in opposition, of course, we would like to have seen it done sooner.

We believe that there was much opposition to the minister's decision. It was expressed very fully and clearly by many segments of the population. For many

months, many years, in fact, this minister and other ministers appeared to refuse to listen; but, in some senses, this resolution is now redundant because the minister has, of course, changed her mind and has decided to reinstate compulsory Canadian history at the Senior 3 level.

However, Madam Speaker, the minister did do it in a way which I thought was not as open or as clear as it might have been. She reversed her decision the day after the Legislature rose in December. That seemed to me not the right way to go about it. For many years, there had been petitions which we had read in this House to ask the minister to retain Canadian history. There had been letters from some of the people whom I mentioned in my resolution. There have been letters from many societies and individuals across the province asking the minister to reconsider her decision.

But it seemed to me to have been the right thing to do to have got up in this House, in this Legislature, where we presented so many petitions on this issue and to have said openly and fulsomely that, yes, we have changed our mind, yes, we were on the wrong track, yes, we have listened to Manitobans and we are going to change this decision. But the minister, it seems to me, chose not to do that and I will not comment on why or the reasons for that. I would think they would be fairly obvious. But she chose not to face the public debate on the reversal of this decision. I think that takes away from the decision itself in a way.

I congratulate the minister for having made that decision. I am not impressed by the way in which the government chose to do it. It is not uncommon, it is not unlike other incidents in this government's history where they have chosen to hide behind or to take things away from the Legislature and not to discuss things in the Legislature when they are making their decisions.

They are a government which I find does not appear on a regular basis to defend its policies. It sends civil servants, whether it is in Health or Education. I think that is not right. I do not think that is an appropriate use of civil servants, but this government does it quite frequently. It seems to me this way of changing its mind, announcing its change of mind on Canadian history the day after the House had risen, was in the

same frame, that it was not prepared to face the public debate on its change of position.

This was not something which people had been unafraid to express their opinions on. People were very clear on this. The Manitoba Historical Society had written to the minister. I believe at one point they had written more than one letter to the minister on the absence of Canadian history from the minister's future plans. The archivist had written to the minister, the museum societies from around the province had written to the minister, the Legions had written to the minister, the Teachers' Society had written to the minister, the historians at the universities had written to the minister. I believe senior citizens organizations had written to the minister. We had presented the petitions of individuals time after time in this Legislature saying, please reconsider your decision.

So it is not that there was no opposition to this. The opposition was very clear. It was enunciated in many ways over a number of years in this House and elsewhere. And yet, when the minister chose to change her mind on this she was not prepared to face the debate in this House.

Well, let us look first of all, Madam Speaker, at why the government chose to do this in the first place, and I will acknowledge that it was not this minister who chose to do this. In fact, my guess is that if it had been left to this minister, that decision would not have been made in the first place. But she was left with a policy instituted by her predecessor, Clayton Manness, and it was Clayton Manness who introduced most of the new changes which the government categorizes as reforms, the new changes in education, and introduced a series of very rapid changes at the same time as he began the cuts to education funding.

He had a very narrow definition of education, I think. It seemed to exclude, as we saw, the new program being put into place. It began to exclude industrial arts, home economics, music in some cases, and basic French. And it specifically excluded Canadian history at the Senior 3 level.

Now, I do not think this was unexpected for Mr. Manness. I think Mr. Manness had a view of the world based upon Hayek and other right-wing thinkers which

very clearly saw Manitoba as one small part of a global economy. The sense of place, the sense of citizenship, the sense of nation which Canadian history can help to impart—it is not the only thing which helps to impart that, but it is one of the factors—that sense of place in a global society was not necessarily something which concerned Mr. Manness. He had a different view of the world and he was moving very quickly to ensure that those in our school system also encountered the kind of ideological world which he shared.

But he was clear about it and the loss of Canadian history at the senior level, it seemed to me, fit with his perspective. It also fit with his perspective and this government's perspective on education generally. I do not think we have seen any changes from this minister or other ministers on this. It is a very narrowly based framework for education. It is one which has chosen to emphasize what is commonly called math and English or French, and to that extent it has begun to exclude, in the attentions of both parents and teachers and students, other areas of what I would consider to be a broadly based education.

