



Fifth Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature

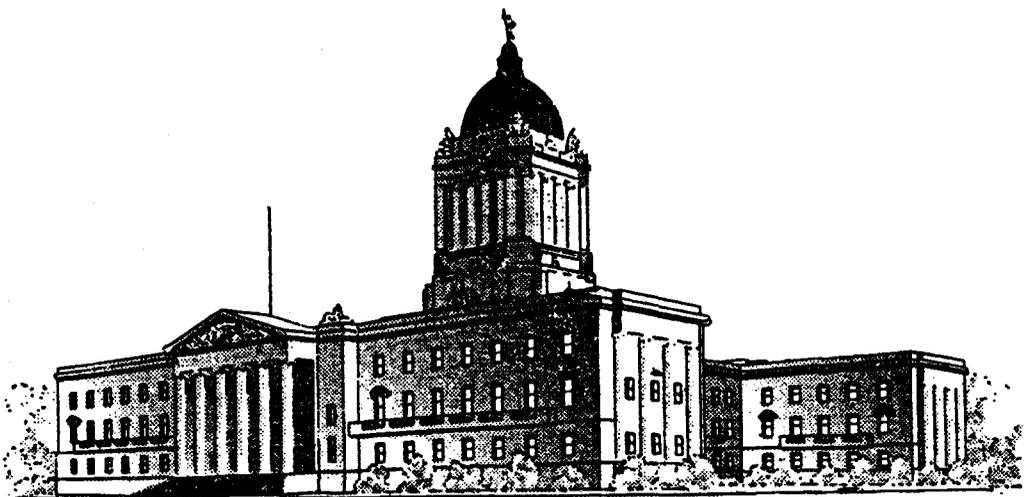
of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(Hansard)

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	NDP
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	Liberal
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	NDP
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	NDP
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	St. 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
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Liberal
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Liberal
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	NDP
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	PC
MACKINTOSH, Gord	St. Johns	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	NDP
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	PC
McCORMICK, Norma	Osborne	Liberal
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
ROBINSON, Eric	Rupertsland	NDP
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ROSE, Bob	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	NDP
SCHELLENBERG, Harry	Rossmere	NDP
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	NDP
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	PC
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	PC
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	NDP

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 24, 1994

The House met at 8 p.m.

ORDERS OF THE DAY (continued)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): Good evening. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. The committee will be resuming consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training.

When the committee last sat, it had been considering item 4.(h)(1)(a) on page 42.

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, before we recessed at five o'clock, I was asking questions about the GWE, and I was wondering if, including the program that the Assiniboine Community College is assisting GWE in, could the minister give us, including that amount, the total amount of dollars through incentives or grants for that particular company?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): From memory, I cannot. I am not the lead minister, obviously in that file, so I cannot. I can probably address Workforce 2000, but I cannot talk with any degree of certainty with respect to the total level of support to GWE.

* (2005)

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Just on a point of order, not to interrupt the questioning, but I would suggest that this line item should be passed. The question is really relating to the operating nature of Workforce 2000. It probably would be more appropriate under Other Expenditures, some of the other line items rather than strictly staff. So, just as a point of order, it

may be a way of dealing with it. Once again, not to interfere with the questions.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The honourable member did not have a point of order, but I would advise the committee that we have been dealing with (a) and (b) basically, Other Expenditures at different points. So the honourable member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray) has not had an opportunity yet to ask on either line.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, in the Workforce 2000 program—and I know that our Leader had sent a letter to the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) asking for some details on Workforce 2000 of which, I think, most of the information was provided to us in regard to that—the industry-wide partnerships, the 26 individuals, does the minister have information on the nature of those partnerships?

Mr. Manness: Yes, I read those into the record, I thought; but, if not, we will undertake to provide that information. I am sure it is part of the record, but the breakout, the 26 or 27 agreements break into the following sectors, and I repeat this: basically, nine sectors, and they are manufacturing-goods producing; construction; agriculture-related; transportation communications; business community services; financial insurance; realty; wholesale-retail, primary and other; businesses relocating-expanding to Manitoba.

Within those general breakouts or sectors in 1994-95, I will talk about the 26. Ten are expected to be in the manufacturing-goods producing; one in construction; six in agricultural-related; three in transportation communications; six in business community services. At this point, we do not see any candidates in the last four areas.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, with the 26 that the minister has indicated in the breakdown in

the various categories, can the minister tell us: Is there any particular prioritization that is done in terms of deciding with whom in industry these partnerships should be formed? Is it based on industries that actually come forward to the government, or is there a particular prioritization that the department is using for 1994-95?

Mr. Manness: There are basically two criteria at work: the first priority would be directed towards those sectors that align themselves very closely with the strategic areas as laid out in the framework for economic growth; secondly, manufacturing, our primary industry where obviously there is a tremendous contribution in wealth generation for the province.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, under this program, Workforce 2000, does the department advertise to various industries, and does it indicate to them, this is what the criteria are? Does it assist the industries so that when businesses are applying for incentives through Workforce 2000 they might have an idea if they are going to be successful or not?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, like all government programs, there are brochures available which lay out the criteria. In this case, I guess we do not do broad advertising as such, as I have indicated to the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), and yet we expect others to help carry the message. Those others include industry associations, chambers of commerce, the CMA, Canadian Manufacturers' Association, and, because many of these sector agreements are in partnership with the federal government, Human Resources Development. We expect them, of course, in their contacts to also provide some information to the people who approach them. So we honestly believe at this point that there are very few businesses and/or sectors that are not fully aware of Workforce 2000.

* (2010)

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister mentioned this afternoon that his department or he as minister does not direct the Provincial Auditor in terms of audits; however, there are regular auditing functions that go on within various

departments. There used to be an audit group attached to each department. I do not know if Education and Training had one, and now they have centralized the audit function. Certainly there are regular reviews that do go on. Can the minister tell us, has Workforce 2000 as a program had any internal auditing done in the last couple of years?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, internal review at this time is doing an internal review as to process and administrative processes that are in place. The only area of specialized audit that was done, and I cannot say very much about this, was done in accordance with an article that was written maybe a month ago, that did come to light basically a month ago. So that is the auditing that is taking place or has taken place to this point in time.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, can the minister elaborate on, when he talks about special processes, what he is referring to?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we are trying, again, to make our administrative procedures fit into the overall program. I mean, we are reviewing criteria. We are also trying to look at the screening process on entry. We are also trying to make sure the evaluation procedures that we have in place, although they, by definition, cannot be exhaustive—again, the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) and I engaged in a long debate on that. We just have no opportunity really to go through all of the files, and yet we want to do a survey and put surveys into place to make sure that we are evaluating in a scientific fashion the program. These are the processes to which I refer.

Ms. Gray: Can the minister tell us how his department defines a small and medium firm versus a large firm?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it basically is a rough estimate in association with the payroll tax cutoff. Right now we have no payroll taxes paid below \$750,000 payroll, and we sense that that must be approximate, depending on what divisor you use, 135 employees.

* (2015)

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the program administration, the changes to the Workforce 2000, the two SYs' reduction, can the minister

explain what happened in that reorganization and why?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we did a combination of Youth Programs and Workforce 2000, and we had a situation where a manager was reporting to a director. We sensed there was overlap and duplication, and in our attempt to streamline and in our attempt to reduce hierarchy of positions, we sensed that we could save a position. Secondly, a data entry clerk, that position was one that we sensed that we could reduce.

Ms. Gray: What was the classification of that particular position, and how many other positions were in the same classification within the Workforce 2000, if any?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am led to believe the classification was a program director and there were no other positions of that nature within this branch.

Ms. Gray: Has that position or that person as well as the data entry clerk—have those two individuals found other employment within the Civil Service?

