



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, March 25, 1992

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Craig Gill, Vern Ducharme, Ramona Bias and others requesting the government show its strong commitment to dealing with child abuse by considering restoring the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Cindy Rebillard, Judy Trout, Candace Saunders and others requesting the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) call upon the Parliament of Canada to amend the Criminal Code to prevent the release of individuals where there is substantial likelihood of further family violence.

Mr. Jerry Storle (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Judith Clayden, Margaret Church, Sandra Skeoch and others requesting the government show its strong commitment to dealing with child abuse by considering restoring the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign.

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Karen Green, John Rempel, Herman Holschen and others requesting the government to show its strong commitment to dealing with child abuse by considering restoring the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

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

THAT the bail review provisions in the Criminal Code of Canada currently set out that accused offenders, including those suspected of conjugal or

family violence, be released unless it can be proven that the individual is a danger to society at large or it is likely that the accused person will not reappear in court; and

The problem of conjugal and family violence is a matter of grave concern for all Canadians and requires a multifaceted approach to ensure that those at risk, particularly women and children, be protected from further harm.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislature of the Province of Manitoba may be pleased to request that the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) call upon the Parliament of Canada to amend the Criminal Code of Canada to permit the courts to prevent the release of individuals where it is shown that there is a substantial likelihood of further conjugal or family violence being perpetrated. (Ms. Barrett)

* * *

I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member, and it complies with the privileges and practices of the House and complies with the rules (by leave). Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

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

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

It is the responsibility of the government to recognize and deal with this most vicious of crimes; and

Programs like the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign raise public awareness and necessary funds to deal with crime; and

The decision to terminate the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign will hamper the efforts of all good citizens to help abused children.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislature of the Province of Manitoba may be pleased to request that the government of Manitoba show a strong commitment to deal with Child Abuse

by considering restoring the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign. (Ms. Friesen)

* (1335)

I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member, and it complies with the privileges and practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

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WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislature of the Province of Manitoba may be pleased to request that the government of Manitoba show a strong commitment to deal with Child Abuse by considering restoring the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign. (Ms. Barrett)

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The decision to terminate the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign will hamper the efforts of all good citizens to help abused children.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislature of the Province of Manitoba may be pleased to request that the government of Manitoba show a strong commitment to deal with Child Abuse by considering restoring the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign. (Ms. Cerilli)

* * *

I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member, and it complies with the privileges and practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

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

THAT locally controlled public housing with elected and appointed board members encourages democratic and accountable decision making; and

Many housing authority boards included tenants on the board of directors; and

Volunteers serving on boards made worthwhile contributions to local housing authorities by serving their tenants, their community and in saving taxpayers' money; and

With no consultation, the provincial government fired 600 volunteer board members, abolished 98 local housing authorities, laid off staff and centralized purchasing and administration;

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislature of the Province of Manitoba may be pleased to request that the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ernst) consider reinstating local housing authorities with volunteer boards. (Ms. Wowchuck)

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the Second Report of the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs.

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

Your committee met on Tuesday, March 24, 1992, at 10 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building to consider the March 31, 1991, Annual Report of and matters pertaining to the North Portage Development Corporation.

Dr. Arnold Naimark, Chairperson of the Board, and Mr. Kent Smith, General Manager, provided

such information as was requested by members of the committee with respect to the annual report and business of the North Portage Development Corporation.

Your committee reports that it has considered the March 31, 1991, Annual Report of and matters pertaining to the North Portage Development Corporation.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

Mrs. Dacquay: I move, seconded by the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Subsection 43(1) of The Fatality Inquiries Act, I am tabling the Fatality Inquiries report for the year 1991.

* (1340)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 70—The Social Allowances Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), that Bill 70, The Social Allowances Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aide sociale et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois), be introduced 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 message.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 68—The Public Trustee Amendment, Trustee Amendment and Child and Family Services Amendment Act

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer), that Bill 68, The Public Trustee Amendment, Trustee Amendment and Child and Family Services Amendment Act (Loi

modifiant la Loi sur le curateur public, la Loi sur les fiduciaires et la Loi sur les services à l'enfant à la famille), be introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 71—The Retirement Plan Beneficiaries Act

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik), that Bill 71, The Retirement Plan Beneficiaries Act (Loi sur les bénéficiaires des régimes de retraite), be introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Department of Government Services RCMP Investigation - Leasing Branch

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, we have been raising questions about the leasing arrangements with 280 Broadway for a number of months now. Today we have the information provided in the warrant made public by the RCMP. The information confirms that it is indeed the director of leasing contract and expenditure control of the Manitoba Department of Government Services who is involved in the investigation by the RCMP. We are very concerned about answers we received in this House from the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme) last week wherein the Minister of Government Services stated that the department had no relationship in terms of this investigation, no relation to the landlord.

Mr. Speaker, information filed with the RCMP indicates that a million dollars was provided to the company 72398 of two partners, Mr. Shenkarow and Mr. Kozminski. That money in turn was paid to Bachman and Associates, which in fact is a company that is owned partially by Mr. Bachman and also by Mr. Shenkarow. So clearly there is a contradiction in the information that was provided by the government.

Would the Deputy Premier now confirm that in fact the landlord was involved in receipt of money, was involved in the receipt of the contract and did in turn flow money that eventually is in investigation with

the RCMP warrant that was tabled in the information today?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Acting Minister of Government Services): Mr. Speaker, I would take that question as notice on behalf of the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme) to ensure that a full and complete answer is provided to the member for the question asked.

Internal Audit - Leasing Branch

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, we are also very concerned on information contained within the audit that the date of cancellation of the original tender, according to the Premier (Mr. Filmon), was January 21, 1991. The Premier stated in this House in April of 1991 that Treasury Board had nothing to do with the cancellation of the tendering. It was the Department of Government Services that had cancelled the open-tendering process and went ahead with the closed-tendering process.

The RCMP in their affidavit and information in the warrant today state that the dates under investigation for the director of leasing of Government Services include dates of January 1, 1991, to December 11, 1991.

Given that the date of January 21 was the date on which the Premier alleges Government Services cancelled the open-tendering process, can the government advise us of what steps they have taken in terms of the investigation of the leasing arrangement with the director and the two parties who received the lease from the government?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Acting Minister of Government Services): Mr. Speaker, again I will take the question as notice on behalf of the minister to provide the appropriate information.

*(1345)

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, again the government stated, in questions we had last week in the Legislature, that the irregularities, the so-called irregularities which we had to raise in this House based on the RCMP raid two weeks ago, were not communicated publicly by the government. The so-called irregularities, the information they are looking at includes tendering documents and other documents pertaining to the original lease agreement.

Could the government advise us how they could possibly say that that had nothing to do with the original landlords and the original decision on 280 Broadway?

Mr. Ernst: Again, Mr. Speaker, I will take the question as notice.

North American Free Trade Agreement Government Action

Mr. Jerry Storie (Filn Flon): Mr. Speaker, members of this Chamber and perhaps Manitobans were surprised to learn in 1988, when we were discussing the Free Trade Agreement with the United States, that the Leader of the Opposition had not read the agreement.

Yesterday we found out that the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) has not read any of the documents relating to the North American free trade agreement. In addition, yesterday, the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) added another condition to the list of six conditions he now has tabled publicly under which he would support a North American free trade agreement.

My question to the Deputy Premier is: If the government proceeds, as it is apparent it is intending to do, to sign this agreement before an election some time late in 1993, how is the opposition that this government says it will proclaim, if these conditions are met, to manifest itself? What is the government going to do if the federal government continues to ignore the warnings of the Premier and members on this side?

Hon. James Downey (Deputy Premier): Mr. Speaker, as the member has made reference to me not having read the free trade agreement, it would be very difficult to read it when I in fact have not had a copy of it, which I indicated as well.

The additional comments and questions that the member has raised deal with the further involvement in any free trade agreement. We have clearly put our position forward as to the conditions that have to be met before there is any consideration of support by this government.

Mr. Storie: Well, Mr. Speaker, mindlessly opposing something without laying out a concrete plan of action so the people of Manitoba can judge whether you are really opposing it or paying lip service to opposing it, trying to absolve yourself of any responsibility for getting into this agreement, that is nonsense.

Mr. Speaker: Question, please.

Provincial Jurisdiction

Mr. Jerry Storle (Filn Flon): Mr. Speaker, my question is again to the Deputy Premier.

Can the minister explain why he has not taken time to read the documents that the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson) says are available to him, which explain the apparent giving away of provincial jurisdiction over trucking, energy policy, industrial development policy and health care? Can he explain why he has not read the document when those provincial jurisdictions are at risk under this agreement?

Hon. James Downey (Deputy Premier): Mr. Speaker, the member well knows that there are different ministerial responsibilities within government. What I indicated to him is that I have not read the trade agreement that is being proposed because I have not seen a copy of it. He makes reference to the fact that the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson) has it. I am not debating that. What I am telling him is that I have not read it because I have not seen it.

Election Call

Mr. Jerry Storle (Filn Flon): Mr. Speaker, one final question to the Deputy Premier.

Will the Deputy Premier undertake today for the people of Manitoba the premise that if this agreement proceeds as it is going to proceed with the federal government ramming it down our throat, despite the opposition supposedly expressed by the Premier (Mr. Filmon), we will demand an election be called before Canadians and Manitobans are subjected to the implications in this agreement?

Hon. James Downey (Deputy Premier): Mr. Speaker, it is the intention of this government to act responsibly as it relates to trade within Canada to break down some of the trade barriers that are internal in this country between provinces. It is our responsibility as a government to make sure the people of this province are correctly and truly represented in their interest as it relates to any trade deal. We are not going to in any way compromise those people who depend on us in a responsible way to represent them.

* (1350)

Judicial System Court Transcription Service

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. On January 4, 1991, 14 months ago, a memo from the minister's department said with respect to the new court reporter machines being brought in, and I quote: "Every new system requires a start-up period."

"We should have a smoother, more efficient system in place shortly. It is clear that a new system could be developed that would lower overall costs while retaining the benefits of such advanced systems. We will be striving to achieve this goal over the next year."

I want to table a copy of that memo, Mr. Speaker. It has now been more than a year since that memo and since the minister made that commitment. Thanks to the minister's actions, it now takes weeks instead of days in northern Manitoba to get transcripts, even expedited ones which used to be available on an overnight basis, and while two court reporters in The Pas sit idle, the Crown is bringing in court reporters from Winnipeg to do local trials.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is: Will the minister today table evidence, if he has it, to substantiate his claim that court reporter machines instead of people in northern Manitoba are more accurate, more efficient or more cost effective in the delivery of justice?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I will bring the specifics of the matter raised by the honourable member today to the attention of officials in my department and ascertain if there is any truth to the preamble of the honourable member's question, and if there is, deal with the matter, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, again for the Minister of Justice.

Can the minister explain why on March 19, last Thursday, in Thompson, Judge Howell, when he asked to see a transcript of a preliminary hearing in a sexual assault case, had to be told that the machine had not been working in Lynn Lake during the preliminary hearing and that the victim in the case of that sexual assault would have to go through that hearing and face her assailant a second time needlessly because the machine was broken and nobody knew it during the entire course of the

preliminary hearing? Where was the smoother, more efficient system in that case?

Mr. McCrae: I remind the honourable member that there were tape recordings of court trials in Manitoba prior to the changes announced last year. Human error is an element in reporting no matter which system you use. I would regret very much if an error occurred that caused somebody involved as a victim in an assault case or a sexual assault case to be inconvenienced. As with the previous question, Mr. Speaker, I will bring this matter to the attention of my department and obtain a response for the honourable member.

Mr. Edwards: The fact is that northerners are receiving, at the hands of this minister, second-class justice.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister further tell members why Judge Gregoire had to send a plane back to Thompson from Oxford House to get a new machine because the one they brought broke, and why two weeks ago at a trial on a charge of drunken driving, a matter dear to this minister's heart, not one but two monitors broke, meaning that one trial started at 4:30 p.m. and the other at 8:30 p.m., resulting in all staff getting overtime pay after sitting for a day while waiting for the third machine to arrive?

Where was the smoother more efficient system, Mr. Speaker, and why is this minister unaware of the regular—

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

Mr. McCrae: I appreciate the honourable member is attempting to be helpful, Mr. Speaker, and help us to ensure that whatever wrinkles there are in the system are ironed out. I am sure that the honourable member will also want to be helpful in asking his colleagues in the bar to co-operate and not carry forward on threats to slow down the justice system.

Home Care Program Privatization

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health.

Each day we hear this government saying they are increasing spending in home care. I find this statement very questionable in light of a letter that has been sent to a family of a client receiving home care, a letter which I would like to table.

The letter states that household maintenance will be cut, and I quote: "Would you then be able to help your mother find someone to hire privately to assist?"

In light of this letter, Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the minister: Is he privatizing the home care service, thus those who have money will be able to have service and the poor will continue to suffer or end up in hospitals?

* (1355)

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Unequivocally, no, Mr. Speaker.

Service Reduction

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, the letter goes on to say that changing beds and laundry will be cancelled. These tasks need only be done once or twice a week.

I want to ask the minister: Does he feel that cleanliness is not part of staying healthy? How can he allow his staff to take away services, such vital services, from our seniors, particularly people—

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

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated to my honourable friend when she raised this issue some month ago, and last week and probably next week and probably the week after, there is a process of reassessment in the Continuing Care Program. That process of reassessment has been part of the program since 1974 through successive governments that have administered the program. That reassessment is undertaken by professionals. They make the judgment as to whether services are appropriate, need to be increased or can be decreased.

Based on that professional assessment, services are either maintained, increased or decreased. In the areas where they are decreased, my honourable friends receive letters. In the areas where they are increased or maintained, my honourable friend does not receive any letters.

Mr. Speaker, the application of reassessment of the principles and policies of the program have remained consistent through four successive governments since 1974.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, the letter says—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member has tabled the letter. The honourable member, kindly put your question, please.

Ms. Wowchuk: To the same minister: Has he changed the mandate for delivery of home care services? Has housekeeping service, which was an essential part of the health care environment up until now, been removed, and has the mandate of his department been changed for the delivery of home care service?

Mr. Orchard: Again, Mr. Speaker, no. That is what I told my honourable friend in conversation last week. That is identically the policy that my honourable friend had since 1974. Let me even further explain for my honourable friend because my honourable friend fails to understand the policies put in place in 1974. I do not need to remind you who was government in 1974.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, in 1985 the government in power, and I need not remind you who that was, established a program called Support Services to Seniors which funded in the communities the salaried cost of a volunteer co-ordinator. That volunteer co-ordinator was to work with community organizations, groups and volunteers to establish housecleaning services, home maintenance services, laundry services that the individuals in the community could access rather than have those services always provided by the taxpayers, a policy of the NDP that we happen to agree with.

Endangered Spaces Tall Grass Prairie Program

Ms. Marianne Cerlill (Radlsson): Mr. Speaker, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) made a promise in the last election to spend some \$250,000 to protect Manitoba's tall grass prairie. They also made a commitment to the Endangered Spaces Program. In the report from the last year in the Endangered Spaces Program, there was a further commitment to purchase 640 acres of tall grass prairie by May 1992.

My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. Is the 20-hectare site near Regent and Bradley Street part of this tall grass prairie program?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, I am aware of the site that the honourable member refers to. It is being actively considered as part of the overall acquisition

of tall grass prairie sites in our Endangered Spaces Program, and hopefully, something can be arranged. I understand that there are still some negotiations that have to take place with the city administration with respect to proceeding with that at this time.

Ms. Cerlill: I thank the minister for that answer.

Considering this program to purchase 640 acres when there is only a month left, can the minister inform the House how much of this area has been set aside to be purchased?

Mr. Enns: I am assuming that she is now talking about the overall commitment of 640 acres.

Mr. Speaker, I think the honourable members would appreciate that it is difficult to be precise. We are working with organizations such as the Manitoba Naturalists Society. We were able to acquire some substantial acreage in the southeast portion of the province, in that of my honourable friend from Emerson.

It is my hope and certainly my commitment and that of this government that we live up to the commitments made. Whether we will be able to do that categorically on calendar dates is not entirely in my hands. It also calls upon the co-operation of nongovernmental agencies, landowners and/or other jurisdictions, as is the specific site that she mentioned in the Transcona region.

* (1400)

Endangered Spaces Tall Grass Prairie Program

Ms. Marianne Cerlill (Radlsson): My final supplementary on the same issue is for the Minister of Environment.

Will the Minister of Environment make a commitment to have the Clean Environment Commission, not another body, conduct a full environment assessment on any construction by the city to put a thoroughfare through the Regent and Bradley Street prairie site?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, I am aware of that site and aware of the issue that surrounds the protection of that historic prairie grass, but I do not believe that at this juncture I am convinced that bringing the Clean Environment Commission in would be beneficial to the process. I am not eliminating any possibilities, but at this point, that is not my intent.

Rent Regulations Enforcement

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

A few weeks ago we raised the issue of tenants paying higher rent than normally allowed by the law. The minister said that she could do nothing because the illegal increase was implemented under the former landlord. There are two parties who have been victimized, the new tenants and the new landlord. Can the minister tell this House why she sides with the previous landlord, why she is abandoning the tenants and also the new landlord, and why is she not upholding her own law?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for The Maples for the question. As the member knows, and we have discussed this before, the problem with this particular situation is the interpretation of a section of the act which indicates that for a two-year period prior to a change in ownership, the new owner can be held responsible for actions taken, but prior to that period, he cannot.

Legal opinion that we have obtained on this issue indicates that there is nothing further that can be done.

Legal Opinion Request

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, can the minister table the legal opinion in this House, please?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I do not have that legal opinion here with me, but I do believe that the individual who contacted my department on this issue has been sent a copy of the legal opinion.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell this House why she would not table the legal opinion? The minister has known the issue for four weeks. Why will we not have that report so that we can make a judgment call also?

Mrs. McIntosh: I have not been asked until this point for the actual legal opinion wording. I have given the legal opinion; I have explained the legal opinion. I understand that the individual whom the member is raising the issue for has a copy of the legal opinion and in fact is a lawyer himself.

Home Care Program Service Reduction

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, I would like to pursue the issue of home care with the Minister of Health since he has failed to recognize the importance of this letter that has been tabled by my colleague the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk).