So the curriculum has become more narrow. It was set in place by Clayton Manness for specific ideological purposes. He believed, I think, as many do on the government side, that the only purpose of education is to provide students with a preparation for the workforce. I believe, and I think many on our side would argue, that education is much broader than that, that it prepares students to take their place in the world. The world of work is one part of that, but an active citizenry and an active citizenship are certainly a very important part of that.

* (1710)

That was where we saw the senior level Canadian history fitting in, that it was important. It was not the only factor, but it was important for students in their senior years in high school to have an opportunity to learn in a disciplined and critical manner the major outlines and the major issues that have faced Canadians in the past, and to learn to understand the ways in which Canadians have dealt with those issues in the past, and to be able to apply the critical thinking, the learning, the understanding of other societies, that is, past societies, in their deliberations on the public issues that would face Manitobans and Canadians in the

future. That is what we saw as the role of the Senior 3 Canadian history.

But the government was prepared to abandon that. In fact, what they were prepared to do was to allow Manitoba students to graduate with a credit in American history but not necessarily one in Canadian history. In some cases, that was quite possible. Students could take an American history course in their Grade 10 level, and they need not take a Canadian history any further. I had great difficulty in explaining that to the minister, and to both ministers, in fact—I will not single out this one in particular. It was also difficult to get across to the minister the argument that, once Canadian history became a local option, which is what Clayton Manness wanted, then, in fact, school boards, who were being increasingly squeezed by the cuts to funding that this government was putting in place, might find it increasingly difficult to maintain Canadian history as a local option.

When you are facing the difficult financial decisions that school divisions are currently and in the recent past have been facing, you have to make some very difficult choices about the kind of programs that you can make available and the kind of teaching staff that you can provide. So the prospects that we were hearing from many local divisions were that it was all very easy for the minister to talk about local options, but those local options might not always be able to be maintained.

So the minister was, in effect, setting up a situation where the last time that students would have to discuss Canadian history as a collectivity was in Grade 6. In Grade 9 they do have a program in Canadian government and in Canadian political studies, and, yes, there is an opportunity there for some history, but it is not primarily a history course. So it seems to me that this Grade 6-Grade 9 linkage, if you want to put it in the best context that the minister might like to put it in, was hardly a rigorous approach to understanding one's own past. Hardly likely to enable students with the maturity and with the perspective that one might have at the Grade 11, a Senior 11, Senior 12 level, to discuss the future and to discuss the issues that they would be facing.

But the minister continued to deny that this would happen. The minister continued to deny the perspective

of historians. I noticed recently in a book called *Who Killed Canadian History* that the minister has been cited for her decision to cancel the senior level Canadian history. The minister continued to deny the message that the *Winnipeg Free Press* had for her on the maintenance of Canadian history. She continued to deny the concerns of those new Canadians, whom I had spoken to and who, I believe, had spoken to the minister about their desire for the maintenance of that course.

The opposition came from everywhere, Madam Speaker, and over and over again I challenged this minister and her predecessors to tell me and show me the one petition, the one letter, the one phone call from across Manitoba which had asked her to do this. And never, ever was the minister able to show me any evidence of anyone who wanted this.

So I think that in that sense it seemed to become more and more ludicrous. The government was having greater and greater difficulty in maintaining the argument that this should go. The minister, in fact, made an even more ludicrous argument, was that she was going to have more Canadian history. She was going to drop Canadian history at Senior 11, but there would be more Canadian history elsewhere in the curriculum. Well, I looked in vain for changes in the curriculum at earlier levels. I looked in vain for new curriculum materials for teachers to show me that there was going to be more Canadian history taught in the classroom at the Grade 10 at the Grade 7, at the Grade 8 level, and I found none.

What I did find was that the minister had gone to the Western Canadian Protocol, the people who are looking at a curriculum right across western Canada, and they had found, I believe, that, what a surprise, other provinces actually had compulsory Canadian history and that Manitoba was going to be the odd man out in this situation. We would be standing alone as one of the very few provinces which had no senior level compulsory Canadian history or Canadian studies curriculum.

