



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

42 Elizabeth II

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ALCOCK, Reg	Osborne	Liberal
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	NDP
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	Liberal
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	NDP
CHEEMA, Gulzar	The Maples	Liberal
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	NDP
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	PC
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
DUCHARME, Gerry, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	Liberal
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Cliff	Interlake	NDP
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	PC
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	NDP
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Liberal
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	PC
GRAY, Avis	Crescentwood	Liberal
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
ORCHARD, Donald, Hon.	Pembina	PC
PALLISTER, Brian	Portage la Prairie	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
<i>Vacant</i>	Rossmere	
<i>Vacant</i>	Rupertsland	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 1, 1993

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Jeffrey Monias, Corey Monias, Maggie Monias and others requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to consider making, as a major priority, the establishment of a solvent abuse treatment facility in northern Manitoba.

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Ovide Mercredi, Phil Fontaine, Sydney Garrioch and others requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to consider making, as a major priority, the establishment of a solvent abuse treatment facility in northern Manitoba.

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Donna Guerette, Marilyn Halbert, Yvonne Sanderson and others requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to consider making, as a major priority, the establishment of a solvent abuse treatment centre in northern Manitoba.

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Bob Brightnose, Bernice Scatch, Nora McLeod and others requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to consider making, as a major priority, the establishment of a solvent abuse treatment facility in northern Manitoba.

Mr. Jerry Storle (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Yvonne Manoakeesick, Vincent Mason, Diana Wood and others requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to consider making, as a major priority, the establishment of a solvent abuse treatment facility in northern Manitoba.

* * *

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Harley Bradley, Laurel Palosaari, James K. Anderson and others requesting the Manitoba Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) to consider conducting a plebiscite of Manitoba's farmers as soon as possible

on the issue of removing barley from the jurisdiction of the Canadian Wheat Board.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS there is a very serious solvent abuse problem in northern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS according to the RCMP over 100 crimes in Thompson alone in 1992 were linked to solvent abuse; and

WHEREAS there are no facilities to deal with solvent abuse victims in northern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS for over three years, the provincial government failed to proclaim the private member's anti-sniff bill passed by the Legislature and is now proposing to criminalize minors buying solvents even though there are no treatment facilities in northern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS for nine years, the 25 Chiefs who comprise the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, supported by medical officials, police and the area Member of Parliament, have proposed a pilot treatment project known as the Native Youth Medicine Lodge; and

WHEREAS successive federal Ministers of Health have failed to respond to this issue with a commitment; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba provincial government has a responsibility to ensure that there is adequate treatment for solvent abuse.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier to consider making as a major priority, the establishment of a solvent abuse treatment facility in northern Manitoba.

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

Mr. Clerk: The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS there is a very serious solvent abuse problem in northern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS according to the RCMP over 100 crimes in Thompson alone in 1992 were linked to solvent abuse; and

WHEREAS there are no facilities to deal with solvent abuse victims in northern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS for over three years, the provincial government failed to proclaim the private member's anti-sniff bill passed by the Legislature and is now proposing to criminalize minors buying solvents even though there are no treatment facilities in northern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS for nine years, the 25 Chiefs who comprise the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, supported by medical officials, police and the area Member of Parliament, have proposed a pilot treatment project known as the Native Youth Medicine Lodge; and

WHEREAS successive federal Ministers of Health have failed to respond to this issue with a commitment; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba provincial government has a responsibility to ensure that there is adequate treatment for solvent abuse.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier to consider making as a major priority, the establishment of a solvent abuse treatment facility in northern Manitoba.

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

Mr. Clerk: The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS there is a very serious solvent abuse problem in northern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS according to the RCMP over 100 crimes in Thompson alone in 1992 were linked to solvent abuse; and

WHEREAS there are no facilities to deal with solvent abuse victims in northern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS for over three years, the provincial government failed to proclaim the private member's anti-sniff bill passed by the Legislature and is now proposing to criminalize minors buying solvents even though there are no treatment facilities in northern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS for nine years, the 25 Chiefs who comprise the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, supported by medical officials, police and the area Member of Parliament, have proposed a pilot treatment project known as the Native Youth Medicine Lodge; and

WHEREAS successive federal Ministers of Health have failed to respond to this issue with a commitment; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba provincial government has a responsibility to ensure that there is adequate treatment for solvent abuse.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier to consider making as a major priority, the establishment of a solvent abuse treatment facility in northern Manitoba.

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

Mr. Clerk: The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS there is a very serious solvent abuse problem in northern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS according to the RCMP over 100 crimes in Thompson alone in 1992 were linked to solvent abuse; and

WHEREAS there are no facilities to deal with solvent abuse victims in northern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS for over three years, the provincial government failed to proclaim the private member's anti-sniff bill passed by the Legislature and is now proposing to criminalize minors buying solvents even though there are no treatment facilities in northern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS for nine years, the 25 Chiefs who comprise the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, supported by medical officials, police and the area Member of Parliament, have proposed a pilot treatment project known as the Native Youth Medicine Lodge; and

WHEREAS successive federal Ministers of Health have failed to respond to this issue with a commitment; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba provincial government has a responsibility to ensure that there is adequate treatment for solvent abuse.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier to consider making as a major priority, the establishment of a solvent abuse treatment facility in northern Manitoba.

* (1335)

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Mr. Edward Helwer (Acting Chairperson of Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the First Report of the Committee on Privileges and Elections.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Your Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections presents the following as its First Report.

Your committee met on Tuesday, April 27, 1993, at 5 p.m. in Room 254 of the Legislative Building and Monday, May 31, 1993, at 10 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building to discuss the organizational process for public hearings for The Freedom of Information Act.

Your committee adopted at its May 31, 1993 meeting the following recommendations:

MOTION:

THAT the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections advertise extensively within Manitoba that public hearings be held in Winnipeg on June 22, 1993, at 7 p.m., and if necessary, Saturday, June 26, 1993, at 10 a.m., and written submissions regarding the comprehensive review of The Freedom of Information Act be accepted by the Clerk of the Committee.

MOTION:

THAT this committee limit the time of oral presentations to 20 minutes per presenter with up to a further 10 minutes for questioning by committee members, and that the 20-minute presentation limit be included in the appropriate advertisements.

MOTION:

THAT following the public hearing process, staff of the department responsible for The Freedom of Information Act draft a report to be presented to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections by March 31, 1994, for their debate and approval and later presentation to the House.

Your committee reports that it has concluded the organizational process to establish public hearings for the review of The Freedom of Information Act.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

Mr. Helwer: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairperson of Committees): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has considered certain resolutions, directs me to report progress 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.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table Supplementary Information for Legislative Review for the Manitoba Department of Health.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, I have a statement for the House.

Mr. Speaker, honourable members, today I had the pleasure of announcing, along with Mr. Monte Hummel of the World Wildlife Fund, Canada and Allison Elliott of the Manitoba Naturalists Society, a provincial regulation under The Wildlife Act that will ensure a large part of the Cape Churchill Wildlife

Management Area remains protected for designation as a national park.

This regulation will preclude mining, commercial forestry, hydro-electric development or other activities that could significantly impact natural habitats within the wildlife management area and will protect the area for future designation as a national park. This action demonstrates our commitment to the proposed Churchill National Park and reaffirms the government's commitment to the Endangered Spaces Campaign.

The campaign's goal is to protect representative portions of Manitoba's natural areas. Land protected under this regulation will qualify as representative of the Hudson Bay Lowland and the Arctic Tundra natural regions of Manitoba.

Manitoba's initiative will maintain the area's suitability for designation as a national park, and it will be a step towards having the area contribute to the protected spaces goals under the federal Green Plan.

The negotiations between Canada Parks Service, the LGD of Churchill, local native representatives and the Department of Natural Resources have been wide-ranging and constructive in respect to possible national park establishment in the Churchill region.

Negotiations over the proposed park area will continue. Provisions are in place to maintain local and traditional uses in the wildlife management area. As well, this regulation does not—I repeat—does not prejudice any native land entitlement negotiations that may be included in this area.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. George Hickey (Point Douglas): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to respond to the minister's comments, because the park that has been negotiated for the community of Churchill is mostly in the Cape Churchill area, which is the habitat for snow geese. Also, it has been traditionally a hunting area for the local residents. It was heavily used in the past for aboriginal trappers of the area.

I am glad that the government is going to continue negotiations with the local people, because it has to be looked at as an area to be used for tourism and an area to be used as a park, but also, not to exclude the usage of the local residents and the aboriginal users of that area. It is very important that is looked at and considered very strongly.

With it becoming a national park, hopefully when they develop this into a national park and hire personnel to staff it as a national park, I hope the minister will encourage his federal counterparts to ensure that local residents—or insist that local residents are given opportunities to be employed at that park.

Whether or not it takes training dollars to get people of the area qualified, because there is such high unemployment in the community of Churchill, and they are relying on the assistance of this government for the park as they are for the spaceport, a rail line, I hope the minister will insist that local people are hired, adequate training is put in place and will make sure that the aboriginal users of the area and the local residents of the area are not jeopardized in any way because those are areas we have used for years and years.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (1340)

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join with the minister and to recognize what is indeed a considerable achievement. We are moving, albeit extraordinarily slowly, one could almost say at a snail's pace, towards our commitment to endangered spaces in the province of Manitoba, but at least there is some movement in the announcement that is being made today and that has to be seen as positive.

Unfortunately, it comes just one day after the announcement of a parks policy in Manitoba with the bringing down of a new parks act, which is a toothless tiger in terms of any genuine protection for parks in the province of Manitoba which come under provincial jurisdiction.

So while they are prepared to protect those that will hopefully and soon come under federal jurisdiction, it is, I think, unfortunate that the minister has not taken exactly the same kind of long-term strategy with regard to the parks within his own jurisdiction.

This is a good step in the Endangered Spaces Program and I look forward to hearing other announcements.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery, where we have with us this afternoon from the Rock

Lake School eleven Grades 7 and 8 students under the direction of Mr. Walter Warkentin. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Maple Leaf Fund Transaction Review

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the public is repulsed with some of the examples of greed and profit for funds received under the Immigrant Investment Fund, examples where people got a hundred-thousand-dollar fee—Mr. Kozminski—for managing a vacant lot adjacent to the Broadway building, examples of garages and car washes flipping and flipping and flipping again so that outrageous amounts of money are made, examples of \$622,000 for the Maple Leaf Fund paying Mr. Kozminski a fee for managing one of his own properties.

On page 31 of the report, the report states that the government tabled a part dealing with the Maple Leaf Fund: The terms of our engagement did not extend to an exhaustive investigation to determine whether all related party transactions had been adequately disclosed.

I would like to ask the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) whether, in fact, the internal review that was announced by the government on March 26, 1991, included those transactions?

* (1345)

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, in terms of the Leader of the Opposition's preamble, that is part and parcel why, if he goes back to the audit that was prepared and submitted back in December of 1992, there are many suggestions around the whole issue of the original application, the reasonableness of any projects, the amount of—in fact, there is a suggestion, which we endorsed, in terms of capping the amount of fees that promoters and developers can, in fact, take from any individual project.

Again, he is pointing to deficiencies that existed in the program that were outlined in my letter back in March of 1991 to the federal government indicating what our role was in terms of the review

of economic impact in our province and what we saw as the federal government's role.

In terms of the related party transactions, when the matter was reviewed internally back in March, April of 1991, at that particular point in time, officials pointed out that while there might be some general concerns about perception, in terms of the guidelines that existed, there were no violations of guidelines that were in place, Mr. Speaker.

Mike Bessey Involvement

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the minister should inform the public that the government was being threatened with lawsuits on July 22, 1992, which precipitated the investigation. It was not the minister riding off on a horse dealing with this issue unilaterally. I have the letter from Mr. Shead.

Getting back to the dates, Mr. Speaker, there was no internal review and no external review, obviously, of the connections dealing with the various companies in spite of the fact there were public allegations. There were questions I raised in a letter to the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of March 25, 1991, about this issue, and subsequent to that date, about a person named Mike Bessey, a person described by Manitoba Business as the Premier's No. 1 adviser. The No. 1 adviser to the Premier of Manitoba, the most powerful person second only to the Premier himself, according to Manitoba Business, was appointed on September 4, 1991, to the position of Acting Deputy Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism.

What was Mr. Bessey's involvement in these internal reviews, and what was Mr. Bessey's involvement in recommending a second approval of the Canadian Maple Leaf Fund, a fund obviously of tremendous pecuniary interest for Mr. Kozminski?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Once again, the Leader of the Opposition is absolutely incorrect in his preamble in terms of what precipitated the review, and it had nothing to do with the letter he refers to. There were other issues that came to light at our level, and we initiated the review, Mr. Speaker. It had nothing to do with that particular letter that the Leader of the Opposition is, in fact, referring to.

In terms of Mr. Bessey's role, he was the Acting Deputy Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism for a period of time. We have outlined on many

occasions the process to the Leader of the Opposition and members of this House. The Leader of the Opposition knows full well the process.

It is a similar process to that put in place back in 1986 when he was a part of government, that these matters are dealt with at an administrative level in terms of the review of the economic impacts on Manitoba. The process was the same in 1986 under his government. It was the same in 1988 when we came to power, and it was the same when Mr. Bessey was Acting Deputy Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism.

Political Connections

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the minister contradicts himself. On the one hand, he said, I dealt with these concerns in my letter I wrote to the government; on the other hand, he ordered an internal investigation. He, the minister, promised the public he would have an internal investigation, and then he goes ahead and has an approval of Mr. Kozminski to get a next fund after those issues of internal review are allegedly being dealt with by the Conservatives opposite.

I would like to ask the minister: Who was dealing with and who was investigating the political connections between the Conservative government of the day and Mr. Kozminski, a person who is a prominent fundraiser for the government?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, again, the Leader of the Opposition is up to his usual approach, his usual attack with any of these issues, always trying to politicize and impute motives and so on in any one of these situations.

This audit was conducted on five individual funds, and there was no political involvement in terms of the decision making around the Maple Leaf Fund. It followed the same process that every other fund that was approved, starting back in 1987, followed.

The treatment of that particular fund was not treated any differently than any other fund, Mr. Speaker, and I think the Leader of the Opposition, I am sure, is interested to know that a release through the press today from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, says: The provincial government intends to review its participation in the federal Immigrant Investor Program in the wake of Manitoba's withdrawal from it.

With Manitoba moving so quickly, it makes it easier for Saskatchewan to do a review, said David Kutcher, a consultant with the province's Business Immigration Program, once again confirming what I have told him on many occasions is the role we are playing in this initiative.

* (1350)

Mr. Doer: The minister did not answer the question of who reviewed the political connections between the government of the day, the minister of the day, the deputy minister who is the chief political adviser for a period of time or is chief adviser to the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the various investors, Mr. Speaker.

We are very concerned about this. We were very concerned about it when the government first announced the audit. The audit is very thorough in financial analysis. The public is repulsed by what has happened, Mr. Speaker, and it is obvious that this is an exercise in greed in terms of the Province of Manitoba, and we want some answers to these questions about the involvement of the provincial government.

The provincial government, the Conservative government, in 1990, received money from the Canadian Maple Leaf Fund itself in political donations. I would like to ask the minister whether the auditor reviewed the political donations and whether they came appropriately or inappropriately to the Premier and the Conservative Party of Manitoba.

Mr. Stefanson: Once again, the Leader of the Opposition follows his usual approach. In fact, he must have been reading old issues of Hansard because the Leader of the second opposition party, I believe, raised this very same matter back in March or April of 1991, if I recall correctly, Mr. Speaker.

Again, he is dealing with issues that do not relate to the approval process around any Immigrant Investor Fund, and we have a series of them in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, and I believe, if you were to go through the list of people who are a part of any of these funds, you would find individuals who probably support all three political parties.

That has absolutely nothing to do with the review process that the administration of Industry, Trade and Tourism was doing under his time in government and has been doing under our time in government since 1988, Mr. Speaker.

The process is the same, the internal review. Our role is the same. Our role is the review of the economic benefits to Manitoba on any project, and we have said consistently from Day One—and we confirmed it back in March of '91. We confirmed it in June before the task force in terms of a submission from my department. I confirmed it in writing to the chair of the task force. We have confirmed it over and over again, Mr. Speaker, what our role is and what we recognize as the federal government's role, and we put them on notice over two years ago what their role was in terms of compliance, in terms of monitoring, and that continues to be substantiated by our audit.

I am pleased to see that other provinces are now following the lead of Manitoba, provinces like Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, these issues became public. The connections between the Conservative Party and the Maple Leaf Fund and Mr. Kozminski became public in 1991. The minister himself promised an internal review to ensure that these matters would be dealt with.

He then proceeded to approve, through his department, another second issue for the same Mr. Kozminski and the same Canadian Maple Leaf Fund in November of 1991—which he confirmed yesterday in the House—subsequent to the appointment of Mr. Bessey as acting deputy minister of the department.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister: Did the auditor review the role of Mr. Bob Kozminski as chairman of the Conservative spring Premier's dinner in May of 1993 and its relationship with the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Conservative government in terms of approving these funds?

Mr. Stefanson: I cannot help but restate, Mr. Speaker, my comments to the Leader of the Opposition, that I am totally disgusted with his approach in terms of dealing with this national issue, and he is doing a disservice to the entire issue.

I went back and I read his questions back in April of 1991. Do you think he asks about investor protection in those questions? No, Mr. Speaker. Does he ask about compliance mechanisms? No. Does he ask about monitoring protection or anything? No, none of those types of questions. All of a sudden, on the heels of initiatives of this government in terms of cleaning up this issue, he

now starts to try and politicize the situation and tie one director to this political party.

I have told him what the process is. He knows full well what the process is. He was there when the process was put in place in terms of the review on the role of Manitoba, and for him to do what he is doing today is absolutely unacceptable and unconscionable.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the only cleaning up that is going on is some of these developers tied to the Conservative Party. I have asked the minister three times who investigated the political connections. Three times, the minister did not answer because nobody investigated that matter, because the government would not dare have that investigated.

I would like to ask the government who is investigating the fact that in 1991, after the minister himself and the government themselves promised an internal review—the Premier (Mr. Filmon) himself promised an internal review in his Estimates. The Premier himself said that Manitoba has the best record in Canada. I think when these investigations are completed, unfortunately, Manitoba will have the worst record in Canada.

Who is reviewing the fact that either people did not see it or did not want to see it in 1991 when the government did not investigate the connections, did not investigate the second party as the reports says, and the government did not even ask the auditor to investigate the second relationships?

Who is dealing with the bigger picture of why there are verbal agreements on these funds? Why are there verbal agreements and files missing on other funds? Why is this thing so loose and why is nobody investigating the political realities or the political connections between Mr. Kozminski, who is the chair of the Premier's fundraising, and the provincial government?

* (1355)

Mr. Stefanson: I am not sure where the Leader of the Opposition is heading with this whole line of questioning about political connections. Does he want us to go back to each and every director of each and every fund and find out what political party they belong to, go back to each individual investor and find out what political party they belong to? We certainly know that people who are proponents of some of these funds, and some of these funds that have problems, are not supporters of the Progressive Conservative Party, Mr. Speaker.

It is for reasons of having no politicization that the process was put in place under their government, that these decisions are made at an administrative level. Decisions around the Maple Leaf Fund were made the same way as every other fund in terms of stopping at an administrative level in terms of the process. The role of the provincial government is to review the economic benefits. The remaining roles are the responsibility of the federal government. We followed the same procedure that he was a part of when he was in government, and it is one that keeps politics out of it.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, he does a pure disservice to try and create the kind of picture or to try and paint the kind of picture that he does. He is doing a disservice to what is a national issue. We have governments in Saskatchewan, Ontario, New Brunswick and across this land recognizing that something needs to be done, and they are following the lead taken by Manitoba.

Immigrant Investor Fund Attorney General Involvement

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the very sad part about this debate is that, obviously, whether it was set up by the New Democratic Party or whether it was added to by the Conservative Party, it has been badly managed since Day One. That is perfectly clear.

The question is, what is happening today to protect funds that are still in existence and to protect investors who have, in fact, contributed those funds?

The first audit was complete in February. Can the minister tell the House if upon receipt of that first audit, it was sent to the Attorney General for further legal investigation?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, the first audit the Leader of the Second Opposition is referring to is the Winnipeg Ramada Renaissance Hotel on north Portage. That report was received shortly after February 4, which is the date of the auditor's report.

Simultaneously, we were having a legal opinion in terms of many of the aspects around this particular project from the legal firm of Taylor, McCaffrey. One Mr. D'Arcy McCaffrey and others in that firm were doing a legal opinion. We waited for the conclusion of not only the accounting and

auditor's report but also the legal opinion before deciding to forward all five copies of the audits along with the pertinent information to the Attorney General's department.

I do want to remind the Leader of the Second Opposition, I think she is fully aware that since the end of December of 1992, the funds in the Ramada Renaissance, the funds in The Pas and the funds in south Portage have all been frozen, so nothing can be happening to those funds. We have made a recommendation in terms of what we think should be a reasonable course to follow in terms of the disposition. So far, the federal government does not agree with us. We will continue to pursue that.

I agree with her. I agree with her comments about the problems around this fund, and we can say, should we have acted sooner or when should we have acted. We have accepted that as fair criticism, unlike the kind of criticism and politicization we see from the NDP.

We accept the timing issue, Mr. Speaker, but we have addressed it, and we are the first province to be addressing it. It is interesting to see the reaction now coming from provinces across Canada, because this is not, I assure this House, a unique problem to Manitoba. We are going to find unfortunate situations across Canada.

Funding Freeze

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, while it is clear that the funds were frozen in one particular project, because of the audit completed February 4 and because of the minister's concerns even prior to the completion of that audit, can the minister tell the House today why the other funds' assets have not been frozen in the same way?

* (1400)

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, again, as the Leader of the Second Opposition, I believe, knows, we did not have the authority to freeze funds. The three funds in question were frozen at our request to the federal government.

We did not have any reason to make that request, and, certainly, there is nothing preventing the federal government, if they saw a reason to implement it, from imposing it at any given point in time. So at stages during the audits, there was no reason to make a request as it relates to other funds.