Clearly this letter marks a change in policy, the end to universal access to quality home care services. Mr. Speaker, that is the beginning of the end of universal medicare services, something that this minister says he supports, and he is not supporting, a clear indication of this government's true feelings about medicare.

Why, Mr. Speaker, has this government suddenly denied people whose medical circumstances have not changed, who are well on in their years, 80 and 90 years old, who were dependent upon homemaking services, to stay in their homes and out of costly institutional care? Why has this government changed that policy, taken away that vital service and told them to go—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, at the risk of my honourable friend's—what is the phraseology?—shouting and yelling about an issue, my honourable friend might want to revisit (a) the policy which founded and underpinned the Continuing Care Program in 1974. My honourable friend will find out, should she choose to read that policy, two things: that it has not changed since 1974; and secondly, that the policies around the application of the home care rules, procedures, have not changed since 1974 through four successive governments.

Secondly, my honourable friend might want to research the cabinet papers that were passed, establishing the program called Support Services to Seniors, while my honourable friend, I believe, was in the Howard Pawley cabinet making those kinds of decisions. My honourable friend will find that the Support Services to Seniors program was established through, as I explained in an earlier answer, funding for the retention of a volunteer co-ordinator so that services such as homemaking and other nonmedical services could be provided through not-for-profit service delivery in the community to help as an additional instrument of independent living for seniors, established under

good policy by my NDP friend, consistently applied today.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: I would simply like this Minister of Health to account for this dramatic shift in health care policy where they have now ended a universally accessible program and expect senior citizens who need this service to turn to private entrepreneurs to purchase those necessary health care services.

* (1410)

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, at the risk of raising my voice and delivering an inappropriate and alarmist-motivated answer, I will be calm as my honourable friend shrilly denounces and announces the end of universal medicare—such silliness, such abject silliness.

Mr. Speaker, the medical services that my honourable friend refers to are house cleaning, the very services that in 1984, 1985, when she sat in government, supported a program called Support Services to Seniors to undertake at not-for-profit in the communities. Charging the people who used the program in 1985, when she was in government, for house cleaning has been maintained. We believe that policy initiative of the NDP in 1984-85 was a good one, and in fact, we are building on it again this year.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Speaker, there is nothing in this letter to say—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for St. Johns, put your question now, please.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Is the minister now saying that homemaking services, once considered an essential part of our home care program, universally accessible to all regardless of income, or geography, or status in life, is he now saying that this is the end of that important part of home care and our health care system and that in fact seniors must turn to private entrepreneurs and, if they cannot afford it, either will do without, or end up in expensive, costly institutional care?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, one of the strangest phenomena that I have witnessed in the four years I have been Minister of Health is the convoluted twisting-and-turning-around policy initiatives that the NDP, when in government, brought in, introduced an alternate mechanism for home cleaning services, so that the program as

supplied by the taxpayers would not be called on to provide house cleaning services—a perfectly common-sense approach to policy development by Howard Pawley, the NDP and assisted by this member.

Now when the wisdom of their action in government is being questioned by the critic in opposition, where is the NDP coming from? I mean, that program of Support Services to Seniors that is introduced after being researched and recommended by very, very competent individuals in the ministry of Health, who are still there—and that policy is one of the best ones in Canada; other provinces are emulating it.

Now my honourable friends want to turn their back on good public policy that even they had the common sense to bring in. I find that shameful.

North American Free Trade Agreement Impact Agricultural Industry

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) for Manitoba has been at best lukewarm in his support for supply management commodities in this province and production under supply management in any GATT agreement. He refused to sign an agreement that was put forward by the dairy producers of Canada.

At the same time the federal government is mouthing lukewarm support, their actions shine through insofar as the North American free trade agreement when they use the tariffication proposal, which would be so harmful to Canadian farmers, as the basis for their position on agriculture. They say tariff equivalents, and I quote: resulting from the conversion of nontariff barriers into customs tariff rates shall be reduced in accordance with the schedules relating to each party, incorporated into the general agreement on tariffs and trade Uruguay round.

That is the position they put forward in that agreement. That means the end of orderly marketing.

I ask this Deputy Premier what representation he has made or he intends to make to stop this damaging position by Canada with regard to the North American free trade agreement.

Hon. James Downey (Deputy Premier): Mr. Speaker, I am confident that the provincial Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) and this government have represented the farm community responsibly

as it relates to the issue which the member raises and will continue to do so.

I can tell you there is constant contact and consultation with the agricultural community, with the farm community, which I believe is truly reflecting the interests of Manitoba farmers.

Mr. Plohman: He puts his confidence in Mulroney, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that Mexico has asked for specific provisions in the North American free trade agreement, specific provisions to protect their producers, will this Deputy Premier now insist that the federal government abandon its tariffication proposal, which is an American proposal harmful to Canada, and do the same thing that Mexico is doing with regard to any North American agreement and ensure that Canadian producers can be protected under the North American free trade agreement, not reject it as they are doing?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, again let me reiterate for the members opposite. This government is continuing to carry out policies and put forward our position in the interests of the farmers of Manitoba as it relates to GATT, as it relates to the North American free trade agreement. We have listed our conditions and will not support it unless the interests of those producers are protected.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, since the Deputy Premier does not understand this agreement—he has not read it, by his own admission—will he just use good common sense and call upon the federal government to end this damaging process which will do irreparable harm to Canada and Manitoba's farmers?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that the best interests of Manitobans will continue to be put forward, unlike the track record of him and his government when he was in office that devastated this province, that devastated the agricultural community and devastated the ability for this province to compete in the international marketplace.

Education System Transportation Report

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Education.

Manitoba has long been recognized as having one of the best bus transportation systems on the North American continent. Despite the attempts of

the former minister to try to privatize portions of that system, it still remains one of the best.

Can the minister advise whether or not the bus transportation privatization study, undertaken by the former minister at a cost of half a million dollars, has been submitted to her? It was scheduled to be submitted by the end of last month.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, there was in fact a study being done on transportation, and it did develop a number of issues which it was examining. They have not submitted the report to me at this time.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister indicate whether or not she has been given any indication when this study will be submitted and whether or not she will make it public?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, I am encouraging that committee to do its work very carefully. With seriousness, I would like to have a report that is going to be very helpful to my department, to this government, to the people of Manitoba. I expect that report as soon as possible.

Health Care System Cataract Surgery

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Health.

I have a constituent who has been nearly totally blind since July of 1991 and therefore cannot work or function around the house, resulting in considerable hardship for himself and his wife. He has been on a waiting list since October of 1991, and it now seems that he is going to have to wait yet another year, Mr. Speaker, before he can have his cataracts removed at the Brandon General Hospital.

I would like to ask the Minister of Health: How can we truly say that we have an accessible universal medicare system if citizens have to wait more than a year, in this case about a year and a half, for this type of surgery?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend might be interested in knowing—and I do not have the numbers in front of me, but I will certainly make them available to him—that in 1987-88 or thereabouts, and the timing was prior to us coming into government, I believe the figures are that the government of the day funded some 2,400 cataract surgeries per year.

Currently, we expect to approach 4,400 cataract surgeries per year. One can acknowledge that is a fairly significant increase in the cataract surgery program.

Now, Mr. Speaker, individual physicians, ophthalmologists, maintain their waiting lists, and they prioritize them so that individuals most urgently in need of the procedure are advanced on the list. I would be pleased to take the details of this individual's case for my honourable friend and find out whether there are specific reasons around this placement on the waiting list, Sir.

Mr. Evans: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister—I appreciate his offer. What are people on modest incomes in this province supposed to do when they cannot afford to pay the thousands of dollars that are usually required in these private clinics and, as in this case, where the family income is \$600 a month?

*(1420)

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly why we have medicare where there are no costs for those procedures. If my honourable friend wishes to provide me with the details of this particular individual circumstance, I will be more than pleased to investigate it and provide my honourable friend and his constituent with whatever information I can ascertain around the circumstances that he brings to the House.

North American Free Trade Agreement Information Tabling Request

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Deputy Premier again.

Earlier this morning, the Deputy Premier acknowledged that he had not read the North American free trade agreement even though the draft agreements are available in the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism's (Mr. Stefanson) office.

My question to the Deputy Premier is: Will he now access those documents and have some of the front bench read them and perhaps as a courtesy also provide all of the documents that this government has on the North American free trade agreement, provide them to members of the opposition, both parties on this side, so that at least we may be well informed about the implications of this agreement?

Hon. James Downey (Deputy Premier): Mr. Speaker, as the member well knows, this particular issue is being handled by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism. I can assure him that the minister will comment, answer his questions on his return to this Legislative Assembly and answer any of the questions that he has to deal with at that time.

Mr. Speaker: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

Nonpolitical Statements

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): May I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable minister have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? Leave? Agreed.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, over the past few days, we have seen several honourable members in the Chamber rise to congratulate teams and individuals for achieving national and provincial championship status.

Today, Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to congratulate two hockey teams from my constituency for achieving the provincial championship status. First of all, I would like to congratulate the Russell-Roblin Barley Kings Bantam team and their coaching staff, I might say, for winning the provincial gold medal in their category in Lundar.

Secondly, I would like to congratulate the Russell Peewee hockey team and their coaches for winning the provincial championship status in their category.

Mr. Speaker, this has been an excellent year in hockey in my community, and we have had three provincial championship teams. I would like to congratulate all the coaching staff, the players and indeed the constituency and the community for their effort, their commitment and indeed this noteworthy accomplishment. Thank you very much.

* * *

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Might I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable minister have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? Leave? Agreed.

Mr. Ashton: Today is a significant day for Greeks throughout the world. It marks the anniversary of

the independence of Greece. I would like to say a few words in Greek, Mr. Speaker, if that is agreeable to members.

Mr. Speaker: As long as the honourable member provides translation.

Mr. Ashton: I am sure the Minister of Urban Affairs will be listening intently.

[Greek spoken]

[Translation]

Today is a significant day for Greeks throughout the world. It marks the anniversary of the independence of Greece.

Last Saturday, I was pleased to join with Minister Jim Ernst, Councillor Peter Diamant, president of the Greek community of Winnipeg Charles Hatzipanayis, and members of the Greek community in Manitoba to celebrate the 25th of March.

On behalf of all members of the Legislature, I would like to recognize the importance of today which represents so much about the freedom and independence of Greece and Greeks throughout the world.

[English]

Mr. Speaker, in English, long live the 25th of March, 1821. Long live the Greeks of the world.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would ask the honourable member for Thompson to provide translation to Hansard. You will provide translation to Hansard, please, later? Thank you.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Urban Affairs): May I have leave for a nonpolitical statement?

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable minister have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? Leave? Agreed.

Mr. Ernst: Mr. Speaker, firstly, I want to offer my congratulations to the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) on a stirring speech.

On Saturday evening last, Mr. Speaker, in celebration with the Greek community of March 25, the liberation of Greece from 400 years of Turkish rule, the member for Thompson and I had an opportunity to attend where we did participate in the celebration of that with the Greek community. The member for Thompson's wife, I understand, was born in Greece, and as such, she has obviously been teaching him well, no matter how difficult it

might be. Nonetheless, I too want to join in commemorating that very significant anniversary. Thank you.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Might I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for Emerson have leave?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave. It is agreed.

Mr. Penner: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to congratulate a team of girls, a basketball team that is home to the smallest school district in this province, namely, the Sprague Consolidated School District. This young team of girls won the AA provincial basketball finals last week. In doing so, they defeated the eight teams competing in the finals. They were made up of Neepawa, Western, Boissevain, Sprague, Roblin, Killarney, Lorette and Carman. The girls won all of the games played and therefore became the AA champions.

This is, I believe, quite an outstanding accomplishment for this school. There are only 17 girls in this school, and eight of them make up the basketball team. I think these girls, their principal and the school need to be congratulated for having the heart to play, first of all, to form a team and having the courage to go out and compete and win the AA championship in the province of Manitoba.

* (1430)

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Darren Praznik (Deputy Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, with reference to Orders of the Day, we would like, I understand, to continue with Interim Supply. If that is completed during the time for regular business, then we would ask to call for second reading of Bill 64 and followed for continuation of debate on second reading in this order: Bills 53, 12, 14 and 48.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 67—The Interim Appropriation Act, 1992

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), Bill

67, The Interim Appropriation Act, 1992, Loi de 1992 portant affectation anticipée de crédits, standing in the name of the honourable member for Inkster who has two minutes remaining.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I ended yesterday talking about heritage and the role that the Manitoba Heritage Federation will have to play in the future with the government.

I want to start off, because I only have a very short period of time this afternoon, with the letter that was sent to me from the Manitoba Intercultural Council, or that was faxed to me. I wanted for the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mrs. Mitchelson) more so to take it as notice, so that when we enter into the committee stage of Interim Supply that I will be asking extensively regarding some of the questions in regard to what actions the minister is taking on this particular report.

I wanted to cite very quickly the one paragraph, Mr. Speaker, because it basically says a lot in terms of what I tried to raise yesterday in the House. It reads, MIC in the letter to the Honourable Bonnie Mitchelson, Minister responsible for Multicultural Affairs, encourage her to do everything in her power to help MLAs become more sensitive to all segments and cultural groups in Manitoba communities. In the past, the MIC has recommended training in cross-cultural sensitivity for all elected officials.

Mr. Speaker, what that does is it reinforces the need inside this Chamber to have that cross-cultural made available for every member of this Legislative Chamber. That is how I wanted to end off my speech on Interim Supply and encourage the minister to think between now and whenever we do go into the committee stage as to when she would bring forward that cross-cultural course for the MLAs in this Chamber.

I would encourage her to in fact bring forward a date as opposed to have to put it off indefinitely or leaving an open-ended situation in which it could be two, three, four, five, six months or who knows when. I really encourage the minister to come forward with a day set for the MLAs of this Chamber.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to participate in this debate. I have a very serious concern and I want to share it with the members of this House, in keeping in the spirit with the budget and the people.

The dignity of an individual and a person, whether that person is an MLA or an ordinary person in this province of ours, I think that is the issue here. Whatever we do in this House, whatever the government does, that message has to be to help people whether financially to continue with their lives and also to make sure that their dignity and their rights are protected. Mr. Speaker, we are here to protect people, not to undermine any specific group or any specific person.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken on the budget, and I made it very clear that there are a lot of good things in this budget, many good things. I was very disappointed, and I thought that if I do not speak then it could be taken that I am complying with what the member for Rossmore (Mr. Neufeld) has said in this House. When we talk about the freedom of speech, the freedom of right, I think we have to make sure that my freedom of speech does not cause a pain for others who cannot defend for themselves. Mr. Speaker, that is the issue, whether we can talk about the budget of this government or as the elected officials in this House. I am not accusing a particular party here. I want to make it very clear.

The Premier (Mr. Filmon) made it very clear that is not the policy of this administration, but as a symbol we are sending signals which are not positive, and they are not positive in the sense that they are harming individuals emotionally and not making them productive citizens of this province. I think that is the issue, whether we are going to treat people equally, whether we are going to treat them as mere symbols or we are going to give them the real rights, and the real rights must have some meaning attached to that.

Mr. Speaker, I was very disappointed. One can draw a lot of conclusions if you are making a statement once. It could be a slip of the tongue or it could be simply a mistake, but when you repeat over a period of time and when you do it on a voluntary basis there has to be something which is underneath which is causing such a disruption in an individual's mind, that person can become not very realistic.

(Mrs. Louise Dacquay, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair)

If a particular member in this House wants to have those things put on the record and wants to defend those kinds of things, I think that individual, whether of any party, they should tell the voters at that time.

I do not think we can take a privileged position and attack people, and not only one group but attack even the basis of our society, the equality on the basis of sex even, Madam Deputy Speaker. That has even been attacked in this budget. I was very sad. That is why I am replying, otherwise I would have not.

Madam Deputy Speaker, if you do not raise your concerns—whether that will change an individual we do not know, but at least if we can convince that person without an argument, that we can tell that person, please, whatever you say you should have total background information. We cannot focus on one area and say, well, that is my belief and I am going to impose on somebody else.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the province is different than what an individual member thinks. It is not a question of colour and race. It is a question of people of all races and all colours and all backgrounds and all beliefs and all philosophies. If the government or a member of the government or an individual member is going to send those signals, they are not making best use of people in this province. It is very dangerous.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I have been in this House for almost four years, and the kind of respect and the kind of understanding I have with all the members is unheard—it is a very good understanding. I want to continue that kind of understanding, and convince, if somebody has not changed I can try and sit down with that person and try to explain.

The Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mrs. Mitchelson) has done exceptionally well. If you go outside the community, the message is very, very positive. I want to be very clear on those things. I am not accusing any particular party here. I am just simply making a case that there must be some kind of mechanism that people who are not in this Chamber they have the right to come and ask a particular individual why that kind of freedom of speech is having implications on somebody who cannot defend herself or himself. Attacking the major policy of his own government in terms of affirmative action or pay equity, saying it is one of the stupidest things in the whole world, that is a bizarre statement, because that does not fly with the common sense of individuals.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it is very, very frightening when people in this House are making

these kinds of statements. It was not that somebody was forcing somebody's arm or twisting somebody's arm, it was done on a voluntary basis. That even makes it worse.

Madam Deputy Speaker, many members of this House have been to many ethnic organizations' committee meetings. They have been well received. They are given their due respect. They are doing whatever is possible within their means, but when one person does certain things, I think it does not send the right message. For me to just accept it and not say anything, I think I would be showing a weakness, and I do not want to do that. I want to make it very clear that this government should tell its members that that kind of behaviour is not acceptable.

Some editorial board will write that freedom of speech is well in this country, but any freedom of speech which is going to be freedom of pain for somebody else is not freedom of speech.

* (1440)

Madam Deputy Speaker, the kind of work the ethnic organizations have done and the ethnic backgrounds like Ukrainians, Jews, you name it, every ethnic background, every person is ethnic other than the aboriginal people of this country. So that means that the member is attacking even the existence of each and every member? That is not the case.

I think each and every individual, I do not think there is a question of colour anymore, it is a question of a person making sure that you are not attacking the person on a basis which may or may not be under his control. I do not think we have the right to change how an individual lives, as long as people are following the laws of this land.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it is very, very sad that I have to speak on this issue today. I think every member was talking on our behalf. It is not only me here, we are talking about 1.13 million people, people who watch the TV and have a look at that kind of message that was given outside the House about the button. The message was, I do not care about the button, it is up all in here.