And so faced with that and faced with the opposition year after year from right across the province on this decision, the government finally decided to change their mind. So, Madam Speaker, I look forward to a

new Canadian history curriculum or a new Canadian studies curriculum at the Senior 3 level. But I am afraid that what we have lost in this whole process of indecision on the minister's part or refusal and reluctance to listen to the people of Manitoba over and over again is some very precious time.

We now have a relatively old curriculum in Canadian history. We have wasted time with the Western Canadian Protocol in trying to come to agreements on what Manitoba should be doing in this whole curriculum process. It is my understanding that we are now many years away from a new curriculum in Canadian history. I think that will speak volumes for the record of this government when we come to evaluate it at election time.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): It has been quite an amazing dissertation. I do not have time to answer all of the allegations or just flat outright wrong statements the member has put on the record, but I will try to answer a few and then I want to make my own comments, so I will have to use my time wisely here.

I will start with the last comments that the member made which shows an appalling ignorance of process. It is appalling for someone who is an opposition Education critic to not know that curricula is being prepared constantly and that we had in place, have in place and were planning to have in place, history opportunities at Grades 9, 10, 11 and 12, Senior 3, Senior 4, et cetera.

The member knows, well, pardon me, the member does not know according to her speech, did not understand what was spelled out very clearly by my predecessor and reiterated by me that the content of history currently being taught in kindergarten to Grade 11 would be condensed and taught from kindergarten to Grade 10. The same material covered in 10 years instead of 11, and then in Grades 11 and 12, two advanced courses in history would be made available for students who were going to be, as we know, in the last two years of high school now, opportunities to specialize. Most students would be taking the regular course, but those who know that they are going into science or arts or whatever they have decided is going to be their career option can then begin to load up on

their specialty subjects provided that they have to take language arts and math, and they have to take four subjects from a list of six, one of which is history.

The chances of a student not taking history were fairly remote; the opportunity to learn all that they currently learn was still there but learned in 10 years instead of 11, and the opportunity to learn more history by two advanced history courses in 11 and 12 was there.

Those courses, Madam Speaker, have to be prepared. For the member to suggest that curriculum development falls behind because the course was going to be optional instead of compulsory is to suggest that we are going to bring in new curriculum for those history courses that are going to be available for the vast majority of Manitoba students. So I do not know or understand what she is talking about, and I suggest that perhaps she is not that knowledgeable herself about what she is talking about.

I would indicate as well, Madam Speaker, that the member's whole point here in her speech was not that we have done the right thing by deciding not to drop history in Grade 11 as a compulsory but to maintain it as a compulsory, and that that is in response to a number of things, one of which being the stated desire of Manitobans to see that as compulsory regardless of anything else, and we heard that and we responded, her criticism is not of that; her criticism is of the time at which I made that indication to the public.

* (1720)

I fail to understand her point here, because we went through a process of decision making, and when we made the decision, we announced it. We announced the decision as soon as we made it, and I submit, Madam Speaker, that if we had made the decision earlier and I could have gotten the chance to announce it in the House that would have been really great for us and she would have then complained that we took advantage of the session to announce it as a guarantee to get the most publicity for ourselves and to stop her criticism. That is what she would have said.

So the member stands up and she says that the reasons I announced this between session rather in

session were fairly obvious. I submit they are. They are fairly obvious. We made the decision and announced it, and that is when we happened to make the decision.

The member says that I did that because I was hiding. Well, what was I hiding? It is to my advantage to have that announcement made as publicly as possible, and the sooner that it could be made, the better. So I do not know what she is talking about when she says that I made the announcement between sessions and somehow that was good for us and bad for them, when I submit, it would be the other way around if I had announced that in the House as a ministerial statement or in Question Period or in speeches. I would have gotten a lot more publicity if that is what the member thinks I was after, and she would have had less opportunity to criticize, if she thinks that is what I was trying to avoid.

I mean, her premise absolutely makes no sense whatsoever. She is so desperate to find a point to argue that she actually chooses a point that anybody—anybody—analyzing the situation would point out to her in terms of political naivete that she has got to be a winner in terms of political naivete. I do not understand her argument. She said I had to—I wrote down here—she said I could not face the ensuing debate that might come from my announcing this in the House. Is she kidding? Shake a tree, Madam Speaker. Could not face the ensuing debate on a good news announcement? Where is her logic? I do not understand the point she has made here it all. It defies even what people know about the imagination coming from the opposition critic.