Most of the funds that we have before us, some are specific projects that are now completed. What we are dealing with in many cases we are learning from unfortunate situations after the fact, but what we can learn from this is an improvement around the program in its entirety.

That is why we will not go back into the program unless integrity and reasonable rules are built around it. At this point in time, as the Leader of the second opposition party knows, we are out of the Immigrant Investor Program.

Ramada Renaissance Project Ownership Transfer

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Quite frankly, in my opinion, the best thing to do with the entire program would be to abolish it and stop selling visas to enter Canada.

Mr. Speaker, the province has frozen funds for the Ramada Renaissance project, but the audit says there is not enough money to complete this project, contrary to the guidelines, and that has been admitted, but Lakeview, contrary to these guidelines, as well, signed a deal with the North Portage Development Corporation which says that if the project cannot be completed, ownership will be transferred to the North Portage Development Corporation.

What effect does the freezing of the funds have on this arrangement?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, that was one of the deficiencies found by the auditors, that if the project was started and defaulted on, there was a provision with North Portage that the hotel would transfer to North Portage, which clearly was not outlined in the offering memorandum when the original subscriptions were sold to immigrant investors.

At this particular point in time, nothing has happened to the funds that are on deposit. We have made a recommendation to the federal government to go to the courts and to get somebody appointed on behalf of the investors, most of whom live outside of Canada currently, in Hong Kong, Korea, Taiwan and other parts of the world, that somebody should be appointed by the courts to represent them.

That individual then, in consultation with investors, can start making decisions around the disposition of the remaining funds, the whole issue of the hotels, the whole issue of their visas because

they all have been issued, or the majority of them have been issued visas to Canada, and what will happen with those visas if a project does not go ahead.

So we have made what we think is a very reasonable recommendation to deal with this situation. So far, it has not been accepted by the federal government. They have suggested, Mr. Speaker, utilizing the trust company, RM Trust, as a mediator in this situation. We disagree with that because we think RM Trust was a part of the whole process, and they do not bring the independence that would be brought to the issue by court-appointed individuals on behalf of the investors.

Assiniboine River Diversion Natural Resources Support

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, there has been ongoing concern and now growing evidence that this government is paving the way for the Assiniboine diversion with support in many forms.

I have a memo from the director of Policy Co-ordination branch in the Department of Natural Resources where he writes: The Manitoba Natural Resources supports the Pembina Valley Water Co-op's proposal conceptually, based on the information provided in the EIS in the addendum and based on our familiarity with the proposal through our past involvement in various aspects of the proposal during the planning project stages.

I would ask the Minister of Natural Resources why this official in his department is giving this kind of support before the environmental impact assessment.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Natural Resources and the federal agency referred to as PFRA, the prairie farm rehabilitation organization agency, are the two main organizations responsible with the mandate for management of Manitoba's water resources.

Both of these agencies have been actively involved in pursuing the resolution to the chronic water shortages of that particular region of the province known as the Pembina Valley Water Co-op management group. They have been called upon, in fact, they have been funded by this government as well as by the Government of Canada in pursuing a resolution to this problem.

It is not surprising to me therefore that officials within the department have assisted the Pembina Water Co-op in bringing this proposal forward which is now before the provincial Clean Environment Commission for consideration.

Ms. Cerilli: Mr. Speaker, for the same minister: Why is the support not made conditional on dealing with the environmental concerns, some of which are raised in the same memo? Why is this support not made conditional on dealing with these environmental concerns?

Mr. Enns: Mr. Speaker, as you would expect on a proposal of this kind, all kinds of issues are raised. Professional people are doing their jobs.

Here is a listing of the kinds of memos that people from the Department of Environment, my department, Fisheries, Oceans and Fisheries, have raised with respect to this issue. All are being looked at and addressed. If she reads the memo further, the comment is also made that in the opinion of some of the officials of the department, these issues can be mitigated or their seeking further advice from the Department of Environment will be dealt with in a particular way.

But that is all neither here nor there. The issue is, these are the kinds of things, these are the kinds of testimonies that will be sought by the Clean Environment Commission upon which a decision and recommendation will be made to government.

Mr. Speaker, let me make it very clear. These are department officials doing their job. The government of Manitoba has yet to deal with this issue.

Ms. Cerilli: Mr. Speaker, why is it that our Department of Natural Resources is giving unqualified support based on documents that now four other federal agencies are not satisfied with?

Why is it that our federal agencies are not satisfied with the information which has been said to be inadequate, and our Department of Natural Resources is accepting it?

Mr. Enns: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member really cannot have it both ways. She quotes from the same document where the very responsible departmental official points out certain concerns, points out matters that have to be addressed.

That is hardly unqualified support, Mr. Speaker. What it is, is a departmental official doing his business with respect to a particular proponent's

proposal before the Clean Environment Commission.

Agricultural Research Centre Location—Northern Manitoba

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, we have a government in this province that plays favouritism in those areas that have Tory representation and then punishes those areas where, in the words of one minister, have voted the wrong way.

We saw it with decentralization and we saw it with lack of support for the Port of Churchill. Now, Mr. Speaker, we are seeing it with the announcement of the agricultural research centre.

We have long said that there should be more research into agriculture, but I want to ask the Minister of Agriculture why the research centre and all the satellite facilities are in the southern part of the province. Why did he not push to have research in northern areas such as Swan River, Dauphin, The Pas and other areas where there are different climatic conditions, different soil conditions?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, we believe very strongly in research, and I am very pleased to see that the agricultural industry is putting forth money to help with a research centre with a main site and four satellite sites across the province. That is five locations.

I want to tell the member that the committee that went through the process of determining where these sites would be analyzed, I believe, a total of 11 different locations in the province. There was broad analysis where those sites should be.

The industry, in terms of producers, the processing industry, is putting money into the research centre along with the federal and provincial governments to be sure that we research the proper topics to increase the diversification of agriculture in the province of Manitoba.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, we all believe that there has to be more research done, but we believe that there has to be research across the province and support for agriculture across the province.

How can he tell us that his government can fund the centre for \$2.7 million over 10 years but has no funds in this year's agricultural budget to support the horticultural position in northern Manitoba? Why is he ignoring agriculture in northern Manitoba?

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, the funds from Manitoba government come from a variety of departments, a number of different sources. Our commitment in agriculture is two half-time positions that are going to be moved from other locations to that location at times in the year when they need to be operating in that particular position. So ours is in-kind support, existing staff in the existing budget.

* (1410)

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, again, we are not seeing support for northern Manitoba.

How can this government say they are committed? They say they are committed to support for research, but how can they say they are supporting farmers when they will not lobby to have grain shipped through the Port of Churchill which will help farmers? They cannot find money to support the Churchill economic development centre or support the northern research study centre.

Why are they only interested in southern Manitoba? Why will they not support research and supports for northern Manitoba?

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, that member should be ashamed of some of the falsehoods she puts on the record today.

In terms of lobbying for Churchill, no government has worked harder for Churchill than this government right here and this Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger).

The Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism—

An Honourable Member: No government has failed more miserably either.

Mr. Findlay: There is a member from the North who does not care about what is being done for Churchill.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson) and myself signed the initial agreement on the Arctic Bridge which is being brought forward with the industry and the players from Murmansk in Russia to be sure that the Port of Churchill has a viable future. No government has worked harder than this government for the Port of Churchill, and that member is embarrassed by that fact.

Mr. Speaker: Prior to recognizing the honourable member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock), I would like to ask the honourable Minister of Agriculture—because in your response the honourable member has said the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk)

put falsehoods on the record. It is clearly unparliamentary. I would ask the honourable Minister of Agriculture to withdraw that remark.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, if I erred in using the word, there is no question she put some factual inaccuracies on the record.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have asked you to withdraw the remark "falsehoods."

Order, please. The honourable minister is having trouble hearing. I have asked the honourable Minister of Agriculture to withdraw the remark "falsehoods."

Mr. Findlay: I withdraw that word, Mr. Speaker, but the intent of what I said is there.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the honourable Minister of Agriculture. [interjection] What did I miss?

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the minister, after he supposedly withdrew the remark, said that the intent of his remarks remain.

That is not in keeping with our rules or traditions. If the minister is going to withdraw, let him withdraw without any qualification. That is only fair and that is the way we proceed in this House.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I did not hear the remarks of the honourable Minister of Agriculture. Unless the honourable minister would like to withdraw it again, otherwise I will take this matter under advisement and peruse Hansard to see if it is on the record.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the use of the word—

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the honourable minister. That does clear up the matter.

Distance Education Telecommunications System

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in Estimates in Education, we had a lengthy discussion about the use of data transmission and distance education and the way in which we link up the department and schools. I notice that the Minister of Education has set up a Task Force on Distance Education, that she received an interim report in November, and that she has the final report in her hands.

We have now been informed by school divisions that they are having to negotiate separately with MTS at considerable cost per school division to establish these connections, and there has been no attempt on the part of the department to co-ordinate these negotiations and hopefully negotiate a lower cost on behalf of all of the schools.

I would like to ask the minister, at a time when money is so tight, why they have not been more active.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, the report on the Distance Education Task Force is being released to the field for comment. It is also being analyzed by government.

There are, however, some school divisions which have wished to go ahead and enter into pilot projects or enter into various distance education programs. They have been in touch with the Department of Education and Training, and we attempt to provide assistance where possible. However, in terms of the development of a policy, our government is still reviewing it based on the task force report.

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Speaker, it is one thing to have a policy about the use of the system. It is another thing to co-ordinate the establishment of the system. The member responsible for telephones sits some four seats down.

Is it not possible to establish a co-ordination of this rate setting? It is costing divisions as much as \$5,000 a month and up to \$150,000 to hook up. It seems like a tremendous waste of money.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, again, in the Task Force Report on Distance Education, we reviewed a number of matters including technology, various types of technology, which technology across the province was the most applicable in various areas.

We recognize some technology will not work in some parts of the province, so we have not established a policy yet. We are looking at the detailed information which has been provided to us, as are school divisions across this province, to develop a policy.

Distance Education Telecommunications System

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, we are not talking about a specific technology. We are

talking about the carrier. There is a significant difference.

Maybe I could ask the minister responsible for telephones because the school divisions tell us that MTS will not negotiate with a number of school divisions together but wants to go school by school.

Can the minister tell us why MTS is following this policy?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister responsible for the administration of The Manitoba Telephone Act): Mr. Speaker, the Manitoba Telephone System is a public utility in selling services. I can assure the member that they are looking at the issue as to how they can price it in a fashion that is reasonable and responsible to all concerned.

Brandon General Hospital Kidney Dialysis Services

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

Mr. Speaker, government financial restraint and cutbacks at the Brandon General Hospital have resulted in major staff layoffs, closure of beds, downgrading of services, a growing waiting list for mammography testing.

Now patients dependent on the kidney dialysis unit are being told that because of budget restraints, the level of service is being capped and that if an additional new patient or patients arrive, some of the existing patients will be asked to relocate to another dialysis unit outside of the Westman region, causing considerable financial and emotional hardship.

My question is: Will the minister look into this matter and ensure that Brandon General Hospital patients who come from the Westman area will not be forced to relocate to another town or city outside of the region?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my honourable friend's question, even though some of the preamble is laced with inaccuracies.

Mr. Speaker, there has not been—well, I will back away and I will qualify the statement I am about to make. The investment by this government into dialysis in the last five years has been significantly greater than any previous five years of government, since dialysis became a program funded within our hospital system. It has included significant expansion at most hospital locations. It has included

new expansion at Portage la Prairie to serve some of those Manitobans who may have accessed the Brandon program. It includes ongoing planning to expand our dialysis program.

But, Sir, for my honourable friend to make statements that we are cutting back on the resource to dialysis in the province of Manitoba is an absolutely false statement. I would like my honourable friend to please consider accuracy in his statements and maybe even an apology of his statement.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. In his response the honourable Minister of Health used the words "false statements," which is clearly unparliamentary.

I would ask the honourable minister to withdraw that remark. "False statements" is clearly unparliamentary.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, not being learned of the rules, you might perchance guide me, Sir, in how I can point out an inaccuracy that an honourable friend puts—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Beauchesne's 489 clearly states: It is ruled unparliamentary to use the words "false statements." I would ask the honourable Minister of Health to withdraw said remark.

Mr. Orchard: I will withdraw that remark, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the honourable Minister of Health.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, if the honourable Minister of Health will look in Hansard, he will see that I used the word, "capping" the level of services. I did not say cut back the level of service of dialysis. I said the capping of dialysis services, which is causing the problem, and people in Westman are legitimately concerned, living in many of the constituencies that honourable members across—

Mr. Speaker: Question, please.

Mr. Leonard Evans: My question is, does the minister appreciate the hardship that this permanent or temporary location that is being proposed will cause the existing patients at BGH who usually spend between three and a half and four hours, three times a week, to be able to simply stay alive? How can you expect these people to relocate without causing considerable emotional and financial pain due to the capping of the service—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member has put his question.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that my honourable friend corrected an inaccurate statement in his first preamble, but placed an inaccurate statement in his second preamble.

Mr. Speaker, there has been more expansion of capacity—

* (1420)

Point of Order

Mr. Leonard Evans: The minister says he is pleased that I corrected an inaccuracy that I mentioned in the first one with regard to the dialysis service. I want to make it clear and ask the minister to look at the record. I said capping—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend from Brandon East's first inaccuracy was alleging cutbacks in dialysis. His second inaccuracy is alleging capping of services in dialysis.

Both statements are inaccurate. If one were an outside observer, they might say they were false, but an outside observer, of course, does not have privilege in this House.

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, our rules are quite clear. I am surprised that the member opposite, who has been in this House for a considerable period of time, is not aware that not only can one not use unparliamentary language, one cannot phrase other statements that would impute unparliamentary language.

I think the intent was very obvious on the part of the member. I would ask him to withdraw those statements.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised, Beauchesne's 490: ". . . it has been ruled parliamentary to use the following expressions: . . . False."

* * *

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I want to simply remind my honourable friend from Brandon East that the reason why dialysis is in Brandon General Hospital was the efforts of the member for Arthur (Mr.

Downey) when he was in opposition, dragging the NDP government that he sat around the cabinet table on, to put dialysis in Brandon in the first place.

That may have coincided with the time that my honourable friend was in the underground bunker at Camp Shilo when he closed hospital beds at Brandon General Hospital.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, the ladies and gentlemen and the doctors and the health givers who are concerned about a legitimate problem will be very disconcerted about the garbage of a reply that we are getting from the Minister of Health—garbage, total garbage. Let us get some answers—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Question, please. The honourable member for Brandon East, with your question now, please.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, does the minister appreciate that many of the kidney patients are elderly, on fixed incomes, and cannot afford the relocation costs, and they believe that this service is being capped and so do the doctors and so do the health givers?

Therefore, is the government prepared to assist them in some way in their relocation, if this is being required? Certainly, far better, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member has put his question.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend made the statement in his preamble that people, including doctors and patients, believe that the service is being capped.

They would maybe believe that, although it is not accurate, but they would have a greater tendency to believe that after listening to the incorrect, inaccurate and improper information my honourable friend from Brandon East brings to this House periodically.

U.N. Convention on Children's Rights Government Strategy

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, this evening, a vigil will be held here on the grounds of the Legislature to mark International Children's Day and to demonstrate a commitment to the rights of children, especially a concern for the increasing numbers of children who are neglected or abused. Members on this side of the House have asked the government numerous questions in the past

regarding the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

I would like to ask the Minister of Family Services what steps his government has taken toward implementing the goals of that U.N. convention.

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, our department deals in considerable detail with the children of Manitoba, first and foremost in the daycare system where we have doubled the funding over the last five budgets that we have devoted to daycare. In a recent meeting with my colleague from Saskatchewan, she was amazed that their budget of \$13 million is so small compared to the commitment we have here in Manitoba.

As well, we devote considerable time and effort and resources to the Child and Family Services system where, again, we have seen dramatic increases in the amount of funding that we give to those agencies. Within those agencies, we have brought in a number of reforms such as the Child Advocate, the service information system, the high-risk estimation system which is now being implemented by Child and Family Services agencies across Manitoba.

I can tell you from a recent meeting I had with the board chairs and the executive directors, they are very positive about these reforms that are being brought into place.

Child Poverty Rate Reduction Strategy

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): I would like to ask the Minister of Family Services, given the fact that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) said in December 1991—and he promised to work co-operatively on any program designed to eradicate poverty with respect to the children of our province, what programs has this minister and his government implemented or even designed or even proposed to reduce the appalling level of child poverty in Manitoba where one in five children lives below the poverty line?

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services): Besides addressing the provincial rates on an annual basis, we moved to create an exemption for the children's trust funds that exist within this particular program. We have given additional assistance for school supplies. We have passed on the goods and services tax as exempted income. We have increased the liquid asset

exemption levels. We have changed the head of household policy. We have modified the wheelchair transportation for social reasons. We have extended the health benefits to recipients who have the health card.

Currently, a number of departments of this government are in consultation with the federal government—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Family Services to explain to Manitobans how the policies of his government he has implemented, including cuts of social assistance rates, cuts to tax credits, cuts to health care for welfare recipients, increases in child care fees, cuts to foster parents, user fees for essential medical supplies and the extension—

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

Mr. Martindale: . . . how these policies can be reconciled with a spoken commitment to eradicate child poverty and fulfill the goals of the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of the Child.

Mr. Gillieshammer: Mr. Speaker, this government realizes with other governments across this country that we must have the deficit under control if we are going to maintain social programs in health, in family services and in education.

As a result of that, we have made some changes. Even though the member talks about cuts, the Department of Family Services has seen dramatic increases in the budget line for every budget year for the last six budgets, and, at the same time, of course, being able to keep down the level of taxation.

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

Nonpolitical Statements

Mr. Jack Reimer (Niakwa): May I have leave for a nonpolitical statement?

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for Niakwa have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Reimer: Mr. Speaker, I rise today and ask all members of this House to take a little time out of their hectic schedules to pay tribute to one of our greatest resources—children.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I call on the Assembly to recognize an event that is taking place later today which places the spotlight on the serious problem that is affecting too many children in our cities, our towns, our villages and our local neighbourhoods. It is the problem dealing with violence against children.

Sadly, innocent children are far too often the victim of senseless abuse. I know we all hope and pray that this form of sick violence is stopped one of these days. As I said earlier, children are one of our greatest resources. They bring pleasure to our lives, and through their own form of influence change people's lives for the better.

Children are our future teachers, our police officers, our sports stars, and yes, even our future politicians. There will be a vigil outside the Manitoba Legislative Building this afternoon at 5:30 to show concern for abused children who do not speak for themselves or seek help.

As well, the gathering is designed to bring this serious problem to the attention of more people. I call on this Assembly to salute the many hard-working volunteers for their dedication toward combatting this problem, and I also invite members from the House to join me in attending today's vigil at 5:30. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for Burrows have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I would like to add to the remarks of my colleague and say that I too will be attending the first annual International Children's Day kids vigil on the grounds of the Legislative Assembly.

I hope that many other honourable members will join us to show our commitment and support for children and to let the public know that we are in support of rights for children and that we are opposed to anything which is harmful to children, particularly, abuse and neglect of any kind. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Committee Changes

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): I move, seconded by the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development be amended as follows: the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) for the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey); the member for St.

Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) for the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson); the member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Stefanson) to fill in the vacant spot.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable deputy government House leader, seconded by the honourable Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Downey), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House—

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, if I may, just before you put the question, I would ask if you would canvass the House to see if there is a will to waive private members' hour?

Mr. Speaker: Is there a will to waive private members' hour?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. Leave is denied.

Motion agreed to, and the House resolved itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty with the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) in the Chair for the Department of Education and Training; and the member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) in the Chair for the Department of Environment.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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

When the committee last sat it had been considering item 2.(a)(1) on page 35 of the Estimates book. Shall the item pass?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I have for

tabling today a report on the Analysis of Staffing Complement by Staff Category as was requested yesterday. I also have to table four copies of the course Skills for Independent Living with its complete content of the Interim Guide.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, given that we are in the administration section of this—actually maybe the minister could help me with the term too, am I talking about a branch here now of the department?

I am interested in developments at the School for the Deaf, and I am wondering if the minister could just bring me up to date on what has occurred there in this last year, if there have been any changes in program staffing, et cetera?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. At this time we are dealing with line (a) on Division Administration (1) Salaries. If you will note on line (d), Manitoba School for the Deaf falls there and that is when the minister's staff will be here to answer those questions.

* (1440)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we are prepared to answer that particular question at this point. Just to clarify, the member was asking if this was a branch or a division. The line 16.2(a) we are looking at the administration of a division, the division of Program Development and Support Services.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member has asked some questions regarding the Manitoba School for the Deaf. First of all, to answer in relation to policy and what is new in that area, the direction of the Department of Education and Training with regard to deaf education is to support a continuum of program options for parental choices. The program options available range from the bicultural, bilingual deaf education at the Manitoba School for the Deaf to programming provided in the integrated and/or segregated settings in the public school system.

The department and its position on bilingual and bicultural education for the deaf and the hard-of-hearing students, the Department of Education and Training fully supports bilingual and bicultural education for deaf and hard-of-hearing students as an important program option. This approach is being developed and is provided at the Manitoba School for the Deaf. In terms of the use of technology in the classroom for deaf children,

several members of the Manitoba School for the Deaf administration and teachers recently attended a workshop entitled: Enabling Technologies for the Classroom of the '90s. Within budget restraint, plans are being made to co-ordinate information received regarding these and other specialized classroom materials so that the programs compatible with the current Apple and IBM computers may be obtained.

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the bicultural program that the minister referenced, I think she indicated that it was being offered at the School for the Deaf. Is it offered in any of the integrated classrooms in other divisions?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the bilingual and bicultural education is primarily through the Manitoba School for the Deaf. It is difficult in the other programs in the public school system because there is not really a milieu for the bilingual and bicultural programming. It is somewhat easier in some programs in some areas where the students are clustered. I understand that there is a program in St. James where there would be a greater likelihood of the possibility of that working. However, it is very difficult in some rural areas, for instance, where there would not be enough children to cluster to provide the milieu.