That kind of image on students is very dangerous. They want to learn good things, and if we are going to set the standard as an elected official, whether through the budget or our bills, our laws have to be set in the tone of individual rights. I must say that whenever I go and meet with all individuals, and I

am not working for a specific group, we all work for each and every person. I think if we continue to do that, I think we will do a good service, and we can make the best use of each and every person to their best capability.

People in this province are not going to disappear. They are going to be here. As long as we can continue to work with them, all of them, we can achieve what is the goal of this government, and the goal is a very noble one. The goal is to have a prosperous and peaceful life. How can that kind of life be achieved if we have this kind of statement, which is causing us damage?

If somebody was saying outside this House on the street or in their house, we can say, well, maybe the person is not well informed, but a minister of Crown, who was a minister of Crown, and then a member of this House, has said those things—very, very sad.

I had a private discussion with him, Madam Deputy Speaker, tried to convince him, but I am not going to quote some private discussion because that is not fair. I will say what I have read on the record, what I have seen on the TV, and whatever message has gone across. It is very sad, very dangerous, and I think people should realize that this kind of behaviour will not be tolerated. I do not think we can try to differentiate individuals on the basis of a specific direction. You have to give whatever—as a government you can try to provide atmosphere. Nobody is asking for handouts. Nobody is asking to give them jobs, and he said that we are putting individuals on affirmative action who are not qualified. That simply is nonsense. That is not true.

People who get jobs on those kinds of policies, they have to work harder because they have even justified even though normally they do not and they should not. That is very wrong, and I am so glad that member is not a minister of this Crown.

Madam Deputy Speaker in my four-year term I have never raised an issue about any minister, because I know all of them. They are the best we can have in this province. They are giving the best time of their life to build this province, but even if one person does something it does reflect, the same as with a family. If one member of the family is doing something wrong it reflects on the whole family. We are talking about the whole society. We are not talking about one person.

That is why when in the 1990 Meech Lake debate, when some individuals in Quebec were saying that Manitoba has a different attitude—and I said on that debate, that is not true when they were the first one in this country to elect a first generation Canadian, that was me, Madam Deputy Speaker. I think that was a very good statement. That is why we have to defend those rights, and we have to defend the perception and integrity of this House. So I would like the members of this House to work together and educate and re-educate each other, and learn, because behaviour is what we learn. If we do not learn that way, we are not doing a service. We are teaching children, our family members, our friends, a very bad attitude, and that is not helpful for society.

I think we should forget about what is going to happen to a specific group, whether the uniform of the RCMP has changed or not. I do not want to go into that history, because I do not know the history fully, but members should know that the people with the turban did serve in the Second World War hand in hand with the army of this country. They did. That issue was very well explained. It was very well solved by members raising this issue in this House.

In trying to feed on the emotion of poverty and economic despair we see today, if you want to fuel any kind of anger, when they are down, kick them. No, we have so many unemployed people, and when you tell them something like this, you are giving them a wrong direction. Telling them, go and attack these people. Ask them the question, why are you working, why am I not working? It is basically a divide-and-rule policy, and I hope that that is not the intention of that member.

It is very sad that in four years' time we cannot convince each other that people are equal. It is very simple, you do not need a 50 percent vote to win. You can go outside and work for the 34 percent of the people and win. But that is not the issue. When you come into this House, you work for each and every person.

I know at my heart that I have never, never raised an issue when it is not required, when it is not justifiable. I have done it on a nonpolitical basis, and will continue to do so. That is not my nature because I think people in this House, on the government side, as I have said, are decent individuals.

No question about that. They have families, they have values, they are working for all of us, and they

work very hard. That is why I have said many times that it is a shame to see that these people who have given their life, and when people who do not understand the type of job, they raise questions, because we are giving them platform to do exactly what they want to do.

Madam Deputy Speaker, what is the conscience of our country or your country or my country or somebody else's country? It is basically a country of people. If you cannot make happy the individual who lives in the country, how can you call it a country? What is happening with the Constitution? These kinds of remarks do not help us at all.

You are taking advantage of poor, innocent, uneducated and now unemployed, and the economic poverty. You go on TV and make your remarks. The only party that can do it may be the Reform Party. That kind of attitude does exist, but now they are also learning, they are changing, because they know that to get their way, the way they want to go, they still need a consensus.

I know every party's policies are changing and that is positive, if we can change even them. But, if anybody thinks that any one of the members, including this side or that side, is going to accept behaviour like this, I think we are dreaming. I mean, individuals read these things; people are not stupid; they understand. They may not say something, but eventually they will come after you because you are not doing your job properly.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that is why I said in the beginning of my budget speech last week that government has done a number of good things. But, to keep the confidence of people, they have to have the actual moral confidence rather than the electoral confidence which is a very, very delicate.

Democracy is very delicate. One can abuse it very easily. I think this is abuse of democracy when you are talking about the freedom of speech, but at the same time trying to do harm to people when they are not here to defend themselves. Why do they not go outside and accuse somebody in the gatherings, and do it on the election platform? Then people can make an informed choice. Then it is a different thing.

* (1450)

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) said in 1988 and in a very decent way, we will accept. We were so happy, so were the NDP Leader, Mr. Doer,

and, of course, Mrs. Carstairs. It was a very positive, uniform approach to a very delicate issue, and in a very delicate time. Now things are changing back because we see the Reform Party is preaching something which an individual may like. Why do they not join the Reform Party and drum for themselves rather than sit in this House and do something and say something which is not true to their own philosophy, whether you are a party member or you are a member of this House or you are not?

If you are going to vote for the budget, then say it, that you are voting for the budget, on all the aspects of the budget. I said that I liked a few things in the budget, and I would like to see more things, but when I read these comments, on a voluntary basis—I am not accusing anyone, any party. I want to make that very clear. I have said it many times. I am not going to make political hay out of this nonsense, but I want to express my wishes. I want to express in a very meaningful way that this kind of behaviour is not acceptable.

I am not raising a specific policy of the government in terms of what you are doing financially. I am talking about a moral obligation of the provincial government. If the member does not like it, then he should say so.

It is very, very sad that rather than to work in a consensus, we are working in opposite directions. These kinds of things are going to come in that debate on the Constitution in a few months. We are all going to talk about those things. Then I think we will see whether all of us are working for all people or working for a special group of people. It is not that easy.

I said from the beginning that, as a member of a visible minority, the kind of reception I got in this House is unmatched in this country. I said it and I will say it all the time. What I am saying simply is, I want to make sure that people would notice that if something goes wrong, we must raise our voice, otherwise we are accepting those things. Whether we can change it or not, that is a different question, because what we can change—our children, we can teach them, but if they are going to watch this kind of behaviour, it will not change.

When you go in the schools and when we see schools coming here in this building, and you see the make-up of the schools, Manitoba is reflected very well on those pictures. You see black, brown,

yellow, every kind of colour. You see every kind of background. So if these children can be together, why cannot the adults? It is very simple, but it is the attitude, the learned behaviour.

To say every time, well, I worked hard—well, who does not work hard? Tell me, Madam Deputy Speaker. Everyone works hard and to the best of their capabilities. Some individuals have a good environment, some may not, but we have the responsibility to provide the adequate environment from a provincial level, and I think providing the moral rights and the good environment is a part of growing in a community and in the nation. I do not think one can separate a person from the growth of an economy or an individual or a healthy environment. All these things are all mixed together. The person is in the middle and everything affects that person. So I was disappointed not only with the comment, but also the editorial that freedom of speech is alive.

Madam Deputy Speaker, today when the MIC had issued a press release and asking us to learn, and do we not learn? We learn all throughout life. We learn about each and every aspect of life. Why can we not learn about basic human nature and basic behaviour? That is unbelievable.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I sincerely hope the government will have a good talk with the member about pay equity, about affirmative action and also about the quality of life they want to provide for all people. I just want to know, how much time do I have left? [interjection]

Madam Deputy Speaker, I have attended some functions with the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik). The Minister of Labour is one of the best speakers when he goes into ethnic communities, and everyone knows it. So I would ask him to do something and teach the members of his caucus and try to convince them in a meaningful way and explain to them about his roots, the roots of everyone.

Like today, the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) spoke in the Greek language, a very positive thing. Every day we stand up in this House in nonpolitical statements to cater towards what we feel is right, but when it comes to the real sense, I think we have to convey the real message.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I hope that we can continue as members of this Assembly to build on the best among people and achieve what is best for

all of us, best for the taxpayers. But if you are going to be very selective on the basis of your own preconceived ideas, I think you are failing everyone in this House. I do not think anyone really feels proud when they have to answer those questions. Because people who are members of this House who have to represent the city ridings have to face more questions because the mix is different. Naturally, there is more exposure there, but I am sure the members in the rural communities have to face the same problems.

I will tell you, Madam Deputy Speaker, we have friends, each and every Canadian, I represent all of them, 12,000, 14,000, the same as I think everyone does. But it is very sad when we see that kind of behaviour is being tolerated, and I hope that the next time in the election of Rossmere somebody will stand up and say to that individual, you put your things on the record right now. If you are going to run on my banner, on my party's banner, then you follow my philosophy, otherwise, get out. I think that is the time we would like to see that.

I think now is the 10-member majority, one-member majority, we understand. We do not want to precipitate things, and we do not want the advantage also because it is a very difficult time for people. We have to make sure they get the best. I will not and no one else in this House will tolerate childish, irresponsible behaviour and in the name of freedom of speech, Madam Deputy Speaker. Thank you.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading of Bill 67. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Acting Minister of Finance): Madam Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), that Madam Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider and report of Bill 67, The Interim Appropriation Act, 1992.

Motion agreed to, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider and report of Bill 67, The Interim Appropriation Act, 1992 (Loi de 1992 portant affectation anticipée de crédits) for

third reading, with the honourable member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) in the Chair.

* (1500)

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill 67—The Interim Appropriation Act, 1992

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. Will the Committee of the Whole please come order to consider Bill 67, The Interim Appropriation Act, 1992 (Loi de 1992 portant affectation anticipée de crédits).

Hon. Jim Ernst (Acting Minister of Finance): Madam Chairperson, Bill 67, The Interim Appropriation Act, 1992, is required to provide interim spending, commitment and borrowing authority for the 1992-93 fiscal year retroactive to April 1, pending approval of The Interim Appropriation Act, 1992.

Bill 67 differs slightly from the 1991 Interim Appropriation Act with the insertion of clauses to provide government with the authority to pay accrued liabilities and to provide transfer authority from the aboriginal justice initiatives and the internal reform work force adjustment and general salary increases appropriations.

The amount of interim spending authority requested in Section 2 of Bill 67 is approximately 30 percent of the total amount of \$5,058,392,500 to be voted in The Appropriation Act 1992 which equals \$1,517,517,750. This amount is expected to last until approximately the end of July 1992.

Section 3(1) Commitments for Future Years provides for \$120 million representing 30 percent of the '92-93 forward commitment authority of \$400 million to be included in The Appropriation Act. The authority for future years commitments provides for the commitment of expenditures to ensure completion of projects or fulfilling of contracts initiated prior to or during the fiscal year ending March 31, 1993. Expenditures for these commitments may not be made in the fiscal year ending March 1993 unless additional spending authority is required.

Section 3(2) Voting of Funds in Subsequent Years provides that the estimated amount of expenditures which are committed under sub (1) shall be included in the Estimates of the fiscal year in which the actual expenditures are to be made.

Section 4 dealing with Authority to Pay Liabilities provides government with the authority to make payments totalling \$196,556,452 exactly for liabilities accrued and then paid as at March 31, 1992. This includes \$37.6 million for Manitoba's contribution to the 1988 Canadian crop drought assistance program and \$158,900,000 for the change in accounting policies for Manitoba Tax Credit Payments. The authority to pay liabilities covered by this Interim Supply bill will not be replaced when the main Appropriation Act is passed.

Section 5, this section is self-explanatory and permits expenditures up to the full amount of each individual item to be voted in the 1992-93 Main Estimates, even though total expenditures authorized by Bill 67 are only a portion of those requirements.

Section 6 stipulates that once the main Appropriation Act is passed, any funds expended or committed under the authority of this Interim Act will be deemed to have been made under the authority of the main act, with the exception of Sections 4 and 15 which are not affected by this clause.

Section 7 provides the departments, in order to render services or provide materials, supplies or property to other departments that are cost-recoverable, may make the required expenditures in anticipation of recovering the costs from the other departments.

Section 8 allows for the transfer of the appropriate departments of any part or all of the money to be authorized for expenditure under the Canada-Manitoba Enabling Vote.

Section 9(1) provides that money authorized under this act for expenditure in respect of an agreement with the government of Canada may be expended in anticipation of the agreement being entered into.

Section 9(2) provides authority to expend money on projects in anticipation of federal cost sharing even though such cost sharing may not be realized.

Section 10 provides for the transfer to the departments of any part or all of the authority to provide it under aboriginal justice initiatives.

Section 11 provides for the transfer to departments of any or part of all of the authority to provide it under decentralization.

Section 12 provides for the delivery of environmental innovations funded programming through any of the departments of government and the proper recording of these expenditures under service heading, Environmental Innovations Fund.

Section 13 allows for the transfer to departments of government any part or all of the authority required for internal reform and costs associated with work force adjustment and general salary increases.

Section 14 is a standard section which requires no further explanation.

Section 15 is included in the bill to enable the government to borrow money in the '92-93 fiscal year prior to the approval of the '92 Appropriation Act. This section provides authority to raise money by way of loan or loans up to \$300 million as may be considered necessary for making any required payments out of the Consolidated Fund.

Unlike the expenditure authority provided by this Interim Supply bill, the authority to borrow is not replaced when the main Appropriation Act is passed.

With these comments, Madam Chairperson, I commend the bill to the members of the committee and will endeavour to answer any questions they may have.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Chairperson, I have a number of questions that I would like to get on the record, and possibly I will start off with the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) and then follow to the Minister of Culture, Heritage, and Citizenship (Mrs. Mitchelson).

The question really is one of the issues that came up while we were in a break, the rural bonds office. It is located out in Altona. There was some concern in terms of why it is an individual former executive, an EA of the government, one of the governmental ministers was sent to that particular office. Now I would ask the Deputy Premier to explain to the House why it is that individual was sent to that office?

Hon. James Downey (Deputy Premier): Madam Chairperson, first of all, the individual he refers to was the executive assistant to the Minister of Rural Development. It is Allan Peto that the individual is referring to. He was very qualified; he played a very intricate part in the development of the Rural Grow Bond Program.

The need to have that individual for continuity purposes and for getting the program off the ground, his experience and knowledge in the development of the program was essential, and that is why the individual was given that responsibility. It was done openly; it was done by Order-in-Council. There was no intention but to fully disclose what activity was taking place, and I will try and anticipate the next question, and that is, will the position which he occupies be open for competition? The answer to that, Madam Chairperson, is yes.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, what the Deputy Premier has done, I believe, is a mistake. I do not believe that the deputy minister really had a need to have an EA transferred over to the bonds office, and I look in terms of the number of positions that were created, one of which the EA is filling, and there were four of those positions, three of those four positions were in fact transferred over from the Civil Service.

I would ask the minister if in fact the Deputy Premier felt that there was no one within the Civil Service that was capable of doing what the EA was assigned to do.

Mr. Downey: Madam Chairperson, let me again express to the member that because this is a brand new program in the province of Manitoba, second in Canada, the Rural Grow Bond Program, because this individual as an executive assistant to me in my office in the development of this program had a lot of the detail and a lot of the knowledge that was obtained from the Saskatchewan program in the building of this program, to not have that individual go with that program for ease of delivery in the interests of getting the program up and running to help rural Manitoba get on with the program, that was the reason why it was done. It was not done underhandedly without public knowledge. As I said, it was done by Order-in-Council which are registered and public documents.

* (1510)

He may disagree, but in disagreeing what he is actually disagreeing with is the support and help that rural Manitoba needed in getting on with the Rural Grow Bond Program. I appreciate his disagreement and his displeasure if that is what he is expressing, but the decision was made. It was made openly and honestly in the interest of the bond program, in the interest of rural Manitoba. He was

a capable person, and it has been carried out, Madam Chairperson.

If the member wanted to say to me that you had to find someone else within the department who did not have any knowledge at all of the Grow Bond program, that individual would have to be brought up to speed. There well may have been and well may be somebody who is qualified within the department. They will have the opportunity when this goes before competition to apply for that job. That is a timing factor more than anything else. It is not an intent to do anything but get the program up and running as soon as possible, to use a person who had demonstrated his capabilities. If there are other individuals within the department or within the Civil Service anywhere, they are quite capable and can feel free to apply for that job when it comes before open public competition.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, what the minister or the Deputy Premier is really saying is that every minister of this government, if they bring in any sort of a program or initiative whatsoever, they can take their EA and have their EA be one of the staff persons on site or wherever that location might be or whatever position it is and then go ahead and hire another EA. What it is to me is that the minister has found a loophole—

An Honourable Member: It is not a loophole.

Mr. Lamoureux: —a loophole in the sense that the Civil Service has the competence to be able to fill that particular position, but because the minister was wanting to have someone in that particular office that would be able to inform the minister, possibly of the political optics of individual requests for the bonds, we do not know.

We have tried in the Liberal Party to ensure that the Civil Service is respected. This is one opportunity here, Madam Chairperson, that I am going to ask the Deputy Premier to show his confidence in the Civil Service and make a commitment today to having that position open for competition effective immediately, and that that position will be filled through the Civil Service, and the EA will not have anything to do with the hiring of the future candidate.

I would ask the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) to say today to the civil servants of this province, and particularly to the Civil Service Commission, that he has full confidence in the commission to fill those types of vacancies.

Mr. Downey: Madam Chairperson, I have no intention of doing anything but what I have previously said on the record as to the open competition for that job. Any individual within the Civil Service or anywhere may apply for that job. It was done in the interests of time, getting the program up and running.