Mr. Manness: The first position, the manager position, the individual has found a position in Industry, Trade and Tourism as a consultant within that department. The other position was vacant at the time.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, in this particular section, the Workforce 2000, with the one manager and about 18 SYs in Professional/Technical, are there any outstanding grievances in regard to staff in this section?

Mr. Manness: I can say there are a number of outstanding grievances within the whole department, but I think protocol would dictate that I do not comment upon them because that would certainly be highly improper.

Ms. Gray: I wanted to know basically if there were outstanding grievances. I was not about to get into details on what they were. I just want to know the number of outstanding grievances and what the relationship was of those grievances in relation to other parts of the department, and so I had no intention of getting into individual grievances with the minister.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Shall the item pass? The item is accordingly passed.

Item 4.(h)(1)(b) Other Expenditures \$4,040,900.

* (2020)

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I wanted to ask the minister about some double entry on some of these grants, and I notice that, if I compare '93-94 list of the individual grants to the payroll tax deduction grants, there are several names which crop up on both lists: Inventronics, McMunn and Yates, Mediacom, Regal Furniture and Bedding, Faroex, Russelsteel, and I think one or two others. What distinction does the minister make in his mind when he is recommending these grants? Why are some people applying under both? Are they not receiving enough money under their payroll tax deduction fund?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member is correct. The general rule is that the maximum per employer under Workforce 2000 under all its programs is \$10,000, and in some cases the payroll offset does not add to that, or come to that total. Consequently, the employer makes application under one of the other two programs.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chair, does the minister have an estimate of how many companies have done that in the history of the program?

Mr. Manness: No, I would not estimate, but we can provide that.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chair, well, the minister has the numbers. He could provide it. Will he provide it?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I said I would. I said we could provide that.

Ms. Friesen: You said you could not.

Mr. Manness: No, I said we could provide that, but I cannot do it now until we do the count, but we could provide that, yes.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chair, would the minister just clarify and tell me whether he is going to provide it or not? Will he provide it?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, there is not much trust left at this table. I am shocked. I am really, really disappointed. I did not know that this professional relationship between myself and the member for Wolseley had deteriorated to a point where there is absolutely no trust. When I said we could provide it, my interpretation was that we would provide that.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chair, I am glad to hear that. So the minister will provide that.

Can the minister tell us at this sitting how many companies have done that in this past year?

Mr. Manness: No, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I cannot, and when I do give the result, it will be for the past year, because I cannot speculate as to how many it might be in the present year until the present year is over, and that will not be until April '95.

Ms. Friesen: My earlier question was directed to the minister over the history of this program. Will he provide that information for all the years of this program?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we are back into history again. The member is asking me to drag up years of history. This is not the place to do that.

Ms. Friesen: No, I am just clarifying what it is the minister has undertaken to provide, and it is my understanding that the minister will provide a list of companies that have enjoyed the benefit of both the payroll tax deduction and an individual grant.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am beginning to feel like I am on the witness stand here and that the member is thinking I am playing loose with words. As I have said before, we will provide this information and we will do it. We will go back into the past year, the last year for which we have records, that being '93-94.

Ms. Friesen: Is the minister indicating he has no records in the two years before '93-94?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I think we have given all that information to the member. She can do her own counts to see how many of the companies are coming under two of the programs. We have given her all the raw information. What

more does she want? She can do her own count for the years prior to that.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, there have been instances in the past when the information the minister has provided to me has been incorrect: the companies, for example, which no longer exist; indications where the minister has said later that training did not occur, and that abuses have occurred. So I wanted to be quite sure that the information I got was correct, that the minister agreed with it, and that it was in fact the right information. So that is all I am asking. Over the last three years, how many people have enjoyed the benefit of both types of grants? I know that the minister has the information, and I am asking him to provide it.

* (2025)

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, because I do not want to cause problems, I am not going to raise a point of privilege and indicate that the member is imputing motives. She is indicating by inference, she is saying that I am leaving information on the table, as I had walked over to the NDP caucus room, that was not in keeping with the actual fact.

The information that the member has been given to her is exactly the information that we have available to us. So, for sure, I have no alternative but to again ask the member to do her own counting to see what firms are on both lists. She can do that just as well as I can. For '93-94, we do not have the information collated at this time, but when we do, we will share it with the member.

Ms. Friesen: Obviously, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, what I am trying to do is to be quite specific about the minister's apparent generosity, and whereas his claims are for an open, accountable system, there are severe limits upon that. A minister who will one minute propose that he will in fact provide information over three years, in the next sentence then says, no, it is only going to be in one year, and then only when he has it collated. At other times, he has provided us information that has not been correct. Now I am sure it was the best information he had at the time, but then he turns around and then criticizes others in Question Period for not

putting on the record correct information which is exactly the information he had given us two days earlier.

So I am not impugning motives in any way. I am simply indicating the kind of experience which we have had with this program and my desire to have exactly the same information as the minister has—public information, publicly arrived at, publicly paid for and publicly accountable.

So I do not think the minister has to really be too upset about professional relationships here. This is really just an attempt to ascertain the same information as the minister.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I do not know why the member plays revisionist history one minute after she has made the first statement. She never did ask for three years of data, and if she did, I never consented to providing three years of data. I never consented to providing three years of data, at no time with respect to the overlap and whether or not two firms or firms were eligible under two of the programs to take their employer value up to the maximum.

So, if the member is going to correct me with respect to specific commentary and challenge me as to the accuracy of my statements, I am afraid I have to do the same thing with respect to her.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we will certainly have to check the record.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would like to make a motion. I move, seconded by the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), that

WHEREAS the minister has not provided adequate public information on the curriculum, effectiveness and educational outcomes of the many training grants and millions of dollars spent in the Workforce 2000 program;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT 16.4(h)(1)(b) Other Expenditures be omitted.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I am just going to take it under advisement, and we will carry on in a few minutes.

Motion presented.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The motion is in order, and it is debatable.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I must tell you, I am very disappointed—not surprised, but very disappointed—that the member would see fit to bring forward this motion.

The member throughout the review of Workforce 2000 has gone on and on again and said—the last time being about four o'clock this afternoon—Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I want to repeat for the fourth time, I am not against workplace-based training. What the member did not say was that she is totally against Workforce 2000. She has been. It has been the thrust of her questioning in the House now for the basic of two months.

What we have, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, is the protectionist, small "c" conservative approach from members opposite, of course, who do not want to see changed the whole training regime in this province. They want to see it maintained within the institutions as we know it—universities, community colleges—and no changes.

* (2030)

Now, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, members opposite were totally against governance when we brought it into the college system when my colleague the member for Roblin-Russell (Mr. Derkach) was the Minister of Education. Members opposite, of course, did not want to see the changes that were encompassed within that change. Once and for all, the bureaucracy that had encumbered community colleges, particularly in some respects the department, was finally taken away, and colleges now could react to the marketplace. They could listen quickly and make changes with respect to the requirements of the employers, people who create, in combination with employees, the wealth of our province.

So the NDP were opposed to that, because I can remember sitting in this very committee room when Bill 70 came in and Bill 22 came in and, indeed, all of the questions surrounding that public policy, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that the members were at that time, when they were giving some input with respect to that bill, always talked about how it was we were providing greater governance to the community colleges.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that is in keeping with their reaction to some of the recommendations that came forward in the Skills Training Advisory Committee report.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the STAC committee had canvassed all of our employers, had asked for input from the community at large, had asked for input from the education community, had tried to find a method of bringing into the modern age training within our workplace. So what did this government do? Well, it could have listened to the NDP. It could have maintained the level of funding, and, therefore, maintaining the same courses that had been in place within the community college for basically 25 years. It could have followed the approach of, through Treasury Board review, reducing a course here or there every year, and then trying to build in a new one; or it could have come into the modern age and recognized that the aerospace industry, recognized that the health products care industry, recognized that the telecommunications industry—

An Honourable Member: And the chicken industry.