Mr. Alcock: I should maybe try to define this a little better, too. There is a range of disability. Some children who are considered deaf are in fact classified as hard of hearing and with augmentation can function with some assists within the school. Others are deaf to the point of using sign language of some sort. I can remember the St. James program. How many children who are using something other than an oral method of instruction are currently in the school system and not at the Manitoba School for the Deaf?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we do not have those exact figures with us because we are not at that specific budget line. We could estimate the numbers. It is a very broad estimation across the province of approximately 25 to 50 young people.

Mr. Alcock: Yes, I appreciate that we are doing this a bit out of order, although services to children who are classified as deaf and not receiving services at the School for the Deaf would not necessarily be tracked within that line. Would that be correct? Where would those children fall? In what part of the appropriation should I be looking for more detail?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the Manitoba School for the Deaf is our program, so we would have that information under our appropriation. Services provided to other children within the province are programs which are provided through local school divisions. So the information is not necessarily information which we would have in total because it is not our program.

However, under the appropriation 16-2(e), which is our Child Care & Development Branch where we have our seven consultants who operate in the rural area, we might have some further information in that area.

Mr. Alcock: Perhaps then, not necessarily at this moment or even if we get to that particular line today—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. Could I ask you to just move a little bit back from the mike? It is actually giving us feedback right now.

Mr. Alcock: Is that better?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Yes.

Mr. Alcock: Oh, here I thought I was helping you.

Not for today's session necessarily, but I would be interested in that number, roughly how many students. I would also be interested—and this may be something that can be answered now. Those children who are identified as deaf and needing something other than simple auditory augmentation that are being taught with a sign language system—are you still not hearing me?

An Honourable Member: They did the same thing to me last night, Reg.

Mr. Alcock: No, I think the minister is actually trying to provide useful information. I do not have any sense that they are—

An Honourable Member: I do not mean she is not doing that. I am talking about your information.

Mr. Alcock: Oh, okay. Is this any good? Is that better? Do you want to try this, No. 9? That is okay?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Yes.

Mr. Alcock: Do you want me to repeat all that or do you understand? I just want to know, is ASL the language of instruction? That is all I want to know.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, yes, at the School for the Deaf, ASL, American Sign, is the language of instruction.

Mr. Alcock: What about these 25 to 50 children in the other school divisions?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed that ASL, as I have said, is the language at the School for the Deaf, but within the other programs which students are in, we have some difficulty knowing exactly which of the languages is being used, because Signing Exact English may be the skills that the person has who is available to assist that student within the classroom. So I understand outside of the MSD, there is some mixture of ASL and Signing Exact English.

Mr. Alcock: Yes, it is my understanding that the St. James program uses ASL. Are there other examples where there is a clustering of this that allows the use of ASL?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed that St. James is really the only large cluster of students.

* (1450)

Mr. Alcock: The minister met some time ago with representatives from the deaf community about a study of deaf education, and I am wondering what the status is of that.

Mrs. Vodrey: I did have a meeting with some representatives of the community and at that time they did ask about a review of deaf education in our province. I can say now, and I did say then, that I am in favour of a review because we are seeking to improve continually the education for the deaf and the hard-of-hearing students in Manitoba.

But I have said that as an alternative to a total review, I have requested that the advisory board for education of the deaf and the hard of hearing and the department jointly prioritize issues to be examined. Then I will be able to determine in consultation with this advisory board how these matters will be reviewed and how the resulting recommendations will be able to be implemented.

Mr. Alcock: Has that committee been able to prioritize?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed that the first meeting of that committee will be next Monday.

Mr. Alcock: Can the minister inform me as to who the representatives of the Community Centre for the Deaf are? Who is representing the deaf community?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed that the two representatives from WCCD are Bruce Koskie and Dianne Mondor.

Mr. Alcock: Perfect. I think you will get very, very solid feedback from them. Now, the minister mentioned that this was a joint committee with the deaf and the hard of hearing. How are they defining the hard-of-hearing community, or are we really talking about the oral education community?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, one of the issues that was discussed was a broader representation on the board and that broader representation to include what the committee had referred to as the hard of hearing as well as the oral deaf. I understand that there will be a representative at the Monday meeting who represents what the community has determined is hard of hearing, and then one of the issues that they will be looking at specifically Monday is to take an active step in terms of a broader representation on the board. They will be looking, I am informed, at the three areas: the hard of hearing, oral deaf and also more representation from the deaf community.

Mr. Alcock: I do not need to take up the time of this committee in the details of this issue. I am sure the minister's staff, who have been well immersed in the concerns of the profoundly deaf community over the use of ASL and the cultural implications that has for their community, and their concern about an erosion of the core of that community as we develop education methods that they question the efficacy of—although I am not certain that we should be getting into that here.

I would like to know, the Manitoba School for the Deaf, is there a policy around downsizing the School for the Deaf? There has been a significant decrease in the number of children served at the school, and I am wondering whether this is a result of a specific policy, or has it just been the development of other services that have allowed children to be served in their home communities?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I can tell the member that it seems some of the reasons for what is now a fairly stable population are really the issue of parental choice. We certainly in the department have not taken a role either pro-mainstreaming or con-mainstreaming in terms of working with families. In terms of the projected populations, it is true in about '88-89, there were 89 students, it went to 90; in '90-91, it was 88; '91-92, 85; '92-93, 82. The projection for the next three years is 83 students. So there has been a relative stability over the past—well, it would be projected for five years.

Mr. Alcock: So there is nothing in the planning or sort of forward-looking policies of the department to reduce the size, reduce the use, reduce the focusing on the School for the Deaf.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, no, there has been nothing.

Mr. Alcock: I am pleased to hear that. Certainly, it is an area that arises. Every now and again I will get a phone call, because I have a number of friends who are deaf, that a little panic goes through the community about the potential closure of the school. I suspect they react to the rumours that come out of the budget process as much as anybody else.

For the ASL community, the school is a very important center. They use it not just for the education of their children, but it forms a social function within the community, too. They would be very loathe to see it changed or closed or the program further decentralized.

On curriculum, I had a question about the IB programs. How is the curriculum for the IB programs established? Is that something that the department does or are we borrowing a curriculum that has been established outside of the province?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the International Baccalaureate program is a program which was developed in Switzerland. It is a standardized curriculum, a standard program. Students who are taking the International Baccalaureate program, those Manitoba students must first complete the Manitoba curriculum and then complete two years of the International Baccalaureate program.

I am informed that there is somewhat of an unevenness in the completion, because there are two possible ways to complete, one being a diploma at the end of the program in which the students do an extended essay. They also do three courses at a higher level as well as our curriculum. Students may, however, obtain a certificate in the International Baccalaureate program which requires somewhat less of a commitment to the total course.

* (1500)

Mr. Alcock: The curriculum comes out of Switzerland, I think the minister said, presumably because it is a curriculum that is administered worldwide in all of the international programs. Is there any process whereby the department has an involvement with that? Do they feed information

back if they have any kind of exchange with the people who establish that curriculum?

Mrs. Vodrey: In Manitoba there are five schools which offer the IB program, the IB courses, and they have come together and have an International Baccalaureate office in Manitoba, and that is located at Kelvin High School. I am informed that it is a somewhat loose liaison in terms of the International Baccalaureate relationship.

Our concern is that students complete the Manitoba curriculum, and that we view the courses offered by these five schools as local option courses in which the schools choose to offer the IB as a local option. Therefore, they have come together, as I have said, to form the IB office in Manitoba.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Yes, just a couple of questions to the minister regarding the staff table that she gave us. I thank the minister for that information. I note that yesterday the minister talked about 15 management for 1992, and this table shows 14. Can the minister explain that discrepancy? She indicated there was a reduction of two, down to 13 from 15, and now it seems that it was only from 14 down to 13.

Mrs. Vodrey: I would have to check the record for having given that number to the member, but, as I check the Estimates book for last year, the number is 14 and that is the correct number.

Mr. Plohman: Yes, well, the minister clearly said there were two co-ordinators that were removed, and now it would show there was only one. I mean, that was clear last night. If that was just a mistake, that is fine.

Mrs. Vodrey: The co-ordinators are considered within the Professional/Technical line, not within the Managerial line.

Mr. Plohman: That makes the information given even more difficult for me in terms of accepting what the minister is saying. I asked that question under management, and the minister said that there were two managers removed, those being co-ordinators. Now she is saying that is not even the relevant category.

Mrs. Vodrey: I would have to check the record, but there were some questions asked in an area of clarification, and I asked the member yesterday, was he referring to directors, was he referring to co-ordinators? So what we have done today is provide the detailed information that the member

has asked. We have provided him with the information in the Managerial line, in the Professional/Technical line, in the Administrative Support line, and then provided a column with total.

I am prepared to answer any questions he might have regarding the information which we have put together for him today.

Mr. Plohman: I will certainly ask questions on this information, and I appreciate having it, but I would assume when we ask the minister questions and she gives definitive answers, which is on rare occasions, that we have to assume that those are factual, not just something that comes out of the air somewhere.

I asked distinctly yesterday about managerial positions and how many were reduced and the minister said two from 15 to 13, and we asked about Professional/Technical and Administrative Support, and that is where we got into larger numbers, and that is why the minister said I should have to come back the next day and give us the information. So it was clear that the information that was asked for and received yesterday was obviously incorrect information.

Insofar as the Professional/Technical and Administrative Support—no, first of all in the management; I will just finish with that. If we see this year 13 managers for 261 staff, the ratio is 1 to 20, and last year there would have been 14 for 343 staff, so the ratio would have been 1 to 24.5. Under that scenario, the minister is becoming more manager-heavy and she has more managers per staff than she had previously. It is a significant increase, 4.5 on 20 which is close to 25 percent increase in terms of the percentage of managers per staff or staff per managers. Why is that? Can the minister give us any indication why she is making the department even more management top-heavy?

Mrs. Vodrey: In terms of some of the reorganization that we are doing within the Department of Education, we are providing much more of a co-ordination function, and so the people who hold the managerial roles are still looking at working with a client base of approximately 200,000 students. So we are still providing that type of function which may fall into the Managerial category.

The member looks at some of the reductions in the Department of Education. Yes, there was the decentralization of the clinicians to the employment

of the home school divisions. Those clinicians did fall within the function of one manager. That one manager does retain a very large role throughout the province, particularly in the area of special needs young people.

* (1510)

Mr. Plohman: The minister's answer is not consistent with a desire to put priorities with services. It would seem to me that, when she made the decision to eliminate the clinicians, these were Professional/Technical people who provided direct service to children.

She is now rationalizing having managers service 200,000 students, and therefore it was necessary to keep as many as she has done. That does not make sense, because the managers do not provide direct service to children. The Professional/Technical people did and do, to the extent that they are left. I cannot understand the rationale behind that kind of thinking.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, as I explained to the member in the last answer, we do still perform a co-ordination function within the province. In terms of the direct service, direct service, for instance, by clinicians, was provided by the clinicians. That direct service is now being provided by clinicians who are within the employment of their home school division where they are establishing their own employee-employer relationships.

The department's role, however, is to continue to offer a support function. We have gone over several times the kind of support function which the department is willing to, and is still active in, one being the certification of those clinicians.

(Mrs. Shirley Render, Acting Deputy Chairperson, in the Chair)

In terms of the overall management function, as I said, we do provide for co-ordination. Our role is to assist in the area of planning and, where appropriate, prioritization. We have to develop strong consultative links with the field, and that is the way that the Department of Education and Training is looking now to provide its leadership role in Manitoba.

Mr. Plohman: Would it not make more sense to provide support services for those clinicians who were laid off and deleted from this department? The minister likes to use the term "decentralized," when, in fact, she has offloaded them onto local school

divisions with grants that are not sufficient to meet their total cost.

In any event, they are working for an independent employer, an employer not of government. Therefore, the direct management is not necessary for those people who are no longer in the department. If they need support services, they need it from Professional/Technical people, to give support to those Professional/Technical people in the field or employed by the divisions. It does not seem to be necessary to maintain the full complement of management which the minister has virtually done here.

Mrs. Vodrey: The member speaks about providing support to the clinicians in the field and to the school divisions. I have explained to him that the department is actively supporting the school divisions with their assistance in recruitment and selection process and through the involvement of senior consultants in speech and language and psychology from the Child Care & Development Branch, so they can assist in the area of recruitment. I have also said, we will also provide the supervisory function that is required for clinicians to become certified within the province of Manitoba.

In addition and in response to the school divisions' requests, the Child Care & Development Branch is arranging for the transfer of the diagnostic and treatment materials which were used by those clinicians to the department, from the department to school divisions and to districts employing clinicians. So there is a number of functions which are being undertaken. The member has asked about supervision and has asked about support, and I have told him that is still being provided.

Mr. Plohman: Some of the comments made by the minister seem somewhat absurd in trying to explain this. In terms of the recruitment process, I would think that the Human Resource section would be providing that support. That is not something that would come under this section, as a Human Resource personnel department of government.

As well, the minister talks about transferring materials to the school divisions from the Diagnostic Centre. Is she saying that she needs these managers to transfer those materials?

Mrs. Vodrey: First of all, in the area of who provides support and who assists in the area of recruitment, Human Services is involved in that area. However, the role of the manager from the Child Care &

Development Branch area is to provide information regarding the specialization and the special skills required regarding these clinicians, so there still is a professional input from the person who is being employed as a clinician from their own professional background.

The member is speaking about the issue of managers and, as I have said, we are looking at a reorganization within the PDSS area and we have been speaking about that for some time. When we have completed our consultations—and I have explained that reorganization will be completed with consultations with the department itself and also with the field. When we complete that reorganization and that restructuring process, then we certainly will be looking at the issue that the member for Dauphin has been raising and discussing.

Mr. Plohman: I guess I have to ask the minister if it is her policy to maintain management while cutting services to children?

Mrs. Vodrey: When the member speaks about cutting services to children, I am not sure exactly what he might be referring to. He has spoken over some time about clinicians, and I have been able to tell him over discussion over several time periods that the clinicians will be looking at employment, not through the Department of Education and Training, but employment through home school divisions.

I have already explained the model, that there are 19 school divisions currently operating in that way. We have spoken about the grant available to the home school divisions for the hiring of clinicians. We have also spoken about supplementary support available for school divisions as they hire their school clinicians, so there certainly is still support.

In the area of special needs support, also, I would remind the member that we have increased quite significantly our special needs funding over the past few years in the Department of Education. We have this year, through our funding formula, recognized as has never been recognized before, funding support for emotionally behaviourally disordered young people and also for hard-of-hearing young people. So there has been, on a number of fronts, support offered in the area of special needs.

The member does not seem to have grasped the picture.

Mr. Plohman: Under one category, the minister has provided additional funding for severely handicapped children, Level II and III, with low

incidence, high cost. On the other hand, she has cut clinicians that supported all the kids with special needs, with no guarantee when that was done that these services would be maintained. The minister has admitted that she has no way of enforcing that these would be provided by the various school divisions if they choose not to take advantage of the support that is there from government, support which I have said several times is not adequate to meet the total cost. We know that. School divisions have told us that, whether the minister admits it or not, that \$45,000 is not sufficient.

The minister cannot have it both ways with this. If she says she has decentralized these clinicians, are they then the responsibility of the local school boards? The minister cannot use that as a rationale for retaining almost all of her managers, while these are now within the jurisdiction of the school divisions. That is what we have been arguing with her, that she has retained the managers and done so at the expense of direct services to children, personnel who are providing direct services to children.

That argument is very powerfully demonstrated in the data that has been given to us. It will be encouraging, I guess, in this process if the minister would simply admit that is the case at the present time, and that she will undertake to deal with that distortion in the future, either by restoring services, staff that would provide direct services to children or by reducing management. Our preference would, of course, provide the services to children.

If she is going to take away those staff, then surely she has to also remove a proportionate number of management from the section.

* (1520)

Mrs. Vodrey: We certainly support direct service to children and support that in a number of ways. First of all, in the area of clinicians—and I have explained this and perhaps the member when we get to the funding formula will also have a concrete way to look at the support which is offered.

The grant to support clinicians has been increased. In addition, we have spoken over the course of the Estimates process about supplementary funding available through the funding formula to school divisions that would need further assistance in the hiring of their clinicians, and that support which comes through supplementary

funding would assist school divisions in certainly a number of ways.

So I have made it clear that, as individual school divisions hire their clinicians, they will receive support through the grant available for the hiring of clinicians; in addition, where required, they would receive support through the supplementary category of the school funding formula. I believe that certainly answers the question of the financial commitment.

In addition, when the clinicians were in the direct employ of the Department of Education and Training, there were 52 positions. Now that school divisions will employ clinicians directly, the number of positions available, calculated by way of the formula, is 59.5. That is more.

So it is certainly evident that funding the services to special needs children through clinicians and funding them through the school funding formula should, in fact, lead to better service for special needs children. In terms of the local divisions, I would also be very surprised if divisions did not access the services of clinicians because of the supports available to them.

Mr. Plohman: The minister may be correct that most divisions feel incumbent not to reduce services, and therefore will do everything possible to attempt to hire clinicians. I am not saying they would not think that is a priority, but she should not have difficulty understanding why they would not when she has cut their funding by 2 percent this year and then placed this greater burden on them to also find additional monies locally.

If she is surprised about it, I think she should get over that surprise immediately because there are very good reasons why they would not be able to offer the services that they would deem to be desirable.

Point of Order

Mrs. Vodrey: Just let me tell the member that special needs funding went up 6 percent this year in school funding.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mrs. Rander): The minister does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over facts.

* * *

Mr. Plohman: It is a ridiculous point on the minister's part because it does not even deal with the issue. The ridiculous point is this, that, in fact,

we are not talking about the same thing, clinician services. The special needs that I referred to earlier was the severely disabled students, whether it be the Level II and III students, where there have been increases in funding.

Insofar as the clinicians are concerned, there is a substantial decrease in this line in funding. The grants on the other side may end up adding up to as much as the decrease here, but there is the decrease in this line. If the minister can show that the money being provided for clinicians in another line is greater than the decrease here, then she will have a point to make about that.

I want to say, though, that I would not keep talking about enhanced grants for clinicians because that happened last year, and so I do not know how many years the minister would keep talking about enhanced grants. The grants were not enhanced this year, even while this major step of removing them and transferring them over to school divisions was taking place.

I think it is clear the minister would have to—whether she is supplying an adequate amount of support for special needs kids, and we would argue that she is not. She has also retained an overabundance of managers while she has reduced staff who provided direct service to students. That is the point I am making at the present time.

I note also on this table, though, that the minister has made cuts, and, as a result, that she has more Administrative Support SYs than she had under the 1992-93 Estimates. We have all these Professional/Technical people being eliminated, and yet we have maintained the managers and we have maintained all of the administrative supports.

As a matter of fact, the number is higher in absolute terms; and, in percentage terms, it is much greater. How can the minister explain that?

Mrs. Vodrey: First of all, I just have to make a comment around the issue of the funding. The member has said, will I be able to show that in fact the funding adds up to the same on behalf of clinicians and special needs young people?

I am certainly informed that, when we add in the supplementary funding available to school divisions as well as the budget line that we have been discussing, yes, we will be at what would certainly be seen as a break-even point even at this time.

So I think that it is very important for the member to not continue to say that somehow there are not the same kinds of support available within school divisions because, in fact, I have explained that there is support from two areas: one through the funding formula; another through the area of supplementary funding.

In terms of the staffing within the Department of Education and Training, we do look at the programs that are being offered, particularly in this area, which is the Program Development and Support Services area. We also look at the priorities in this area, and we do not make a sweeping gesture in terms of a formula. We do not make reductions in terms of formula, which the member is trying to get at.

There must be some way—he has given us some ratios and so on during the discussion in the afternoon. He seems to feel that, based on ratios, decisions should be made. As I have explained to him, and as I have been explaining to him, there has been a careful look at the issue of programming which is being done and also priorities.

We have wanted to look at minimizing the impact on service within any of the programs which we offer in the Department of Education and Training. As we discuss more of the services, then the member may find that this becomes more clear to him than simply a mathematical formula.

(Mr. Jack Reimer, Acting Deputy Chairperson, in the Chair)

* (1530)

Mr. Plohman: I am not saying that she should use ratios, but I am saying the ratios reflect what she has done. She has not even considered the fact that, as a result of her decision, she has far more Administrative Support to Professional/Technical people, secretarial support and so on that are needed, than previously, before these massive cuts were undertaken in this branch. I am asking the minister how she can justify having so many more support staff when she has so many fewer professional staff providing direct service to kids.

Mrs. Vodrey: Again, the member has been using ratios as an attempt to try and look at how things should look in his mind, and I have said that we did not make those decisions based on that ratio formula. Instead, we looked at issues such as program and priorities.

I have also explained, and I can go over it again, that we are looking at restructuring in this K to 12 area. We are looking at reorganizing in the K to 12 area, and I have told him, even this afternoon, that during this restructuring and during this reorganization we will be most certainly looking at the complement of staff, the functions of staff, the priorities of staffing. So, as he asks us to review exactly the work of staff, yes, we will be doing that as we do the restructuring and the reorganization.

Mr. Plohman: The point is, the minister has made some hasty cuts here without considering the impact on children at all. She keeps saying that that is her primary consideration, services for children, but that is not reflected in the staffing table that we see before us. In fact, it goes quite the opposite way. She has maintained, and enhanced, actually, Administrative Support by two and a quarter staff while cutting 77 Professional/Technical staff and reducing management by only one. Overall, this has distorted the ratios that were there historically with regard to professional staff, administrative support and management.

As a matter of fact, the ratio for Administrative Support has gone from one to four, to one to three. That is a significant change, and I want to ask the minister how she can rationalize that on the basis of enhancing service to children.

Mrs. Vodrey: The member knows very well, I believe he should know, that school divisions are now going to be the employers and are going to be responsible for that direct service, where clinicians, for instance, were previously the employees of the Department of Education and Training. School divisions are now responsible for that direct service.

I have explained to the member that we are in the process of a restructuring and a reorganization, and it is a process. Through that process, there has been a process of consultation. The consultation has been with our direct staff and also with school divisions. We are in the middle of that consultation. When the consultation is complete, then we will be able to look at making some of these changes.