I really take strong exception that the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) would accuse me of doing something excessively political to carry out in any way that kind of activity. I am really surprised and, quite frankly, shocked.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, I can assure the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) that he is nowhere near as shocked as I was when I first heard that an EA was filling a position of this nature, a position that should have been filled from the Civil Service. I can assure him of that.

I would ask the Deputy Premier: When is he going to be opening it for competition? Are we talking a week, are we talking a month, are we talking a year? When is the government planning on opening this particular position for open competition?

Mr. Downey: Madam Chairperson, that will be done within the operations, the decisions of the department and the deputy minister who has the administrative responsibility. I can assure him that it will be carried out. As to when, I cannot make a commitment at this time.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, in fact, the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) can make a commitment. Somehow the EA got appointed over to that board. Somehow the minister can allow for an open competition. I do not believe the Civil Service Commission would oppose the Deputy Premier saying that we are going to take back the EA, and that we are going to allow you to have the open competition. I do not believe that is in fact the case.

I would ask the Deputy Premier if he feels it is essential to have an EA, or other EAs of other ministers doing the same type of thing, of going out through different offices, whether it is Natural Resources, whether it is Culture, Heritage, whatever the department. Is there any line that can be crossed that is going a bit too far in the appointment of EAs?

Mr. Downey: Madam Chairperson, not wanting to excite the members of the official opposition, I am

not sure where they would draw that particular line in seeing some of the past experiences of their administration. I say to the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) that his concern has been raised—

An Honourable Member: And noted.

Mr. Downey: —and noted. That is correct. Again, I can assure him that the program which he is referring to and the hiring of that individual was done in the interests of the program, in job creation, and the whole activity as it related to the development of Rural Grow Bonds.

If he is saying that he wanted to somehow put in jeopardy that program, put in jeopardy rural economic employment, then let him stand up and say so. That is really where he is coming from. I mean that seriously.

This was done, not in the interests of putting an individual because he was an EA in a position within the Civil Service; he was put there, as I said, to get on with the job. There is a process that has to be gone through as it relates to the full-time hiring, and it will be done, Madam Chairperson. I am saying to the member, it will be done when it can be done through the normal process. There is not any intention to do anything but.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, the Liberal Party was fairly clear when the government had in fact announced the program, and we commended the government for doing it. I believe all three political parties want to see economic activity in rural Manitoba. What we disagree with is the minister's roundabout way in terms of trying to politicize a good idea. That is what we oppose.

Unless the Deputy Premier wants to respond to that, I will move on to the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship.

Mr. Downey: I indicated the process that had been gone through. I appreciate that the Liberal Party did in fact support the program, and I will acknowledge that, because I think it is a good program. As far as the employing of an individual in that program, it was done, as I said, up front, openly. There was not any intention to do anything but publicly express what we were doing. When the hiring decision is made to make public an open competition, I will as well advise the member opposite.

* (1520)

Mr. Lamoureux: I thank the Deputy Premier, and I anxiously await that letter indicating that it has been

opened for competition. I can only hope that I receive that letter very soon, very soon being sometime within two weeks would be nice.

Madam Chairperson, I will move on to the Minister of Culture and Heritage. There are a couple of major issues that I have before me in that particular area. One is in regard to the Manitoba Heritage Federation. The other one is in regard to racism. Both of them are equally important.

I want to start off with something which has come up just recently through the budget, when the budget was in fact being announced, and I want to go over, Madam Chairperson, some of the concerns that were expressed to myself.

Earlier this week, I had received a phone call from some representatives of the Manitoba Heritage Federation. They had indicated to myself that 24 hours prior to the budget being introduced inside the Chamber, they were given a telephone call and requested to come down to the Legislature. Well, because the notice was 24 hours, not very many board members were able to make it at 2:30 in the afternoon on that particular day.

Madam Chairperson, while we were inside here listening to the budget being presented, we had the president and I believe it was the general manager of the Heritage Federation walking into the deputy minister's office and on their way in were handed an envelope. Inside that envelope was a letter that told them that they no longer have the funding authority, that they are no longer responsible for the funding distribution of monies coming into the department.

Madam Chairperson, they were very upset to receive no notice, to walk into a meeting and be told that no longer are they distributing the funds and were not even given the explanation as to why they were not responsible for distributing the funds. They were able to surmise and come up with what they believe is the reason. We talked about it over the telephone with a couple of individuals, as I say, from the Heritage Federation, and the speculation was—and I raised it to the minister—the reason why it was taken away was because of the administrative cost.

Madam Chairperson, the minister had entered into an agreement with the Manitoba Heritage Federation two years ago, and part of that agreement had the administrative costs, and the minister did not say anything or the minister's staff people did not say anything that was wrong. They

did not say that your administrative cost is way too high, if you do not get it down we are going to cut it, cut you off. They did not give any indication whatsoever.

Then over that time period, between the agreement being signed and all the way up to the 24-hour notice as we were listening to the budget, not once was it raised formally to the board that the administrative costs were too high. The government did not even attempt, Madam Chairperson, to try to raise their concern with the board to try to find out if in fact something could be done about it.

Madam Chairperson, the minister will no doubt have to acknowledge that whoever administers the program there is going to be an administrative cost. She will try to argue that the administrative costs being done through her department is not as high as the administrative costs from the board. Well, she does not know that for fact, because she did not approach the board to find out if in fact they could reduce their cost.

My question to the minister is: How does she justify treating the hundreds of volunteers who donate thousands of volunteer hours throughout the province of Manitoba in that fashion? How does she justify that type of treatment?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Madam Chairperson, I will indicate, yes, we did sign an agreement with the Heritage Federation a couple of years ago, and within that agreement there was stipulated administrative costs. If we looked at the agreement I think—and with all due respect to the member for Inkster and his new-found knowledge about the heritage community and the Heritage Federation, I want to indicate that if he looked at the agreement and examined the agreement he might note that they were in violation of the agreement that they had because their administrative costs were higher than what was stipulated in the agreement that they should be.

The Heritage Federation had also written to me and indicated that they were contemplating hiring another staff person, which of course would have made their administrative costs that much higher again. Within the contract there is a 90-day notice given to any umbrella organization that the contract will be terminated and, indeed, on budget day staff met with the Heritage Federation and gave the

90-day notice that the agreement would be terminated.

Mr. Lamoureux: I want to address both aspects of the answer. First she comments on this new-found knowledge. Well, I can assure the minister that the heritage of this province means a lot to everyone who sits inside this Chamber.

She refers to the Estimates process and the number of hours, which is limited. She will find that we put more hours in Culture, and Heritage and Citizenship last year than we have ever put in in the history of this Chamber.

Madam Chairperson, if it was an unlimited number of hours that we could ask in Estimates, I would have been more than happy to have asked more questions. At the time, there were other issues that had to be addressed, but I can assure the minister that had she raised this back then, there would have been a lot more hours of debate. In fact, we might have exceeded 60 hours of debate during the Estimates process.

In regard to her latter comment, she talks about, well, they did not raise that they overextended or they were in violation of their agreement. What that tells me, Madam Chairperson, is their treatment of organizations. Why did they take the funding formula away from MIC? Because they were unable to sit down and come up with some type of a compromise, come up with some sort of an agreement as to how the monies could have been allocated.

I would ask the minister: Did she bring it to the light of the board at any point in time in a formal way, that they were in violation of the agreement and that if they do not stick to the agreement that the funding will be taken away from them? Did she ever raise to the board in any formal way the administrative costs?

Mrs. Mitchelson: A contract is a contract and an agreement is an agreement. The agreement was discussed in detail with members of the Manitoba Heritage Federation when it was signed. They were fully aware of what the contract and what the agreement said.

Clearly, they knew they were in violation, and we can agree to disagree, and the member can bring forward his point of view, but ultimately it will have to be the entire heritage community with the many, many volunteers out there that will determine whether in fact this government is dealing with the

heritage community in the right and proper fashion. I believe that through the consultation process that has been set up, which I might say will include the Heritage Federation, we will be determining, and in fact the heritage community will be the judges of whether this government under a new structure will be delivering a service that they agree with to that community.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, when the minister says, an agreement is an agreement is an agreement, that principle seems to apply to only some ministers. When we asked questions about the Repap agreement, I guess an agreement is not an agreement for the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness).

I asked the question specifically to the minister: Did she or any member of her departmental staff raise at any point in time formally to the board that their administrative costs were too high?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, I can state that I did not speak to them directly, but I would have to check with my staff. They are not here and at my access right at this moment, so I can certainly ask my staff who in fact dealt with the Heritage Federation over the overexpenditure and get back with that information.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, I will look for some clarification now in terms of what is going to be happening. I would ask the minister to confirm that it is the department that is going to be responsible for administering the request.

* (1530)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, I have made a commitment to the heritage community that there will be broad consultation. It will be including the heritage council, the major heritage organizations, the Manitoba Heritage Federation and all those that are involved in ensuring that the community is well served through the grant process. In fact, when we have met and when we have discussed, an announcement will be made on the structure that will deliver heritage grants for the future in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, I am encouraged that the minister has not made a final decision on this. That is maybe a shred of light, and she might reconsider possibly what she is doing to the Manitoba Heritage Federation.

What I would ask the minister, ultimately is she going to be making the decision on who receives which grants? Who is going to be making the decisions?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, it will be volunteers within the heritage community that will be making those decisions.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, I would ask the minister, will she will assure this Chamber that if it is going to be heritage groups or these new volunteers, if she will make a commitment to the Chamber that they will not be a politically appointed board?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, I will make the commitment that the people who will be representative of the heritage community and have a commitment to the heritage community will be people who will be making the decisions. I cannot make any further commitment until I consult with the community on what their desires and wishes are.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, I would ask the minister, because this is very serious. What she did for MIC was that board was elected from a number of different ethnic groups and the minister did have some input in terms of the appointments. The funding was taken away from MIC and given to a politically appointed board. Now, the perception from the different ethnic groups is that it is a political group.

I am asking the minister, is this what her intentions are for this new decision-making body?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, I regret that I have to differ with the member for Inkster and his comments on a politically appointed board. They are volunteer members of the community. I have not received a complaint from any community or any community organization, even an anonymous complaint, somebody phoning in or somebody writing a letter that has not been signed, that the committee that is in place that is dealing with multicultural grants is in any way politicizing the process.

I would like to ask the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) if he has specifics and allegations—because it is very serious, the issue that he is bringing forward—if he has allegations that would indicate that there is political interference in the process of awarding grants to the multicultural community through the Multicultural Grants

Advisory Council, I would like him to state in this House and publicly whom he has heard from and what he has heard, because I have not heard anything from the community, except that in fact they are being well served through the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council. If he has some allegations to make, because he is seriously bringing forward to this House an allegation of political interference, I would like him to substantiate those or withdraw those remarks and apologize.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, I would ask the minister: Can she tell this House that none of the decisions have been appealed that MGAC has made?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, yes, there is an appeal process in place now, and there was not an appeal process in place when MIC was handing out grants. People were told they received no grant, and they had no way to even appeal that decision. If there is an appeal, it goes back to the board; and, if more information is brought to light that would indicate or warrant a grant, then that grant is provided. I believe in an appeal process, unlike what was in place previously.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, now I am going to ask the same question of the minister. Why does the minister not table for us—the allegations that she put on the record are just as equally as serious, when she said MIC was distributing the funds inappropriately. Why does she not table the letters that she had that said there were complaints, or does she have any letters from groups that said that what MIC was doing was wrong? Does she have the letters?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, what I just indicated now was that there was no appeal process in place. There was not an appeal process in place under the mechanism that MIC used, and I can substantiate that for the member.

What I have said is—and I am very serious, because he is bringing forward very serious allegations. If in fact he has information that can substantiate those allegations, I believe it is incumbent upon him as a member of this Legislature and as a person that is out there representing the people of Manitoba that in common decency he should bring those allegations forward so that they can be examined and they can be rectified if there are allegations.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, it is incumbent upon me to bring forward information that I believe is in the best interest of the constituents that I represent. The constituents that I represent, I believe, feel very strongly about what this minister in particular is doing to the granting bodies of the Province of Manitoba.

Now, the minister has herself said that there have been some appeals. How many appeals have there been?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, that information I can get very easily, the number of appeals. I do not have that detailed information in front of me. That is normally a question that would be asked during the Estimates process when all the detail is there in my book so that I can provide that information. I am not opposed to providing that kind of public information on how many appeals there in fact have been.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, I am going to move on and ask the minister, now that she has taken away the funding responsibility from the Manitoba Heritage Federation, what purpose, or what role, does she see it playing now?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, in fact it will be up to the Heritage Federation to determine where they fit into the structure of the heritage community.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, I find it is very unfortunate that the minister did not take the time in her first three and a half years, four years to review what it is she is going to be doing.

If the minister was really wanting to assist those volunteers, or give direction to the volunteers, what she would have done is that she would have come up with a plan instead of taking away and then saying, I will come up with the plan later after I do the consulting.

What the minister should have done is she should have consulted with the different groups, because those groups might have said, let us leave it the way it is. Let us let the Heritage Federation be responsible for the distribution of the funds and the decision-making process and let the department do the administrative costs.

She does not know what is going to come out of these consultations. The minister has got it backwards. I would hope that what the minister said, that her decision has not been made, is in fact

the case so that the Heritage Federation is given serious consideration.

I want to move on to the question of racism. I made a reference to two very serious issues that were up and going at this time. The other day I had asked the minister a question regarding MIC's Combatting Racism, a report that was in October of 1990, which the minister was given.

One of the recommendations had that the government of Manitoba provide a one-day cross-cultural sensitization workshop to all members of the Legislature of the province of Manitoba, school trustees, and city councillors. I would ask the minister when does she intend to provide that day?

* (1540)

Mrs. Mitchelson: As I have indicated before, Madam Chairperson, I did ask the Manitoba Intercultural Council to give me recommendations on how the government of this province might assist in combatting racism.

There were many recommendations that came forward which had different implications for many different departments throughout government. We have been analyzing those recommendations. In the meantime, we have not been standing still. We have been announcing positive initiatives which I think will go a long way towards the area of attempting to eliminate racism.

We know that it is not an easy task and there are barriers to overcome in all segments of society, but I do know that some of the programs that we have put in place, like the Bridging Cultures Program, and I think I indicated that I was at St. John's High School on Friday afternoon last, where the youth at St. John's were putting on a power play that was extremely effective in how to intervene in instances where we in our day-to-day lives experience racism or activities, that are not only perceived to be, are racist in nature.

Funding was provided for that forum to the Manitoba Multicultural Resource Centre along with St. John's High School, along with the City of Winnipeg Police Department and the RCMP. Through the Bridging Cultures Program, that was just announced in the fall, MMRC applied in conjunction with the high school, the police and the RCMP, and in fact, did something that I think was very powerful and very constructive in a way that

deals with and was open and available to many of the youth in our province.

There are other activities that are going on, and yes, one of the recommendations was in fact a day for legislators. They are talking city councillors and school trustees also. I think throughout the Manitoba population there is a lot of work to be done in many, many areas.

I think our record is clear as a government on our stand on racism, on our stand on multiculturalism. I would hope that the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) would not disagree that we have made some positive moves in the right direction.

One of the things that we did do was second a person over to the Manitoba Federation of Labour, because they too realize that there is racism within the workplace throughout the province. We seconded a person over there for a two-year term that developed modules on how to deal with racism. We have received those modules, and we have the Citizenship Branch within my department working very aggressively on putting into place a pilot project to test one of those modules to see how well it will work.

We are testing it or piloting it in the Department of Culture. We will evaluate that module, and then we will look at where it might be utilized throughout the Legislature, throughout City Hall, throughout the school divisions, throughout the community and throughout other government departments. That is a part of our process. We have made the first step, and once we evaluate that pilot in the Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship we will be looking at where we go with it after that.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, the minister has done some good things in terms of combatting racism, but there are some other areas in which she has been somewhat slow to react to. One of those things I have brought up time after time, and somehow she is able to evade making some sort of a commitment to it. It is not that tough of a commitment that we are actually asking for. I think what the minister needs to look at is just what has been happening over the last couple of days inside this Chamber.

The member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema) stood up today and gave, I thought, a very good speech on racism that dealt in part with racism, something that he holds very close to his heart because it is such a sensitive issue that was raised over the last

few days. Like the member for The Maples, I too feel that it is absolutely essential that the minister take some action wherever she can. There is an area in which she can work on or make a commitment to, that she does not necessarily have to come up with excuses as to why we cannot have it.

What I am referring to, of course, is the question I have asked about eight or nine, maybe possibly even 10 times over the last year and a half, and that is that cross-cultural day. What I found interesting today, Madam Chairperson, and I will table, not table, I will send a copy of it over to the minister, but I am sure she has likely received it. It is dated March 25, and it is a news release.

It comes from an organization that the Minister of Culture, Heritage, and Citizenship (Mrs. Mitchelson) has said that this group, MIC, is now an advisory body, and we will listen to what the advisory body is telling us.

Madam Chairperson, I am maybe speaking on behalf, and I am sure she would agree with me that MIC is an apolitical organization. If she does not, I hope she will put that on the record when she responds, but I am sure she will agree it is an apolitical organization.

Madam Chairperson, what I will ask is that the minister do what MIC has issued today in a news release. This comes from Sam Koshy, the executive secretary, for further information, and it was issued from Ron Schuler whom the minister has met with on numerous occasions, as I have, and no doubt the NDP critic.

Instead of reading the whole letter, what I am going to read is one, possibly two paragraphs:

MIC in a letter to the Honourable Bonnie Mitchelson, Minister responsible for Multicultural Affairs, encourage her to do everything in her power to help MLAs become more sensitive to all segments and cultural groups in the Manitoba community. In the past, the MIC has recommended training in cross-cultural sensitivity for all elected officials.

Madam Chairperson, this is something that the minister can do. She does not have to wait. She has had the report now for a year and a half. Will she now listen to the MIC news release as she has committed herself to do in the past? When she took away the funding responsibility, she said that they would play an advisory role. Will she listen to the

advice that is being given from MIC and announce now, when we can have that cross-cultural day, or at the very least, say it is going to be within two weeks?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, the member for Inkster might like us to have that kind of a seminar while he is away on spring break. I do believe that MIC gives us very valuable advice and I would not have asked them for a report and some recommendations unless I felt that they would come up with recommendations that would be beneficial to the whole province.