Mr. Manness: The member says, the chicken industry. Well, the member has got a fixation with chickens, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. I do not why the member for Wolseley is so against chickens. Now I know the NDP. They hate rural Manitoba, and they hate the farm, but I did not realize they hated chickens, so I know there is a resentment towards anything that—

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): You do not know that.

Mr. Manness: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we just had one of the better contributions from the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) of this whole debate, but the reality is the NDP has been totally opposed to a change in training regime in this province, so what we have here is obviously a clash of philosophy.

The members opposite, of course, want to maintain the status quo. They want to see, first of all—and I sense, of course, it is to their political agenda, that every time when we ask them where we can find millions of dollars to help them with

their spend-more slogans, which, of course, occur daily in the Legislature, they can always point to Workforce 2000 as some programming that possibly the resources supporting should be directed elsewhere.

I wish at times, though, the members would realize whom they are attacking. I can remember just a month ago when the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) on public radio attacked one of the staunch corporate citizens of our community—

An Honourable Member: Which one?

An Honourable Member: Accused him of being a Liberal—or a Conservative.

Mr. Manness: No, Birchwood motors. He went after the Chipman family, Mr. Deputy Chairperson; he called them a bunch of Tory hacks in essence and offended them greatly.

Then you realize what is at work here. What you realize is that this is now taking on overtures of becoming a class warfare issue, because, of course, the members want to be able to talk about, they want to be able to relate this to the corporate welfare bum themes—the last time that they were anywhere in double digits in the polls in the country. So the members opposite are desperately trying to make an issue around Workforce 2000.

What does Workforce 2000 try to do? It has tried to take the focus away from those who are the professional educators, those who think they know everything about the economy, those that think they know the world, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, and say what courses are important and what priorities. They have shifted that focus of training to the employer, because the employer in large measure was turning away from the formal institutions within our community, saying they really were of little relevance to the modern, day-to-day decisions that had to be made.

So, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, a government came along, after having canvassed the wealth-producing sector, saying, what is it that we should do to bring training into the modern age, to cause an awareness of how important training should be? What is it that the government can do?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, in loud chorus, the members of the community said this: Focus the training on the employer. Let the employer decide in conjunction with the senior management, in conjunction with the supervisors, in conjunction with the employees as to what basic skills are missing, No. 1; what areas of management capability are missing; and, thirdly, what areas of communication skills and other skills are missing.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the community also said, do not drive us into the formal institutions for this type of training. Let it happen at the workplace. Let it happen without an incredible bureaucratic association. So this is what we endeavour to do, so we took, some would say, a smaller amount of money, \$4 million to \$5 million depending on what fiscal year we were in, and we directed it to the workplace.

I know the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) felt offended. She sensed that her institution and, indeed, the formal post-secondary institutions were under attack, that somehow they might be suffering long term over this.

An Honourable Member: I just want accountability.

Mr. Manness: The member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) wants accountability. The members opposite by virtue of their questions made public, the Provincial Auditor looked into this program, and what did the Provincial Auditor say?

I quote, Mr. Deputy Chairperson: In 1993-94 the Workforce 2000 program was cited by the Provincial Auditor as a positive initiative of government, and I underline positive initiative. Positive initiative. It did not say negative initiative.

But the Auditor went on to say, concluded: "The program objectives are: clearly defined"—I have never seen that stated before in a Provincial Auditor's report on any area of programming—"and consistent with the mandate; linked to key result areas; and reflected in the plans and organizational structure." Listen, and I repeat, "linked to key result areas," meaning evaluated. Evaluations—meaning the evaluations.

These are the Provincial Auditor's words, not mine: "Linked to key result areas; and reflected in

the plans and organizational structure." So, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, what the Provincial Auditor said is that, as regards the program as conceived, as the plans and organizational structure put into place in support of the program, the linkages were there.

Furthermore, and I quote: "The training activities are appropriately organized . . ." Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, who is doing the training activities? Well, the Train the Trainers—the people that are hired to be the consultants. "The training activities are appropriately organized and controlled, . . ." Well, whose responsibility is to control that process? Well, obviously, it is the department's.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, to go on then, the Provincial Auditor says: "Performance criteria are in place. . . ." The member has been hounding us and dogging me day after day on accountability. What does this mean when the Provincial Auditor says that performance criteria are in place?

Does that mean the evaluation process, the standards for measurement is against that process, the benchmarks, that some evaluations are—that the evaluation processes are in place? To me, that means exactly that; "performance criteria are in place to monitor achievement of results, . . ."

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, what the Auditor is saying is that the evaluation process is in place. Furthermore, management decisions are timely and relevant. The 12 rules of effective attributes of effectiveness accounting, the Provincial Auditor, from my memory, has said already this program has hit on half of them, on half of them. There is not a program in government that does that well.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, again, I quote: "Performance criteria are in place to monitor achievement results, . . ." Management decisions are timely and relevant, and, furthermore, the program provides accountability reporting on financial activities, which means that you do not get your money if you are an employer unless you have spent it in a manner in keeping with the commitment you made with respect to training.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member now wants us to do a better job of riding herd on 2,800

files. As a matter of fact, she wanted me to drag the 50 filing cabinets we have—she wanted me to bring them here tonight; she wanted to have them here tonight so that I could talk about every one of those 2,800 files.

* (2040)

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, what nonsense, what abject tomfoolery. The member is being mischievous. I gave the member more credit. I thought she was seriously interested.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. Hansard is having a little bit of trouble picking up the minister, so could I ask the honourable members to keep it down just a little bit?

Mr. Manness: I am very disappointed in the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen). I thought that this was an exercise of sincerity on her part; I thought it was an exercise of trying to find out all the information that we could impart with respect to Workforce 2000. I realize now, by virtue of this motion, that the member is just trying to make a political issue out of Workforce 2000. It is obviously going to be a major plank of the NDP election thrust, and they are going to, obviously, totally ignore what the Provincial Auditor said.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I have also indicated because the member—I am growing a little bit sensitive to this charge of no accountability associated with this program. I said in coming to office that I had concerns about some of the criteria around Workforce 2000. I have also laid those concerns on the record. I have said what areas have concerned me. Now the member says, which companies are you going after? I have shared them. For the record I will state again: The greater concerns that I have are related to those industries that are purely within the service sector, and which may not be contributing any greater to the provincial economy as a result of the training than they might have before that.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I have also said, because the service sector is so wide in its description and its definition, there are significant portions that rightfully should be included. There are some others that we should look at in a second

look. My department has been doing that over the course of the last several months.

A year from now, when we review the list, when we share the list, which we will do again because we are an open and accountable government, just as I did for the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) when I sent the list for '93-94 up to a point in time—I believe it was February or early March that was the cutoff date because I know that the member wanted to have this information before coming into the House. I sensed that it was the proper and responsible way to be open and accountable. We will do that again.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, there is no doubt in my mind there will be some businesses that have been on the list for the last two years and will not be there in terms of '94-95 final results, and that is because we will have changed some of the criteria.

I recognize, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, and I say to the member for Wolseley, I still take sincerity out of some of her statement. I am trying to reflect some of the good parts of her commentary into decisions around criteria.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would like to move on with respect to evaluation. An evaluation that was done internally of the Workforce 2000 program was completed in late '93 and the key findings included, and, again, I indicate this, and this has been shared with the Provincial Auditor—well, we will share it with the Provincial Auditor if we have not. [interjection] This is open. When the Provincial Auditor comes and asks for evaluations, they are shared. For the record, they were shared with the Provincial Auditor because I mandated that be done on coming into office.