So, Madam Speaker, I have to say that the resolution, of course, is null and void. It is totally extraneous, it is redundant, it is something that has already been done, it is no longer necessary, it is something that is in place. We do not have any trouble with it, obviously, because we have done it. We will continue to have really rigorous and relevant social studies and history curriculum.

I have to indicate that the new Canadians, the veterans, the people that spoke to me so eloquently about Canadian history did a far more effective job than the member opposite. If the member opposite thinks

that she can take credit for this decision, she should think again. Her efforts were counterproductive, and the ones who made the difference were the real people of Manitoba who wrote with convincing arguments instead of just standing up, as the member opposite did, and say that you should put this in because we had it in, even though they never had compulsory history in Grade 12. They never saw compulsory history as essential to the end of high school, and we were bringing in advanced, and still are bringing in advanced history for Grade 12, which they never did.

Under our scheme now, students will end up with more history compelled to be taken and more history options available to be taken than ever existed when that member's government was in power. So I think that they should go one step further in the resolution and commend us for bringing in stronger, rigorous, more relevant and more opportunities for history than existed under the NDP when they were in government. I am sure the member is appreciative of that because she is, after all, a history teacher. It is how she earns her living. I know that she appreciates and understands the importance of history, but I think they would have been well advised to have had another person bring those points forward so that it did look and appear to be more impartial from government's perspective.

But we will be looking not just at the Canadian history as is, under the NDP. We are going to be adding pre-European Canadian history; we are going to be adding—

An Honourable Member: God Save the Queen.

Mrs. McIntosh: The members opposite have raised a good point, as well, and I will get to that. We are going to add pre-European Canadian history, which those NDP members never did. We are going to be adding the Asia-Pacific work, as the members opposite have not done in emphasis, not the way that we are going to be doing it. We are going to be talking about modern Canadian history.

In response to the president of the Manitoba Teachers' Society, the president of the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents, the president of the Manitoba Association of School Trustees, the president of the Manitoba Association of Parent

Councils, two parents at large, four principals and the president of MAP, we did send out a memo reminding the field about the issue they raised of opening and closing exercises. In response to that, reaction from that which was half the population saying they did not want it and half saying they do want opening and closing exercises, that committee will make the decision, and I would be most interested to know because they have never said what the position of the New Democratic Party is on opening and closing patriotic exercises in school—[interjection] And they are not going to tell us unless we call an election.

The Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer) has just said they will not tell us whether they believe in opening and closing patriotic exercises in schools, as requested by all of those people officially of this minister to remind the field. They will not say unless we call an election.

Now, this is the party that talks about Canadian history, the need to inform new Canadians. The Education critic is walking out of the Chamber right now. She is running from the debate.

An Honourable Member: Walking out of the Chamber? She is walking to talk to her Leader.

Mrs. McIntosh: Well, she is standing in the Chamber talking to her Leader instead of sitting in her chair and listening to this important debate on her resolution. She will not even sit in her chair to hear her resolution debated because she is running from the debate because she does not know where she stands on opening and closing patriotic exercises in schools. She has no position. She, who brings in all of this stuff on Canadian history, has no—

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, Madam Speaker, I really am concerned about the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh). I think she has lost her senses. Instead of debating the issue, she made reference to the Education critic leaving her seat, leaving the Chamber, when, in fact, that was not happening. She was actually talking to our Leader. We actually do talk to each other; I do not know what happens in that caucus.

I am very concerned about the minister not even being close to being relevant. I would like to ask you to bring her to order. Her behaviour has become increasingly bizarre, and I think she should at least stick to the debate on this rather than get off on these kinds of tangents.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Education and Training, on the same point of order.