Indeed, I indicated that it took two years for someone working with the Manitoba Federation of Labour to develop some modules. I have to say that those modules needed some reworking when they came to government before. In fact, we could look at implementing and piloting them within my own department. I have indicated that is in the process.

I think that with MIC we have developed a good working relationship over the last number of years, and I look forward to continuing that. I do not think that you would find many members of the community that would question this government's commitment to multiculturalism, and this government's and our Premier's and my commitment to combatting racism. We will do whatever is in our power to try to implement programs throughout government that are sensitive to the cultural needs of all.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, once again the minister has been able to, well, somewhat successfully evade making some type of an announcement, but we hope, I hope, that we will see an announcement.

She made reference to multiculturalism and the commitment that the government has to multiculturalism.

When we do go into the Estimates process, I will have a number of questions regarding multiculturalism. [interjection] Well, one of the government backbenchers has asked me if I am going to be asking to cut out the funding to MGAC.

Madam Chairperson, had the member really been here and possibly listened—I should not say, he might have been here, I cannot say he was absent—but had the member paid attention to what I had said the other day on Interim Supply, is that the government is very good at manipulating the figures. What they do is, they do have the authority

to be able to allocate additional monies to any line that they so choose.

The government has the authority—

An Honourable Member: You bet.

* (1550)

Mr. Lamoureux: The minister says, you bet. He is the only minister that will actually admit to it that I am aware of.

So to answer the question from the Conservative backbencher, the motion that I moved last year was a very good motion. Had a number of the backbenchers listened to the explanation of that particular motion, they would have likely supported it.

I am sure a number of them do not care for the government manipulating the multicultural community. As I say, I am going to have ample opportunity to discuss that at length when we go into the Estimates, and I do have a number of other questions for different ministers, but I know other people want to ask questions.

I did want to ask just a couple of very brief questions to the minister, because I had received a phone call the other day regarding the Outreach Office. I would ask the minister how the Outreach Office was selected, this particular Outreach Office.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, what we wanted was an Outreach Office that would be in the core area of the city of Winnipeg that would be a storefront office, easily accessible by bus or by car. There were several different locations. It was quite a while back now, and I cannot recall all of the detail. I know that there were several locations that were looked at, and it was deemed in conjunction with Government Services and the Department of Culture that this was the best space that was available for lease at the time. I do not have the exact detail, but we looked at location, we looked at a storefront operation that was easily accessible and available to those in the core area.

I would imagine that at the Outreach Office there will be a lot of new immigrants coming forward seeking information about government or immigration issues. It seemed like the kind of location that we wanted.

There were several that were looked at, and it was deemed to be the most appropriate space for use as an Outreach Office. That is how it was chosen.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, the minister knows that we support actually the Outreach Office and we would like to see it very accessible to the groups that would use it. The minister can take it as notice and get back to me if she so chooses, unless, of course, she knows it right now. Did her department make the decision as to the office location, or did it go to Government Services, and the request just making it a visible location and really had nothing to do with her department?

Mrs. Mitchelson: The Department of Government Services was notified that we were looking for space. I think they came up with different locations that were open and available—and I am recollecting, because this was a while back, too, when they were looking for space—but I know that Government Services was involved, they identified locations. I think it was a combination of Government Services and the Department of Culture that looked at the space and looked at what the requirements might be for a two-person office and chose that one as the ideal location.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolsley): I understand that there are some time constraints on the minister, so I will begin my questioning and we will see what transpires from there. Perhaps I will have a chance to question the minister at a later date.

I wanted to ask some questions about the Heritage Federation. There is a great deal of discomfort out there. I think all parties have had calls from people who see their funds in jeopardy and are also very unsure about the process at the moment, particularly over the next three months.

One question, however, I think that concerns everybody in heritage organizations is the amount of lottery money that has in the past been given to the Heritage Federation to distribute, which I understand is about 3 percent of lottery monies altogether. I think what people are looking for first and foremost in a very uncertain situation is a commitment from the government that that same percentage of lottery monies will be available for heritage purposes. So that is my question to the minister, can she give that assurance now?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I can unequivocally state to the heritage community that we are not looking to take away funding from the heritage community as a result of this process. In fact, there should be more money as a result of less administrative costs going

to the grassroots heritage community than there has been previously.

We do not allocate a certain percentage of the pie anymore as a result of the needs assessment. In fact, we have casino revenues that are going to health care. That is a new initiative. We have video lottery terminal revenues that are all part of Lotteries revenues that are going to rural economic development. We have money now that is going to conservation, different initiatives. In fact, what has happened with the signing of agreements with umbrella organizations is that we look at their funding, and within the agreement it might be a zero-percent increase one year, or a three percent depending on what revenues are available. The pie is bigger as such, and it is not a certain percentage of the pie that is distributed now, because we have made commitments to health care and to rural economic development.

Ms. Friesen: I think people are very concerned when they see a reduction in that line from \$700,000 to \$400,000. I think they want some assurance that that money, which the minister argues was used for administration—although I think there are certainly some questions on the other side of that, because the Heritage Federation believes that it used additional monies from its reserve pool for administration as well, and it is not simply that marginal a difference there.

So I think that the question is: Can the heritage community be assured in the coming year that that gap, that \$300,000—I do not have the figures in front of me unfortunately—is also going to be used for heritage, and that we are not simply looking at a \$400,000 amount for heritage for the coming year?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Absolutely, and if we look at what happened to the Manitoba Sports Federation last year, when they had a reserve of some \$12 million or \$14 million sitting that they had in the pot, what we said to them was that they were to use their reserves up, and in the same amount of funding that they would have normally been allocated, and then they were reinstated.

What has happened is, the Heritage Federation has a fairly major reserve of money sitting. I know they have made commitments. Many commitments that the Heritage Federation has made will in fact be honoured through the process and the community will in fact receive as much, or as I said, if not more as a result of less administrative cost. So the, I

believe it was, \$712,000 will be available to the community.

Ms. Friesen: I shall make this the last question then, Madam Chairperson, because I know the minister has to go.

The second principle, I think, that all people in the heritage community are concerned about is the principle of peer review of grants. I know the minister has spoken in response to the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), of the likelihood of the maintenance of volunteers in that position.

Volunteers do not necessarily translate into peer evaluation. The principle of peer evaluation is very important. I think it has taken the Heritage Federation a fair amount of time to get to that stage as well, and it is a system that, I think, has certainly been recognized as working well over the last few years. I would like the minister's response and preferably some commitment to that principle of peer evaluation.

* (1600)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Absolutely, and I think it is essential that that kind of process be looked at. Because it is the community, that understands heritage and understands the needs, that should be looking at the projects that come forward. That was one of the issues that I have been starting to discuss with the community, and I can make that commitment.

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): My questions will be to the Minister of Native Affairs (Mr. Downey).

I would like to talk about the process that was underway for, I understand, some seven or eight months with regard to the Abinochi Zhawayndakozihwin Project, the preschool project.

Can the minister tell the House just exactly how the decision was made to enter into the study? Which departments were to be involved in the formulation of the study? What results came about as a result of a number of meetings which, I understood, took place?

Hon. James Downey (Minister responsible for Native Affairs): Madam Chairperson, if I understand the question correctly, is the process as it developed up until now, who was involved in the process of dealing with it.

First of all, the request came forward to carry on with Abinochi preschool language program

following the end of the Core Area Agreement, which it was funded under. The request came forward to me as the Minister responsible for Native Affairs and consideration was given and basically agreed to, approved a \$64,000 grant to finish out last year's programming. At that same time, there was an agreement to put together a working committee of the Department of Native Affairs, the Department of Education, and I am not just sure which other departments were involved. At least there were those two departments. There may have been the Department of Culture, Heritage and Recreation, but I will get that information for the member. At least there were two departments that worked together—I am sorry, Family Services—for the Department of Education, Native Affairs and Family Services, to try to see what might be able to be accomplished. As the member is aware, she has the documentation that was filed by the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) yesterday.

It was determined that at that time there would not be any additional funding from the Department of Native Affairs as I have expressed.

Mrs. Carstairs: It is my understanding that in fact this particular program was in operation some years before Core Area actually came into being, that it was at first funded by parents and originally acted as a drop-in centre with everybody putting whatever monies they could in order to keep it ongoing. It then received some funding for Secretary of State, then received some Core Area Initiative funding, always did receive some grants from Culture, Heritage and Recreation because they were dealing with a heritage language. It was receiving some \$7,000 a year as part of the heritage language grant that is given to many organizations that are in fact engaged in teaching heritage languages. When it became clear that the Core Area Initiative was no longer going to be able to supply money, that the group met with the Minister of Native Affairs who purported that it was important to sit down and has been quoted by some of the members who met with me as saying that, quote: if we have to change policies, we will in order to get this things back on stream.

Now, the group feels that they had a genuine commitment from the minister that this would be not only engaged in a working process, but that the government would do everything in their power to see if they could not find dollars in Family Services and dollars in Education and dollars in Culture,

Heritage and dollars in Native Affairs in order to make this thing work. They went through this working process, I understand, for some eight months, meeting at least once a month, and came up with a report which certainly recommended that this be proceeded with. What impacted at that point, that the minister pulled money away and said that there will be no money for this program even though the government gave some \$80,000 last year to this program?

Mr. Downey: No, Madam Chairperson, I would like to correct the member. What I indicated to her earlier was—and pre the 1985 period under Core Area I cannot comment. I am not aware of how it was funded, in fact carried out. I can say that last year we did meet, I did say that I was able to get support for funding for 64,000 to complete last year. In doing so, I said that we would establish or we would develop a committee which worked with the departments of Family Services and Education, which truly, if there is going to be a funding program, should come from either of those departments and/or maybe the Department of Heritage.

As I am not a program funding department, I did not have the capability of putting in place long-term funding. It is not the purpose of the Native Affairs Secretariat to do that. It is a co-ordinating jurisdiction. So both the departments of Family Services and Education came forward and indicated, as she is aware, that they did not have the capability of doing it.

I am prepared to table two letters, Madam Chairperson. One was October 29, 1991, which was sent by the Minister of Education, the Honourable Len Derkach and myself at that time, and I will just read the last paragraph: We regret to inform you that no provincial funding will be allocated for your organization. We wish you success in your efforts to establish a funding base.

That was in October. On June 3 of 1991 there was a letter that went from the Deputy Minister of Finance, and I will read the final paragraph on it and I will table it: I regret to inform you that the recommendations of the Abinochi working group for the establishment of a new provincial funding source were not accepted. Accordingly, I must advise you that there was no new funding allocation approved for your organization for the fiscal year of 1991-92.

Madam Chairperson, let me say this genuinely, that I think that the program has served an excellent purpose, and I am not against the program and the development of cultural language programs. I say that, and the government is not. What I found myself in was a position of not being able to continue funding it for one organization, because I am not a funding department for programs. Now, if the Department of Education—and let me just go back. I am sure this will be helpful to the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen). I did not get a chance yesterday to comment on her speech, but I think it is important that I do. The Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) may want to respond to this as well.

There were some 29 legislative reform hearings throughout the province over the last several months, to ask what possibly the Department of Education should look at as far as additional programming is concerned. Neither the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) nor the member for Wolseley made presentation to those legislative hearings. No one spoke on behalf of the inclusion of a preschool language program. This, I believe, would have been an opportunity for one of those members to come forward and do so, if there was a process established that could have accomplished that, but there was silence from the members opposite.

I guess I am a little disappointed that now they are coming forward in the last hour, and I apologize to the member for not answering their questions at this time. That to me would have been the appropriate place to bring support forward for the Abinochi language program, so that the process that was put in place could have been followed through and could have been dealt with.

As much as I am sympathetic, I did not have the capability to continue funding the program, as I had indicated I could not do, but would work to try and encourage the other departments to do so.

* (1610)

I am not an educator. I leave it to the Departments of Education or Family Services to see if there is some way this program could fit within their mandate. I honestly, quite frankly, could not carry out continued funding with the mandate which my department has.

Mrs. Carstairs: Let me make two points on what the minister has just said. First and foremost, I think most members of the Legislature do not think that

public processes of going across the province to try and generate what the public wants on a particular issue are things that should be controlled and manipulated by members of this Chamber, no matter what side they are on.

I think that I personally, and I would like to think other members do too, that when you go on a road show of any kind in order to generate public opinion, that you do not want to hear from members of the Legislature, whom you hear from on a pretty regular basis, but you want to hear from the public in their communities, whom you do not hear from. So to say that we should be trying to do both I think is misleading the process to some degree.

The other issue that I want to deal with here is in terms of the fact that you do not have the ability to fund. Well, that is like saying that the Minister of I, T and T does not have any money to put into the business faculty at the University of Manitoba because he is not in charge of Education. Well, he is not, but he has been putting very large lump sums of his budget into the Faculty of Business now for the last three years.

I do not disagree with his doing that, because I think we needed to upgrade that particular faculty, and this was one way of doing it, but the same thing applies here to your administration. Whether it comes from your line or Education or whatever line of the budget it comes from, last year there was \$64,000 in a direct grant from your department and there was another \$16,000 from the Department of Education. If there was \$80,000 last year to support this kind of initiative, why was there no monies left to support that kind of initiative during this fiscal year?

Mr. Downey: Because, Madam Chairperson, it was a decision of government that there were not funds available, that we were not going to be continuing to fund it in this particular manner, that in fact it is an educational program. If there is justification for it through the Department of Education, then that is where it should have been funded.

As the member knows, this is an ad hoc program. I do not believe that it is fair to, in an ad hoc way, lead people to believe that they can continue on, on that basis. What we try to do is get a judgment from people who are in the education field within the Department of Education as to an ability to put in place a long-term funding program.

I do apologize, I know there is a sensitivity. It was not any way of trying to take a shot at anybody by expressing the fact that there were legislative hearings. People could have been encouraged—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Chairperson: Order, please.

Mr. Downey: No, I am serious. I am not speaking in a negative way about trying to develop something for these individuals, but I guess the question is a matter of priorities. We did not have the capability of continuing to fund it under that way. I cannot express it in any other way.

Mrs. Carstairs: Well, let me put it another way. Obviously there must have been, and I would like to think, a genuine interest in maintaining this program or else the government would not have spent \$80,000 to investigate through a working group ways in which this particular program could be funded.

I would like to think we just did not put \$80,000 down the drain. So having spent \$80,000, the working report signed by his director of Native Affairs indicates that not only is this a good program, not only is this a valuable program, but it is a program which should be continued. It says it is recommended that the four ministries represented by the working group fully endorse the principle of aboriginal language learning at the preschool level and commend Abinochi program for their leadership.

It is recommended that provincial funding be provided at the level of \$102,000-plus; it is recommended that long-term funding be channeled through the Department of Northern Affairs; it is recommended that an interdepartmental committee be established with representatives from the other departments, and it is recommended that a five-year funding agreement, available on a renewal basis, be negotiated. Now, presumably this government was part of this working group. How did the working group come up with this wonderful report which would see this program still in operation instead of observing its closure in the last few days? What changed? What is in this report that the government does not agree with?

Mr. Downey: Nothing is really changed, but I did spell out a year ago when this was being assessed and there was a clear communication that the funds would not be available in the normal manner. I say

this. What has not changed is the economic condition of this province and our ability to spend money, and we have had to prioritize. Our revenues are flat. We have maintained and frozen the taxes of the people of Manitoba. What is not changed is we have not seen an increase in revenue and the capability of carrying on these kinds of programs which we expressed, Madam Chairperson, would not be able to be funded this year.

I say this genuinely. I mean there are a lot of preschool language programs that I am sure the government could expand into in a great way if we had the resources to do it. It is the realization that we do not have the capability of doing it.

Mrs. Carstairs: Then I can only assume that a priority was taken to have an economic secretariat with a new staff line of \$466,000, but there was to be no money for a group of preschoolers who were getting aboriginal heritage language, because this minister did not have as much bargaining room at the table as the Minister of I, T and T.

Mr. George Hlckes (Point Douglas): Madam Chairperson, I also have a few questions on the Abinochi preschool program. We hear the government constantly talking about partnership, sharing, co-operation with people, trust, priorities of this government, and we even have the Attorney General using "real programs for real people." I think that is what this program is, a real program and it is about real people.

I would like to ask the minister, in response to the letter that he received, which was hand delivered to his office or to him, when they have been seeking a meeting with him since July of 1991, they have not been able to have a simple little meeting, and here the government is going on co-operation, partnership and sharing. I thought that is what meetings were all about.

Mr. Downey: Madam Chairperson, I have checked and I cannot determine from my checking that we have had the kinds of requests that the member is referring to. There may have been phone calls that have come in that I had not been aware of. There may have been other requests, but I am not aware of any written letter of meeting request. If there has been, I apologize for not. It is not my intention not to meet. I found it most productive.

In fact, I can tell the member that last year the meetings that were carried out between my office,

the Minister of Family Services and the Minister of Education did produce support for the program for last year. I think it is a little unfair his criticism about us not wanting to meet. We did carry it on for an additional year which, if the decision had been taken last year, would have ended last year. That is where it is at. We did show our faith and our commitment in trying to support the program for the completion of last year.

Let me ask the members how they would have seen this when it was developed under the Core Area Initiative? Why did the previous administration not put in place, when they developed the Core Area Initiative, and say that we expect that this should be developed into a long-term educational program within the Department of Education? Was there any indication when this program was established and started that some day there would have to be a decision point as to whether or not it could be continued within full provincial responsibility?

It was a cost-shared agreement between three governments—federal, provincial and municipal—of which three parties supported it. It came to an end. Did they expect at that time, I ask the members of the former government, it would be the provincial government's full responsibility? It is tough choices that have to be made when we are dealing with tough economic conditions. I am not trying to deprive anyone from carrying on their culture, their language. In fact, I am strongly supportive of it, but again, what capability does the province have to do it with when we have flat revenues, tough decisions to make? We have demands in health care. We have demands in Family Services. We have continual demands on us. Again, by not funding it, we are not depriving those individuals from carrying on with their education and their language.

* (1620)

There must be other ways in which individuals can continue the support of those language programs, and again I would suggest that if members have suggestions where they think that monies from within the Department of Native Affairs or northern development could be taken, they want to take it from the recreational program from the North—

An Honourable Member: No, they want us to take it from private schools.