Now, what they really said. Key findings included that 85 percent of businesses surveyed in October '93 stated that training increased their productivity. [interjection] The survey was scientifically conducted. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, 71 percent of businesses increased their competitiveness, and 64 percent of businesses increased their profitability. [interjection]

By the tone of the remarks from the members opposite, they seem to be referring that all business people are crooks, and anything for a dollar, they

will do anything for a dollar. To them, I say, shame. [interjection] I sense that the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) believes that everybody that is in business is basically a used-car salesman. That is the picture; he tries to paint everybody with the same wide brush.

Other results, Mr. Deputy Chairperson: 78 percent of the companies surveyed indicated that their company's investment and training would have been less without the participation of Workforce 2000.

An Honourable Member: Of course.

Mr. Manness: Well, the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plobman) says, of course. By that, he means, naturally, they are receiving government money. So he thinks, even though they have had to put in many cases two dollars, three dollars for the one they got from the government.

* (2050)

Of course, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I found out one thing about socialists. Socialists will take money, but only if they do not have to put up a dollar. That is one thing about a socialist. Socialists will only take it if they put up nothing.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, 97 percent of employers stated—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. We are getting a little carried away again. Do you want to get it out of your system now? The honourable minister to continue.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it also found, and I am talking about the evaluation, that the program's approach to restructuring Human Resources committees was endorsed by industry and sectoral clients—to structuring Human Resources committees. You know where the thrust is towards Human Resources committees.

An Honourable Member: Where?

Mr. Manness: It is directed towards quality control, Total Quality Management. Today, if one wants to believe anything they read, and if anyone wants to believe that to be part of the globalized world today, you have to put forward a quality product and service. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that starts right on the workplace floor. It starts right

within the office. It permeates every dimension of the workplace, and yet the members opposite say, no, we want this training to be within the institution. If it is a six-month or eight-month course, so be it, because what we want for sure is we want jobs for those instructors, those instructors that belong to the MGEU. That is what we want. I know where the NDP is coming from.

There are achievements in '93-94 that should be again noted for the record, 992 contracts with small- and medium-sized businesses providing training to 3,021 employees. Members opposite do not even know how many businesses there are in Manitoba. The members opposite have no clue because, of course, they have no regard whatsoever for the total number of businesses. They just assume—you see, the difference between the NDP and the Conservatives, they assume that business will be there to create wealth. That is their basic assumption.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, 992 contracts with small- and medium-sized businesses. I go on to point out 27 sectoral activities initiated, providing training to 2,563 employees; 14 courses developed and delivered through province-wide special courses. The member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) has really grilled me on these special-courses component attended by a minimum of 44 businesses and a minimum of 243 employees.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the members of the NDP party are totally against workplace—

An Honourable Member: The Liberals are not against this.

Mr. Manness: Well, I am not sure about the Liberals, but, of course, the Liberals, as they have said many times, like to ride that fence in the middle and have it both ways. So, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, no doubt the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray) will want to put the Liberal position on the record.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, 267 companies submitted training plan applications, representing approximately \$8,760,000 in workplace training to 31,792 employees. That is the pent-up demand for workplace training.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, one can read all of the commentary by the Economic Council of Canada in the past, and the C.D. Howe Institute, and everybody will tell you that within Canada there is a void with respect to training culture in our private sector.

The member opposite says, it is true. Do you know what the NDP did, what their solution to it was? You tax the devil, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, by way of payroll tax out of the company; you take that money and you put it over in the institution and then you force the companies to buy places in the institution. Whether or not they had the right mix of jobs, whether or not it was market-related, whether or not it was in keeping with the demands of the workplace or not, it did not matter.

What mattered was you had to have that staff there, who were part of the MGEU; you had to have them employed. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that was the modus operandi of the NDP.

So I say to the members opposite, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that we can see what the essence is of this motion. The members opposite really could care less about the training aspect of it. Really what their big issue here is to force training back to the model which worked well 25 years ago, but which has been reluctant until we gave it governance, been reluctant to change in a fashion that was necessary.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I suppose I should leave my commentary there, other than to say that the government remains very supportive of this program. Yes, there has to be some fine tuning. We will do that fine tuning, and a year from now, I know the members of the NDP party will applaud, will absolutely applaud Workforce 2000, having taken into account some of the changes that we are contemplating.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it is very interesting sitting here in the committee listening to the formal debate that is going on that will be on the record and the informal debate that is going on, and I sometimes think that the real people out there in the world, whether those individuals are small or medium employers or whether they are individuals who are looking for retraining, really want to

ensure that government does provide leadership and that government is there to initiate and assist businesses where possible and to create jobs. I am not sure most of them would appreciate a lot of the particularly informal comments that have gone around this table tonight. When we think about the real people out there, I think it is very important that we keep that in mind.

The motion by the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) indicates that the minister has not provided adequate public information on a number of areas, and she cites curriculum effectiveness and educational outcomes. Listening to the debate that went on this afternoon, and I understand that there was much more debate on Workforce 2000 in the days preceding, it is clear that the minister to date and to this point has not either been able to provide that information or has not been willing to provide that information, but up to this point, we still do not have that in regard to what some of the educational outcomes are in regard to those training grants.

I think it is important to note—and the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) made reference to this, and I think the MLA for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) agrees—that there is a void in training, and that there is a void out there with small businesses and industry in terms of providing retraining opportunities for their employees. I know the one example I can think of is a computer program in Dauphin, Manitoba. Being familiar with some of the retraining that went on and the Workforce 2000 input, I think for that particular business and those employees it was important.

Now the question that remains, and when one looks at this motion, is the number of dollars that is spent in Workforce 2000: Are we getting value for our money? That is what we do not seem to have a clear answer on. The minister has certainly indicated that the Auditor is going to be looking at this program. We need to look at more of it.

I do not think it necessarily makes sense to throw the baby out with the bath water. If a program is not working, if we are not getting good value for our dollar, then we should make changes or we should be willing to scrap programs.

Governments in the past have been slow to do that, regardless of political stripe, but I think we need to look at that in the future.

I would have preferred in the RESOLVED part of this motion to hear that in fact we would have a deferral of this section till the end of the Education Estimates when we have given the minister an opportunity to provide some of the information and some of the evaluation. [interjection]

* (2100)

The member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) indicates the minister has no intention of providing anything. That may well be true. Certainly, when we wrote a letter to the minister in regard to Workforce 2000, it was very clear that some of the information was forthcoming from the minister, but the rest of the information was not. I certainly support the WHEREAS of the motion, that we have not seen this information. I do not want to see the program eliminated until we have an opportunity to evaluate.

Now, unfortunately, the way these motions read, in order for a motion to be in order, one has to be very clear on the resolved part of the motion.

I look forward to the other members speaking to this, but I have to support the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) on this particular motion because we have not seen the information yet. I would hope that the Minister of Education would have been able to provide this information and would still come forward to provide this information. [interjection]

What information? The minister says, what information? Well, I have to disagree with the minister, because even in the two and a half hours this afternoon when there were questions being asked on educational outcomes and curriculum on a number of various grants and programs, that information was not forthcoming. We have not seen that information.

The minister indicates that there is not a curriculum. Well, then that is a grave shortcoming of this particular program, if we do not have information, if the staff of the departments are not aware of the particular programs that we are giving money to.

It is very easy to write a course outline and talk about problem solving, human relations, communications and decision making. Those are all buzzwords. Those are all basically principles of any kind of course material that one hears. It is very easy to write that kind of a course outline. I would hope that the department would want information, and very specific information on actually what is being taught on that.

I know those questions were asked this afternoon. We have not seen educational outcomes; we have not seen any written material about the effectiveness of some of these programs. The minister has indicated the Auditor is going to be looking at this program, but we have not actually seen that from the minister.