Mrs. McIntosh: On the same point of order, Madam Speaker, the member clearly put forward a resolution that said that new Canadians and others should learn all about Canada's history, and she said that we should—[interjection] Excuse me, I am trying to speak and I am being interrupted by the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton). I would like to speak on this point of order.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mrs. McIntosh: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. The member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) introduced a resolution about Canadian history and how important it is that all aspects of Canadian history be made available and be given the opportunity to all students in our Manitoba schools. Yet, the opening and closing patriotic exercises, which do deal with Canadian history, which was raised from the floor by the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer) during my comments on the debate, during my portion of debate, he asked me then to start speaking about the Queen.

Now, absolutely relevant to the debate, absolutely relevant, and I then asked the question, why in this resolution about the importance of all aspects of Canadian history did the member consciously and willfully leave out any reference to opening and closing patriotic exercises when she knows that all stakeholders have asked the field to be reminded of them? The point of order is to this relevant, quite relevant.

* (1730)

Madam Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), I would urge all members that our rules are very specific, that debate should be relevant to the

motion, although latitude is allowed by numerous speakers in this House on several occasions.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The honourable minister, who has three minutes remaining, to complete her debate.

Mrs. McIntosh: Madam Speaker, I think that the new history—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order, please. May I please ask for the co-operation of all honourable members. Only one member has been recognized to speak. That is the honourable Minister of Education and Training. It is disruptions as occurred in the last five minutes that do cause general disruption in the House.

Mrs. McIntosh: Madam Speaker, I do appreciate the need to have students fully aware of our Canadian heritage, our history, and our current situation. Our new, rigorous, relevant curricula will provide that. It is being developed in conjunction with the Western Protocol. That timetable is the timetable that is on, and that timetable is on whether history at Grade 11 is compulsory or optional. We will have enhanced history. The members opposite should know that when we are complete in our New Directions for history, we will have more compulsory history and more optional history available for students in Manitoba, with new, improved curriculum much better than ever existed when they were in office.

Also on a very relevant point, the fact that Canada is part of the Commonwealth and the constitutional monarchy, the whole issue of whether or not history education should include opening and closing patriotic exercises, as was asked by the field to remind the field to be consistent in it, that decision will be made by the very people who asked to have the field reminded.

It would behoove the opposition, who claims to care so much about all students being fully aware of the Canadian heritage, to take a position on the issue. Do they believe in opening and closing patriotic exercises, yes or no? To say they will not make a decision as to whether or not they believe O Canada and God Save the Queen should be sung in schools until an election is called is just absolutely them rushing away from an

issue, them deciding that they cannot face an issue, them deciding that it is too sensitive to face because half the province approves, half do not.

The regulations right now that were there when they were there say that the opening and closing exercises should be adhered to, and the field asked that they be reminded of that. The field has now asked to re-examine that issue. I am quite pleased to have them re-examine it, but all of us need to remember that the history of Canada is important to the students of Manitoba. They cannot say one thing and ask for history, and then run from history at the same time. That is what they are doing.

I am pleased that the only criticism the member could find in this is the timing of our decision on it. But her worry about the timing on it is flawed in logic, absolutely, totally flawed in logic, and anybody with two ounces of brains between their ears can see that. So, if her only criticism is that we did not announce it at a time pleasing to her, she should re-examine. If this had been announced in the House, she would have been the first one up to accuse me of announcing it in the House and getting maximum publicity for it. So the resolution has already been acted upon; it is no longer relevant. The member should rethink their own utterings about Canadian history, and not just talk about the things they think are safe. They should also talk about the things that are true.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I, too, want to put a few words on the record with respect to this particular motion.

Madam Speaker, I can remember the Minister of Education quite well that was there prior to the current minister. When Mr. Manness came down with a lot of fanfare in terms of the whole new educational reform package the government was proposing to Manitobans, there were a few key issues that really came out in the sense of very strong negative reaction from the public.

One of the biggest ones, of course, was the decision by government at the time to drop Grade 11 history as being a compulsory course. What we saw was a great deal of resistance. A good number of individuals, both opposition parties, lobbying and questioning

government in terms of why it was doing what it was doing, and we even went through a number of days in which the Minister of Education showed absolutely no indication whatsoever of how Canadian history was going to be compensated prior to them reversing their decision. The minister states today, and in the past to a certain degree, that the Grade 11 was going to be compensated through additional teachings within Grade 1 to Grade 10.