Mr. Downey: Again, the member hollers private schools.

That is an education department programming agreement that is already in place. So I am searching for some answers from the members opposite as to where within the Department of Native Affairs do they suggest that some of the core funding for some of the organizations should be redirected. Is that what they are suggesting, that we should take money from the Assembly of Chiefs?

Where should it come from? Again, they have not got any quick solutions other than to spend more money.

Mr. Hlckes: That was a very nice, long, roundabout way of saying, no, we will not support it. He says, where will we get the money? One question I have that has been very disturbing in my mind, because I never got an answer the other day was, he says, where will we find the money?

One of the solutions could be St. John's-Ravenscourt, which was originally an Anglican school, not a Catholic school, like I mentioned the other day. That is one option. The other option is that is an education matter, the minister states. When you take whatever the proposal is to cabinet is that not dealt with by all cabinet ministers to see where that program would best fit, to help the minister find the dollars for a program if he so supports?

So I asked the minister, did he take this to cabinet? If he did, what was the response? He refers to the Education minister, the Family Services minister—tell the people who stopped this program. So the people will know who to talk to.

Mr. Downey: Madam Chairperson, I can understand the member opposite not understanding how the process works. What I have said is that the government, the committee, the process within government indicated a year ago, both in June, from the Department of Education, and in October from the Department of Northern and Native Affairs, that there would be no funding available as was done in the past.

The opposition members are expecting us to pick up what had been a cost shared with the federal government, the cost shared with the provincial government, to carry on this programming. The next argument they come forward in criticism is that we are picking up offloading from the federal government.

I guess what we are talking about is how much of an expansion of preschool education do you want the province to pick up? I guess that is the question. When you fund one preschool program, such as is being recommended by the members opposite, how many other Native or other languages do the members believe it is our responsibility to pick up?

Madam Chairperson, I guess it is not a matter of saying that it is not important. It is important. It is important that those individuals carry on their language, but it is important the provincial government prioritize how we expend our money as well. What I am saying is, we do not have the capability to carry on that program.

Mr. Hickes: Madam Chairperson, I would just like to ask the minister, the letter he just tabled by the Deputy Minister of Education. It states very clearly in that letter that he tabled: accordingly, I must advise that there was no new funding allocation approved for your organization for the fiscal year 1991 and 1992.

The reason this just came up is because the funding just ran out for 1991-92, and it says here there will be no money available for '91-92, but the minister found \$64,000 to contradict what the deputy minister has written in this letter. It says very clearly, funding allocation approved for your organization for the fiscal year '91-92. So they got the money for '91-92. Now they are asking for a continuation of that funding, which is highly recommended, for the year '92-93, and that is what we are talking about. So when his deputy minister, according to the recommendations—I would like to ask the minister and go through these recommendations and get the minister's response. If he supports these, will he bring these to cabinet?

It is recommended that the four ministers represented by this working group fully endorse the principles of Abinochi language learning at the preschool level and commend the Abinochi preschool program for the leadership of this issue. Does the minister agree with that statement?

Mr. Downey: Madam Chairperson, let me put it this way. The member can go through all of these questions and I can deal with them. I guess in the interest of time, we have basically put our position forward. We support, in a broad sense of the way, the continuation of education of Native language. We do not have the capability to carry it on with a complete 100 percent provincial funding that was

given to us after a Core Area Agreement ended. We did extend it to try and find additional funding. As I said, we could have ended it last year. We did not have to go forward with the additional \$64,000 to continue the program to try and find another way of funding it.

Again, what I am trying to get through to the member is, we have to put priorities on the expenditures of taxpayers' money. The members today in Question Period, Madam Chairperson, stand and ask us for more money for home care, more money for health care, more money for everything. It is a matter of making tough decisions, and I guess I ask the question: Is it a priority of the members opposite to put a preschool educational program ahead of some of the other things that they are requesting? I would hope they would be straightforward enough to say, yes, they want to put this program ahead of some of the other essential services in the health care field or in the aboriginal field. I ask them to come forward.

Mr. Hickes: Madam Chairperson, I would like to ask the minister, when he states that he has not committed his government to the funding of 1992-93. This letter states right here from the parents of the Abinochi preschool program, and it says, underlined, at that time you committed your government to fund our program. It is underlined. Then if you go to the deputy minister of his own department, and if you read No. 5: It is recommended that a five-year funding agreement, available on a renewable basis, be negotiated and implemented to honour the long-term commitment of the Manitoba government to Abinochi. To me it is very, very clear.

The parents of Abinochi have said that the minister is committed. The deputy minister says the government has committed. Well, who is telling the truth, I guess I would have to ask.

Mr. Downey: Madam Chairperson, if the member would put into complete context the paragraph that he is referring to, where they have underlined that I have committed to fund the program, this letter was written in October of 1990. Following that there was a commitment lived up to that was made at that meeting, and that was a \$64,000 commitment, as I understand it. To my knowledge the only commitment that was made on a long-term basis was that we would establish a working committee that could see if we could find a program within government that could give it long-term support.

The decision has been taken and communicated to the Abinochi support group that there was not a capability of carrying it on. Again, I know it is a tough decision, but it is a decision that was essential and has been made. I know the member will continue to push for this, and he is quite free to do so. But unless, I say this without raising any false hopes, the Department of Education or the Department of Family Services or Culture and Heritage could develop a new program in conjunction with the federal government, in conjunction with some other way, I cannot see the provincial government taking on 100 percent responsibility for this preschool program.

* (1630)

Mr. Hickes: I just have one final question that I would like to ask the minister. Will he now agree to meet with the parents of Abinochi to give them a full explanation on what is really happening and bring forward the proposal for Abinochi to his cabinet for the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) and the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) to have the opportunity of assisting aboriginal people? I am sure that every one here recognizes the importance of this program to preserve the language and culture of aboriginal people.

Mr. Downey: Madam Chairperson, I am quite prepared to meet with the organization. I can assure him that the discussion will be not unlike what he will relay to them from Hansard that we are going to be produced from this meeting.

As far as further discussions are concerned, if the Minister of Education or the Minister of Family Services or the Minister of Culture and Heritage (Mrs. Mitchelson) have a program or a way in which they see that they could support this program, I am not going to close the door on that particular department, or any of those departments. What I am saying is I do not have the capability within the Northern and Native Affairs portfolio at this time to give any additional support, and I would be less than responsible if I were to mislead and to encourage them that there in fact was.

I said last year what I would do, and that is one thing I have found dealing with any group in society whether it is our Native community, or whether it is our non-Native community. If you can do something, then you say you can, and you do it. If you cannot, you should be honest and up front to say that you cannot, and that is what I try to maintain.

If there was some belief that I was able to put some long-term funding in place, then I apologize, but as I read the letter, and as I read our commitment, it was for the funding of last year, the \$64,000.

Mr. Hickes: Just to respond to the minister's remarks, if that commitment was not there or was misunderstood, would the minister agree to have a meeting with the parents to clear all the misunderstanding up, to meet with the parents personally?

Mr. Downey: I have no difficulty with that, Madam Chairperson.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Chairperson, I have questions for the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ernst), the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh) and the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer).

The Minister of Housing knows that I am still very concerned, and we on this side are still very concerned with the decision to abolish 98 local Housing Authorities and form the new Manitoba Housing Authority. We have said before that this decision has taken away local control of public housing, it has taken away local input and responsibility, and the result will be less of a feeling of local responsibility for public housing, especially in small communities in rural Manitoba.

I have some concerns and some questions about the implementation of this decision. I know that the government has repeatedly said that this decision will save \$3 million, and therefore, I would be interested in knowing how much money did the government save by firing 600 board members.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Housing): Madam Chairperson, that is a silly question and really does not deserve an answer. Obviously, when you have volunteer board members that are not paid, you do not save any money, nor was it ever explained publicly or otherwise, or ever suggested publicly or otherwise that the dissolution of volunteer housing boards across the province would have saved a dime.

However, Madam Chairperson, I can tell you that, for instance, we have over a period of time accomplished a number of savings. Let me give you just two or three examples of that. Previously, for instance in Selkirk, painting costs for suites in Selkirk ranged under the administration of the former Housing Authority approximately \$1,200 to \$1,500 per unit. By August of 1991, approximately

six months after the dissolution of the former boards and assuming at least part control and not total control because the operations of the authority still functioned administratively very much as they had before, but just for the couple of incidents, we brought those costs down to about \$850 per unit which would have saved \$72,000 for the Selkirk Housing Authority alone, one single Housing Authority.

So that by implementing common practices across the province, we see a number of areas of savings that can be engendered through this process. I think my honourable friend, you know, has perhaps a philosophical hangup, but I can tell you that once the Manitoba Housing Authority begins to function fully, once the social housing advisory group operations are in place in communities across the province where they desire them, they will now have an opportunity, I think, for significant input from the local community level. Tenant associations are encouraged under the Manitoba Housing Authority. We have, in fact, in every district office a tenant relations officer whose job it will be to liaise with tenants, to assist them in forming tenant associations, to liaise with social housing advisory groups, and to generally do the things that, while may have been done on an involuntary or voluntary basis in the past, will be formalized under the MHA. I think quite frankly that it is going to be a better system for the tenants.

Madam Chairperson, we as a government, we as a Legislature, have to worry about how we are going to maintain a housing stock that in large part is 20 years old and more, and the fact that it is deteriorating, and the fact that dollars are short, the fact that CMHC has cut back in its operations. We have to come up with the money to keep these places in reasonable repair.

Madam Chairperson, it is in all of our interests. It is in the tenants' interest, it is in the government's interest, in the Legislature's interest, and in the taxpayers' interest that we try and maximize the benefits that we can out of the operation, to keep the stock in good condition, and then to be able to have the money available to accomplish those objectives.

Mr. Martindale: I am pleased to hear that the government estimates that they are going to save \$72,000 in Selkirk alone. One of the concerns that tenants in Selkirk have is that with the new system tenants are being asked to vacate units so that a contractor can paint a whole row of units or a large

number of units, and they felt that this was inconveniencing tenants and unfair in some cases. I am wondering if the minister has any information and if he is willing to comment on that.

Mr. Ernst: If the member is referring to the Alfred Block in Selkirk, the matter raised by the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) the other day, that is exactly the case.

It is not just a simple matter of painting. The place is a disaster. What happened was that the Selkirk Housing Authority administration under the former manager chose, because of a large number of units in Selkirk, to take all of the problem tenants and put them in one building. Because of that, there was significant damage inflicted upon the building. There were a number of problems which I will not go into, Madam Chairperson, at this point, but if the member wishes, I will be pleased to do that in private.

Nonetheless, the place is significantly in poor repair, although structurally sound. We are vacating the entire building so that work can be undertaken to bring these units back into reasonable condition. We are taking the existing tenants and relocating them in other units elsewhere in the community in order to accomplish that objective.

* (1640)

Mr. Martindale: If I can comment just very briefly on the tenant relations officer, as a former tenant organizer I look forward to this new system and hope that it will be successful, and that everywhere that tenants want to have a social housing advisory group that they will be enabled to do so through the new tenant relations officers.

Could the minister tell the House how much the government thinks that they will save by firing a number of part-time staff?

Mr. Ernst: The resolution, Madam Chairperson, of the Manitoba Housing Authority in terms of staffing, there were a number of areas of duplication. There were people that were underutilized in terms of the job situations that they have, so there will be some dislocation. The expectation is that overall there will be 40 less full-time equivalent positions in the overall scheme of things than there were under the MHA and that between 75 and 100 people perhaps will be impacted.

You have to appreciate that under some housing authorities, a number of housing authorities, there were staff who for instance worked an hour a day or worked one day a week or worked two hours every second day and things of that nature. There were a great number of staff who it was not a full-time job for them. They could not make a living at doing that, it was a supplementary situation for them, for which we are appreciative of the work that they have done.

The fact of the matter is, Madam Chairperson, that there will be, in addition to the current full-time staff, contact persons or others in the community who will be available for contract work. They will not be full-time employees of the Manitoba Housing Authority, but they will be contract employees to the Manitoba Housing Authority, so in every community there will be one of those people, for virtually every building there will be one of those people, so there will always be local input related to particular building for immediate contact emergency-type situations.

Mr. Martindale: It is my understanding that the union has a tentative agreement with the government, and because of this they did not go to the Labour Board and that union members will be voting whether to accept or reject this agreement that has been worked out and that Manitoba Housing will have the opportunity to decide whether they want to accept it or not. Could the minister indicate when the government will decide and when that information will be made public?

Mr. Ernst: Madam Deputy Speaker, we have been having ongoing discussions with the—there were five, I believe, unions altogether dealing with their previous housing authorities, plus about half of the staff were in fact nonunionized. We have been discussing these matters with the unions involved for some period of time. There is now an agreement that has been ratified I believe Monday evening by the MGEA and the Operating Engineers Union, who are the two successor unions to the previous group. Now that that has been ratified and we have an agreement, we will be dealing with that matter shortly.

Mr. Martindale: Right now the employees are experiencing a great deal of distress because they have to reapply for positions. They do not know if they will be successful or whether they will have to accept other positions, possibly at less pay. People who may be losing their jobs do not know yet if they

are losing them, and it would be my hope that this could be resolved as soon as possible with the least amount of stress on the employees.

Could the minister indicate when the department or Manitoba Housing Authority feels that the new positions will be settled on, so the employees can know when these decisions will be made?

Mr. Ernst: I do not doubt for a minute that it has been as distressing for the employees. It is not a desirable situation, one I do not think anyone would have gone out and sought to have this kind of process; however, such as it is, the process is there and it had to be gone through. Now that we have resolution with respect to the collective bargaining agents and an agreement in terms of who is excluded, who is not, who has successive rights, who does not, who has seniority rights and who does not, and appropriate policies surrounding that, we will be proceeding forthwith with bulletining and filling of these positions.

We intend to provide round-the-clock virtual interviews and so on. They are going to go five or six days a week so that these positions can be filled. We anticipate that most of the existing staff who wish to be employed with the MHA will likely be included. There will be some dislocation, there is no question. So the sooner that is known, the sooner the whole affair can be put to bed, the better I think for everybody concerned. We are going to attempt to do that as quickly as we can.

Mr. Martindale: I would like to thank the minister for those responses. Now, I would like to move on to the issue of co-op housing and the changes in the most recent federal budget.

Would the minister be willing to share with me the correspondence that he had with either the federal minister responsible for Housing or the Minister of Finance? I would be interested in knowing exactly what the concerns were that were passed on to the federal government, and also if the minister has any idea of how this will affect Manitoba in terms of fewer dollars coming to Manitoba, the number of units that will not be coming to Manitoba and the number of jobs that were probably lost as the result of no construction activity for federally funded co-op housing?

Mr. Ernst: Technically, you should rule the question out of order, because it deals with another level of government. In the interest of time and co-operation, I am prepared to say that certainly

when the Estimates of the Department of Housing come up we can have a detailed discussion with the member opposite regarding some of the questions that he has asked, because I cannot at this point answer them.

I can say though that through the council of Housing ministers, we are presently attempting to have a meeting with Elmer MacKay, the minister responsible from the federal side, the minister responsible for CMHC, because all of us collectively across the country are unhappy not just with the co-op housing program cancellation, but the fact that the 3 percent cap on CMHC funding overall is going to impact our province significantly in the future. So we are attempting to organize an emergency meeting with the minister.

The chairman this year is the minister from Ontario, the Honourable Evelyn Gigantes. She is in the process of trying to do that. We are in communication every second day or so to try and encourage that meeting to occur and to do whatever we can to co-operate and assist with that. Presently, the expectation is it may be held on the 10th of April. It had to be moved back one week, but we still have no confirmation of that. Once we have confirmation, we will be attending. We will be putting forward strongly Manitoba's case for both the co-op housing situation and the question dealing with the cap on CMHC funding.

Mr. Martindale: I look forward to continuing this discussion in Estimates. Since we are running out of time, I would like to move to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh).

My basic question is where is the new Residential Tenancies Act? When is it going to be proclaimed? I would be interested in knowing what the problem is, what the holdup is.

It is my impression that part of the problem results from changes that were made between Bill 42 and Bill 13. When we asked one of the previous Ministers of Housing where certain things were in Bill 13 that were taken out of Bill 42, one of the previous ministers said, well, it will be in the regulations, which I interpreted as a well-trust-me kind of answer.

I am wanting to know from the minister who is now responsible for that act if drafting the regulations is a problem, because it has been said that the department is on the 10th draft of the regulation. Could the minister tell us when the bill is going to be

proclaimed and what the problem is? Is the problem the regulations and, if so, is it because of things that were taken out of Bill 42?

* (1650)

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Chairperson, first of all, there is no problem, there is no delay. My statement has always been that the act we hope to have proclaimed at late spring, early summer 1992, which remains our deadline, which remains our target. You know, I cannot say it will be exactly the first day of summer, or the last day of spring, but in around that area is my target date. All of the things we had in line to do are proceeding along the time line we were expecting them to be on at this point.

Yes, they were on draft 10 when I became minister. I cannot speak as to what happened before I was minister in terms of what the minister said about the first draft of the bill and Bill 13. I can tell you that from the time I have come, our target date was late spring, early summer '92.

The regulations have taken a long time to draft. I do not know if they are addressing the things that you were expecting them to address. I do know that they are addressing the things that I have been told by interest groups and by individuals who said, I am really worried about such and such, will the regulations address that? All of those points have been taken into consideration.

The regulations, of course, have to go for drafting. Right now there is a lot of drafting being done for bills that are in the House, and they, of course, take precedence over other drafting.

The deadline for receiving applications for the commissioner is now passed, and those applications have come in. We have ordered 106 chairs for the courtrooms that we will be setting up. We have to do some moving around of duties and responsibilities because, as you know, we will be having court functions now which we did not have before. The staff is being trained. They have to be trained in some of these new functions, some of the new information that they have to put out to the public. The procedures manual, I am not sure if it is ready now, but it is in the stages of being completed.

Once we have the commissioner in place, then the commissioner, him or herself, depending upon which gender it is, will then be assisting us with the final stages of putting together those last details that

have to be put in place before we can proceed to be a court, really, in a sense, which we were not before.

Mr. Martindale: I thank the minister for her answers, and I have three short snappers for the Minister of Family Services.