As I have said, as a result of the consultation, managerial positions are being reviewed, but at the moment, they still have a function within the Department of Education and Training in relation to the field.

The member's difficulty is that he is looking only at numbers, and we are looking at total programs

and initiatives. The member seems to be having a lot of difficulty putting together the picture of the programs and the initiatives that the Department of Education and Training is responsible for, and it is looking at providing support to the field, as he focuses only on a specific number.

Mr. Plohman: Since the service to children was supposed to be the governing criteria, why did the minister go the opposite way with these cuts?

First of all, she has said today already that it was not to save money, because the staff is claiming and the minister is claiming that there are actually more total dollars in the area of clinicians overall. Through the grant system, there is actually money when you consider the grants for clinicians as well as direct dollars for programs.

When the minister is finished consulting in the middle, my point is she is saying that the— [interjection] Well, I would like the minister to be able to hear. There is no sense me rambling on if the minister is not listening.

The point is the minister is saying that total services for special needs, including clinicians grants as well as programming grants is more than was previously available in this particular area before the offloading and the cuts in the clinicians.

So if it was not done to save money, and it was done for the opposite priority that the minister says was the governing criteria, which was, of course, that services to children would be protected as the major criteria here, then why did the minister do it at all, if it was not just to show the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) that she had reduced staff and, therefore, SYs were down and the government could say to the public, we have reduced civil service positions. Is that not what was really behind these cuts? It does not make any sense any other way.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Deputy Chair, I think if the member reviews the comments I have made, he will find that I said there has been an increase in the special needs funding, but that in terms of the funds to support clinicians, we are now, through the two methods, at approximately a break-even point. So there have been two areas I have discussed in terms of where the funding lies. We have again spoken— [interjection]

The member seems to want me to hear him, but then he seems to be talking while I am trying to give him an answer, so let me repeat the answer again.

There has been increased funding in the area of special needs, approximately 6 percent, and we are at the moment at approximately a break-even point in the area of funding for clinician services through the school funding formula for clinicians and also through the supplementary funding.

* (1540)

If the member would like to speak about actually services to children, then we might want to take a little bit of time to talk about the employment of clinicians by the local school division, that employment by the jurisdiction closest to the student. In the 19 school divisions that currently operate that way, obviously that has been a way in which they have felt that they have been able to deliver service in a way that is closest to the place where the student lives.

As the member knows, when I worked as a school clinician, that was a model that I worked in. I worked in a model where I was not employed by the province. I was, instead, employed by a school division and was able to work directly with the personnel who had the direct responsibility for the educational instruction and programs for students.

Mr. Plohman: The minister just made my point when she said that there is a break-even on clinicians and no money saved by this move. So the minister was not doing it for the purposes of saving money, she is now saying. If you look at the other criterion, services to children, there was only one way the minister could ensure that the services would be at least as good as they were the prior year or even better: that would be to ensure that those clinicians were maintained in the department.

She has no way of knowing for sure whether that service is going to be maintained at its previous level. There is every indication that it will not simply because school boards are in a pinch as a result of this government's failure to provide adequate funding for the education of children in this province through the public school system. Therefore, some will, as a matter of fact, have difficulty rehiring all of these clinicians.

So it was not to enhance services to children that this was done; it was not to save money. So what was it for? What was the purpose? Why did the minister make this move?

You know, she talks about consultation now. She is going to go and consult and then determine whether she has got too many managers. I thought

this was something that was rather internal to the department. They are going to determine how many managers they need and how many Administrative Support staff they need. The minister is going to go and consult on that.

Why did she not consult then on the Professional/ Technical people before she dumped them onto school division? There was no consultation there. It was a last-minute decision. There was no notice given to school boards. There is no consistency at all in this minister's approach. She is all over the map.

Mrs. Vodrey: Let us look historically then, first of all, to say that the department has provided leadership during the last two decades to ensure that clinician services were developed in rural areas in this province, in rural divisions and districts, and in isolated areas of the province.

I can tell the member that, when I arrived in the province of Manitoba in 1975, I did have a chance to talk with what is now the Child Care & Development Branch and to look at clinician services in the rural parts of Manitoba and to look at the development of those services. We are a province where there is a cluster of population within the city of Winnipeg, but we recognize that we have children and families that are living in all places of this province.

So there has been, from a historical point of view, an effort by the department to make sure that these clinician services have been developed. We have talked about the financial end, and then in my last answer I spoke again about clinician services being offered where clinicians are employed by the local school division. They then work very close to their employing authority, and they work very closely with the people who are making decisions on behalf of children.

I also explained to the member that was a model that I have some experience with in terms of being able to work directly with those people within school divisions who are making decisions on behalf of children and, as a clinician, to have the opportunity to work directly with those people making those decisions. That answer was given when we were speaking about how decisions affect children and how we look at the impact of decisions directly on children. I think that answers the first part of his question.

The second part of his question regarded the actual setup of the Department of Education and Training, particularly in the Professional Development and Support Services area. In this area, I have been explaining all afternoon, and several times before that, that we are looking to provide the service in the most efficient way, to make sure that the role of Manitoba Education and Training is well understood throughout the province.

The member seems to have some difficulty with the issue of consultation. Even though I have explained that the issue of consultation relates, No. 1, internally with our own staff so that there is a full understanding, a strong corporate picture. Much earlier in the Estimates, I discussed the fact that one of the important goals of the restructuring and the reorganization is that, when a representative of our department is out within the school divisions, they will be able to speak for more than just their single area or discipline and that they will not have to go through the whole process of saying: well, that is not the area that I work in, I cannot tell you anything about that; but instead to assist in the development of a much stronger corporate picture.

So we are going through a process of consultation. One is internal. One is with the field so that the role that Manitoba Education and Training has developed is, in fact, well understood. We will be completing that reorganization, and we believe that it will make us a very efficient organization.

As I said, we are working very closely with divisions. We are working closely with divisions in the transfer of responsibility of clinicians. We have been very supportive to school divisions, and we expect to continue to operate in that way.

Mr. Plohman: Let the minister not leave on the record that I have any problem with consultation. I have consistently advocated consultation on the part of the minister before she makes some of the fundamental decisions that have been made. Obviously, this concept of consultation applies to the minister's thinking in certain instances where it is convenient; and, in other instances where it is not, she conveniently forgets to mention that it should have been done.

In the case of clinicians, in her brilliant wisdom, the minister determined for school boards that they should want to employ clinicians locally. She never heard from them that they wanted this and they were clamouring at her door for it. She just decided that

they should employ them locally, that it is good for them, and it is good for the clinicians and everybody should want this. That is not the kind of heavy-handed, top-down decision making that reflects consultation. There does not seem to be any element of consultation in that kind of approach, and there is no advanced planning in that kind of approach either.

If the minister had said we are looking at doing this, we are going to provide sufficient incentive to school boards to ensure that it will not cost additional dollars for them to hire these clinicians and that we would like to see a date one year hence, perhaps the fall of '94 for this to take place, then, of course, it would have made some sense, and the minister could have rationalized what she was doing in terms of consultation and so on. But this was dumped on the school boards with about two weeks notice prior to their having to finalize their budgets.

So the minister cannot try and explain away history here, that somehow there was a process of consultation—there was not—and secondly, that this was what was wanted—it was not—and that she was keeping services to children as the primary consideration, because it was not the case.

So she is wrong on all of those points. She is misleading, whether deliberately or not. The point is I feel, my personal opinion is we are being misled here by this minister, and I wish she would come clean and provide facts and not—

Point of Order

Mrs. Vodrey: The member continues to use the word "misleading". He has used that word a number of times, having been cautioned by yourself at several opportunities.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Reimer): The minister does not have a point of order, but I would ask all members to be careful in their selection of words and the implications of such.

* * *

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, just in my own comments here, not on a point of order, I should remind the minister to review Hansard, read Hansard and read the Chairperson's apology to me where he had incorrectly asked me to withdraw remarks dealing with "misleading" when they were used in a context which was not an allegation that the minister was deliberately misleading the committee.

If she is able to go back and read that, then she would know, before she even decides to attempt a point of order on this point, that it would be futile to do so. So I stick by the words I have used. To me, what we have seen here from the minister is misleading information in my mind, and I would ask the minister—[interjection] That is right, in my mind, and any reasonable person's mind—I can only assume on the basis of what the facts surrounding the cuts are, and what the minister said by way of explanation. It just does not jive. It is not consistent.

Now, will the minister admit it was not for the reasons she has provided to this committee that these clinicians were dumped on school divisions, but it was merely to satisfy a need to reduce civil servants in her department? It was to make the government look good by showing a shrinking civil service, and it had nothing to do with maintaining and enhancing service to children, and it had nothing to do with the other excuses which the minister has given here, and it had nothing to do with the results of consultation.

* (1550)

Mrs. Vodrey: The member has gone on in quite a long discussion where some of the facts may be questionable and where I would suggest there were some misleading statements which the member has continued to put forward over the course of our discussion. So, absolutely not, I will not confirm, cannot confirm, would not confirm, his final comments.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, can the minister tell us what action she intends to take to deal with the massive change in staff ratios in this branch?

Mrs. Vodrey: I have explained this particular answer several times through the course of the afternoon. When the member looks at some of the staffing changes, we have discussed that some of those staffing changes are in fact clinicians who will now be employed by the existing school divisions, and we have also said that the department will continue to provide support to those clinicians. The department will also assist school divisions and support school divisions and assist in recruitment and also supervision for certification.

I have also explained a number of times this afternoon that we are in a process of reorganization within this particular division of Education and Training, and with that process, as I am sure the

member would know, the process of change requires a dialogue, and there has in fact been a consultation, and we have talked about the consultation which is an internal consultation as well as a consultation with school divisions, and we have spoken about that process a number of times this afternoon.

We have also spoken about, within that process, the work which will establish priorities for service and which will also bring us to a restructuring of the department. So the answer, Mr. Acting Deputy Chair, to the member's question remains the same answer that I have provided him several times this afternoon.

Mr. Plohman: I have to characterize the minister's summaries that she does so often as a teacher summarizing to the children what we have learned today in class. It is absolutely condescending and ridiculous for the minister to continue to repeat information that is, first of all, not supported by fact and therefore is information the minister puts forward as an hypothesis about why she has done certain things.

We do not see it based on fact by the results, by the information that has been provided to us. It does not make any sense to go out and consult about cuts that have already been made. Why not do the consultation first, then take the action after it? The minister has not explained why she did not use that kind of method in her decision making.

Maybe it would be helpful, so the minister would have less difficulty understanding the questions, to clarify precisely why she is consulting as to how many of the 87.5 Administrative Support staff should be removed as a result of the reorganization that she calls it, after removing Professional/Technical people. What is the nature of the classification of those particular individuals, and, of course, I ask this also about the management.

Let us look at the Administrative Support. What do we have here? How many secretaries are involved? What other classifications of people are involved here? And why is it so incumbent upon the minister now to consult with others outside the department to determine how many of those people might not be required, after removing all of the professional people?

Mrs. Vodrey: In the member's final remarks, I can only understand them to mean that he just does not like the answers.

Now, to the next question of Administrative Support, the member seems to have been misunderstanding the issue of restructuring and reading it instead as removing. That is another one of the misunderstandings that the member has.

When he asks about who is in the Administrative Support line, they are primarily AY2s and AY3s, which are secretarial positions.

Mr. Plohman: The minister has maintained the secretarial positions, AY2s and AY3s, and increased the number of secretaries per staff from one to four, to now one to three. What additional administrative work has she identified in this branch that suddenly requires one secretary for every three professional staff as opposed to one for every four as was present the previous year?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Deputy Chair, within the Administrative Support line, there has been a number of reclassifications, and those reclassifications were not at our request as a department, but they were requested by the individual or by the civil service. So, when the member looks at the classification and where those individuals fall within the lines, that may help him understand who they are and what their classification is.

Mr. Plohman: Another answer I do not like, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson. I am quite pleased to admit that I do not like the answers here, and the minister is correct on that one. These answers are totally ridiculous. They do not respond to the questions that I am raising with the minister. Telling me about reclassifications—so what? I just want to know why she needs 87 secretaries now for 243 staff instead of 85 last year for 343 staff.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, in terms of the workload of those individuals, the workload for those individuals has remained fairly constant. The clinicians, whom the member has been referring to on a regular basis, had a great deal of their work done in schools and not by the department secretaries.

* (1600)

Mr. Plohman: Now, why does the minister feel it incumbent upon herself to consult with outside groups about how many secretaries she should have?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, let me start again by clarifying what the consultation will do. This is where the member and I get back to the

member thinking about numbers and my description to him, and explaining to him that in fact we are looking at programs and priorities, a wider picture, while the member seems to have been very focused on a specific number or ratio.

Within the consultation process that we are doing, we are looking at consultation for program priorities. We are looking at consultation to improve our service, and I can tell the member that our secretarial support staff within the Department of Education and Training play a very important role. Perhaps the member has not understood entirely the role that these individuals play.

They are, for many people in Manitoba, the very first contact that is made with the Department of Education and Training regarding sorting out an issue. I can tell you that, through the internal consultation which I have spoken about, these individuals themselves, our secretarial staff, have said that they wish to continue with that very important role.

In addition, we employ people within the Department of Education on contract basis, for instance, people who may be responsible for Ukrainian education. So the secretarial support staff is responsible to assist those people and those numbers whom you see on the chart now and also other contract positions and individuals who do not appear on the chart.

Then, finally, when I was speaking about reclassification and the member was having some difficulty in terms of looking at why that would be important, the reclassification, I am informed, transferred 10 positions from the Professional/Technical area to the Administrative Support area.

Mr. Plohman: Well, the minister has failed to give any rationale for why she is now going to consult after making these severe cuts in one particular area of her department. She has not provided any evidence that services to children were a primary consideration. She has not provided evidence that the reason these cuts were made was for budgetary purposes, and we can only say that the information that the minister has given us has been vague and certainly not direct.

Therefore, I move, seconded by the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), that this committee condemn the Minister of Education for failing to provide direct and accurate answers to questions by members of the opposition.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Vodrey: I believe I do have an opportunity to speak to the motion, and I think it is a very important one and certainly would not offer any support to a motion such as that.

We have been in the Estimates process now for well over 30 hours, and in that process I believe that the Hansard record would speak for itself in terms of the kinds of questions which have been put and the kinds of answers which have been provided. When we look back over the numbers of questions which have been put over the last 30 hours, we can see that questions have been delivered over and over again, and the members have had a great deal of trouble understanding, I think, and holding on to their own train of thought. It is very interesting that, when the questions have been asked and the answers have been given, the members have continually asked and reasked and though people observing have certainly not had any difficulty in terms of understanding the answers.

So I certainly find that the motion is a very interesting one and I believe one of the words that was used was the word "forthcoming." Certainly, in terms of being forthcoming, we should probably examine the way the Estimates have gone so far.

We have taken a great deal of time to explain information which is not necessarily required under a certain budget line and where members have asked for information which does not require being answered under this particular budget line and which in fact could be answers deferred to another time. We did not defer them, and in fact spent a great deal of time making sure that there was staff and information available so that the questions could be covered in the order and the train of thought of the members of the opposition.

As they asked a question, they probably came upon another question which they would like to ask immediately following. Instead of deferring that particular answer, I did make a number of attempts to allow them to have their free-flowing train of thought and I have certainly provided them with information and attempted to follow their free-flowing train of thought.

So, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I think that, in the very first instance, speaks to how forthcoming the process of this Estimates has been and how the members of the opposition have been able to look at a range of information.

Secondly, we have also tabled information and the members have asked for some detailed information and they have wanted to have that detailed information available for themselves to look at, I presume, at this time or at another time. In allowing that to happen, we have made sure that we have brought forward a series of information.

I believe that the Hansard would show that at the beginning of each day there has been information tabled. Today, for example, I tabled the complete information of the course Skills for Independent Living. That course, we did discuss in detail last evening and we certainly went over the content topic areas of the course, but as I explained when I tabled that information today, that it is a very comprehensive piece of information which has been tabled and it was provided freely for the members because I understand that they needed that.

*(1610)

We also tabled information regarding staffing today and in the days previous we have tabled, as the Hansard will show, quite a great deal of information. We have been asked for information on statistics and that information has been provided. We have been asked information on program philosophies and I have spent a great deal of time looking at program philosophies as well with the members.

I can say that with this depth of information, it is very difficult to understand how it would be that the honourable members would feel that the information provided was not forthright and did not meet their needs but, certainly, we are not finished the Estimates process by this point either. As I have said, we have only accumulated approximately 30 hours. We have a great deal of opportunity to continue discussing the information required and, certainly, I will continue to make every effort to provide the information and to answer the questions for the members of the opposition.

Then I think the Hansard will also show that questions have been asked from a variety of members. There have been questions, certainly, from the four critics of Education, and each one has taken an opportunity to ask in areas of particular interest of themselves. There have also been questions asked by members who wish to ask questions on behalf of their constituents. We have made every effort as well to provide information to members of various constituencies.

So I believe the record will also show that questions were answered from a number of different individuals and also for a number of different purposes which have been required.

Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I would also like to make a comment on the issue of accuracy, because I believe in the motion there may be some question around the issue of: Was the information provided accurate? Certainly, where there have been tablings and certainly where there has been information required—

Point of Order

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I recognize that the minister is a little embarrassed because none of her colleagues are here, but we have a motion here—

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Reimer): The member did not have a point of order.

Mr. Storie: The minister is simply filibustering this question.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Reimer): Order, please.

The member does not have a point of order, and the member should not be alluding to who is in or out of committee, because it is the rules of the House. The motion is under advisement, which will come back.

* * *

Mrs. Vodrey: Let me pick up where I left off in my discussion to the motion.

Point of Order

Mr. Brian Pallster (Portage la Prairie): The previous speaker made reference to the absence of any members from the government being here, and I think it should be pointed out that there are members of the government here, in fact, and that his comment was a false one, which is unfortunate but typical.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Reimer): The member did not have a point of order.

* * *

Mrs. Vodrey: Let me continue my remarks in terms of speaking to the motion. I believe I was speaking about the issue of accuracy. In terms of accuracy, I have explained to the member that we have provided the information required and, where there

has been any question of the issue of accuracy, I have been very careful—[interjection]

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Reimer): Order, please. I would remind all members that the honourable minister is speaking.

Mrs. Vodrey: Where there has been any question of the issue of the complete accuracy of statistics, I can say to the member that that was immediately acknowledged. If it was an estimation, an estimation was provided and was followed up by the complete information being delivered to the member.

Again, last evening, the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) asked about co-operation and collaboration as concepts presented to students within Skills of Independent Living, and I can tell him that at that time I assured him that these qualities were in fact a focus of the new curriculum. In terms of the use of those words, collaboration and co-operation, I can tell the member that we have been attempting to provide a great deal of data and information as an illustrative way of showing collaboration and co-operation, and we certainly look to have that information assist the member. Within the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training, we have again provided that information in a collaborative way and a co-operative way—

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Reimer): Order, please. If the conversation could be on the side, please, while the minister is talking.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Deputy Chair, again, when we look at how collaboration and co-operation is accomplished, that has been accomplished through a number of ways through this committee. If the member wishes to look at Hansard, he will see that there has certainly been co-operation in terms of providing information to the member and in terms of collaborating over the time spent in the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training. We have really been over the past, now over 30 hours, looking at a number of issues, and again, let me say for the record, the issues have been considered, not necessarily by budget line but instead by the free-floating questions of the members opposite.

There has not been any effort to refuse to answer, though members may have been directed specifically to a budget line. They would note that the answers have been provided, and where further information has been required, then we have made every effort to supply that further information.

Again, I have been attempting to demonstrate some of the skills which we hope that students will be able to pick up, skills of collaboration and co-operation and also providing answers in a very clear and direct way. There have been other times within the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training in which the member has asked for some philosophical opinions, where I as minister have been asked for some honest reflection on issues, and that certainly has also been provided.

We have looked at a number of issues. The member began the Estimates process by asking about philosophy and where we looked for the Department of Education to be within the next while, and I have explained to him in the process of reflection, both as an individual with the skills that I bring to this position as well as a government, what we are looking to accomplish. One of the issues that we have talked about as members in this committee over a time has been the issue of consultation and the issue of process.

Those are two concepts which a great deal of time has been spent on. In the area of consultation, we have discussed consultation as it relates to very specific task forces or jobs which are being done within the Department of Education and Training. I will give the member again, by way of example, the task force which was looking to The Public Schools Act and any changes which will be made there, and that the report which has been released contains the opinions of 6,000 Manitobans, over 6,000 Manitobans.

* (1620)

Then we have the Task Force on Distance Education, which also looked at bringing forward information from a number of Manitobans, and that these task forces have also been representative in nature. So, when we look at the issue of consultation, again, where I was asked to reflect as minister in an honest and an open way on the issue of consultation, examples have been given. I can also say that the same has been done in the area of process. So, Mr. Acting Deputy Chair, I can say that I speak very strongly against the motion. In fact, I reject the motion which has been put forward by the member.

Mr. Plohma: Yes, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, the minister has gone on and on again on this particular point about how she rejects this motion. The fact is it deals with the symptoms of problems

we have had in these Estimates right through, and we have attempted to question the minister in great detail on numerous issues, and we cannot get straight answers even when they are evident from the minister.

It happened as recently as last night when we were dealing with Answering the Challenge, and we asked the minister about implementation deadlines and time lines on various strategies. She could not provide that information. She would not admit that she was abandoning certain strategies. We asked if any were abandoned. She would not admit that, and yet it is clear from her answers that she is abandoning some of those. In a roundabout way we have to draw conclusions, but she will not even admit the simplest error on her part. She will not admit that perhaps things could have been done another way or that she had not thought of something.

In no circumstances has she provided any admission that would indicate to us that she is willing to operate in a straightforward manner to the committee. We see that with the provision of information. We ask about audit information for internal audits that were not complete. She says she will not provide it to the opposition when it is complete. She did not explain why clinicians were dumped onto school boards without any consultation, when she said that consultation was the primary consideration and that services to children were a major concern. She did not admit that, no matter how much questioning we did on it. The fact is that it is evident that she has not kept face or been consistent with her words in terms of her actions.