So I think it is very reasonable that we have asked for that information, and, again, I still hope that the minister is able to provide that type of information. I would think it is incumbent upon him as Minister of Education to want to have that information so he knows how to proceed with the Workforce 2000 program.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, my comments will be relatively brief. In fact, I am almost tempted, as I understand the Liberal position, to quit while I am ahead, but I am not sure yet, and we will see. I hope the Liberals will support this.

It is not a matter of delay. If there is any doubt in anybody's mind, there are times in this Legislature we have to make choices, we have to make decisions. We moved this motion because we feel given what is happening in this Education budget that it is not acceptable for the government to have a program; in this case, we are dealing with \$4 million.

I notice the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) is here, and I am sure that in his heart of hearts he is looking too for ways of ensuring efficiency of government services, but we have cuts to public schools, we have cuts to universities, we have cuts which we debated of 20 percent to ACCESS funding.

What we have said, and we cannot reallocate the money, but our position is that this program is

seriously flawed. We would like to see this money taken out and the kind of money that is budgeted here, \$4 million, be put toward some of the other items that we have raised in this Legislature. That is our concern.

Let us not forget, I will just point very briefly to why we feel this whole program is so flawed. I think the irony of this is the minister talked about class struggle, he talked about socialism. What we are seeing here is corporate socialism. In fact, it is ironic that the largest item that we are deleting here—and I want to be quoting this for the record here—is described as social assistance.

This is not social assistance for single parents, which the government has cut. It is not social assistance for the poor. It is social assistance for corporate training that we have expressed serious concern about. This is the kind of priority of this government.

The bottom line is we are saying this item should be deleted. We are saying that if the minister wants to talk about workplace training, he has to totally start again, because this program is seriously flawed. We are saying our priority is not for Kentucky Fried Chicken, for major corporations like IBM, for virtually every car dealership in the province to receive grants for training, it should be for public education.

I would say to the minister just as one final comment, because I know the minister is someone who always talks about the taxpayers' money, et cetera. I wonder if he would care to go and talk to a lot of the taxpayers about where the money is going under this program, because you know, he talked about how the employees who received this money were satisfied with the program.

Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would say if you were to give grants to anyone, they are probably more likely than not going to be happy with receiving the grants. If the minister talks about accountability, I am sure that people out there would expect more accountability than to have someone who receives a grant make sure that they have spent it first, and they claim for it then.

That does not deal with the public issue of whether you want IBM and Kentucky Fried

Chicken and all the other companies we have mentioned to be receiving corporate grants when you are cutting back the public education system. That is where we are saying cut this line item, put it towards public education.

If you want workplace training, come up with a proper program, an accountable program. That, by the way to the Liberals, is why we moved this motion. It is not to delay consideration. We have made that decision, and we expect all members in the Legislature to show where they stand on this issue by voting on this motion.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Is the committee ready for the question? The question before the committee is as follows: It has been moved by the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), seconded by the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman),

WHEREAS the minister has not provided adequate public information on the curriculum, effectiveness and educational outcomes of many training grants and millions of dollars spent in the Workforce 2000 program;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that 16.4(h)(1)(b) Other Expenditures be omitted.

Is it the will of the committee to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: No? All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: All those opposed, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: In my opinion, the Nays have it. The motion is defeated.

Formal Vote

Mr. Ashton: I would request a recorded vote.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Is there a second member supporting the honourable member? A formal vote has been requested by two members.

This section of the committee will now proceed to the Chamber for a formal vote.

The committee recessed at 9:09 p.m.

—
After Recess

The committee resumed at 10 p.m.

* (2200)

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The hour being ten o'clock, what is the will of the committee? Is it the will of the committee to sit until midnight?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I will check with the committee's wishes at that time.

Item 16.4(h)(1)(b) Other Expenditures, \$4,040,900—pass.

16.4(h)(2) Stevenson Aviation Centre (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits, \$307,600. Should the item pass?

Ms. Friesen: Since the line has not yet passed.

An Honourable Member: Yes, it has.

Ms. Friesen: No, it has not. I have not voted on this.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We are now dealing with (2) Stevenson Aviation Centre (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$307,600.

Ms. Friesen: It has not passed.

An Honourable Member: I am sorry, it has not.

Ms. Friesen: I do not recall this item passing. Could the Chair perhaps explain when and where it passed and what the vote was?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Which line was the honourable member referring to? Right now we are dealing with Stevenson Aviation. The last line we passed was (1)(b) Other Expenditures, \$4,040,900.

Ms. Friesen: How could you have passed it?

An Honourable Member: We did not pass it.

Ms. Friesen: We did not pass it.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Well, if the honourable member checks the record prior to your arrival, that line had passed, and we moved on to (2) Stevenson Aviation Centre.

An Honourable Member: The committee was not constituted.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I had called the committee to order. We had asked what the will of the committee was, whether it was to sit until midnight. The committee said that that was the will of the committee.

Mr. Plohman: The committee was not sitting.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The committee was sitting.

Mr. Plohman: No, we were not—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The honourable member for Dauphin has a statement he would like to make?

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the practice has been, and the Deputy Chairperson knows full well, that until such time as the official opposition is sitting in the chairs and participating the committee is not sitting. The committee was not officially sitting prior to our arrival. We are here, let the record show, at ten o'clock, and following the vote we gathered our stuff, materials, and came right here, and I would suggest to the Deputy Chairperson that this is not appropriate. We will certainly challenge this kind of behaviour on behalf of the Deputy Chairperson.

As a matter of fact, the Deputy Chairperson has told me on various occasions that he would not call or pass the line unless the official opposition—unless we were here as critics.

We came here immediately following the vote. Is the Deputy Chairperson trying to indicate to the committee that he would pass the whole Estimates of the Department of Education in one minute if someone was not sitting here? It is just a sly effort at maneuvering, and I am really quite upset with this Deputy Chairperson, because, in fact, the Deputy Chairperson is supposed to chair in an impartial way.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I would like to thank the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) for that remark, but, as the Chairperson in the House stated when she called our committee back to order, I came into the committee room and we established ourselves in our seats. The

honourable member for Inkster was here (Mr. Lamoureux), and I asked what the will of the committee was. I asked whether we were to sit until midnight, and the answer was yes. Then I called off that line, and that line passed.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, in your defence, because you can hardly defend yourself in the position you are, but I did not rush to the committee room. The member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) knows that fully well that I did not rush to the committee room. I came here very casually. I sat here for at least two or three minutes.

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Manness: Yes. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) was here, and, as is past practice through the days, you are right, you will not start these committees until there is an opposition member present.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we have started this committee over the course of the last week when there were Liberals present and no NDP and vice versa. As soon as the committee sits, as you have called it to order, given that there are opposition members here, and there were, you did the right thing in calling the particular line.

The members say, well, would you pass the whole Estimates? No, not without opposition critics being present. But does the official opposition have to be here or a member of the Liberal Party have to be here? Mr. Deputy Chairperson, in the eyes of the Chair, an opposition member is an opposition member, so I come to your defence only because in my view you have done nothing wrong.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Well, as the Deputy Chairperson I will seek what the will of the committee is again. I have already called that line that is in question, and it was passed, but I seek the advice of the committee. What is the will of the committee?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I think that there is a valid point that has been at least raised, and that is, of course, the calling to order of a committee. I have attended committee meetings, for example, in the past where because of the lack

of a presence of one of the opposition parties it has resulted in a passage of a full report. I personally felt that that was most unfortunate.

We had a vote. We were called to go back into the committee process. I, too, had opportunity to, in fact, make a call prior to you calling this committee to order, as I was watching down the hall when the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) walked in. But it begs the question in terms of when is, in fact, the proper time to call a committee to order.

My personal preference, and I stress my personal preference, is when there is acknowledgement of all oppositions. In this case, there are two opposition parties, but that has not, to the best of my knowledge, been what has been happening in the past. So I guess before, if there is a challenge of the Chair, I would seek to get some form of clarification just what obligation there is of a Chairperson or a Speaker or a Deputy Speaker to have to call a committee, in fact, to order.