Could the minister confirm that money allocated to CRISP, the Child Related Income Support Program, has decreased every year in recent years?

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): I do not have the budget details, and I think we are going into Estimates. Maybe even tomorrow we can get into that, but I know that some of the income supplements have changed as salaries have gone up and needs have changed. Certainly the 55 Plus program, the volume has gone down as pensions kick in and other income comes into play. I think we can get into that in the Estimates process when we get to that budget line.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): I have a couple of quick questions to the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey). Perhaps we could start, although I recognize we have only a few minutes, but we could get into it now and finish it tomorrow maybe.

An Honourable Member: Maybe leave those until private members' hour.

Mr. Alcock: If the Chairperson wishes to ask if there is leave, she could do so.

An Honourable Member: You cannot. You have to wait until we are back in the Chamber.

Mr. Alcock: Okay, we cannot, so maybe I can ask my question then.

I wonder if the Minister of Education could start by explaining to me the difference between the announcement in the budget of \$2.5 million in new programs at our community colleges and the existence of only \$1,164,000 in total additional funding to those same three colleges?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Some of the details I will have to provide to the honourable member during the course of the Estimates process, but in terms of the additions at the community colleges, I am sure he understands at this point that we have been able to add a number of new courses to the community colleges and, in addition to adding the new courses, we have also expanded some courses which are currently ongoing at this time.

Mr. Alcock: I thank the minister for that rather brief answer. Perhaps though—the budget was fairly clear. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) said there would be \$2.5 million in new programs, and I am wondering if the Minister of Education can tell us which programs those are? Which are the new ones that add up to that \$2.5 million?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, I am certainly happy to provide the names of some of the new programs at the various colleges if the member would like a listing.

We have, at Red River Community College, a post-diploma in geographical information services. We have a post-diploma in biomedical engineering. We have a manufacturing—oh, I am sorry, manufacturing assessment services is an expanded program. We have a new program, post-diploma in technology management. We have a new program in technology preparation, a new program in applied sciences. Those are at Red River Community College.

I am certainly pleased to provide additional new programming at the other two colleges if the member would find that helpful.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, I would indeed find that helpful.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, other new programs at Assiniboine Community College: agribusiness, a new program; heavy duty equipment, electronics technology, a new program; media production technology, a new program; sustainable shelter specialist, a new program.

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

Mr. Alcock: Thank you very much.

In the \$1,164,000 in increased funding for those three facilities, is any of that money to go for salary increases or operating expenditure increases?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, as I said, I am more than happy to go into the details in the Estimates process.

I will also remind him that I am a new minister, however, I can tell him that some of the increases certainly were for new programming. There were other increases in terms of expansion, and as the member knows also, we have college governance.

We are in the process of working with an implementation team for college governance, and there is some staff training which is necessary in order for those community colleges to progress into college governance which we are aiming for on April 1, 1993, and so there is also some funding for staff training.

Mr. Alcock: Madam Chairperson, I think, given the lateness of the time, perhaps I will just lay out some of the areas that I would be interested in talking about tomorrow, so the minister can prepare for tomorrow's discussion. In the Estimates that were tabled in the House there is, as I had mentioned, about \$1,164,000 in total new funding to the three colleges. The minister has indicated a great many expenditures against that. Presumably there are contractual increases, or salary increases because of merit increases and the new contract. Presumably there are some noncontrollable operating cost increases, electricity and heat and those kinds of things, and the minister has mentioned other things like the new governance program, staff training and all of those kinds of issues that will draw upon those funds. In addition, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) has announced \$2.5 million in new programs.

Given that we have increased expenditures, what I would like to get from the minister is an idea of what portion of that \$1,164,000 will be eaten up by salary increases, merit increases, the new training she has referenced, organizational changes, et cetera, and then try to get a handle on exactly where this \$2.5 million is, and then try to identify what programs are being cut or reduced as a result of the need to fund the \$2.5 million in new programs that the Finance minister has promised us.

Do we still have time remaining? [interjection] Well, no, the Speaker can ask for that. I am told by the Chairperson that she cannot request that, it has to be done by the Speaker. Is that correct? Would you like to move to that now?

Madam Chairperson: The hour being 5 p.m., it is time for private members' hour. Call in the Speaker.

* (1700)

IN SESSION

House Business

Hon. Jim Ernst (Acting Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if there might be will to waive private members' hour today so we can

continue on with Committee of Supply dealing with Interim Supply and so that the member for Osborne can have his questions answered that he so succinctly put earlier?

Mr. Speaker: Is there the willingness of the House to waive private members' hour?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. Leave is denied.

Committee Report

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairperson of Committees): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole reports progress on Bill 67 and asks leave to sit again.

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

Motion agreed to.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 5 p.m., it is time for private members' hour.

ORDERS FOR RETURN, ADDRESSES FOR PAPERS REFERRED FOR DEBATE

Mr. Speaker: Standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis),

THAT an Address for Papers do issue praying for:

The text of the formal opinion requested from the Department of Justice by Health department officials on whether there is anything that would interfere with enforcement of The Public Health Amendment Act, Statutes of Manitoba Chapter 62 (formerly Bill 91), also known as the antisniffing legislation.

Motion presented.

Mr. Speaker: Standing in the name of the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale), who has eight minutes remaining.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): When I left off last time, I was talking about some research that I did back about 1984 in preparation for a speech I made for a national conference on sniffing at the Fort Garry Hotel. What I was looking at in the studies was whether there was a correlation between socioeconomic conditions and sniffing.

One of the problems with this particular issue in our community is that I think there is a public perception that this problem is an inner-city problem, a problem of poor children, or a problem only of aboriginal people in the city and on reserves.

The result of my studies of sniffing show that is not the case, that about half of the studies show a correlation between socioeconomic conditions and sniffing, and about half show that there is no correlation between socioeconomic conditions and sniffing. There was one study that showed a correlation between high income and sniffing. That study, amazingly enough, was done in Winnipeg in the 1970s.

We know from newspaper accounts from time to time that it is not just children on reserves and children in the inner city that die from sniffing. In fact, I remember during the time that the antisniff coalition in Winnipeg was active that there was a very tragic death of a young person in St. James in Winnipeg from an average family, a bright young person. He and his friends were experimenting, and the result was a very sad and tragic death as a result of sniffing.

So when we are asking for this legislation to finally be proclaimed, it is not because we are only concerned about our constituents, not that we are only concerned about inner-city residents and reserve residents, but because this problem affects people everywhere in the province of Manitoba. We want this protection for all young people in the province, not just people in certain geographic areas. So it is, and should be, the concern of all members of this Legislature.

We know that the government supported this bill. They had to support it for it to become law. They promised it and then they have delayed it, and we are still waiting. We have been waiting a long time for them to do something about it.

It was given first reading on December 15, 1989. On February 1, 1990, it was introduced for second reading. It was spoken to on February 6 and March 1, 1990; March 8 and March 13 it went to committee stage; March 13 was clause-by-clause; March 15, third and final reading; but we are still waiting for proclamation.

On December 11, there were questions in Question Period, and in February 1991 the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) indicated that further study was required and that no date had been set for

proclamation. On May 1, 1991, the Minister of Health stated that amendments may be necessary to deal with technical problems with enforcement, but I do not think we have had any clear guidance or indication of what those technical problems are. On March 3, 1992, the minister was asked to table a legal opinion on enforcement of the bill and refused. We have been very critical of the numerous delays in proclaiming this bill.

In fact, there are some parallels with the war on drugs, the alleged war on drugs, by this government. There was a committee chaired by a member, who was a member of the upper benches, now a cabinet minister, and that report was completed and handed to the minister. In fact, I have heard that it was published last July or August, and apparently it is sitting on the desk of the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). We would be interested in knowing where this report is. We are looking forward to seeing those recommendations from that committee that toured the province.

So we have a parallel, in the same area actually. In one case, alcohol and drugs, in this area, in sniffing. We are still waiting for that report, and we are waiting for the antisniff legislation to be proclaimed.

All we can say is that we are very disappointed in the Minister of Health. We are very disappointed in the nonaction of this government, and we would hope that by debating this every Wednesday or every opportunity that we get that it might spur the government to do something instead of sitting and doing nothing.

While they sit and do nothing, the lives of young people are endangered. Between the time that the bill is passed and that it is proclaimed, it is likely that young people either have died or will die. I do not think that I would want to be responsible for that if I thought that those deaths could be prevented. We believe that this legislation will prevent deaths. That is one of the reasons why we are supporting it and anxious to see it proclaimed.

So we will be looking forward to hearing from the Minister of Health in debate and see if he has anything at all to say, and if so, what he has to say, and if he can indicate to the House when this bill will be proclaimed, so that we do not have any more stalling or delaying. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (1710)

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): The Order for Papers that the NDP has asked for, Mr. Speaker—I could not knock them for working towards the goals that they are reaching for. I supported exactly, I would say, almost a parallel legislation when I was at City Council.

Mr. Speaker, the antisniffing legislation, I could not speak against it. You are right, it is positive legislation. The problem is, it is not enforceable. We passed legislation—well, not legislation, we passed a by-law at City Council, the parallel legislation to this, and when it went to the courts, it was found that it could not be enforced. [interjection] I am sure the honourable member can put what he wants to put on the record after me. I do not think he is trying to take up my time. I am more than happy to allow him to come back at a later time.

All I am saying is, I supported the by-law when we were at the city, Mr. Speaker. I spoke in favour of it. It is important that we, as a community, try to protect our young people and all those who are dealing with drugs and sniff and all the rest of it.

How that legislation is put in place is another question. I think the time has come that you do not just draft legislation for the sake of drafting legislation. I think when you draft legislation and you do not put thought behind that legislation, you run into exactly this type of problem. This type of problem, Mr. Speaker, is that you could not enforce it at a later date. I do not feel that you are gaining any ground when you go to the courts and have your legislation being challenged, and you are being turned into a negative response.

An Honourable Member: Proclaim it. Let somebody challenge it.

Mr. Laurendeau: The honourable member says proclaim it, let it be challenged. That is the philosophy of the opposition, proclaim it and let it be challenged. It is really going to do a lot of benefit, Mr. Speaker, a lot of benefit to go into the courts and have a legislation challenged.

Why do we not do it up right, Mr. Speaker? Do what is right for the public and see that proper legislation is not only drafted, but the regulations are enforceable. That is what is necessary. The necessary thing here—and I am sure that is what the NDP want—is protection for our children and protection for the public. So, yes, I am in favour of the legislation, but let us see that the regulations that are in place with the legislation can be enforced in

a court of law. Once that has been put in place, I am sure that this government will see that this type of legislation is put in place.

Thank you very much.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): I am very glad to be able to have the opportunity to speak on this bill, and I was very glad to hear the defence of the government offered by the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) as to why this bill has not been proclaimed.

His defence, it seemed to me, was based upon the argument that this was not an enforceable law. Now, I assume—was the member for St. Norbert in the House at the time when this was voted in? Apparently, he was not in the House, and so he did not vote for this, although he does claim that he voted for something similar in the city during the 1970s, but certainly—

Mr. Laurendeau: Seventies. I am not that old, Jean.

Ms. Friesen: Oh, sorry. Eighties?

Mr. Laurendeau: Nineties.

Ms. Friesen: Nineties, you are a nineties guy. After all this, I did not know that. My apologies to the member for St. Norbert.

He is arguing that this is not an enforceable bill, and although he, himself, did not vote for it, the members of his government and his cabinet did indeed vote for it. They voted for it after attending, as I understand it, committee hearings where a number of community groups spoke in favour of it. In fact, I understand that there was only one group which did not speak in favour of it and that was the Manitoba Medical Association.

It was not a legal body who spoke against it. It was not a legal opinion that was offered that this law was unenforceable. Indeed, I understand that at the committee hearings, lawyers did appear and did compare it to the city by-laws and did say that it was comparable, but in fact it avoided the problems that the city by-law had presented. The lawyers did argue at the committee hearings, and one would have to assume that the government which voted for this bill heard those arguments, took them into account when they made their final disposition on this bill. So the argument of the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) that this is not an enforceable bill seems to me to be based upon very spurious kinds of arguments, and, in fact, run

directly in face of the kind of evidence and the kind of arguments which were presented at the committee hearings in Manitoba.

Now, perhaps the member for St. Norbert does have an alternative legal opinion. That is always the possibility, indeed, that there is more than one legal opinion on this bill. I know that members of this House have for the last two years been asking for other legal opinions, and if they do exist then we would be very keen, I think very anxious to read them. The member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) who has been persisting against all odds in the attempt to get this bill declared into law, I think, has said time and time again that she would like to read the legal opinion that she assumes that a reasonable and rational government must have if it is not proclaiming this bill.

An Honourable Member: Well, I do not think it is a reasonable and rational bill.

Ms. Friesen: You would have to think that does argue against the fact that this is a reasonable and rational government. Speaking in this House where all members are indeed honourable, we would have to assume that there are some honourable members on the other side who do have an alternative legal opinion. So I would ask the government at this stage to put that on the table if they believe sincerely, as the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) has said, that this is not an enforceable bill. If they believe that this follows exactly the pattern of the City of Winnipeg by-law, as the member for St. Norbert has said, then let us put that opinion on the table. Let us all read it, and let us all understand what the arguments of this government are.

In the absence of any evidence, after repeated questionings in this House, it seems to me that it is a disregard of the legitimacy of this House to argue on the one hand from the back benches that this is unenforceable and from the front benches to refuse to put any legal opinion on the record. I think that my constituents, indeed, who have been very anxious to see this bill passed would be interested to know of this. I certainly will be communicating this to them in my next letters and when I meet people on the doorstep.

There are some areas of my constituency where this has been an issue for many years, and indeed I know that some of my constituents were very much involved in the presentations at the committee

hearing and in working with the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) when she put this bill forward. Indeed, the very first call that I had as a new member for Wolseley in this House was from somebody who phoned me and said, where is that antisniff bill? He continued to phone me on a regular basis for six months. He moved then to another riding, and I assume that he is dealing with his member still in that way. It was the very first item that I had to deal with.

I must admit, Mr. Speaker, that I found it very difficult to understand why a government and a cabinet which has voted en masse, solidly, no absentees, no people who voted against it, a solid vote for a bill now refuses and puts the legitimacy of this House, the legitimacy of the democratic process into question, refuses without providing any evidence, refuses to proclaim this bill which has been passed democratically by this House. So I continued my investigations into this on behalf of my constituent. In fact, he was not the only one, because I have had a number of calls since, particularly from the pharmacists, the pharmacists on Broadway and the pharmacists in other parts of my constituency who were very interested from the beginning in the passage of this bill, and very keen to ensure that the restrictions to people under the age of 18 could in fact be carried out. It was something that they certainly wanted to do themselves. They see every day on Broadway some of the damage that these kinds of solvents and other drug abuse—the toll that they can take upon people. They were very keen in fact to see this bill passed and to ensure that they could act upon it.

I have had to tell them in letters and in other communications that, yes, this bill was passed by this Legislature. Yes, this was a bill that was passed by this government. Yes, this was a bill that was voted for by this cabinet, but, no, this bill has not been proclaimed. There is no evidence to suggest that there is any reason for this, no legal opinion. Every time the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) asks a question on this I send her question out, and I send out the supposed responses of the various ministers of this cabinet to the people in my constituency.

* (1720)

I do not think the government should think that this bill and their absence of action on this has gone underground, because it has not. Every member on this side who has constituents who are concerned

about this are sending out this information as often and as frequently as we can.

In my constituency, as well, there is an antisniff coalition which operates at the moment with the assistance of Klinik. This is a group of people in the area around Vimy Ridge Park who, particularly during the summer months, are very concerned about the solvent abuse and sniff kind of activities that they found in their neighbourhood. They are a very concerned group.

They have been very effective in clearing the shelves of one of the local grocery stores of this kind of sniff, and working with the local community police to make some kind of changes to the area around Vimy Ridge Park to make it a safer place for the children who play there. Also, I would emphasize that when I was canvassing in that area during the election campaign, the people whom I spoke to, who are very concerned about the local grocery store, concerned at that time about some inaction on these questions, were also very concerned to a person, in all of the doors that I knocked upon in that area, very concerned about the individuals, the people themselves who were in such desperate straits and in such terrible conditions that they had become constant abusers of solvent, because many of the people who are abusing solvent in that area tend to be older people, homeless people, one of the growing number of homeless people in Winnipeg, particularly during the summer months. They were concerned that there were very few treatment opportunities for these people.

I think that is another thing that I would like to remind the government of at this stage. On the one hand, you cannot simply deny the proclamation of this bill and leave people in limbo, because it is not as though you are expanding the number of opportunities for treatment. There are many more people, many waiting lists, much longer waiting lists, in fact, for this kind of treatment than for many others.

I think the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) and the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) must be very well aware of this, of the very limited opportunities that we have not only in Winnipeg, but in the province generally, for the long-term treatment which is necessary for people who are now, or have been in the past, solvent abusers.

So the treatment issues, I think, are very important to people in the constituency. They were

concerned about the people who would be moved on from that part—people who were hungry, who were cold, who used sniff often, in fact, to escape from the very terrible lives that many of them lead. Where were they being pushed to?

There were no homes for them to go to. There were no treatment centres that were empty, and that equally concerned the people whom I spoke to. It is not just in that part of the constituency of Wolseley, but it is also obviously a problem in St. Johns, in Point Douglas. I have heard the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) also speak of this.

It is not just in the inner city as well. I suppose if I had given attention to this issue before I came into the Legislature, it was with the very tragic events that the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) mentioned—the two young students in St. James who essentially went on a spree, and it was the only time they ever took sniff. It was the first time, and for one of them it was the last time.

That, Mr. Speaker, I think to me, and to many of the people in that part of the city and perhaps elsewhere as well, the tragedy of that is the one mistake that somebody made. It was so easily accessible to him. It was a summer night, they had nothing else to do, they took it as a lark, and one of them died.

It is something which for many people—not just in this city, but in the northern reserves particularly, and in other northern communities—it has been a one-chance event that people have died. We have an issue, for example, recently in Norway House where a woman died. Now I do not know if it was just from a single event, but certainly what strikes me very much is in many ways it is very much like AIDS.