But at least a part of the argument at the time was that you get, for example, a great deal of new Canadians that come to Canada, and they do not necessarily start off in kindergarten, that there was a very real need to ensure that the Canadian history would remain a part of that core curriculum at Grade 11 because the vast majority of Manitobans, with the exception of a very few, believe that it was absolutely essential that that course remain compulsory. I was quite pleased when the government of the day reversed its position and went back to Grade 11 history being compulsory.

I think, in part, it gives some hope that at times the system can work, that if you apply enough pressure to the government of the day when we know that they have done something clearly wrong, that, in fact, enough pressure can, in fact, be mounted to get the decision reversed. So, whenever I see government doing what I believe, along with what others believe, is right, they should be applauded, and I would applaud the government on coming to its senses and reinstating Grade 11 history as a part of the core curriculum.

There are many other issues facing education. Through Question Period I did address the whole issue of the God Save the Queen in which the minister had made reference in addressing this particular issue. The Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) is right. There is some relevancy to that particular issue, but I never heard the Minister of Education take an actual position on it. I would recommend to the Minister of Education that what she might want to consider doing is something similar to the Lord's Prayer or at least allow the school Parent Advisory Councils to make that decision on a school-to-school basis.

The only one that I would suggest is the singing of our national anthem. I think the opening of the school

day in singing of O Canada I think is absolutely critical. It is very important, it is very symbolic, and it is something in which I strongly believe in, and as I know the Premier (Mr. Filmon), as he chose to ridicule those that thought that God Save the Queen should not be sung did also include O Canada as a critical thing that needs to be happening at the opening of our school day. But it would be nice to see the Minister of Education rectify that particular issue.

It was virtually a nonissue prior to her involvement actually. At least, I cannot recall ever hearing about that particular issue until the minister in fact—I think it was a memo that she had sent out that really generated it, and then we have this law that is on the books that says every school has to have a closing ceremony. Well, I would look to our pages inside the Chamber and those that are not here today and ask them to reflect on the last time they sang God Save the Queen inside their schools. You will find in reality very, very few, I am not aware of any offhand that sing God Save the Queen at the closing of the school day. It is not to say that it does not exist. I am told that, yes, some school bodies do. Madam Speaker, I would suggest to you that the minister is the one that made that an issue. The minister can easily close that as an issue, and it is something in which I would like to see because I think there are broader more important issues that have to be addressed in education.

* (1740)

The single most important issue, I believe, is that of how we finance public education and the chronic underfunding that we have seen towards the funding of public education over the last decade. I will not speak at length to that because I do have a resolution that hopefully will appear in which we will get a little bit more time for debate. I am sure there are others that might want to comment on the whole history as being a part of the core curriculum. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Madam Speaker, before I get into the debate of the resolution, I simply want to indicate that I had an opportunity to visit one of our schools this morning in my constituency and talked to the administrators and some of the teachers there, and am very positive about the direction that we as a

province were going in education, very supportive, in the things that we were doing.

I guess it is good to go back to the grassroots, as the members opposite talk quite frequently, or they say we have no idea what has taken place out in the field. I would suggest that I think we have a fairly good idea of what is taking place out there, and some of the sentiments that our teachers and that our administrators have. Certainly the mood is positive out there, and it is gratifying to hear that. Even talking about some of the changes that are taking place within education, the response was positive. Certainly they are working hard as I think all people are working hard, and so they were very supportive of the things that we were doing. I just want to congratulate them for the work that they are doing out there. Our administrators, our school boards, our teachers are doing an excellent job of preparing our students for the tasks that they have lying ahead of them.

Canadian history in schools. It is interesting that the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) made some comments about, first of all she started off by supporting the things that we were doing and then very quickly turned towards the negative side. So I would like to put some information on the record today about the things that we are doing and the things that are taking place.

There are many ways in which history can be taught to Manitoba students. When a greater effort is placed on incorporating history into all grade levels, it will become second nature to speak about history when teaching every subject. Recently, on April 10, 1997, in the Legislature, a member opposite suggested that Manitoba students would be graduating from our high schools without having studied Canadian history at a senior level. In fact, students must study social studies, including history, until the end of S3.