I am sensitive in terms of what the members for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) and Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) are saying, because, unfortunately, they might not have been here when you had called it to order, but it is, in fact, not the first time that I have personally seen that occur. But it does beg the question in terms of clarification on that particular issue. At the very least, it is something that should be brought to the rules committee.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I thank the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) for those remarks, but I still ask the committee, I am seeking the advice of committee on this. I have passed the line; it would take unanimous consent of the committee to revert to that line.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): As I understand it, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, this is not an issue that has had only cursory consideration, under circumstances where something was passed, either hurriedly or whatever, where adequate consideration perhaps was not given. That is not the case, certainly here; we just had a vote in the House on the same line.

We have just had days of questioning in discussion with regard to this issue, so, Mr. Deputy

Chairperson, I take your word that—I was not here at the time that the matter was passed, but I am assuming you properly acted in this case, and that has been corroborated both by the minister and by the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux). So I am assuming that your ruling is correct, and I would not want to challenge it.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, further to this, I think it is rather absurd that we even have to discuss this, and that this type of maneuver would be tried without the official opposition here, considering we were just in the House to have a vote which deleted this whole section, and which would have deleted this whole section had it passed.

We had clearly indicated our position. The minister knows that we were unhappy with this particular program. The Deputy Chairperson knows that from the vote, the motion that was made. It is not the same as saying, well, we just had a vote on this in the House, and that, therefore, the question has been dealt with. We still had not agreed to pass this particular line. As a matter of fact, we wanted this line omitted. So that is even more reason why this should have been dealt with when the opposition is sitting at this particular table. We had, as the minister noted, passed in the washroom one minute before, and when the minister came in here and sat down and agreed to pass this, he knew very well that this would be a provocative move that would be unfair with the official opposition.

It is certainly not in keeping with our rules in practice, and certainly, if the Deputy Chairperson is going to rule that this line is passed, we have to challenge the Chair on that particular decision.

In addition to that, I want to say that, as far as the Liberals are concerned, they just voted to delete this line and now they vote to pass it in here when the official opposition is not here. Where are they on this Workforce 2000? All over the map—it is a typical decision.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please.

* (2210)

Point of Order

Mr. Lamoureux: On a point of order, the member from Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) was not here, so he does not know how the Liberal Party voted.

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

* * *

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. Can I remind the honourable members that you are not supposed to refer to the absence or presence of any members?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we started this committee tonight at five after eight, because the minister was late in arriving at the meeting. We had—

An Honourable Member: Five after eight?

Mr. Ashton: Five after eight, yes. We had opposition members from both parties. We had government members. In fact, we even had the Speaker here. In fact, the Speaker was even sitting in the minister's chair, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, but we waited for the minister out of common courtesy, and eventually the minister arrived.

We actually probably would have gotten better responses from the Speaker, but we did wait, and I do believe it is common courtesy, particularly after a vote is held in the House, a recorded vote, to wait, the same way we do every day after Question Period when people are often detained on the way, perhaps talking to the media following Question Period. So I do believe the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) does have an important point here.

I just thought that is where we could spend probably another couple of hours discussing this and debating it, but since there are still questions that are being asked perhaps if we can deal with those questions, reopen up the line, Mr. Deputy Chairperson—just in the same sense of accommodation that we waited for the minister for five minutes. I am not criticizing the minister; I know that the government caucus probably had a meeting the same way that we do on Mondays, or in this case Tuesdays, and just out of some courtesy I would suggest we do that and perhaps

deal with further questions on Workforce 2000, because we have a lot more questions.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, to maintain, I do not know what spirit there is at work here. I mean, we have been on this line now for two days, and so the member can talk about the spirit of the moment, but I do not sense there is a heck of a lot of spirit, certainly, not in my mind anyway.

Let me say, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I hear the argument of the members opposite, and I have waited for ministers, too. I do not know how you start this committee without ministers. I have also seen our ministers wait considerable time when the Chair has ruled that both opposition parties have to be here. Then we found out that sometimes there has been an agreement between opposition parties that one, the critic, will take on a line of questioning for a period of time to keep it going.

Mr. Plohman: No, we did not pass it.

Mr. Manness: We do not know that. When the Chair sat here and called the committee together, I did not know, for instance, that the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) was not going to pose a number of questions on this line, had no knowledge of that with certainty, Mr. Deputy Chairperson.

So I understand, that is right, there is no way we should start a committee, but if we make a hard rule that everybody or that all three parties have to be represented, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, a lot of times there is a lot of wasted time.

So, Mr. Deputy Chairperson I—

Mr. Plohman: You have wasted as much time as anyone.

Mr. Manness: Well, the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) said I wasted all this time. I have wasted maybe a total of eight minutes.

Mr. Plohman: Yes, and we wasted one minute.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, in keeping with the request from the NDP opposition and the spirit they talk about, given that we have been to the House for a vote on this, on a much greater position of power than indeed the committee, and we have voted on the issue, I am

prepared to accept the will of the two opposition parties.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Is there leave of the committee then to revert back to line (b) Other Expenditures? [agreed]

We are now dealing with 4.(h)(1)(b) Other Expenditures, \$4,040,900.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I wanted to ask the minister about Murray Chev Olds, which has three grants under the individual training grants, the small grants. Collectively these add up to approximately \$10,000, and it is for 11 employees. Could the minister give me an idea, first of all, whether those, it is in three separate grants, and I am trying to understand how to read these account sheets. Two grants were, in each case, one person was trained and then one grant where nine people were trained. Does that mean that a total of 11 people were trained or does it mean that some people received training, different types of training or additional training?

(Mr. Ben Sveinson, Acting Deputy Chairperson, in the Chair)

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, maybe the member can tell us to what list she is referring and maybe we can answer the question.

Ms. Friesen: This is page 21 of the minister's sheet, the 1993-94 Training Schedule by Employer, Murray Chev Olds Cadillac sales.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, one company, three grants totalling under \$10,000 for human resource development and quality assurance.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister be a little more specific on Murray Chev Olds Cadillac sales, a human resource development? What is exactly happening in that case?

Mr. Manness: No, I cannot.

Ms. Friesen: Would the minister anticipate that a reasonable assumption that a grant to Murray Chev Olds Cadillac sales for human resource development has something to do with salesmanship?

Mr. Manness: No, I would not accept that.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister give me some other examples of what human resource development might include at Murray Chev Olds Cadillac sales?

Mr. Manness: It could be directed toward quality management; it could be directed toward computer training, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson. I imagine I could go on and on.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I do not believe in the minister's first round that anything to do with computers was suggested. It was human resource management. This is not the technical training. I will remind the minister that this is the most recent section of grants. This is the time at which he told me that salesmanship had been eliminated from the program. This one looks unusual in the context of the minister's assurances, and so I am asking for some specific information on what kind of human resource development took place at Murray Chev Olds Cadillac sales.

Mr. Manness: I am assured by staff this was not for salesmanship or for salability of cars.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, well, if the minister's staff were able to assure him of what it was not, could the minister's staff assure us of what it was?

Mr. Manness: Yes, quality assurance and human resource development.

Ms. Friesen: Will the minister tell us what is meant by quality assurance in the context of the Chev Cadillac sales?

Mr. Manness: I do not know about the Cadillac sales, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, but I imagine the Olds sales deal specifically with making sure there is quality in the sales.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, this is one of the larger grants under this section. This is close to \$10,000.

An Honourable Member: No, no, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson.

Ms. Friesen: Yes, it is.

An Honourable Member: No.

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

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, the human resource development aspect of it was \$142.60.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, so I assume then that is the training of one person for seven hours and one person for six hours, and that was the quality assurance human resource development. What was the other \$9,258.23 for?