In too many cases, she has provided misinformation that has required numerous questioning techniques, going over material over and over to get her to even provide the simplest of facts. She talks about consultation ad nauseam. Yet, when it comes to consultation on fundamental issues, we see no evidence of it. For example, she talks about reform of the education system. Yet, there is no plan. We could not get any information about a plan—no timetable, no time line, no idea, no concept of whether this was a major reform or a minor reform of the act. There was just no information there.

She will not even admit that parallel programming, through a Francophone division in existing school divisions is going to cost more money, a simple

concept to understand, no admission that this would be the case. She has avoided providing any direct and accurate answers to the members of the opposition during these Estimates.

I can only say that it is high time we move this kind of a motion to draw attention to the fact that this minister is refusing to provide direct answers to the questions being asked. That is why we have moved this.

It is nice to see that finally she was able to bring in some support for her Estimates. At one time, she had the Premier (Mr. Filmon) answering questions for her. Now finally, she was able to drag in some members to support her on the vote after about five or 10 minutes of rambling on in a way that in no way supported her contention that this motion was not relevant.

I hope members of the government that are here will point to their colleague and say, you have to be straightforward, you have to be direct with the members of the opposition, you have to provide answers. We demand that you, as a member of our caucus, will provide answers to the opposition in the Estimates process, because this undermines the whole Legislative process. It is not following proper parliamentary traditions.

Clearly, no parliamentary tradition is being honoured by this minister by belittling the process that she is now involved in in the Estimates process. It is a time to provide facts and information to the opposition and to the public through the parliamentary system and tradition in this province. She has not done that, and that is why we want this motion passed.

I move that the question be put.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Reimer): On the question brought forth by the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), question:

I move, seconded by the member for Woiseley (Ms. Friesen), that this committee condemn the Minister of Education for failing to provide direct and accurate answers to questions by members of the opposition.

All those in favour of the proposed motion will please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Reimer): All those opposed to the motion will please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Reimer): In my opinion, the Nays have it.

Mr. Plohman: On division.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Reimer): It is on division.

Mr. Plohman: Now that we have got some interest in the Estimates process of the Department of Education, I want to ask the minister once again whether she can rationalize making decisions in her department, in the Department of Education and Training, where she has maintained the management at a level that is almost as high as it was the previous year, with a ratio that is now much higher in terms of management to administrative staff, and why she has also increased the administrative support, while she has reduced the Professional/Technical people that provide services to children by way of the clinicians that were offering services in the past to school divisions throughout this province.

The minister has cut some 60 clinicians. She has no guarantee that they are going to be rehired by school divisions throughout this province. She has eliminated services to children and yet she has told us that her primary consideration was to provide services and protect services to children. We do not see that here. We do not see any evidence of it; the minister's answers did not provide any information on that area.

So I want the minister, now that she has some colleagues here to give her support, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) and the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme), the Minister of Culture (Mrs. Mitchelson) and the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) all at this committee now, will she tell the answers, give the answers to this committee exactly why she made these hasty decisions at the last minute without consultation and how she can attempt to rationalize that this was done in the best interests of services to children?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, before the motion presented, I answered all of those questions fully and the answers now remain the same as the answers I provided before we had the interruption.

Mr. Plohman: Well, it is typical of the forthcoming nature. Now, we just talked about that in the motion here.

The minister seems reluctant to try to explain the unexplainable in front of her colleagues because she knows, in fact, that they will say: You did that? That is ridiculous. Why did you not tell us that?

It is clear that the minister did not have any rationale for the decisions made.

Point of Order

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs): The member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) does not need to speak on behalf of any of the minister's colleagues. We are quite capable of speaking on behalf of ourselves and we speak very supportively of our Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey).

Some Honourable Members: Hear, hear.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Reimer): Thank you for the member's comments, but the member's comments are out of order. The member did not have a point of order. Pardon me.

* * *

* (1630)

Mr. Plohman: Good point, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson.

So the minister had provided the committee with information. I see she is going back over her notes to try to get the answers again.

The fact is that this is misinformation, in our opinion, because if she had consulted and listened to the people she consulted with, she would not have taken this decision to offload these clinicians on local school divisions with a grant that was not sufficient to support that.

She would not, if she had made decisions that were consistent with good management, have allowed the management ratio to increase while professional staff were decreasing. She would not have left the department with a much greater number of Administrative Support while she has cut professional people who provide services to children.

So I can only assume then, from the answers that the minister has given, if she can call them or characterize them answers, that in fact she did not consider those aspects when making these hasty cuts at the last minute for the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) so that it would somehow help his position with the public, that he is shrinking the civil

service. It was a desire to meet the need to reduce civil servants without regard to the service they were delivering.

I put that on the table for the minister to respond to.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, let us go over the total answer again.

The Department of Education and Training historically has provided a leadership role during the past two decades to ensure that clinician services were developed in the rural divisions and the rural districts and in the isolated areas of the province. As I said to the member, when I first came to Manitoba in 1975, I did go and speak to what is now our Child Care & Development Branch and have a look at the clinician services which are being offered across the province because I am a clinician myself. I was very interested in the model which was being used in Manitoba.

I can tell the member that these services are well established and that the department involvement in a day-to-day operation now is a time that school divisions may wish to act as the direct employers. I see the member nodding his head. He obviously nods in agreement.

Point of Order

Mr. Plohman: The minister was nodding her head last night when I was making a point and I noted that in Hansard as a fact. In this case, I am signing letters here ignoring the minister's ignorant answers, repetitive answers which have not provided any light on the situation over and over again. If she wants to continue to do that, that is fine, but she is wasting the time of the committee.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Reimer): Order, please. The member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) did not have a point of order.

Point of Order

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): On a point of order, I think this is the height of arrogance on behalf of the member for Dauphin who says he is ignoring an answer on Education that he claims on behalf of his party as critic to be an important issue for Manitobans. What arrogance, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Reimer): I would point out that the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) did not have a point of order, but I would

also mention that this—[interjection] But I would remind all members of the dignity and decorum of language in the presence.

* * *

Mrs. Vodrey: So I was now at the point of describing to the member that clinicians will now be employed by their home school divisions. I spoke about it previously, and I explained to the member that home school divisions now have the opportunity to work directly with their clinicians. I have also spoken about my own work as a clinician when I have had the opportunity to work on behalf of students directly with those people within school divisions who are ones who will be making the decisions. That is now the situation in which clinicians will be working. The Department of Education and Training, however, will continue to provide support, and as I have said to the member, we provide support in the area of recruitment. We will also provide support in the area of supervision, and particularly in the area of supervision for certification because clinicians do need to be certified to work in this province as do teachers.

We have spoken about the support which has been offered on behalf of clinicians to school divisions which is financial, that support which flows through the Ed funding formula, and also that support which comes through the supplementary area of the Ed funding formula. As soon school divisions as employers assume control of clinician services, as I have explained to the member, then we are looking at people working directly with their employing authority and also support within the financial area flowing through the funding formula.

Then we have also spoken about, when we look at staffing, the change in terms of the staffing of clinicians, and that is some very good reasoning on behalf of clinicians to be employed by their home school divisions. As I have said previously, there are 19 divisions who currently operate under that model, so we are certainly aware of how the model can work and also have said to school divisions that they may like to come together as a regional group and look at what their needs are. There are a number of ways in which school divisions may determine the kinds of clinician services that they wish to have.

When the member has then asked about a look in total at the staffing of the Program Development and Support Services area, he has asked questions about the Administrative Support service. In

answering that question previously, I have given him a number of pieces of information, one piece being that those people offer support, not only to the numbers that he sees listed on the chart but also to those people who work on a contract basis with the Department of Education and Training, and so they are required to provide that kind of support for those individuals.

I also explained that the clinicians, who previously were employed by our department, often had their administrative support provided within the schools where they are working. The administrative support and the numbers which he sees listed before him on the chart, which I provided to him earlier today, those individuals did not necessarily provide the full administrative support to the clinicians. They do provide administrative support for people who are not necessarily listed on the chart because they are contract people.

The third point that I have made around that matter is that there were reclassifications last year and there have been 10 individuals who have been reclassified from the Professional/Technical area into the Administrative Support area, so that then changes the numbers and the ratio.

I believe that explanation deals with (1) the clinicians employment to school divisions and (2) looking at our staff complement.

The third area that the member has raised for a number of times this afternoon is the issue of consultation. Again, I can reply that we are restructuring and reorganizing this particular division of the Department of Education and Training. As we look to that reorganization within this division, we have done a consultation around that reorganization to look at how we can provide the best service to Manitoba, how we can look at the priorities of services to Manitobans.

In addition, we have also done a consultation within our own staff as well as externally with those people who are our clients. We have felt that the consultation on both sides is important because that consultation will allow for within the department a more corporate view, a view in which people will understand how their work actually interfaces with other people who are working within the Department of Education, but we will also get from those people who are our clients how we can in fact provide the best service, where we can make improvements, how we can provide the most efficient leadership.

I believe that is the third area that the member has asked about, and I am pleased to provide that information to him again.

* (1640)

Mr. Plohman: Let the record show that the minister had no rational answer for maintaining management at an inordinately high level this year, that after the cuts to professional services. Let the record show that there was no consultation prior to the cuts of commissioners, and let the record show—

Point of Order

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Let the record show that those are the opinions of the member for Dauphin only.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Reimer): The minister did not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Plohman: Nor can that member speak on behalf of my colleagues. The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh) is speaking only for herself.

Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, let the record show the minister decided in her brilliant wisdom without consultation and against the wishes of school boards that clinicians should be in the employ of school divisions at the local level. Those are some of the major points where answers were not provided in an in-depth way that made any sense to any rational person in the province of Manitoba. I can only leave it for the public to judge as to the rationale for this kind of a decision and the actions of this minister and her method of operation.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): I wanted to follow up on some of the questions of the member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock). He was asking about the International Baccalaureate program and his questions, I think, were reflecting upon or asking the minister to reflect upon the relationship between curriculum in Manitoba and curriculum which is derived from outside. Can I just start with a couple of questions on statistics, really? The minister said there were five schools offering IB in Manitoba, and I do not have them all but is it still Sisler, Miles Macdonell, Kelvin, I am not sure about Silver Heights still. What would the other one be?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am pleased to provide the names of the schools offering the international baccalaureate:

Silver Heights Collegiate, Miles Macdonell, Sisler, Westwood and Kelvin.

Ms. Friesen: Those are all in Winnipeg, essentially in the greater Winnipeg area.

Mrs. Vodrey: All of these schools are within the Perimeter.

Ms. Friesen: I am interested in the changes in enrollment. I do not know enough about the enrollment to say whether it is continuing in expansion or what rate it is expanding at. It is obvious that the number of schools is expanding. Over, for example, I believe about eight or nine years ago there were only two or three schools which were offering IB, and so I wonder is it expanding, is it contracting or is it just that we are offering program in a wider range of schools?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Deputy Chair, from 1985 through 1993, there have been five schools, so it has been stable for approximately eight years.

Ms. Friesen: The other part of my question was, what have the numbers been like in those schools? Are the registrations expanding or contracting?

Mrs. Vodrey: The number of students totally participating in the IB has been fairly consistent. However, there has been a decline in those students taking the full diploma and more students taking the certificate level.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister provide some numbers on that? Relatively stable at around what level?

Mrs. Vodrey: I do have some of the actual numbers for the school year '92-93. At Silver Heights there were 16 students in the diploma and 34 students in the certificate, and at Miles Macdonell there were seven in the diploma and 45 in the certificate. I am sorry, at Miles Macdonell I have '92 figures also of 12 in the diploma and 40 in the certificate. For Sisler, '92-93, five in the diploma, 12 in the certificate, and for Westwood, '93, two in the diploma, 11 in the certificate. At Kelvin eight in the diploma, 41 in the certificate.

Ms. Friesen: Are these graduating numbers? These are not the numbers for Grades 11 and 12. These are actually the numbers who graduate with a diploma and those who graduate with a certificate?

Mrs. Vodrey: These are the graduate numbers.

Ms. Friesen: The minister is clear then that those numbers have not changed in the period since 1985 within what, 10 percent?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed that in total the numbers have remained relatively stable. There may have been a slight decline, but by and large we have seen them as stable, but the change has been in the area where we have noticed more students of that total taking the certificate as opposed to the diploma.

Ms. Friesen: Can the minister give me an idea of how big that shift has been? Is it, say, a 50 percent shift or is it a 20 percent?—roughly.

Mrs. Vodrey: The numbers that I have available at the moment, for Kelvin we had in 1986 approximately 23 students did the diploma level of 40 students, and so at that time it was approximately 23 students did the diploma level of 40 students. So at that time, it was approximately 2 to 1. The numbers which we have for the 1993 graduating are eight in the diploma, 41 in the certificate, and that is now a 1 to 5 ratio.

Ms. Friesen: What is the minister's reflection upon this? What does she think is happening? Why is this happening?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Deputy Chair, again, I would remind the member that these particular courses are not the courses of the Department of Education and Training. These are courses which are offered as a local option within individual school divisions. Our concerns for students are that they complete the Manitoba curriculum.

But in terms of speculating about some numbers, certainly there are more programs in local areas which look at gifted education. There is in fact a more strong local program. Previously, a number of students may have come into the program from other divisions in which there was not a program offered. So some of the change may simply be that there are other gifted programs available.

In addition, there are also programs, other courses, which are available in terms of the advanced placement from the universities.

Ms. Friesen: The question I was asking was, in a program where numbers have remained relatively stable and there has been a shift from students who, for example—and the only example we have here is Kelvin, where half the students were going for a diploma some years ago, and now, much larger

numbers are opting for a lesser program. That concerns me and that is really what I am asking.

Why are students who are presumably the most academically inclined, at least within the city of Winnipeg, and have the opportunity to go into this kind of program, why are they opting for a lesser program?

I am looking at it, not from the concerns of any particular program or any particular group of students, but from the overall perspective of the goals and standards that we are setting in Manitoba. I am using this as an example.

* (1650)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Deputy Chair, the choices appear to be more a matter of choosing a different pattern. I explain the difference as, the diploma students complete the extended essay and take three subjects at a higher level; certificate students take a mixture of what is a regular set of offerings within their school as well as the IB.

As I said in my last answer, we recognize that there are stronger offerings made available within local schools, and those offerings conform to the Manitoba curriculum. So a student, who in the past might have taken the diploma course, might now find a pattern suitable with stronger course offerings that meet the curriculum of Manitoba Education and Training to then do a patterning which leads them to a certificate in the IB program.

Ms. Friesen: I can see how that might be a useful answer in the context of one school division, but we are looking at the context of one program which has seen a significant shift with students opting for a lesser academic program than similar students did from same schools in fact seven or eight years ago or whatever years we are looking at.

It is that shift that concerns me, because I wonder if it is a reflection of what is happening generally in Manitoba education, is that students are opting and being not necessarily encouraged to do so, but we are not holding out high enough standards for them. Here we can see, in one program where every one had an academic orientation, that students have shifted to a lesser degree. If there are other explanations for it, I would welcome them, but I am concerned that is being fostered somehow amongst students themselves.

I am not criticizing the teachers or the schools. Is there a sense of peer activity or peer consensus in

the schools which says it is okay to do less, it is okay to take less, it is okay to opt for the lesser program, because that seems to be the conclusion that one could draw from what has happened at least with the numbers that we have so far?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, the member is speculating. I would say that her speculation is not correct.

If we come back to the answers which I have already given, and again she is asking me to look at comparing a program which is not a program or a course of study of the Department of Education with courses of study which are offered from the Department of Education.

As I have said, there has been a growth in strong programs which are being offered by the Department of Education within the Manitoba curriculum. Somehow the member is assuming that those programs, in her words, are less, are not as good. What my response to that is that the IB happens to be a set of programs, an area of study, and we now have strong programs being offered which are part of the Manitoba curriculum. Those strong programs provide strength in more than just these five cluster high schools.

We have been looking at the IB being offered within five high schools within the Perimeter. As I have been saying to her, when I look at the program of education, I see students' offerings being strengthened and strengthened in more than just these five high schools. I would say that the speculation that the member is drawing and a speculation of students wanting to do less, my sense is that is not the case. The case is, in fact, that we have more students in more high schools interested in strong programming rather than only in a cluster setting.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, the minister so quickly rushes to a confrontation. I really am very concerned about that kind of consensus which I see in students and in some programs. I was not commenting at all upon the Manitoba programs. I am commenting with a shift within International Baccalaureate programs in some schools, and it does concern me.

I was asking the minister, and yes, I was very clear that I was speculating, what the reason for this is, and does she as Minister of Education have any concerns? Is it for example confined only to this

program? Is it something which is more broadly reflective of larger issues in the school.

I mean, one of the things that concerns me very greatly about our schools is the very high proportion of students who are working many long hours and students who are not looking at education as their first task.

In some ways what I see in the Baccalaureate Program is a shift that says, yes, that is okay and that school is becoming less of a focus for students but more of something which is in many schools a part-time activity.

Those are the kinds of concerns I am trying to put on the record and to look for some reflection from the Minister of Education as to what her concerns are.

Mrs. Vodrey: I certainly have been reflecting on the issues of offerings for students and student achievement, but the member, in her questioning, did refer to course offerings other than the International Baccalaureate as less and as perhaps not being as strong.

So my response to the member—

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Reimer): Order, please.

Point of Order

Ms. Friesen: The minister is putting on record things which I did not say. I said that there has been a shift from the diploma, from the focused. If she wants to get into it, we can look at the difference between the diploma and the certificate programs, but I never said they were less. I am talking about a shift within that program from people who choose not to do the higher level but are clearly choosing only the lower level.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Reimer): Order, please. It is clearly a dispute over the facts. The member for Wolseley did not have a point of order. The minister to continue.

* * *

Mrs. Vodrey: When we have been looking at the kinds of courses that students are taking and the member has asked me to speculate on why students may have moved from the diploma to the certificate, the answer that I did give her was that there are strengthened course offerings within individual schools.

I also understand, as we look at education in Manitoba, that there are increased numbers of students taking very rigorous academic courses at the Senior 4 level. That does speak to the fact that our students in Manitoba do wish to be challenged, and some of the courses which those students have been participating in are courses such as Calculus 305, Physics 300, Chemistry 300, English Language Arts 300. We also have seen increased numbers of female students who have been taking maths and science.

So I just wanted to make it clear that on behalf of students in Manitoba that there has been, yes, a local offering of the International Baccalaureate program. Yes, we have seen some shifts because that is available between the diploma and the certificate program. Some of the reasons to account for that may in fact be, as the member has asked me to speculate, the increased course offerings, but because the member has asked me as minister about the issue as it relates to all students in Manitoba, I want to make sure that I let her know that the information we have is of strengthened courses within other high schools, within local high schools so that students do not have to leave their local high school and necessarily move into the cluster of the International Baccalaureate and that within individual high schools, there is in fact a spirit of wanting a challenge that is available to students wherever they might live.

I know that the member has spoken about the IB only being available in the city of Winnipeg—

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Reimer): Order, please. The hour being five o'clock, time for private members' hour. Committee rise.

ENVIRONMENT

* (1430)

Madam Chairperson (Louise Dacquay): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

This section of the Committee of Supply is dealing with the Estimates for the Department of Environment. We are on item 2.(b)(1) on page 51 of the Estimates manual.

Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

2.(b) Environmental Management (1) Salaries \$3,355,500.

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): I do not have any questions.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Madam Chairperson, how many staff are there covered by this salary appropriation?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): There are 82.13 in appropriation 31-2B.

Mr. Storie: Madam Chairperson, can the minister tell us how many positions are vacant in this appropriation?

Mr. Cummings: The vacancy rate in the department is about 5 percent I believe at this juncture. In that particular section there are no vacancies.

Mr. Storie: I did not hear the minister's last comment.

Madam Chairperson: Would the honourable Minister of Environment please repeat his response? The honourable member for Flin Flon has indicated he did not hear the response.

Mr. Cummings: There are no vacancies in that section, Madam Chairperson.

Madam Chairperson: Shall item 2.(b)(1) Salaries pass?

Mr. Storie: Madam Chairperson, the minister indicated that the department has a vacancy rate of 5 percent overall, but there is no vacancy in this particular area in the department. Can the minister indicate whether there is a policy within the department or is he given instruction from Treasury Board to maintain a certain vacancy level within staff positions in the department?

Mr. Cummings: Madam Chairperson, we have some new positions to fill, which is contributing to what would be a normal vacancy of around 3 percent, I would expect.

Mr. Storie: Madam Chairperson, am I to take it from that response that a 3 percent level is considered normal and the department tries to maintain that level?

Mr. Cummings: I am told that as much as 5 percent would be normal.

Mr. Storie: My question was more direct. The question was: Is the department instructed to maintain that level, or is it the department's goal to have full employment, staff positions, at all times?

Mr. Cummings: No.

Mr. Storie: Madam Chairperson, within this appropriation, how many of the staff that the minister referred to are professional, or considered a professional designation?

Mr. Cummings: 65.13 are professionals.

Mr. Storie: Madam Chairperson, of those 65, how many are visible minorities? What percentage are women? Does that number coincide with the overall objectives for affirmative action targets set by the Civil Service Commission?

Mr. Cummings: Madam Chairperson, I am told we do not have the statistics here, but it would be fair to say that visible minorities and women employees are underrepresented in the department. We have been working over the last few years to address that. As I understand the make-up of the department, it started off with a very high percentage of male professionals from the group that was originally—going back to when this group came out of Natural Resources. So, yes, we have some way to go.

As I recall the mix, and I do not have the figures here, I think we have begun to see women rise to higher levels within the department.

Mr. Storie: I am wondering if the minister could tell us how many positions are currently being bulletined in this area, or are there any?

Mr. Cummings: In this particular area, there would be none, obviously, because there are no vacancies. I am told that there are about six being bulletined right now.

Mr. Storie: Of those six, are any designated as belonging to affirmative action? Do any of those have affirmative action designation?

Mr. Cummings: All of them.

Mr. Storie: Madam Chairperson, I hope that means that we will see eventually some results. It is not good enough simply to have that designation unless there is actually the political will and the commitment to see that policy enforced.