What the member overlooked in stating this was the fact that students in Manitoba schools will be learning, through enhanced curriculum from kindergarten to Senior 2, subject area content on social studies and related topics at grade appropriate levels. This enhanced emphasis allows our students to learn about the importance of Canadian history content and citizenship prior to the end of the Senior 2 as well as at

Senior 3 and will ensure that earlier on students are introduced to the important concept of citizenship and their roles and their responsibilities.

In addition, Manitoba students will have the opportunity to study advanced history in their final year of school. I would also like to add that our students must study from a list of compulsory complementary subjects, four out of six, and one of those six in history. In Manitoba we are addressing the teaching of history in various ways.

First of all, I would like to spend some time talking about the aboriginal perspectives. Aboriginal perspectives will be integrated into curricula to enable students to learn the history of Manitoba and Canada before European settlement and, equally important, to give the perspective of aboriginal people since that time. Each subject area will address the perspectives, contributions and accomplishments of aboriginal people as appropriate.

The goal in integrating aboriginal perspectives into curricula is to ensure that all students have opportunities to understand and respect themselves, their cultural heritage, and the cultural heritage of others. Aboriginal perspectives apply to learning experiences for all students. However, there may be unique and particular learning experiences that apply specifically to aboriginal students. The goals of aboriginal perspectives for aboriginal students are as follows: to develop a positive self-identity through learning their own history, cultures and contemporary lifestyles and to participate in a learning environment that will equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to participate more fully in the unique civic and cultural realities of their communities.

Next, the goals of aboriginal perspectives for nonaboriginal students are as follows: to develop an understanding and respect for the histories, cultures and contemporary lifestyles of aboriginal people; to develop informed opinions on matters relating to aboriginal people. The aboriginal perspectives will be integrated in Manitoba, kindergarten to Senior 4 in all curricula.

Students with Senior 4 will be offered new courses that may include opportunities for further in-depth exploration about Canada and Canadian issues. The

issues will include studies about our aboriginal people as well as provide opportunities to explore the rich cultural diversity of our country and of our province.

Under the leadership of the Native Education Directorate, all government education branches are committed to the incorporation of the aboriginal perspectives into the Manitoban and Canadian school system.

Some examples of activities include the department has established a K to S4 task team to examine all matters related to the education of aboriginal children in Manitoba in the light of aboriginal self-government and the devolution of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, which is known as INAC. As INAC develops, its administrative responsibilities for status Indians and First Nations in Manitoba accelerate their movement towards self-government. It is important that implications for Manitoba Education and Training be examined.

The directorate is also a member of the intradepartment task team. This task team is examining future relationships between aboriginals and Manitoba Education and Training and preparing information which will identify K to S4, post-secondary and integrated issues and present strategic options for addressing those issues.

A bibliography of Manitoba-based aboriginal language resources developed in collaboration with the Manitoba Association for Native Languages was completed and distributed to Manitoba schools in June of 1997. As well, workshops to foster greater parent and community involvement in education and greater cultural awareness were provided to government staff, school administrators and teachers to assist them in their delivery of relevant and bias-free education programs.

The Native Education Directorate will work closely with the Program Implementation Branch to ensure that professional development requirements in aboriginal education are included in school plans. A two-year aboriginal language project to develop a generic levels-based curriculum framework for aboriginal languages was jointly undertaken by all jurisdictions of the

Western Canadian Protocol. This project will be completed in December of 1998.

The mandate of the Native Education Directorate is to provide leadership and co-ordination for departmental initiatives on K to S4 aboriginal education. The objectives of the Native Education Directorate are to ensure a corporate approach to aboriginal education within Manitoba Education and Training and to promote the removal of systemic barriers to aboriginal students' success in education and training. The directorate also collaborated with the University of Manitoba and the Winnipeg School Division No. 1 to make available summer institutes on aboriginal education.

* (1750)

Next year, I would like to look at human diversity. Manitoba is a rich mosaic of people with a diversity of cultures, languages, religions and other characteristics. These aspects of human diversity should be recognized, accepted and celebrated to create learning environments that prepare all students for full participation in society, that provide students with opportunities for cultural and linguistic development, and that encourage intercultural understanding and harmony. The government acknowledges the diversity of cultures within our province and has made human diversity an important consideration in the renewal of education.