I tell my own children, time after time—we have a kind of code word for it in our own house about AIDS. There is no second chance. If you can get that idea across to young children. There are not many elements of the issue of AIDS and of things like sniff that you can get across to them, that they have no second chance.

That to me is one of the tragedies of this bill, that we have a chance here to take these goods off the shelves. We have a chance to protect children, to protect those who are under 18, who on one summer night, just like those two young boys in St. James, might again take it into their heads to have

a spree, and which, for them, there will be no second chance.

So I appeal to the government again. I think I appeal in vain, but I will do it again. I cannot understand the disregard for democracy, the disregard for this House, of a government which has passed a bill, which has heard it in committee, which has heard the legal opinions presented in committee, which knows the tragedy of those children in St. James or the woman in Norway House, which does not bring in another bill, offers us no other alternatives, which knows that there are waiting lists for the long-term abusers of solvents and sniff.

Given all of those circumstances which have been presented to the government time after time after time in this House, yet they are taking it upon their shoulders to do nothing and not to proclaim this bill.

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services): I am pleased to have a chance to address this issue. I think there are some important lessons that can be learned from how we pass legislation in this House. It is an example where in very short order we got agreement on the fact that we had a social problem that we had to address but that the research and the background work that is required to go into that resolution and into that legislation was not there.

As a result, even though we all had the good intentions of addressing this problem, we did not take the time to really study the manner in which we were going to address that through the resolution. As a result, we passed a resolution that we agreed to, I think, in theory, but in real practical terms are unable to bring it forward and have it enforced.

I think the lesson we need to learn here is that when we are doing reform and changes in social issues that they need to be well thought out and well researched and well documented and brought forward through Legislative Council and take the time to think out all of the ramifications of that legislation.

I know the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) would agree that there are times when he has gotten up to speak on an issue where he was very much in favour of it. I would reference some changes in social allowances that we were able to speak on in the last session where, I have not read his words recently, but I recall his saying that he was wholeheartedly in favour of this, it is something that

the government should have done a long time ago, and he was also going to encourage the federal government to make the same changes.

* (1730)

I accepted his praise and his, I thought, well-thought-out suggestions at that time as representing the thinking of the New Democratic Party at that time, and then when those changes came about, he said: I reserve the right to change my mind, I do not feel that way anymore.

Because there were some vocal groups in society who said, you know, we do not like this, he very quickly decided that he did not like it. It makes me wonder sometimes whether there is much thought put into those comments and just what he really believes.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, we have another occasion here where we did not have a well-thought-out, well-researched resolution, and as a result it has been deemed unenforceable. It does not take away from the issue.

We would join with opposition members, particularly in working with the troubled youth we have in society to find solutions to drug and alcohol issues, and the issues where young people are sniffing glue or gasoline or other solvents. I think that there is a genuine desire on all our parts to find workable solutions that we can put into place.

I can tell you from my background in the school systems that these issues do not just appear in Burrows and Wolseley and on northern reserves. These are issues that are troubling all Manitobans and all levels of society. We have to find workable solutions and ways which we can train our teachers and our social workers and our members of the clergy who work with young people, the people who work at the YMCA and YWCA to work with young people to have them find other alternatives, other lifestyles, and to deal with the real issues out there, even though I am sure we accept the intentions of this resolution that was very positive. Again, we see where there is not the proper research, the proper documentation, the proper thought put into it, because we want to solve a problem so badly, we accepted that resolution.

You know, I listen to the rhetoric of my honourable friend from Burrows (Mr. Martindale) and others, and hear the rhetoric that is there now. As one of my honourable colleagues has pointed out from the comfort of opposition, come forward with all sorts of

solutions to problems that were not tackled in the many years that they were in government in the 1980s and 1970s.

I am reminded of a couple of areas in my own department, the shelter system that we have put in place. I mean, all the rhetoric was there during the 1980s, but there was no funding, all of the good thinking about resolving problems in the communities and building shelters and having outreach workers, but there was no funding. As a result, when we came into government, we had a very unstable situation with people wanting to do good work, but not having the resources, the financial resources or the tools to do that, and believe me, it takes time and it takes commitment, and it takes the will of government to put those resources into place to address those problems.

I am proud of the efforts this government has made and the Department of Family Services has made to put into place the funding to stabilize a shelter system to deal with some very vulnerable people within the province. Again, I point out to honourable members opposite that a lot of planning, a lot of thinking has to go into that, but ultimately the commitment of financial resources.

We have seen, you know, a number of areas where members opposite in the comfort of opposition bring forward ideas, and my honourable friend from Burrows (Mr. Martindale), who tells me that his working life has been devoted to working on poverty issues. We have seen in the last few months more reform of social allowances, for instance, than ever took place since the 1960s. Not only have we been able to put a financial commitment in place to alter upward the social allowance amounts by 3.6 percent when other jurisdictions, notably our neighbour to the east, in Ontario, are only putting very limited resources into social allowances.

We have also made reforms with liquid assets and created a new program in very difficult times, a program which recognizes the special needs of the disabled community. I can tell you that the rhetoric that we hear from opposition benches on some of these social issues was not matched by any action during the 1980s or the 1970s. I can tell you that all of these programs take a lot of work, a lot of planning and a lot of thought before we bring them forward and we do have the resources to actually put the programs into place. So, again, I would reference

that this resolution is an example where—a good idea.

I remember the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) bringing her bag full of solvent cans into the Legislature and rattling them to the top of her desk, and the Speaker, quite rightly so, having to call her to order. It became a very emotional issue, and I guess we all got caught up in the emotion of the time in supporting a resolution like this, because truly all of us want to find a solution to it. Truly, we want our young people to live worthwhile lives and to grow up to be meaningful adults and have careers and raise families the way we all have those good intentions.

Again, we see the rhetoric of the opposition, and I think maybe even a sense of guilt that there are a number of things that they know should have been done during the 1970s and 1980s that they are now seeing come to fruition by a government that cares for people, a government who is prepared to not only match the rhetoric but also to put the resources in there. I can tell you that the people of Manitoba are pleased with the reforms that they see.

An Honourable Member: Oh, especially in daycare.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, the honourable member wants to talk about daycare. You know, we see the government of Ontario going the way the government of Manitoba once did, where they do not want to support family daycare, they do not want to support private daycares. Their tunnel vision of daycare is for an institutionalized form of daycare. Again, we have seen tremendous more financial resources go into that to develop a program where parents have choices of where they want to take their children, and there are spaces now to accommodate them.

We see other provinces that do not have those spaces, that do not have the financial resources committed to a program like we do in Manitoba and at the same time maintain the highest standards for daycare in all of North America.

An Honourable Member: Well I do not know about that. It is slipping.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, it was not more than a few weeks ago that members opposite decided to put out their pretend budget and make the choices, before government put out their budget and looked at the resources, and planned with the unlimited resources that opposition have when they sort of put

together a pretend budget. What kind of resources did they devote to Family Services? Some 5 percent. Some \$20 million less than the government of the day brings down in their budget.

I challenge the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) and other members to tell me where they would have spent \$20 million less. I have yet to hear any suggestions where that took place. Now, I know that, in their pretend budget, in their dream budget, this is what their vision was, to increase Family Services by 5 percent. We virtually doubled that.

Members opposite like to pretend that it all goes to social allowances. But there are a number of new initiatives announced in the budget. I have yet to hear the member for Burrows and others compliment the government on the resources that we are finding for the family dispute area, for the new initiatives in the rehab and community living, for other new programs that we are going to announce.

I would guess that maybe there might be some rethinking done as far as candidates for upcoming by-elections go, because their best thinking that was put to work on this budget fell far short of what government was able to offer as resources.

* (1740)

(Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

So I say to you again, Mr. Acting Speaker, that we not only are prepared to tackle the difficult social issues that confront government, through the Family Services department and other departments, in Health and Education, but have put resources into those departments that far outstrip the resources that were there before or even the wish list that members opposite came up with in their pretend budget.

Now, the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) referenced waiting lists for treatment. Certainly that is a reality. I know within my department, when we look at the child welfare area and we want to enhance the treatment centres—whether they be the Marymounts or the MacDonald Youth Services, Children's Home or some of the private treatment centres, certainly we have got a long way to go. We need more reforms there. We need more resources there. We need more training there for the individuals who are working in those areas.

But I can tell you that I am disappointed that there are never reforms of the system, ideas and

suggestions that come forward from across the way, other than, spend more money there. When we have proceeded with some changes in the manner in which child welfare is delivered in the city of Winnipeg—a system that is working well, I might add—we also announced a number of other reforms that were long, long overdue.

I would reference the child advocate, which was an idea first brought forward in, I think, 1983 by Judge Kimelman. Was there any action on that? Was there any attempt on the part of government in 1983 or years afterwards to accept that, to adopt a child advocate? Other provinces have since done so. Alberta and Ontario are two examples that we have studied, and we have looked at the child advocate in those areas. This is a reform that was not only suggested in 1983 but suggested again by Sigurdson and his companion, who had worked on a number of issues in family services, and in 1987, in a report they brought forward, they too suggested that there be a child advocate.

Again, I ask you, Mr. Acting Speaker, did government act on that? Was that a reform that the government of the day was prepared to accept? The answer was no. So I am pleased we were able to announce that reform last June when we made some other changes. Again, I ask members opposite—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Order, please. The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): This is a particularly important issue, and it is one that our caucus and our colleagues have been working on for a number of years. As the evidence shows, my colleague the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) had endeavoured to put in the required research and effort that was needed to bring in a bill, then to have it accepted by all members of this House, all parties, all sides of this House, as an important bill that should be passed. Then to be procrastinated upon by this government is just inconceivable. It is extremely inconsistent on their part, and it is very difficult to rationalize why they are procrastinating on such an important issue.

The Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) has just stood up and spent most of his time talking about how thoughtful you have to be in doing these things, as if there was no thought. It prompts us to ask what kind of a mad moment the

government must have experienced when they chose to, in this fit of madness, actually vote for the bill, this thoughtless bill. Where were they? Why did they support this thoughtless bill if it was so bad? Where was their thinking at the time? Why were they not able to think through the process to identify those areas that were thoughtless and had to be improved, and even bring in amendments, or say that we cannot support this because it is not enforceable, or it does not have the provisions that are required? They were nowhere to be found at that time. They said this is important.

The Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) stood up and said, I commend the member, on numerous occasions, this is very helpful. It is not the be all and end all, but it is very helpful. Let us pass this bill. They did pass the bill just over two years ago, and there is no action following.

So the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gillehammer) really has no basis for making those comments. He proceeds to give a lecture about the things the members of the opposition want in their pretend budget, as he says, when it is not even the opposition who put forward that budget. Certainly, the minister is speaking about something that has nothing to do with the issue we are looking at today in terms of the request by Order for Return for some rationale by this government for the decision they have made to reject an Order for Return asking for reasons that this is not enforceable, some explanation by the government, so that we could understand why they cannot proclaim this bill. What makes it so difficult?

If you look through this bill, there is a definition section, as is common in most bills. It defines what is an intoxicating substance, and I do not think there is anything difficult with that on the part of the government to enforce in terms of the definitions. It seems fairly straightforward and clear as to what constitutes an intoxicating substance. Then it talks about the prohibition: You cannot buy or sell this if you are under the age of 18. It is clear, enforceable. What is the difficulty?

Then it lists some exceptions which are quite easy to define dealing with a person under 18 purchasing on behalf of their parent or some other guardian who has given them written consent. It goes through a few other situations where if you are buying an intoxicating substance as part of a kit, if you are doing a model airplane or something like that, that would be an exception and so on. So it lists a few

fairly straightforward exceptions. There is no difficulty there with the enforceability. So the government has failed to demonstrate in their speeches, in their response, in any way that there is a difficulty in this area of the bill.

They talk about the issue of displays and how it can be displayed. You cannot have self-service display. That is easy to deal with. They talk about the labelling of these products, clearly labelled as to the fact that they are an intoxicating substance. That is not difficult. If they are not labelled, there is a violation there. You can give a warning. Any new law takes time to introduce to the public. They need to have time to adjust.

Just like with seat belts, there was not a lot of tickets given the first period of enforcement, there were warnings given. The police officers endeavoured to co-operate with the government and with the public in that regard as part of an education process, and there could be a period of some warnings given during the initial period of enforcement that the bill is in place. Then following that, there could be charges being laid.

You have a natural and logical process that we would see that could be put in place for this instead of waiting two years, and they have not even brought in a bill. They have not brought in a replacement. They have not brought any suggestions for improving it. We have nothing. We could have had a bill that could have been proclaimed two years ago, could have gradually been enforced. Now we would have a strictly enforceable bill at this point in time, and if some amendments had to be brought in as a result of experience, that even could have been done by this government with two or three sittings of the House since that time.

So there is really no logical explanation, no reasonable explanation by this government. In fact, they are not able to explain their actions other than the fact that they have had a fundamental change of heart on this issue. They are choosing to look the other way. Why are they choosing to look the other way? Why are they choosing to ignore a serious problem in society that we all see in our communities, that we all face? Why would they turn their backs on something so serious? That is a very difficult question to answer when they in fact supported the bill when it was introduced and voted on in this House.

* (1750)

What has happened to change them? Have they been lobbied by some sections of the business community who have said: No, we do not want to stop making money on teenagers buying these substances. We make a lot of bucks on this.

Is that the reason? Well, I just asked the question. I am certainly not implying that is the case. I am asking the question. I am searching. I am searching to find out why it is that they have had this fundamental change when they are dealing with a solution to a difficult problem, a very serious problem in society.

Is it the law enforcement officers? Are they asking that this be shifted aside, that this not be proclaimed? Are the law enforcement agencies saying that? Is that a fact? We have not had that explanation from the government. They do not want to explain at all why they are not. The Acting Speaker, who spoke earlier on this bill, said that he supported it, but he said it is not enforceable. I wonder if he knows something about why it is not enforceable, because no one said and the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) when he spoke did not even say that. He did not even say that. He did not tell us why it was not enforceable. He just said it is not enforceable.

Was he taking the word of the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard)? Was he taking the word of the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer)? Why did he repeat that? Was he just plagiarizing something that had been told to him by others, or has he researched it to find out that it is unenforceable?

You know, there are a lot of questions that have to be answered, and I think the answers lie with the member for Rossmere (Mr. Neufeld). Possibly he will be able, since he is no longer in cabinet, to provide those answers, to shed some light, to speak openly about why the government does not want to support this bill, why they will not even give us reasons for not proclaiming the bill.

What is it that we are missing here? Where is the explanation, or is there nothing logical but basically a change of heart, a callous disregard for the people who are suffering as a result of sniff being available to young people in society? Is that all we can say?

The Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) is listening here. He, I am sure, is concerned. The Environment minister must be concerned about the impact on young people in his community. He

knows that it exists, that this problem exists. Why is he turning his back? Is it because they have not written him enough letters or phoned him enough? Why is it that he will not speak up to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) and the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) and say, this bill must be proclaimed, I will not stand by and ignore this serious problem in our society?

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Others have told us about this serious problem, and I went through this bill, and I went through the major sections, and I could find nowhere in the bill that it was unenforceable. Now, why will the government not come clean with the public and with the opposition here in this House and the other members and explain in detail?

The Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik), I am sure, would like to do that. Has he got the research? Has he been provided with the answers and would he stand up in this House and explain why? I am sure he likes to be forthright in providing answers. We need that information. Let that minister stand up the next time this comes up in the House and explain in detail. He may even have a couple of minutes yet in this sitting where he could explain that.

You know we are in a recession that is driven by policies of Conservative governments in Canada. People are unemployed in unprecedented numbers in this province and country, and with that kind of socioeconomic problem comes turning to other crutches for support and very often leads to such things as substance abuse. That is one of the reasons why the government should be all the more anxious to move quickly in an area to stop this abuse, to save some lives, as my colleagues have pointed out.

Individuals who have tried only a few times, once or twice, this experience and have lost their lives or lost their future as a result of being affected, their brains being affected by the impact of sniff—how can we let this go on when we have the solution at hand? How can we ignore that kind of a problem?

I appeal to the government, please come forward with your explanations and your solutions. Do not let this drag on now for more than two years. If there really is no reason, other than some lobbying by somebody who does not want to see this bill, who might lose some profits because of it, then that is not sufficient reason and the government has a right and responsibility to stand up and say that was the

reason. We are not going to use that reason as a reason for not proclaiming this bill. We are going to move forward because we know it is right, we know it is necessary, and we know that those people who are impacted by it need the help now.

I ask them to in fact move forward. I request that they would bring forward all information they have at their disposal to satisfy the concerns that have been raised by my colleague the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) in her efforts, and our support for those efforts and her efforts, to in fact find a solution to this very serious problem in society. The government has a responsibility, Mr. Speaker, to act now.

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): Mr. Speaker, I am really pleased to speak on this bill. It is a very serious concern, and all members on this side of the House recognize the importance of legislation, if legislation is the answer.

I travelled around the province with regard to abuse of substances and talked to a lot of people over the course of several months. The message we were hearing was not that legislation was the only answer. I think that too often these pieces of legislation come into play without serious thought given to them before they are put into law.

When we look at the bill, the purpose of the bill is to prevent the solvent abuse among young people. As I have indicated, I do not think anyone in government or in this Chamber wants to protect the people who are abusing this kind of substance by

sniffing as a way of life. We realize how serious it is. I heard in our travels last winter travelling the province, it is not something that is foreign to any particular area; it is not foreign to any particular class of people. It is a serious issue among all members of the community in the province of Manitoba.

It is not only in Manitoba that this problem does exist. Society has accepted this as a way of life. In some respects people have taken this route to deal with their problems, but legislation is not going to stop them from sniffing or abusing sniff.

This was recognized by this government after it was implemented after hearings, and the honourable Attorney General (Mr. McCrae) indicated, shortly after it was passed in this Legislature, that there were problems with certain sections that should be dealt with in committee and should be thought through.

Upon the review of the bill, the Manitoba health staff and staff of the Alcoholism Foundation of Manitoba identified certain substances that there was going to be difficulty in proclaiming. It should be noted that in '79, the city of Winnipeg, as the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) indicated—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek will have 12 minutes remaining.

The hour being 6 p.m., this House now adjourns and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Thursday).

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Wednesday, March 25, 1992

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