This branch also is responsible for the licensing provisions related to, I assume, projects like the Flin Flon operation, the Flin Flon smelter. Is that correct? I wonder if the minister could table for us then a recent or an up-to-date analysis of the number of times in the last year that the smelter has exceeded the emission standards set by the department, the Clean Environment Commission?

* (1440)

Mr. Cummings: Yes.

Mr. Storie: Can the minister share a copy with myself and the Environment critic? Can the minister indicate, perhaps verbally, whether the experience in the last six months has shown any deterioration in terms of violations of existing standards?

Mr. Cummings: We do not have all of the precise data here, but I am told the trend has been to a considerable improvement in recent months.

Mr. Storie: I am not sure whether the minister is referring to the last six months. Certainly there was some concern in the fall about a series of incidents really that exceeded the guidelines.

Mr. Cummings: I was referring to the last two to three months. There may well have been some exceedances in the period that the member is talking about.

Mr. Storie: The question would be, what is the normal practice for the department when the guidelines are violated persistently?

Mr. Cummings: I would presume that the member is probably as conversant with this as I am, but I am sure he would like to have something on the record to take back to his constituents. It is well known that, first of all, a warning system, which was a change which occurred since I became responsible for this department, was implemented where exceedances occur. If it appears that it is going to be persistent and problematic, the company would then be asked to cut back on production. Because of the age of the facility and all the other things associated with it, we cannot manage the emissions in any other way but to cut back on production.

Mr. Storie: I am wondering whether the department has ever had an opportunity or had the occasion to require a cutback on production.

Mr. Cummings: No, but I would think that when you have implemented the warning process, you are on the first step toward doing it. Some of the things that the company is doing, I am not totally conversant with this, but I believe I understand the process. It may even well be able to adapt some of their feed processes in order to cut back on their emissions, but the fact is we have not implemented a cutback yet. One of the problems is, of course, that the plant is not particularly flexible in its operations.

I cannot let this go by, however, without indicating that these are the reasons, along with a number of other economic ones, that it is important that the

plant upgrade proceed and has been proceeding and the repair and upgrade that is in place has the potential to deal with the most serious part of the emissions.

Mr. Storie: Madam Chairperson, can the minister indicate whether he has had any correspondence or has been in communication with HBM&S about the potential in-service date for the zinc pressure leach plant?

Mr. Cummings: I do not recall any direct communication to me. I am told at the staff level there have certainly been communications on that matter.

Mr. Storie: Can the minister indicate when that is projected to take place and what the department's expectations are with respect to the reduction of both particulate matter and SO₂ emissions.

Mr. Cummings: The potential dates were June or possibly July. Obviously, we expect significant reductions in particulate emissions. We expect 50 percent reduction in particulate emissions and this will bring compliance to our acid rain regulatory requirements.

We would also expect to see a 25 percent reduction in sulphur emissions at the same time.

Mr. Storie: Madam Chairperson, just a final question on this topic. I had understood from information that was provided by HBM&S early on in this process that they had anticipated an 80 or 90 percent reduction in particulate matter, but it leads to the more general question of: What is the department's role in terms of monitoring the end result of this modernization process, and what sort of contingency plans does the department have should the guidelines that were established for 1994 not be met if for some reason the equipment does not function as originally designed or there are other operating problems which prevent it?

Mr. Cummings: I suppose my immediate tongue-in-cheek reaction is, given the size of the cost overrun, it better work or there would be heads rolling, I would think, within the corporation.

I am not sure if I can answer the question directly in terms of the discrepancy between what he believes will be the ultimate particulate reduction and what information I have that may relate to the full completion of the upgrade. We are the monitoring authority. We have our station in place, and we will continue with the monitoring program. I

am not anticipating any of the possible problems that the member has indicated. Obviously, the full rehabilitation is not going to be complete right away, but the most important part that we needed in the short term is going to be done.

Mr. Storie: On another matter, I believe that recently the community of Lynn Lake has again raised the issue of dust levels coming from the tailings at Lynn Lake. Approximately a year ago, I wrote to the minister indicating my concern over the fact that the tailings were drying out, they were not being managed, I guess, and that it was creating a tremendous dust problem, a dust problem that was visible from many, many miles away from the community, a serious dust problem. I know the community has raised it again. I am wondering whether the department is making any plans or has made any plans to cap the tailings pond as the community has requested.

Mr. Cummings: Yes, I recently received further communication from that community regarding the dust. When we investigated it before and began to work with the Department of Energy and Mines, who have lead responsibility in terms of control, as I recall at that point, we did not establish that this was a major health risk or that this was a problem. It is obviously a problem but a problem of maybe lesser magnitude than what the member may even have just portrayed. But we are again back there on site with officials from Energy and Mines to see what can be done in this respect. It could be a very costly and even difficult problem in order to keep this pile down.

* (1450)

It is one of those things that obviously one needs to be concerned about when we open new mines, that we do not have these kinds of problems lingering after the value has been taken out of the mine and we do not have sufficient capability of rehabilitation of tailings or other remains. But the issue is not dead, and we have been back. I have not received the results of officials going back to the site. I will be prepared to report once we have that information back from our officers that went to the site.

Mr. Storie: Madam Chairperson, is the minister saying that the financial responsibility for whatever remedial action is necessary lies with the Department of Energy and Mines? Is there no responsibility to the previous leaseholder, the

mining company, SherrGold, DCC, any of the other principals that were involved?

Mr. Cummings: With The Mines Act, I am told that the property and the responsibility reverted to the province.

Ms. Marianne Cerlill (Radlsson): Madam Chair, last night, when we finished off, we were discussing the Assiniboine diversion. I have more information this morning, and I want to ask the minister some more questions in this area, particularly related to some new information that we have from the federal government. They have sent letters to the government of Manitoba from four different departments, raising concerns both with the inadequacy of the environmental impact statement prepared by the Pembina Valley group, with the incompleteness of the material, the studies that they have done. I am wondering, first of all, if the minister and his staff have also received copies of this information.

Mr. Cummings: Yes.

Ms. Cerlill: Why is it, then, when I ask questions about this in Question Period, that information of the concerns by the federal government was not put on the record? I have asked questions about this, and the minister has not indicated that these departments have raised these concerns, particularly about the fish habitat, the implications for fish.

Mr. Cummings: Firstly, it is part of the normal process to have various agencies, nationally and provincially, comment on the guidelines. The process, then, flows from those comments. There may well be disagreements between various technical people or different points of view, but ultimately those discussions have to be resolved before the Clean Environment Commission can make a decision, because they will have to be satisfied that either the questions are answered or they are not.

Ms. Cerlill: Well, it is particularly a concern when we have disputes over what the flows are going to be, and disputes over, for example, in this case, who is going to be doing the base line studies. I would ask the minister, with respect to one of the concerns raised by the city, his understanding of who is going to be conducting the studies to provide the data on the effects on the riverbanks in Winnipeg. Who is responsible for doing those studies?

Mr. Cummings: Any of the information that is required will have to be supplied by the proponent.

The type of information that the member is talking about may well be available already. I am not privy to that.

Ms. Cerlill: Who is responsible for telling the proponent to do that, in what form is that direction supposed to come, and when is it supposed to come? As I understand it, the city still has not been made aware that those concerns have been addressed.

Mr. Cummings: As I have been saying for some time, it is either in response to the guidelines that are laid out or in response to questions that the commission will ask.

Ms. Cerlill: Well, if that is not raised until during the hearings, if that is what the minister means, then how is that information supposed to be reviewed during that process if it is not going to be assigned to them until the hearings?

One of the concerns is that the people preparing for the hearings now do not have all the information that they feel they need to make a proper assessment, and if the proponent is not going to be directed until the hearings to do this kind of research.

Mr. Cummings: The commission will make a decision on the relevancy of the questions as well. They might, I suppose, as part of the review, weigh whether or not the amount of withdrawal is in relationship to the normal flows in the river, whether or not all those questions are completely relevant to this withdrawal.

Ms. Cerlill: With respect to the discussion we were having yesterday then, where would the proponents be getting their information about the flows and the changes the flow would effect on the riverbank? Where would they be getting that information?

Mr. Cummings: There is a multiple of sources from which they could glean the information. It could come from existing government information. It could come from preexisting studies that have been done by various authorities. It could come from work they may have done currently as a result of a contract in their own contractors. It could have come from preexisting work done by federal authorities. There is a wide range of areas from which they could get the information.

Ms. Cerlill: Is it not the provincial government's responsibility to keep that data, to keep the information on minimum flow?

Mr. Cummings: Well, Madam Chairperson, I feel a little bit like I am getting poked in the same spot over and over again about minimum flows. The answer is that there are not any minimum flows that have been set, and one should not interpret the studies that were put together as setting or changing the flow regimes in the river. That was the answer that was provided by the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns).

The Clean Environment Commission will obviously review that information, but I really think it is inappropriate for the member to continually put on the record that the minimum flows have been established or changed. That is not the information that I have, and I do not think it is the information that she has, because in my view she is interpreting it wrongly.

The fact is that the setting of a minimum flow was not contemplated. The commission will look at the regimes in the river, what the full range of possibilities are, and they will have to make a decision following that. This debate becomes completely circular when we start talking about the management or withdrawal of the water without talking about the full range of opportunities that are out there. As Minister of Environment, I cannot get into that debate. The Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) might better be able to answer some of the questions because the department of Water Resources reports to him.

* (1500)

I have to be very careful that I do not attempt to prejudge or pre-empt information that may go before the Clean Environment Commission. So I ask my critic to take a look at that in the broader sense.

The environmental impact assessment will be reviewed by the commission, and we or any other member of this House in debate with myself or the Minister of Natural Resources cannot prereview the environmental assessment. If we attempt to, we are in fact short-circuiting the process. I think that we both have enough respect for the process that we would not want to do that.

Ms. Cerilli: The minister talks about respect for a process and already we are seeing that if the assessment is supposed to be identifying the impact of a diversion on the flow and there is no base-line data, we cannot even find out specifically by whom the base-line data is supposed to be set and to make sure that we have all of the information necessary

to arrive at that data available to the Clean Environment Commission so that if now their job is not only to assess the effect of the diversion but is also to figure out what is supposed to be the flow requirements for the river coming into Winnipeg, this is ridiculous.

The city engineers are obviously calling into question the government's independence in this case. They are calling into question their providing all the information and ensuring that all the information necessary is going to be made available.

Mr. Cummings: I find it very strange, Madam Chairperson, that the opponents, in this case the city engineers, go off halfcocked and not supply any substantiating information regarding the wild and irrational, in my judgment, comments that they have made about water flows in the city, but everyone else in the eyes of the critic is expected to fully document and support everything that is being considered prior to any opportunity to properly present that information.

You cannot have it both ways. We have wild-eyed criticisms out there that are not being substantiated. If they are being substantiated, then I respect them but, when they are simply statements of fear, then it is not helpful to the debate.

Now, the next part of the question raises concerns with me about whether or not there are documented records of flows in the Assiniboine River. I know that I have seen records of flows going back to 1900. I am sure that when the time comes for that information to be made available to the Clean Environment Commission, somebody will have access to it. It is my job to make sure that the process is clear, that access will be available to the commission for all of this information, and the bottom line is still if the information is not clearly supportable, and if the volumes are not clearly shown to be what the proponent expects they will be, then I think the conclusion of the commission would be quite obvious. But we are again, as I said, trying to review the impact assessment here without having all the material in front of us.

Ms. Cerilli: I do not think we are trying to review the impact. We are trying to make sure that there is proper information. I think it is a completely legitimate question for me to ask, where did the proponent get the information of 100 cfs?

Mr. Cummings: I suspect that if one were to look at the environmental impact assessment, those figures may well be in there for modelling purposes. If the member wishes to draw conclusions, one way or the other on that, that will be her own conclusions, but let us let the commission have an opportunity to look at the figures.

I refuse to be put in the position of prejudging what the commission will want to hear. The sources for information will be cited in the impact assessment, and I wonder if the member has looked at those sources or if her sources have given her that information. They seem to be able to bring forward clandestine faxes and read selectively from them, but nevertheless they do not want to look at the broad figures that are available.

Ms. Cerlill: I do not think it is being selective to have to understand what it is the Clean Environment Commission is supposed to be assessing the flow from. What I was asking is—and the minister talks about discussions in circles—where would the proponent get the figure of 100 cfs to put in their environmental impact statement? That is where we saw the figure and that is the figure that is being put into question. Why would they know to base their proposal on that figure? This calls the whole project into question. Is that flow going to be satisfactory?

Mr. Cummings: I would like the member to look at what the attributive source is for that information. That will be the source. It must be written in there somewhere. They cannot pull figures out of the air. I think I know what the answer is, but you are going to have to read it yourself.

Ms. Cerlill: Well, that seems to be what the City of Winnipeg people are feeling, that this figure has been pulled out of the air. I was told this morning that the lowest flow recorded has been about 105 cfs, and that was in 1989, 105 cfs coming into the city. It seems to be that a decision may have been made based on that figure, which would not be acceptable because I do not think that on an ongoing basis, that kind of flow could be determined to be sustainable.

Mr. Cummings: Madam Chairperson, the member seems unwilling to accept the explanation of the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) which was clearly given in this House yesterday and the day before and repeated by myself. If she will not accept the information that we give her, then she must be saying that we are trying to lie or mislead in our

answers regarding where this figure may have come from.

* (1510)

I do not think that without getting into a verbal hair pull, this question is going to get any different answer than it has been getting for the last day and a half. I would love to get into the debate if I were the proponent, but I am not the proponent. My responsibility is to make sure that the process is clear, that it is clean, if you will, in terms of access and access to information.

The member did point out that she believes 1989 was one of the lower flows. I would bet that if she were to check into the 1930s, she would find that it was as low as 50 cfs. That probably raises the question about whether or not the dam at Shellmouth is having any impact on the flow in the river.

Ms. Cerlill: I think that there are a number of other questions that could be asked on this, and I can see that the Minister of Environment is, well, stonewalling. It is going to be interesting to see how these issues are handled with the Clean Environment Commission.

I would just hope, after listening to his discussion with the member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs) yesterday, that this project is going to be considered adequately. I know, now, I am satisfied that the federal departments are reviewing this. That was another issue that we had been concerned about before. I think that the minister made some comments yesterday about the status of the federal screening process. So I just want to clarify before I move on to something else.

In his opinion or understanding, what is the status of the federal consideration of the project at this point?

Mr. Cummings: It is in the hands of the various agencies. As I said yesterday, it in fact is not in their hands because a decision has not been finalized in terms of anything that would require or that would cause the trigger, if you will, for them to be pulled into the process. As I tried to explain last night, and I believe the member concurs with me, this is a most difficult area. It hangs on very minute legal points as to whether or not decisions were made in the proper sequence, whether or not they were in fact made, whether or not they had the information that they needed in order to be made.

Those seem to be the types of concerns that swirl around the federal decision-making process. Our process is underway, but I wish to again reiterate that nothing will happen on this project until all the federal and provincial approvals have been achieved. How the federal process will ultimately end up, I cannot predict, but they will have to give an approval through a proper process of their own before we can assume that this project is going to get their blessing or get any kind of approval. Nothing will occur until they have done a proper process.

They will have to look over the whole gamut, if in fact they become involved, and make a decision based on the information that is available. It is convoluted. It is unwieldy. It leaves the provinces wondering when the federal authorities are going to make a decision and what kind of decision it is going to be. But until the new Environment Act is in place, given the court rulings that we have had over the last few years, believe me, the last thing I need is any problems in this area, the last thing this government would want is any problems in this area, and we will be very careful about how we deal with this project and make sure that the approvals are properly handled.

Ms. Cerilli: I think the question, from the minister's response, would have to be, in his understanding then, if this project just seems to not trigger the triggers, what are the requirements for the federal process? Can the minister describe from his understanding what the requirements are?

Mr. Cummings: The answer is going to be difficult to explain, but if there are no triggers, they will not need to make a decision. Until they have come to a conclusion of whether or not there are in fact triggers that would require them to make a decision, they will not be starting their decision-making process. That is the advice that comes out from the agencies to other agencies. I think that it simply adds to the confusion, but it is the way they have to operate. They have to meet the responsibilities of FEARO, and we cannot prejudge how they are going to do that.

Ms. Cerilli: As I understand it, one of the triggers would be that it is on a navigable waterway, that is federal jurisdiction. Another one would be that it has federal funding from a federal agency, and it fulfills that requirement. Another one would be that there is an impact on aboriginal lands. So there are three that are outlined in the act federally, meaning that

there should be federal involvement in the assessment.

The other thing is, as I have gotten memos today, we know that there are federal departments looking at this already. I think the concern is that we want to have those federal agencies, which have a lot of research capability and expertise, to have input into the assessment.

Mr. Cummings: The aboriginal, the waterways, those are all potentially triggers. But there may well not be impacts in those areas that would be significant enough to cause those triggers to be used.

It is not my decision. The federal authority will have to make that decision. As I said last night in these Estimates, there has been an aura built up over the years that those who are not satisfied with provincial decisions have always said, well, the federal authority has to come in and make a decision.

The fact is that they have far less responsibility in many of these areas than the province does. So we will have to wait until they make a decision. They will be held accountable for their decision. It should not, in anybody's mind, reflect on whether or not the province has an ability to proceed with its own hearings. We will be held accountable for our process. The federal authorities might decide it is an insufficient process to answer some of their questions, they might decide that it is. Those are all wide-open questions.

For example, whether or not there is federal involvement in any potential project in terms of a commitment of dollars, that also might be a trigger, but those commitments have not been made. Now, when the member from Portage (Mr. Pallister) asks whether or not there are prior commitments, there are not any prior commitments by this government or other governments. The licences have to be in place before any decisions can be finalized.

The Minister of Transport could require a permit under the Navigable Waters Act or he might not. If he does not, then there is no trigger. The member, nor should I, assume that there will be a permit required under the Navigable Waters Act. I presume that if sanity prevails that might well be governed on whether or not there is a structure that impacts on the river. Those are the kinds of things that we cannot answer today.

Ms. CerlIII: The other issue that gets raised when we talk about the federal process and when I talk to the federal environment review office, they clarified that there is no requirement, that they make the decision and the rationale for their decision, I guess, public, that they are really not accountable, which is a problem. The minister has some other information for me on that?

* (1520)

Mr. Cummings: I am not going to spend any time defending the federal process, but it is my understanding that if they do a screening process that they have to then defend that and give their reasons.

Ms. CerlIII: Okay, I am going to move on to another area.

Madam Chairperson: Shall item 2.(b) Environmental Management (1) Salaries—

Ms. CerlIII: No, no. Another issue, not another area.

Madam Chair, I want to ask some questions related to the 15 appeals that the minister received related to the Clean Environment Commission report on the Abitibi licence. I would ask: What is the status? I understand that those appeals, letters should be replied to. Why has the minister not replied? These groups and individuals have gotten no response, as I understand it. So what is happening with that area?

Mr. Cummings: There is no time requirement in which to respond, although one should not assume that that time commitment would go on for an indefinite period of time.

We have not made a decision on a number of the things that are related to the appeals that we have received.

Ms. CerlIII: Can the minister clarify for us what issues were raised in the appeals and how they would be responding to them, the department?

Mr. Cummings: Obviously, one of them was whether or not there was logging allowed in certain areas, whether or not the bridges would be allowed on the Manigotagan, what the width of, I believe—I am going by memory here, so do not quote me precisely—but I believe that the width of the protective stand along the edge of the Manigotagan was another area that was raised, including Manigotagan in Nopiming Park, so there is

obviously ramifications there beyond what this ministry could reach conclusions on in and of itself.

The operating parameters and the funding of the Citizens Advisory Committee, and actually the only one that I have had much pressure on is when that advisory committee is going to be dealt with and the appeal to it.

The process is that if there is an appeal to a particular clause that we hold back in terms of making a decision on this panel until we have dealt with the appeal.

Ms. CerlIII: The other concern in this area is with the effluent from the mill and its effect on the reserve, particularly. I would ask the minister, is that mill in violation of its effluent licence regulation, and what kind of readings have there been with respect to the water quality that Sagkeong, the reserve there, is utilizing?

Mr. Cummings: The mill has not been historically out of compliance with the licence or with its effluent standards, but the member would be aware that those standards have been changed.

They are presently in the process of licensing with the province and that licensing is in regard to the upgrade of their mill. Part of the upgrade will be to change their effluent handling and capability so that they will be able to meet the new standards.

Ms. CerlIII: How would the water quality for the populations in that area drawing from the Winnipeg River compare with the city of Winnipeg water?

Mr. Cummings: I am told that we have fairly good monitoring records and that the best of our recollection is that this water is equal to the city of Winnipeg water. The quality is not deteriorated.

I suppose I could say, tongue in cheek, however, as I said off the record, it might depend what you are referring to when you talk about Winnipeg water. Are you talking about the Red River at the north end of the city of Winnipeg, or are you talking about the inlets at Shoal Lake? The quality of the Red is not too great.

Ms. CerlIII: Just to clarify, I am talking about drinking water, and I am talking about the quality of the drinking water. How is the department dealing with claims then that there are contaminants in the water that are affecting the health of the reserve?

Mr. Cummings: My response was that the drinking water quality is as good as the city of Winnipeg's drinking water and possibly even better. The

monitoring program, however, is there to try and provide some safety.

Federal Health and Welfare are monitoring, and if there is something about that water that I am unaware of—but it is federal Health and Welfare that is doing the monitoring at the reserve. There is no doubt that the plant needs to meet the new standards. That is part of their application for upgrade, but I have not been told of any outstanding concerns.

Ms. Cerilli: Well, another area of great concern, and maybe I should not have left this one so long, but the fact that we have Repap operating without an environment licence currently, I think, is not a good precedent to be setting. It is a huge problem, and it makes one wonder of the seriousness with which the government takes the issuing of an environment licence. So I would ask the minister to explain how we can have this size of an operation operating without a proper environment licence.

Mr. Cummings: First of all, the operation was not required to be licensed until the act came into place. In fact, they are in the process of working on applications for licensing in the forestry area.

* (1530)

The mill is fully licensed. One should not overlook the fact that this is a long-standing mill and cutting area that has been brought further under compliance under this government than it was ever envisaged before. The forestry cutting, the forestry licences are up-to-date and they are being managed. The overall forest management and licence under The Environment Act is presently being fulfilled in terms of coming forward for final licensing.