In May of 1992, Manitoba Education and Training released Multicultural Education, A Policy for the 1990s. This document provided a conceptual framework for multicultural education in Manitoba. Recent departmental activities in support of multicultural, antiracism education include: first of all, all curricula will be developed in a way that integrates aboriginal perspectives, gender fairness, human diversity, and antibias-antiracism. This means that learning outcomes and curriculum frameworks, as well as, foundation for the implementation documents will reflect these elements in a meaningful way.

Draft curriculum documents will be subject to a review by reaction panels drawn from the field that represent a cross-section of perspectives. Parent groups, organizations and others that may provide a multicultural perspective will be invited to participate

on reaction panels on a document-by-document basis. Learning resources selected to support the new curricula will be expected to reflect the inclusive approach we are undertaking.

The nomination process informs for the nomination of educators who are to be the members of curriculum steering committees and specifically call for educators who are experienced in aboriginal education, second language teaching, multicultural and antibias-antiracism education. Through this mechanism, we will ensure that individuals involved in the development process are sensitive to and are experienced in multicultural and antibias-antiracism education.

Heritage and international language studies are considered very important by this government, and this is one reason why Manitoba is participating through the Western Canadian Protocol for collaboration in basic education with Alberta and Saskatchewan in developing curriculum frameworks for international languages and bilingual education.

There is also a parallel initiative involving all the Western Canadian Protocol provinces and territories in developing a framework for aboriginal languages. These frameworks will provide a basis for the development of new curriculum.

Antiracist-antibias education. Effective schools strive to create and maintain inclusive school programs and environments that welcome diversity and challenge bias and discrimination. Antibias-antiracism educational approach is a critical element in the development of curriculum documents and school environments so that students can experience learning in a safe environment and can develop the required knowledge and skills.

Another important aspect of our work to increase the awareness of antiracism and antibias education is to give teachers professional development opportunities in that area. For example, the department has, first of all, cosponsored with the Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba, several summer institutes on aboriginal education; provided in kind support such as distribution of information and printing of promotional materials for the Manitoba association of multicultural education. Professional development workshops are geared to

educators and the community in general on multicultural and antibias-antiracism themes.

Last section I would like to turn to is the sustainable development. The concept of sustainable development is the process of integrating and balancing the economy, environment and society through a consensus-based, decision-making process, so that in each of these areas the economy, the environment and society can be sustained for future generations.

Well, Madam Speaker, in conclusion, in light of the past and continued support for sustaining Canadian history in Manitoba's public schools, I recommend to the members of the Legislature that there is no need to support this resolution. Therefore be it resolved that this resolution be defeated. Thank you very much.

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): Madam Speaker, it is a great opportunity to indeed speak upon this topic of Canadian history, although I feel that the resolution is one that is redundant because this particular government has seen wisdom, in fact, in enhancing this particular topic within our educational facilities here within the province.

I was slow to my feet, Madam Speaker, on the basis that I was reading from a history book that was prepared by members of our community putting to print our particularly colourful history that we have in Portage la Prairie. I think that one must appreciate that history is one of the elements that form our foundation to which we all can say who we are. We are indeed products of our environment, and our history is, in fact, that environment. I want to place on the record this afternoon my complete support for the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) in her endeavours to, in

fact, enhance and strengthen in our schools through the offering of history courses throughout the grades right through the S3 level.

I do believe that all of our children will benefit from history courses whether they will be specifically called history or through the components that are offered through geography or through social studies, elements of our very colourful history that are offered within the curriculum of those particular courses. I must say that I personally have benefited through our public education system that offered history that is very much part of, or relevant to, our province and our areas to where we have all had the opportunity to grow up here in Manitoba.

I must say that they are within one component of our geography and highlighted—my particular family and their struggle as immigrants here to Canada, how they broke the sod and, in fact, contributed to this province's very colourful history. It was through a lot of trial and hard work that this province has now benefited from those endeavours of not only our family but of others that went without, so that they could better this land that they now call home.

This history which I speak of is, in fact, one that offers us a lot of strength and can indeed—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurshou) will have 12 minutes remaining.

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Tuesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, May 11, 1998

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