* (2220)

Mr. Manness: That was for quality assurance.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, the minister just indicated that quality assurance meant quality assurance in sales, so that nine people were trained for \$9,258.23 to assure that there was quality in sales?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, we will try to find that greater detail out for tomorrow if the member wishes. I cannot say with certainty where the training went at this time. As the member knows, I did not bring along the 50 filing cabinets that might have that information.

Ms. Friesen: As the minister knows, I never asked for filing cabinets. I asked for him to comply with the Auditor's report of publishing an annual report. In the absence of that, I have asked for specific information on specific cases. The minister is able to tell us what this grant was not for, but he is not, for some reason, able to tell us what it was for. First, it was quality assurance in sales, then it was not quality assurance in sales.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, the member sees another listing on the list she has, and that is the code, and I can tell her what the codes mean. Codes 4030, the line to which she has referred, has quality assurance, and that is all I have in front of me. It is all that staff have available to them tonight. We can look into the file and try to ascertain in greater detail what specifically was meant in this case in support of a training initiative of Dan Murray Chev Olds.

Ms. Friesen: The minister then will undertake to table that at the beginning of the Estimates period tomorrow?

Mr. Manness: Most certainly. I would not want to fail in that endeavour.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, one of the other grants I have been puzzled by in this particular list has been the two grants to balloon companies. I wonder if the minister could give us an indication of why those two balloon companies could not have been put together in a collective training enterprise. I am referring now to page 4 of the 1993-94 training schedules where Balloon Creations and Balloon Tycoons each received a grant to train in one case two people, in the other case one person.

Mr. Manness: Again, the question is out of order. We are dealing with the '94-95 Estimates. I do not have again that information. If the member had shown me any courtesy at all and wanted information with respect to these items, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I would have tried to have had that available.

The member did not show me any courtesy to prepare me for identification on that, so Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson I do not have that information. It is out of order, and I guess I am not going to answer any more questions that are out of order.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, but I repeat, in the absence of tabling a list of programs for next year, the only way that we can evaluate the amount that the minister has requested for this year is to try and evaluate, in the absence of an annual report, in the absence of tabled public documents on this, what exactly the money has been spent on in the past in order to develop the kind of general assumptions about this program that would give us some assurance when we again look at this line.

I reject the minister's indication of lack of courtesy. I would expect that a minister who sits here with his staff is fully prepared to answer detailed questions on what he has spent in the past and what his Estimates are for. That seems to me the courtesy that is at issue here.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I do not know whether the member—well, she is more than a rookie, she has been in this place for a long time. I would not pretend to have the detail associated with 3,000 files. I could not expect my staff to have the detail associated with 3,000 files.

Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, if the member wants detailed questions answered, she has two choices. She can go to Estimates—or pardon me, review of Public Accounts when indeed the Minister of Finance may have to have that information available, or she can file an Order for Return.

Today we are considering the Estimates for the '94-95 fiscal year. That is looking forward from April 1, '94, to March 31, '95. So the member cannot have it both ways either. My staff does not have today, tonight, the detail associated with 3,000 files, and nobody in their right mind should expect that. Somebody only who believes that they have got some political axe to grind would do so.

Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I suggest that the member specifically tell me what company she wants more information on, put it on the record and we will endeavour to try and provide her with that information, because it is useless to dialogue on the past. Not only is it out of order, we do not have the information, because we are unprepared, and we are unprepared because the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) did not have the courtesy to allow us to be prepared.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, could the minister tell us what the total amount of money that has been spent on Workforce 2000 in the past year, including all sections of the Workforce 2000 program, including the payroll tax deduction? I believe the Auditor's report spoke of something in the region of \$7 million a year. I am wondering if that is something with which the minister agrees.

Mr. Manness: Well, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I always agree with the Auditor, and that is why when the Auditor came out with a glowing report on the Workforce 2000 program, I also agreed with her at that time.

I want the member to know that in '93-94, \$2.934 million were spent in the two components, in support of the two components, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, not including the payroll tax offset.

Further to that, the final numbers are not in from Finance. The payroll tax refund, it was estimated,

at this point again, these are not final numbers, that the '93—and I believe, yes, the payroll tax works in a calendar year. The amount offset against payroll tax is \$3.261 million. Again, that is not a fiscal year equivalent, that is a calendar year.

Ms. Friesen: So that in the last calendar year, the minister's estimate is in the region of \$5.5 million, total program?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, yes, in the sense though that one is fiscal and one is calendar. If you wanted to make those comparisons from year to year using that same data base, yes, \$5.5 million.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister give us an idea of what was spent in the year before on the same basis?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, the year before, in the two components within my department, \$3.2 million, and on the payroll tax \$3.13 million, so slightly more the year before on a comparative basis.

* (2230)

Ms. Friesen: As we look to next year, does the minister have any grants approved yet for this coming year?

Mr. Manness: Yes, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, we have reviewed that, we reviewed that the other day when we were talking in terms of when I went over the listing and I referred to some of the '94-95 grants, and they were in the special projects, in the industry-wide initiative and province-wide special courses.

Ms. Friesen: What about in the other portion of the program, the approximately \$2 million to \$3 million worth to be spent in fiscal year '94-95, have there been any individual grants yet approved?

Mr. Manness: Well, as I pointed out also on the record, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, some of these agreed upon training agreements were flowing over two fiscal years. It is not the case that the training runs out as of the end of the fiscal year, and so some of the signed agreements would be flowing into two years. So it is very hard to know with certainty what percentage of this year's total

budget was as a result of a commitment made previously.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister tell us what new grants have been approved for the coming fiscal year under the grant program of up to \$10,000, the individual company grants?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, we believe there are roughly 40 approvals since the beginning of the fiscal year, but again we can have that information to her tomorrow.

Ms. Friesen: So I understand the minister will be tabling at the beginning of Estimates tomorrow both the account of the Cadillac Sales and also of the 40 new approvals under the small grants program?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I do not know of a company called Cadillac Sales. They probably did not have an application or certainly an agreement with the government, so I do not know of what the member speaks.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I think the minister knows very clearly of what I speak, although my apologies for not citing it directly as Murray Chev Olds Cadillac sales in this case, that he is going to table that information tomorrow, along with a list of the 40 new approvals in the smaller grants program.

Mr. Manness: Yes, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I have made that commitment.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Sveinsson): Item 4.(h) Workforce 2000 and Youth Programs (1)(b) Other Expenditures \$4,040,900—pass.

4.(h)(2) Stevenson Aviation Centre (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$307,600—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$476,200—pass.

4.(h)(3) Youth Programs (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,065,400—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$294,200—pass.

4.(h)(3) Youth Programs (c) CareerStart \$2,567,400. Shall the item pass?

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I had a couple of questions on special government initiatives and Partners with Youth. Could the minister tell us what these special government

initiatives are that anticipates placing 75 students and youth in this coming year?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, there are two components to this line. Firstly, where we attempt to place disabled people within the employ of the government within the STEP program, and, secondly, an exchange program in support of an exchange program, a student exchange program with the Province of Quebec.

Ms. Friesen: On the Partners with Youth, could the minister undertake to table again tomorrow a list of those projects? Have they yet been approved, the projects for this coming year.

Mr. Manness: No.

Ms. Friesen: When will a list of the programs approved be available?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, because there are four decision points through the year, the last being in November of '94, we will not have a list until after that time.