This mill did not expand or has not expanded in the way that we had originally anticipated when the agreement with Repap was originally struck. In fact, they have every right and are properly licensed to operate as they are and are showing good progress towards preparing themselves for an Environment Act application.

Ms. Cerilli: It has been explained to me or, as I understand it, that it has only been since January '93 that the cut area has had its prior licence expire, that the cutting area prior had been licensed and now that is expired. Can the minister explain that?

Mr. Cummings: The licence that has expired is the Department of Natural Resources licence, and I am

told that even though this forestry process never was required to have an environment licence, they are now in a position to receive one very shortly.

Ms. Cerilli: So are there public hearings planned for that? Can the minister outline what the environmental considerations that are being looked at are for the licence?

Mr. Cummings: There have been a number of public meetings that have taken place. All of the information that the member may be looking for is on the public registry. That information has been there for some time I believe for any questions or concerns that may be around it.

Ms. Cerilli: One of the issues that is of concern is how the size of the buffers was arrived at. Does the minister have any information about what considerations were made in arriving at the 100-metre dimension for the buffers?

Mr. Cummings: As I recall, the relevant information regarding the buffers was all discussed at the commission. I can recall some discussion as to whether this was an excessive width or a reasonable width, but the debate, as I understand it, was carried out at the commission and concerns on both sides were aired. We then, through our Environment people and with receiving advice from forestry management, made a decision.

Now, another question that was raised, and I am not sure if it is addressed on the licence or not, but the fact is that the concern about whether or not you have wildfires or potential for areas to get burned out, believe it or not, does reflect on these buffer zones. There are management personnel who believe that, at the very least, the deadfall should be managed and removed from these buffer zones or they could become a perfect opportunity for wildfires to move in a long and a very rapid manner, and then lose not only the stand that is there but lose the protection that it provides to the river. The hundred metres that we are using, I am told, is a lot greater than some other jurisdictions. In fact, it appears that it is about four times greater than some.

Ms. Cerilli: One of the other areas of concern with the Endangered Spaces Campaign and the target of 12 percent is that all of the proposed sites for the 12 percent protection are going to be protected until the designations are made. Is that happening right now in the Repap cut area? Are all of those areas being protected or left alone from cutting and will that happen in the future?

Mr. Cummings: Madam Chairperson, I am not sure that I have the information to answer that question. That would be primarily managed by Natural Resources, but it is to my understanding that this province is well along in getting a number of its areas recognized, and I suspect that the concern that the member is raising has been answered.

Ms. Cerilli: One of the other areas of concern is related to something we were discussing the other day in terms of the sewage lagoons in the province. One of the large concerns with the siting of the Ducks Unlimited office complex in the Oak Hammock Marsh was that the consideration, the effects, the sewage has not been dealt with properly or even considered adequately, and in fact that the licence is not setting specific levels for the contaminants from the sewage. Can the minister explain, what are the requirements and levels in the licence for the sewage effluent in Oak Hammock Marsh?

Mr. Cummings: I do not know if we have a copy of the licence here, but I think there is something that is continuously overlooked in this debate, and it was raised by Mr. Gowdar and others, who tended to ignore the fact that in the licence for the facility, even the materials that are kept on site or more specifically any materials that might be discharged into the sewage lagoon other than human effluent is very much regulated, and that mitigates against some of the other toxic substances that might be the concern in a normal operating regime, even having a possibility of getting into the lagoon system.

We may have some other information here that I can add, but this is a three-cell system and it is our belief that the regulatory regime that is in place will make certain that we do not have the kind of discharges that people are attempting to show as being harmful, because it certainly is the intention that any kind of discharge that would be harmful to the biota in the area would not be allowed. We do not have the specific limits with us but we can certainly make sure you get them.

Ms. Cerilli: Does the licence specify levels for things like phosphate, nitrate ammonia, sulfide, heavy metals?

Mr. Cummings: I have some information here that the licence prescribes limits on organic and bacteriological quality of the effluent consistent with all other lagoons in the province, prescribes an additional limit on the sodium content to protect plant

life in the vicinity of the discharge point, prohibits laboratory waste from the lagoon system and prohibits a spring discharge of effluent which would normally be allowed in other operations. So those are some of the additional things, including the establishment of a third cell that would be used to protect the area.

* (1540)

Ms. Cerilli: Would the minister not agree that there should be more concern for some of the contaminants that will be in the sewage because of the nature of the marsh, some of the contaminants that I just listed?

Mr. Cummings: I think what is going unsaid is that all of the parameters of what we expect to find in the effluent are controlled. There is not much point writing something into a licence to control something that is not expected to be there.

Ms. Cerilli: One of the other areas that I wanted to ask about is the licensing of livestock operations. I would ask the minister: What would have to happen to bring the licensing of these operations under The Environment Act?

Mr. Cummings: As we have discussed before, there is a lot of work going on right now to assist in the implementation of the farm practices act and the regulations attached to that, and there would be—some regulatory amendments is basically all it would take.

The second part of that, of course, is that I believe there is some general agreement between the hog industry, for example, that the larger lagoons would probably be better served if they were more closely regulated. There is a great deal of, well, to put it bluntly, fear and loathing of hog lagoons out there in the area where they are being established.

By and large, there is no reason why they could not be included in more of a regulatory regime, not because the good operations are not being properly constructed or being properly managed, but because the communities in which they are located are seeking assurances. At the same time, the hog industry is saying they have nothing to be ashamed of, that they are operating properly, and those who are not should be. Therefore, there have been some ongoing discussions with the industry in this respect.

Ms. Cerilli: What is happening in the area of the siting of the facility with the virology lab for

biomedical waste? Are we going to have a centralized facility in Winnipeg?

Mr. Cummings: The virology lab has a licence and can operate within the parameters of that licence if the construction is ever completed. I have every reason to believe it will be.

Secondly, whether or not biomedical waste is—and I think one has to separate that from the virology lab, because we are not talking about the removal of anything from the site, as I recall. Biomedical waste is not yet classified here as a hazardous waste, but we are working on a number of initiatives in the regulatory regime and in the management of the waste to make sure that we stay within compliance as standards change.

Ms. Cerilli: Was there not a proposal that that facility would have a biomedical waste—I do not know if it was going to be an incinerator or a disposal—facility that would centralize all of the biomedical waste from the hospitals in the city?

Mr. Cummings: At this point, any discussions I am aware of would be dealing with its own waste. There have certainly been ideas thrown around of various types, but their incinerator that they would have onsite today would—the plans that are in place today would only be related to the handling of any waste that they might produce internally.

Ms. Cerilli: I would also like to ask for some kind of indication of what is happening with the management plan to deal with the Shoal Lake basin.

Now, there is a lot of concern that we have had the licence for the go-ahead in Ontario for the exploratory mining. Are we going to make sure that we have a management plan in place by the time any actual proposal from mining comes forward?

Mr. Cummings: The jurisdiction with the biggest responsibility in this area is the government of Ontario. We have been badgering them over a period of time to get a management plan in place. At the bureaucratic level a management plan has been brought along quite a long way actually, but there are negotiations going on, as I understand it, right now between the Province of Ontario and the two bands in the area, 39 and 40.

I would be quite happy if Ontario would sit down with us, but the new Minister of Environment has not been particularly co-operative in this area. It is my hope that he might change his mind, but at this point, he has not been working co-operatively to develop

a management plan in this area. He has chosen the view that they will strike an agreement with the bands before they will negotiate with the Province of Manitoba.

I had arranged for a meeting to be held in February at Chief Mandamin's office at Shoal Lake with federal, provincial and Ontario officials present, and the meeting was frustrated right up to the last minute about people not willing to change their schedules or to come to the meeting.

We have had discussions with the federal Minister of Environment, the federal Minister of Indian and Native Affairs, and we are continuing to bring them into the process. But if the Province of Ontario continues to stonewall, then we have reached a situation where I have to bring into question my agreement not to voluntarily not implement the sensitive-area regs on our side of the Manitoba provincial border. We agreed, at the request of Chief Mandamin, not to do that.

* (1550)

I have reserved the right to implement rather quickly, but the overall management plan for the area is still our goal. We believe that Premier Rae supports that goal, and we are hoping the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) and others may pick up the phone and convince him it would be the right thing to do for the people of Winnipeg, because we can do everything that we wish to do. But short of declaring war on the Province of Ontario, we have limited capability of implementing some of the regulations that we would like to see in place on the other side of the border.

I would only ask my critics, I am not sure how you intend to manage the time associated with these Estimates, I have people here who could assist us with going over the Sustainable Development Fund. If you wish to deal with that, let me know and we will ask them to join us. I presume you would like to finish this area of questioning first, however.

Ms. Cerilli: I have a couple of more questions in this area.

With respect to Shoal Lake, how does the minister deal with the fact that Ontario is saying that everything that could have been done was not done in requiring that there be environmental assessment even of the exploratory mining, that there was no appeal made by the province to the government of Ontario before the completion of the six-month window?

Has the minister any letter that he could show that there was an appeal made on behalf of Manitoba?

Mr. Cummings: Yes.

Ms. Cerilli: Is the minister willing to forward a copy of that, or has he made that public?

Mr. Cummings: We made our objections known to the Province of Ontario. We do not have, if you will, legal standing in their process, but a pretty weak excuse on their part to indicate anything less than the fact that we had considerable concerns regarding the progress of some of these projects.

If we had a management plan in place, they could well look at some of the areas of development that they have been pressing on. They seem to be afraid to come to the table because they believe that will impede their ability to develop the area.

The native bands and the people from Kenora are pushing for job opportunities, and the Province of Ontario is responding by not coming to the table because they somehow seem to feel that will compromise their position with their own citizens.

I cannot help but express a high degree of frustration with how things have gone in the last six months but, nevertheless, we are continuing to push and hopefully embarrass them into providing more of the kind of protection that we need.

The second issue that does not get discussed very much, however, is the issue of the native bands, their sovereignty, their right to do what they believe is appropriate on their own lands, and that leads to some considerable debate obviously.

That led the city and the federal government and the province to draw up an agreement to compensate or reimburse one of the bands for lost opportunity if they were to protect the shoreline.

That agreement is now in limbo because the band in question has not lived up to its share of the agreement. So, to some degree, the City of Winnipeg is being blackmailed, and we will have to hope that we can continue to negotiate with the interested parties.

If people will sit down and discuss a management plan, I do not think there will be a lot of broad disagreement on the parameters that might be in that management plan, but of recent months we have found a reluctance to sit down.

Ms. Cerilli: Well, there are a number of issues here. Describe for us more what you have done when you talk about poking and prodding the government of

Ontario? What have you done to try to have them develop an agreement on a management plan?

Mr. Cummings: This has been elevated to the level of the Premiers to start off with. Premier Filmon raised this on, I believe, two separate occasions and through phone calls with Premier Rae. Now that is about as high a level of importance as an issue can be attributed.

In terms of my participation and the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst), we have had ongoing meetings starting with the bureaucracy, some three and a half years ago, began filling in details on what would be the appropriate management plan. I have met with Jim Bradley. I have met with Ruth Grier on several occasions and attempted to meet with the new Minister of Environment, but he is also the Minister of Mines and Natural Resources and does not particularly want to talk about environmental protection in an area that he sees as part of the green belt for development in the province of Ontario. Mr. Wildman and I have not been able to sit down directly and discuss this.

I made a pilgrimage to the Queen's Park, if you will, to talk to the Minister of Environment and convince them that they needed to deal with this seriously, that the people on this side of the border had a right to have input into a management plan, that we had a right to be heard in terms of water quality. I frankly felt that I was making some considerable headway with Minister Grier, but she was moved over to Health about a week later.

The follow-up to that has been less than satisfactory, because it has been couched in the terms that I described earlier, where Ontario wants to make sure it has its position correct with the Bands 39 and 40 before they will allow the Province of Manitoba to sit down at the table with all of the players there. We could meet individually, but obviously, until we get all the players at the table, accomplishing our goals will be done primarily through embarrassing the Ontario government at this juncture, because they cannot talk about their environmental record on Bay Street and then forget that in northwestern Ontario we have 600,000 people drawing drinking water out of a lake that half of their government does not even know where it is.

Ms. Cerilli: Well, the minister can be assured, for what it is worth, that I will try as well again to draw from some of the information put on the Hansard in this discussion. I also used a little bit of time on my

Christmas holidays to bring some information there to the minister in Ontario, the prior minister.

I guess I am concerned too with the minister's response to this. The minister seems to have a different explanation, and I have not heard before the explanation that Manitoba does not have legal standing in requesting for an environment review on the proposed exploratory mining. Other than that, I have a couple of questions related to federal involvement or some kind of designation for this area.

* (1600)

Is there any kind of federal involvement that we could ask for here? The other areas I would ask about, but I do not want to dwell on this anymore either because I want to move on, is the whole issue of the minister informing Manitobans of the hearing that was held in Kenora, if he is now saying that in fact they did know about the proposed exploratory mining, why that was not done and if they in fact had contacted them in enough time, that we could have had Manitobans present there. I think that that would have had some influence as well.

Mr. Cummings: What the member is talking about is the kind of stuff that I take out of my hog barn and spread in my fields.

Ontario knew Manitoba's position. They chose to let us know on the night before the weekend of the hearings in the hope that we would not show up. This is absolutely a situation where the Province of Ontario does not know what to do with its neighbour.

We can lob over the occasional hand grenade but, until the people in downtown Toronto realize that their government does not give a damn about the environment once it gets away from the city, then they will wake up.

Ms. Cerilli: Well, again, I would just think then that there are a number of strategies. If that is the way minister thinks this is being dealt with, there are a number of strategies that he could have been using to impress the people in Ontario about the serious concerns that Manitoba has to provide that pressure internally in Ontario, and I do not think that that was done.

Mr. Cummings: Well, I hope the member realizes that I am starting to get a little short of patience with the Ontario government. They pass themselves off as environmentalists. Now they want to hide behind the independence of the native bands. They want to

hide behind the mining interests who wish to have development in that area and they want to hide behind the fact that there are votes in Kenora that believe that this development and a number of others like KPM should go forward.

Until they recognize the rights of the people on this side of the border to clean drinking water, I have to say, I do not have a lot of respect for their environmental policies.

Ms. Cerilli: Way to go. What a performance.

I would be remiss, I think, if I did not ask some questions about the cleanup of the Domtar contaminated site in Radisson. There has been a lot of progress made, so it seems, with siting the cleanup equipment.

One concern that I have had is that the commitment for air monitoring has not been lived up to to the extent that we thought it would and the extent that the commitment was made. There was supposed to have been air monitoring completed all during the excavation of the soil for the trial and that information was supposed to be made available to myself and residents in the area.

So the main question I have on this topic is: Why was that air monitoring not completed so that the air quality tests could have been part of the consideration for the effects of doing the mitigation?

Mr. Cummings: The monitoring that would logically occur is more important during times of activity on the site and during warm weather. I would think that, when we get the equipment here and operations begin, we will have monitoring capability to make sure that this is not an ongoing concern.

The fact is, and I would assume at the public meeting that occurred that assurances were given and made clear, I hope, that in bringing on site a piece of equipment such as we are talking about bringing there, there will be considerable activity. There will be some disruption of the soil which will lead to the release of fumes just the same as there is around any plant that might have been operating in a very benign way. Smell is very sensitive, and we will have to be cognizant of the concerns of the community when we bring the equipment in there.

As I understand it, and I am not sure, but the member might have been at the meeting where Mr. Wotton explained the type of equipment and what would occur. She, perhaps, has had a more recent briefing than I have in that respect. My knowledge

of the equipment is generic inasmuch as we know that we are going to have to move dirt, and we are going to end up heating it in terms of the process that is going to be on site. We are going to have the agreement of the community that this is an acceptable way of dealing with it, and we are going to have to be able to provide them with some satisfaction that we are not putting their health at risk during that process.

I think all of those can be accomplished. There will be some considerable activity around there if they bring the equipment in as they intend to.

Ms. Cerlill: I think what was expected was that information would have been at the public meeting that the minister referenced. I think it would have been appropriate even though it was winter and you might not have had as much odour, the contamination that would have been airborne from the excavation of the soil would still have been there. So I think that we want to have full disclosure of what the results are from toxins in the air, from the soil excavation. I would just ask for a commitment from the minister that that information will be forthcoming and to indicate now if all of the equipment for air monitoring is in place.

So two things: A commitment to make it public on an ongoing basis throughout the summer, and that now when they are doing the work there, is the air quality monitoring equipment in place?

Mr. Cummings: I cannot answer at this moment whether or not the equipment is in place today, but certainly will give the commitment that that will be done, and that the interests of the community will be protected in terms of making sure that we have monitoring there to assure them that, if levels are detected, they can be adequately explained and given assurances as to what is being found in the air.

Ms. Cerlill: Well, I do not know if it was in the work order that this air quality testing would have gone on during the trial of excavating soil. Is the minister saying that did not happen, that the air quality was not done at all during the excavation of the trial period?

Mr. Cummings: Is the member asking about when the 10 truckloads or so were excavated from this site or when they were processed in B.C.? Because it is my view that when the excavation occurs and the processing is occurring at the same time, that is when we are going to have concerns regarding

emissions. You do not get those concerns during the winter. You largely would not get them when the soil is not being disturbed.

There was a time when the surface of the area was being worked, disced and other activities on it, when some of the sludge was being pumped out of various areas, that there was going to be a lot of emissions. We have now moved into the next stage which will be the processing of the dirt. It will be monitored and we will give the community the answers as to what is occurring.

I am told that, in fact, monitoring did occur during the B.C. test, but I do not think I have the information here.

Ms. Cerlill: I do not want to spend much longer on this, I would just appreciate an answer. Can I have the information directly, both of the tests that have been done? And it is not the concern about odour. We are concerned about what is in the air, what chemicals are in the air. So I would appreciate just getting all of that information sent to my office including anything that was done already and upcoming monitoring over the summer.

* (1610)

Mr. Cummings: All of the information we have is and will be public. I have to indicate that I am quite prepared to keep the rhetoric down in this area, but I think we need a commitment all of the way around that that is what is going to occur, because the communications with the community has to be direct as well.

I am not going to put myself in a position where the communications between the department and community is filtered through my opposition critic's office. We have to have complete trust all of the way around, and the only way that I can understand that trust will be that everything will be open to question, every piece of information will be available, and we will get the community as up to date and make sure that our operations are as responsive to any questions as possible.

Yes, we will provide you with all of the information that we have. If there are blanks in that information, for any reason—I did not mean to imply that the smell was the problem, but the smell becomes the concern. The community, when they smell something in the air, will ask questions about what is there; and what is actually there creates the factual data upon which decisions will be made.

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

The reason I emphasize this so much is that something that surprised me greatly when I came to this office is that the human senses are sometimes much more sensitive than what the testing devices may be able to accommodate, taste being an example, that you can taste certain petroleum products below a level when they can actually even be tested. I suspect that somewhat the same thing occurs in the air monitoring, so when I indicated that when there is a smell in the air, I was not meaning that the smell was inoffensive, it is whatever else might be there.

Ms. Cerilli: Just to clarify on this point, I think it is important for this minister to admit that it was this critic that asked for the department to inform the residents directly of what was happening. Initially, there was not any information. Even now, the way the information is flowing, it is not sure that it is getting to the entire residents' group, but I will move on to another area.

Before we leave the licensing area, I think it is from the annual report where I have the number of licences that have been issued since 1988 under the new act. The only question that I would have is: How many denials of requests for public hearings have been also issued, both in that same time period, but even more just within the last year?

Mr. Cummings: We do not have the numbers here. I am not sure that they are broken down in that exact manner, but the feeling is that there might have been a total of 10 that we would not have held public hearings as a result of a request for public hearings in the last five years, since 1988. So that is a pretty small number.

Very often what happens when there is a request for a hearing as well is that the departmental director will call for additional meetings to make sure that the concerns are aired and then may well, on the basis of those additional meetings, decide that the concerns have been answered and that public hearings need not be recommended.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): 2.(b) Environmental Management (1) Salaries \$3,355,500—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$1,031,800—pass.

Item 2.(c) Legislation and Intergovernmental Affairs (1) Salaries \$141,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$90,300—pass.

Item 2.(d) Manitoba Hazardous Waste Management Corporation.

Ms. Cerilli: What is the schedule for the construction to begin with the facility for the corporation?

Mr. Cummings: The soil mediation process will be in place by July. Construction around that is not significant, but there will be some construction associated with that. As to a definite construction date on the balance of the facility, I cannot provide one at this point because we are in discussions with potential investors, and the ultimate start-up date, I would expect, would be next spring. We will all see some work this fall but, if you are talking about further development of services, I cannot give you a correct date. It would only be speculation.

Mrs. Carstairs: Yes, I just have a few questions in this area. What amount of government commitment, if any, has to go into this project?

Mr. Cummings: I am sorry?

Mrs. Carstairs: How much government money has to go into this project?

Mr. Cummings: Since the inception of Manitoba Hazardous Waste Management Corporation, the Province of Manitoba has invested some \$13 million. Any additional investment, I cannot speak to in precise dollars. I would suspect that we are not looking at a huge amount more. Part of what would be required additionally will depend on the nature of co-investors that we are able to acquire and the dollars and the expertise that they would bring to the operation.

Let me just take 30 seconds and embellish on this a little bit. One of the things that has always been of some disagreement between various people who have looked at this operation, and that is whether or not there is value attached to the site, we know there is some; whether or not there is value attached to the knowledge and the good name of the community and the corporation as they combine together under the agreement, we know there is some. In fact, I would say there is quite a bit of value attached for that, and we know that there is quite a bit of value attached to the licence itself. So how those values are ultimately recognized in the long run will be subject for some discussion and further reporting to the public.

Mrs. Carstairs: The minister made the statement that the balance of the construction schedule, I

assumed he meant, would depend on discussions with investors. What kind of investors? He has already implied that there would be little financial investment. So what kind of investors is he referring to here?

Mr. Cummings: We have received presentations and we will continue to have discussions with highly qualified operational companies in the Hazardous Waste Management field with considerable expertise and knowledge. I did not mean to imply when I said that additional investment would be minimal. I guess it depends on a person's idea of minimal. The total value of this operation when it is up and going may well be \$50 million.

How much of that will be taxpayers' dollars, I would have to reserve speculation on because part of that revolves around how much recognition there is for the value of what we have today, which has cost us \$13 million to develop. I suspect all of those dollars will be recognized down the road, but that will depend on the type of company that comes forward and the type of presentations that they will make. The fact is that the soil remediation process that is being embarked on out there right now was not something that was even necessarily contemplated as being an important part of this operation, but there is, in the short term, going to be a great deal of activity around that because there is a lot of contaminated soil on various locations, particularly within the city of Winnipeg, gasoline stations particularly, a lot of which are no longer being used and cannot be developed until some of those soils are removed and remediated.

* (1620)

So that is the type of thing. It is evolving very quickly, and to say precisely how it will evolve, I think, would be getting a little bit of the cart ahead of the horse.

The principle I want to make sure we are not in any way leaving an impression with the public that we might be departing from is that the government has given its commitment to maintain the ownership of the dirt and maintain a significant and important operating presence within any structure that we would have over the next few years.

An example is that the government is committed to \$700,000 through the Hazardous Waste Corp. I should say that it is through loan authority to the Hazardous Waste Corp. that this commitment has been made. The Hazardous Waste Corp. has

committed itself to a \$700,000 engineering design. It is ongoing right now. That is the first step towards actually starting to see some construction.

Mrs. Carstairs: Maybe I am missing something, but I thought the Manitoba Hazardous Waste Management Corporation was at the present time 100 percent wholly provincial owned, in other words, provincial government owned. Is that not correct?

Mr. Cummings: That is correct, but it is a Crown and the government extends loan authority to the Crowns. Ultimately, it was the decision of the board of directors that they would invest in the \$700,000 for this engineering design within the loan authority that they received.

It should be pointed out that governments do not just automatically extend loan authority. There have been too many examples in the history of this province where that has occurred, and five or six years down the road, governments have found loan authority being used that has been granted that they had forgotten was there. All of a sudden, the debt had accrued inadvertently to the province.

We have taken a much tighter grip on that, as an administration, to make sure that none of our Crowns rise up and surprise us.

Mrs. Carstairs: I do not know of other Crowns which have private investors, yet that seems to be what the minister is saying. I do not want to put words in the minister's mouth; I just want to understand what is happening here.

He keeps talking about investors and I assume that he is talking about waste management specialists. If they are going to invest, are they going to own a percentage of this Crown?

Mr. Cummings: We do not, at this point, have any private dollars invested in the Hazardous Waste Corp. We are seeking private-sector partners. The structure of how that partnership may evolve, it may be a subsidiary. There are lots of different models that this could follow.

We believe it is in the best interests, at this point, to make sure that we acquire as much as we can some risk dollars from the private sector so that they will also bring, through the company, whatever form that company may take down the road, the availability of markets and processes that the corporation may not have on its own today.

Also, some of the risk dollars that could well be involved would mean that rather than the Province

of Manitoba and the taxpayers being the only ones who have dollars at risk that there would be some private sector involvement as well.

Let me hasten to add that I am not in anyway advocating that some sort of a cost-plus arrangement be made. I am talking about a genuine search for high-quality investors who would be willing to come in as part of—and I emphasize the words part of—because the province will not be backing away from its commitment. That is the commitment that really has made the community of Montcalm comfortable with our being there, and we will not do anything to jeopardize that confidence.

Mrs. Carstairs: So if I can summarize, and then the minister can correct my summary. It is my understanding that they are looking for private investors, but they are looking for private investors who would not own a share of the Hazardous Waste Management Corporation but would do joint ventures in the area of waste management with the Hazardous Waste Management Corporation.

Mr. Cummings: That would be a fair summation. That also would be a possible or even a likely scenario, yes.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Rose): 2.(d) Manitoba Hazardous Waste Corporation \$3 million.

Mr. Storle: Mr. Acting Chairperson, perhaps the minister can tell me whether this ground has already been covered, but I am wondering whether the question has been asked about the government's intentions with respect to the Waste Management Corporation and its continued existence as a Crown corporation?

Mr. Cummings: The question has not been asked in exactly that manner, but as I tried to indicate a moment ago, the province is not going to walk away from any entity that develops at the Manitoba environment centre.

This will be a situation where the government's guarantee, first of all, is in place. Secondly, the involvement of the public investment, first of all, and the government, through its Crown agency, will be continued so that the community has the satisfaction of knowing that they are not dealing simply with a private entity, but they are dealing with a larger entity which is the government of Manitoba which has provided the guarantee on the site, the long-term liability on the site and has continued to keep its investment in the corporation.

(Madam Chairperson in the Chair)

What we are looking for, as I have tried to explain, without a specific model in hand we have inquired and have received inquiries about investment and development opportunities that would be partnership arrangements with private sector. As I said before the member asked his question, the value of what the Province of Manitoba has in the corporation today, how the \$13 million that we have spent to date is recognized as value for investment is still the subject of some debate.

I happen to think that it is all there in the licence, in the site, in the good will in the community and in the high standard that the corporation has set for itself and its operations, but that will be part of any discussions when we look at whether or not we can bring in private investment dollars as well.

Mr. Storle: Madam Chairperson, can the minister indicate whether there is any existing waste corporation, public or private, that is currently profitable in Canada—hazardous waste, I should add, not just waste disposal but hazardous waste?

Mr. Cummings: It is my understanding that a number of them are very profitable. In fact, the margins are extremely high in some of the hazardous waste management operations that we have reviewed in Canada.

Mr. Storle: I am not familiar enough with the kind of materials these corporations might take. Can the minister indicate whether they accept all types of materials or are they specialized waste disposal operations?

The question is would they accept the range of materials that we would expect a publicly owned provincial hazardous waste management corporation to accept, in other words, virtually all of the different types of waste that we might generate?

Mr. Cummings: The member raises a legitimate question. It will take a couple of minutes to answer it, because if he envisages a public corporation that says it will take every waste that is produced in this province and treat it here, then what you would have is a situation where particular waste streams might be subsidizing each other, because there will undoubtedly be found certain products that will be very costly to treat here, but would be very expensive to have the material—but low volume—and very expensive to have the equipment or the technology to do it.

* (1630)

This is why the Manitoba Hazardous Waste Corporation has evolved in some of its thinking, I believe, because—and this may well be a debate for our annual report rather than as part of the Environment debates—but the fact is that materials do flow out of this province today. I would anticipate that any investor here or any co-investor, in conjunction with the corporation or even if the corporation were operating on its own as a fully owned provincial Crown, that they would not handle every waste stream, every bit of waste that was offered to them. So the bottom-line answer to the question is that there will likely be some portion of the Manitoba waste stream that will still be shipped out for treatment.

Mr. Storie: Madam Chairperson, I guess that is my point and that is the concern I have with the direction the government is taking generally. Certainly, I would expect that specific types of hazardous waste disposal can be very profitable. I would assume that in an economy as small as ours, probably regionally if you looked at the Prairies, there are going to be all types of hazardous wastes which cannot be economically disposed of by an individual corporation. I would assume that all kinds of mechanisms could develop, that you might have some sort of reciprocal agreement with differing jurisdictions to treat different kinds of wastes.

My concern though is that if the province absolves itself of some sort of overarching responsibility, and we leave particular types of waste to be dealt with privately, then what we are going to see is the continuation of what is an existing practice in Manitoba, to some extent perhaps and other jurisdictions, of certain types of waste finding their way into drums at the bottom of the river and that kind of disposal technique. How is the minister going to assure that does not happen?

Mr. Cummings: I believe that the appropriate approach that can be used to deal with the question that the member raises is that the corporation will likely play a very significant role as a broker as well as managing and treating the wastes for which the volume and the profit stream are appropriate. That seems to me to be another rather intriguing aspect of what the corporation can do beyond establishing the facility and the type of processes for what are the main hazardous waste streams in this area. They may also have a very significant role in finding

a home for some of the others that they cannot today treat.

The member is quite correct. I agree with his approach, I think, or he agrees with mine, that when we look at Saskatchewan, for example, there is a great deal of affinity between these two provinces in terms of what the market might be, because Saskatchewan does not have a treatment capacity, the Alberta borders are still closed, and I think it makes eminent good sense that there may be some trade-offs between two prairie provinces, but we are very cognizant of the fact that we have to look after our own responsibilities first and some of these other export opportunities would likely follow subsequently.

Mr. Storie: Madam Chairperson, one final question—given what I thought was a rather sensible reply to my question and an acknowledgement that there is going to be some form of hazardous waste corporation in existence, some public entity, the question is: Why would then one hive off what could be the most profitable hazardous waste management stream. Why would you not, as an existing monopoly, retain the right to dispose of that waste that might be profitable to support other enterprises of the corporation, other activities?

Mr. Cummings: The intention is not to hive off the profitable and the non-profitable, nor is it an intention to deal in a monopolistic situation. There are other operators within the province, but it seems to me that the corporation has shown that because of its expertise and the base that it has established for itself that it is and will be able to work most competitively in the market and that the brokering of some of the other less profitable lines will not be left to become a dark hole, if you will, to consume profits of the corporation. They will have to deal with all of the waste streams on at least a reasonable profit basis.

Madam Chairperson: 2.(d) Manitoba Hazardous Waste Management Corporation \$3,000,000—pass.

2.(e) Joint Environmental Assessment Review (1) Salaries \$54,600.

Mrs. Carstairs: I note, Madam Chairperson, that the Joint Environmental Assessment Review budget has been reduced primarily because of the discontinuance of the Conawapa hydroelectric joint environmental assessment review project. Was there any consideration given to using that money

to do a joint environmental assessment review with respect to the Pembina Valley project?

Mr. Cummings: First of all, this area is fully cost recoverable. So it can rise and fall according to the demands that are there. The dollars shown here as a reduction are not savings that would accrue to anywhere else in the department. They are recoverable dollars from the areas that we were working with, and I have explained several times during this process of why it is not my decision as to whether or not in the long run there will be a federal process or any semblance of a joint process. That is a decision that the federal authorities will make.

Mrs. Carstairs: The minister has in the past taken the position, and I think correctly so, that if in fact there are going to be federal panels and provincial panels that it might make some sense to have one panel instead. The federal government has already indicated clearly that if money for Pembina Valley is going to have to come from PFRA or would come from PFRA then they would have to do some kind of assessment. Is it not just prudent on the part of the government to find out whether or not the federal government is going to do some kind of environmental assessment before we go through the costs of having one here only to find that the federal government is going to do exactly the same thing and that the two panels may come up with different opinions?

Mr. Cummings: Unfortunately they will not give us an answer, and even given the scenario that the Leader of the Liberal Party has laid out, yes, what that scenario would lead to however is the making of a decision, and that decision would be as a result of having put it through their screening process. It still does not mean that they would call a hearing, and they will not give us an answer about what they will do until they are in a position to have to make a decision.

The difference with these joint panels that we have had up and running is that the federal interest was obvious, acknowledged, and probably exceeded ours particularly in Conawapa, I believe that the federal—north-central, pardon me, particularly there. Their interest exceeded ours, and in fact we might have not even needed to be part of it, quite frankly. So that is the type of conundrum that I find myself in. It is not an enviable position, but I do not have any other option.

* (1640)

Mrs. Carstairs: I always become a little leery of politicians who tell me they do not have an option or they do not have any choices. Politicians have gotten themselves in a great deal of difficulty over those kinds of statements. The reality is, however, that the federal government has given the provincial government some very serious questions about the Pembina Valley potable water supply proposal. I have a letter in my possession, and I am pretty sure the critic does as well, from Andrew Smart who is the acting head of the Environmental Assessment division, Water Planning and Management Branch, Inland Waters Directorate, Western & Northern Region, Government of Canada.

In this he writes to Mr. McNaughton of Manitoba Environment showing a review of the environmental impact statement of Pembina Valley regional potable water supply proposal indicating deficiency after deficiency after deficiency, in their mind, of that proposal. They go on further to say, and this is the opening paragraph: This commentary identifies a number of deficiencies in the report which the department believes should be addressed by the proponent prior to public hearings.

That letter and that memo was drafted to the minister on March 1, 1993. Knowing what the minister knows about the position of the federal government, why has he done two things: One, to proceed without demanding some explanation by the proponent prior to public hearings, and secondly, why has he not tried to involve, more actively, the federal government in a joint assessment panel?

Mr. Cummings: First of all, I have to hope that the member will acknowledge that this is not necessarily the federal position. It is a position put forward by some members of the various departments that are involved.

Secondly—well, I see my New Democratic critic chooses to laugh, but I have learned through this process that some things that seem somewhat absurd are, in fact, the way the courts interpret their responsibilities. In this particular situation, the questions then become couched in whether or not they are, in fact, relevant to the project, or as it is being put forward. They are relevant questions, but are they relevant in the context of the project as it is being proposed? I guess you could even extend that the next logical step which is, the commission may well look at the volume of water that is in the river. First of all, whether or not that is verifiable, the

volume of withdrawals, and then decide if any incremental impacts are of the nature that would require these type of concerns to be answered.

I cannot answer those concerns directly, but that is the process as it unfolds. The other point is, that whether or not the federal jurisdiction ultimately will even have a requirement for their concerns. The question of the concerns, the way the system works is that they are all brought forward whether they are from our own department, Natural Resources. They could be from other departments if they had reasons to inquire about specific aspects. The Department of Health, for example, very often comments in these areas. Nothing the federal staff have had to say addresses the question of whether or not the federal authority has to have its jurisdictional questions answered. So the thing just gets totally mired down in process about whether the feds are in, about whether they have a decision to make if they are in, and which question even comes first.

We can have all of these discussions, but the bottom line is that we have indicated very clearly that nothing is going to happen until both jurisdictional responsibilities are satisfied. The federal authorities will have to satisfy theirs by simply making a decision on whether or not they are in or out. That will be based on a whole lot of things that we talked about before.

Mrs. Carstairs: Well, I wish it was quite that simple, but it is not. I think the minister would indicate that I have some knowledge about the Constitution. The Constitution very clearly says that navigable waters are within federal jurisdiction. The Assiniboine River is a navigable water, so that at any point in time the federal government chooses to become involved, they may indeed. Much more to the point, at any time a federal court orders the federal government to become involved, they will have to be involved whether they choose, in this case, to be involved or not choose to be involved.

What we have watched with a variety of environmental projects, whether it is Rafferty-Alameda or whether it is the Oldman River dam in Alberta is that these projects get three-quarters of the way completed, and all of a sudden a court somewhere in the land orders the federal government to do an environmental impact assessment. Then the court is left with a very difficult dilemma. As was determined in Rafferty-Alameda in the final analysis, well, 99 percent of the project has been built. So there is not much we can do as

a court anyway, except to say it should not have been built in the first place; but now that it is 99 percent built, then I guess we better proceed.

Surely, environmental prudence would suggest to us that we not repeat that scenario in this province. If there is any likelihood that the federal government at some point in time is going to get involved in this, either by order of court or because of their own overt action, we should act in a way that would assume that they are going to do that.

I would like to know what kind of influence, what kind of pressure, if you will, this minister has used on the federal government to have them involved in this, or is he perfectly willing to accept their *laissez faire* attitude—and I have no doubt that it is a *laissez faire* attitude at this point—and say, well, we are going to proceed regardless.

Mr. Cummings: The point is is that we cannot order them to be involved. The federal courts could, but very often what has happened in terms of these disputes that have been settled rather messily over the last number of years, where the federal authority has been dragged into court, is generally as a result of them not exercising their responsibility to make a decision in a given area of responsibility. Their decision might be that their responsibility has been discharged in some way and they have no need to have a hearing.

The very fact that they make the decision and make it in a demonstrable manner that shows that they went through a conscious process to make the decision, either yes or no, has been where as I understand it a lot of the court cases have revolved.

Whether we want them in or not, under today's law there is no trigger that has yet brought them in. The member points to the Navigable Waters Act. First of all, let us assume that something might occur in terms of construction. No one knows if, in fact, there will be a structure added to the river, which is what would likely bring them in.

The proposal, as I understand it, suggests that additional water would be put through the Portage la Prairie water treatment plant and then piped to the areas where it is wanted. That does not seem to me that it would necessarily cause a trigger, but it is not my decision. The federal authorities will have to decide based on those types of decisions. There is no one in this province who will be happier than me if there was more clarity to this but my asking will not make it happen.

* (1650)

We have co-operated with the federal authorities and, as they have said on other occasions—I point to the Pelican Lake situation, where there were always arguments by those who were opponents. I am not suggesting the member is for or against the project. I presume that we are all going to look to the process to decide whether the project is viable in the end but, in terms of the process, the Pelican Lake project, everyone who was opposed to it said it had to have a federal panel. What it was doing was opening up a pre-existing natural channel back into a lake. In the end the federal authorities made a decision. They screened it out. That was accepted as the proper way of decision making, that they had the correct information. End of question.

We could not proceed with any construction there even though we were prepared to issue a licence after we had finished our process because we had to wait until the federal authorities made a decision. While the parallel is not complete, I think this is very close to the same situation.

Mrs. Carstairs: Can the minister table any correspondence with the federal government in which he has put forward that scenario to the federal government? We are examining a particular project. We think there may be an area of federal participation and interest. We want to know if the federal government is going to involve themselves in some kind of review because, if they do, then we would like to go via a joint assessment review process and then could he table the response to such a letter?

Mr. Cummings: I did not sign a letter that says we want federal authority to become involved, but what we have on an ongoing basis every time any—and there have been a number of other projects that have not received this kind of attention obviously—but every time we have any of these overlapping responsibilities the federal authorities are completely involved in the process. They are notified. Their input is sought. All of those things are done and it is made very clear that the federal decision-making authority has to kick in so that all of the environmental concerns can be answered.

Mrs. Carstairs: In this review of the environmental impact statement and the commentary identifying a number of deficiencies, has the minister asked the proponent to in fact address the issues which have

been raised by this review, and what replies has he gotten to the question so raised?

Mr. Cummings: Madam Chairperson, it is not necessarily over my signature that these reviews have to be asked for. In fact, the department runs the process and the department has asked.

Mrs. Carstairs: If the department has asked, and I take the minister's word for that, then can they give us replies to the issues that have been raised in this document, for example, service related to deficiencies and treatment of issues related to climate. What was the response from the proponent with respect to those particular issues raised with respect to the phenomenon of global warming?

Mr. Cummings: Questions have been asked, whether or not they are in hand, or whether they would be part of the addendum that goes forward to the hearing, I cannot answer, but I assume that is likely the latter.

Nevertheless, the questions will have to be answered.

Mrs. Carstairs: The questions will have to be answered by the proponent. How has the proponent been made aware of these questions? Has the provincial Department of Environment, on the advice of the federal Department of Environment, given the proponent the impact statement and asked them to address those issues?

Mr. Cummings: The exact mechanics, I am not sure I can report to you, but the questions will have to be responded to, as I indicated previously. Whether there was a signed request or whether or not these were referred to the proponent to be answered as part of their addendum, the precise answer I would be unable to give you. We do not have the director here who would have handled that, but the process is as I described.

Mrs. Carstairs: Has the Clean Environment Commission been forwarded this particular memo from Mr. Smart?

Mr. Cummings: We would assume in the normal course of communications that it has been, but none of us present here have signed a letter that would have sent it there.

Mrs. Carstairs: Will the minister give me assurance that in fact will be done, if it has not been done at the present moment?

Mr. Cummings: Yes.

Madam Chairperson: Item 2.(e) Joint Environmental Assessment Review (1) Salaries \$54,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$351,400—pass.

2.(f) Alcohol Beverage Container Recycling Program \$600,000—pass.

Resolution 31.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$13,110,200 for Environment, Environmental Management, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1994—pass.

Item 3. Environmental Advisory Organizations (a) Clean Environment Commission.

Ms. Cerilli: In this appropriation, why is there not any indication of where the money comes from to pay for panelists? Do they get to cover the costs? Is that included here?

Mr. Cummings: The cost of operating the commission is under this appropriation. The reimbursement for the per diem for panelists, if that was the concern, would be included in here as well as part of operating expenditures. The staff is very small so that pretty well covers it.

Ms. Cerilli: So what is the amount of money that goes out to pay for the expenditures of the panelists?

Mr. Cummings: We are having a little trouble demonstrating what it might be except that we believe that the remuneration would be about \$25,000 to the commissioners in total, plus they would receive their expenditures travelling as a commission if they, for example, are on location somewhere away from head office.

Ms. Cerilli: We can pass this section.

Madam Chairperson: Item 3.(a) Clean Environment Commission (1) Salaries \$229,800—pass; 3.(a)(2) Other Expenditures \$180,400—pass.

(b) Manitoba Environmental Council.

Resolution 31.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$410,200 for Environment.

Ms. Cerilli: I have some questions under the Environmental Council. [interjection]

Madam Chairperson: We did not. There is no figure there. [interjection]

Ms. Cerilli: Our Estimates book has more detail. There are questions. Maybe I will just ask one question. It is already five o'clock.

Why is Manitoba the only province—

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

Call in the Speaker.

Mr. Cummings: Is there leave to continue?

Mrs. Carstairs: No, there is not leave to continue for an hour, but I would not mind continuing for five minutes. We could finish this particular section, and then we would only have the institute left. Is that reasonable?

Madam Chairperson: Is that the will of the committee? Is there leave to continue for five minutes to complete item 3?

Ms. Cerilli: I can even ask some of these questions under the salary. Let us do it that way, so then the staff does not have to come back. They do not have to come back for the institute, is that right? [interjection] Okay. We can pass it, and I will ask the questions.

Madam Chairperson: Item 3.(b) Manitoba Environmental Council—pass.

Resolution 31.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$410,200 for Environment, Environmental Advisory Organizations \$410,200, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1994—pass.

The hour being 5 p.m., committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

House Business

Hon. Darren Praznik (Deputy Government House Leader): Madam Deputy Speaker, I believe if you canvassed the House, you may find a willingness to call it six o'clock, and I believe items would stand on the Order Paper as they currently are.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Louise Dacquay): Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock? [agreed]

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 1, 1993

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