Ms. Friesen: Are these primarily for summer programs for '95 or are there some programs that will begin after Christmas?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I suppose the largest quantity would occur in association with summer work, but there are municipalities that are sponsoring activities throughout the fall and leading into the new calendar year, also.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I wanted to ask about co-operative education for a minute. I am not sure if that is on this line in your book. I wanted to ask about a committee or a council which has been composed of a number of representatives of not only the department. I believe somebody from the department was seconded to staff that particular council, and the council has been dissolved. I am not sure of its exact name, I think it was called the workplace education council, or something along those lines?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I think the member is referring to a business labour group that established itself, and we provided support in kind. I do not know whether we provided some space, but certainly no monetary

support, and I gather that that organization on its own decision disbanded.

Ms. Friesen: I believe the department did provide space, and I think also staff on secondment. I am interested, first of all, for confirmation of that, but secondly, also in the reconstitution of that council. Could the minister indicate what the department's connection is to this council and how it fits with the department's plans for co-operative education and for workplace-based education?

* (2240)

Mr. Manness: Well, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, the group did come to see me early on when I assumed this responsibility, and made a strong presentation and support of their outreach and their co-operative education approach. It seems to me they were requesting some level—from memory—they were requesting some level of funding, and no determination has been made. As a matter of fact, estimates reviewed did not and decisions did not accept the request. If the member is talking about an individual who was seconded three or four years ago, over the last three years, the government has not provided seconded support to the efforts of this organization.

Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I might point out that there is a separate organization to which all the education, the corporate education partners do belong. It is a provincially constituted council. We are certainly in dialogue with this organization.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, does that mean that the minister is not in dialogue with the reconstituted version of the business and labour groups?

What I am trying to get at is I understand that this group has reconstituted itself, that it felt that as it was constituted it was not meeting the objectives which both it and perhaps the department had set out for itself. I am looking for some response from the minister as to the new directions of this council and where it fits with the department's broader perspectives in co-op education or workplace-based education for young people.

Mr. Manness: Well, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, anybody that wants to take a lead or a

partnership lead with respect to providing greater matching of co-op education in linking the formal education institution with the workplace has our support, certainly our moral support.

If we are thinking about the same group, and I think we are, they made a presentation to me to indicate who they were and how it was that they sensed that they were going to try and proceed over time, and that is my only involvement with that group up to this point.

Ms. Friesen: Does the minister anticipate further involvement? Where does this fit with government policies? Is the government going to be working through this group? Is this group a group that perhaps are going to offer advice to the minister? Is it a group that is going to proceed on a school division by school division basis, or is it going to proceed on the basis of pilot projects, and where does this fit with other initiatives of the government?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, it is not our group. They are dialoguing, I gather, as between the school divisions and employers and, to the best of my knowledge, have not been actively seeking a greater involvement from the provincial government.

I point out, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, with respect to ed reform there will be certainly an awful lot of attention directed towards apprenticeship training and vocational training within our schools, and obviously co-operative education is a pretty close cousin to all of this and will have to be addressed at that time.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Sveinson): Item 4.(3)(c) CareerStart \$2,567,400—pass; 4.(3)(d) Partners with Youth \$1,400,000—pass; 4.(3)(e) Less: Recoverable from Rural Economic Development Initiatives (\$500,000)—pass.

4.(j) Apprenticeship (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,256,600.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I see that the minister anticipates 600 new apprentices registered in this coming year. I wonder if the minister could give us a sense of the magnitude of that by telling us how many

registered apprenticeships, new registered apprenticeships, there were last year and the year before?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I will go through the ledger in the calendar year '93, the carry-over—and we are talking now registrations into '93—was 3,197. Those are active apprentices. Registered I guess is new. New apprentices, 520; cancelled, 541; completed study, I suppose that means, 413; leaving an active count of 2,766 that were those totals, I guess, at year-end. So the active number at year-end was 2,766.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

Ms. Friesen: So this year we are looking at establishing 80 new apprentices if last year there were 520 who were registered, and this year you are looking at registering 600.

Mr. Manness: No, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, just as the first line indicates on page 110 of the supplementary information, we are expecting 600 new apprentices.

Ms. Friesen: And last year there were 520 new apprentices.

Mr. Manness: That is correct, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, but there was quite a reduction last year because we went through the file and expunged the files of all of those who were inactive. There was quite a reconciliation of the total numbers last year, cleaning up the accounts. That is why, even though there were 500 and some new, there was a reduction of 541, I think the number was, and there was, in essence, a net reduction only on paper.

Ms. Friesen: In the year before, in '92, how many new apprentices were registered?

* (2250)

Mr. Manness: We do not have that information, Mr. Deputy Chairperson.

Ms. Friesen: In expunging several hundred people from the apprenticeship program, could the minister give us a sense of what the reasons—when the minister evaluated this program, there must have been a pattern to some of this. Why could so many be taken off the records at this particular time?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we did not expunge people, we expunged the registrations because they were no longer active. I guess if there was one area it would be the attrition rate with the Limestone Training agreement, where a number of people had been provided with registrations, but over the course of years, obviously there were not active trades being followed, and consequently, we decided to clean the files.

Ms. Friesen: What proportion of the 541 were from Limestone?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, they are broken out by trade. We can provide that information, but certainly a large portion of the trades came under that trade agreement. So we can try and provide that information by trade.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister made a claim that the larger proportion came from Limestone and I would simply like to verify that. If the minister made that claim, he must have some basis for it. So, yes, there may be two ways of approaching this, one is to look at the particular trades, and one is to look at the nature of an apprenticeship program in the North. So could the minister undertake to provide me with the numbers which, in fact, come from the Limestone program in discontinued registrations?

Mr. Manness: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, certainly in the area of carpenter apprenticeships 118, and staff tells me certainly the largest percentage of that 118 were discontinued registrations that had been achieved through the Limestone Training project.

Ms. Friesen: Of those carpentry registrations, would it be 70 percent, 80 percent came from Limestone?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, without doing an in-depth analysis I cannot say, but certainly the larger majority.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am trying to get a sense. We are looking at 520, of which the minister said the largest proportion come from Limestone, then the only other number he can give me is 118 carpenters. Is it 51 percent of that? Would the minister undertake to table the

information, the basis on which he made the assertion about Limestone?

Mr. Manness: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member is very sensitive about Limestone. I mean, you cannot help but detect that. Of course, I misspoke when I said probably the majority, but as an identifiable training program certainly there were a significant number within the carpentry area, and also within the industrial welding section. Again, it was a general statement, and I just provided this information, nothing more.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it was the minister who raised the issue of Limestone. I am simply following up on that. In the absence again of broadly available public information on this, my job is, in fact, to try and understand the basis on which the minister makes these assertions.

So we have now gone from a large number, not necessarily the highest proportion, and we are looking at two sections, carpentry and industrial welding. How many industrial welding registrations were cancelled?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, 50. But the member is so sensitive around Limestone. I raised it because over the years 1,700 people that the members boasted about training have left the program, because they were not supported. They were not supported by private employers, they were supported by a government program. Seventeen hundred people were given false hope because of the NDP program. When 1,700 people are pulled out over the course of a number of years, naturally, when one looks at this in historical trends, the large number, when you want to focus where they are as compared to what sectors, they are discontinuant registrants having come out of the Limestone Training program.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it is the minister who has raised Limestone and the minister who is getting quite excited about this. I am simply trying to find the basis of the assertion, which he said that in the last year the largest proportion of people having their registration cancelled came from Limestone. So far what I have been told is a proportion of the carpentry ones, 118, and perhaps there were 60 out of that, I

do not know, and of the industrial welders, perhaps there were 25 or 26, I do not know. I am giving the minister the benefit of the doubt on those numbers because he is not able to tell me, but he is able to make these broad scale assertions about the reduction in registrations in the last year coming from Limestone.

Now, perhaps he does have the numbers. I would like to believe he does, but unless he is prepared to table them, then I think surely the assertion is open to question.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member for Wolseley is having a hard time taking. You know, she can give it, but she can't take it, and the fact is Limestone Training after 10 years has been kind of a dismal failure, and the member of course cannot tolerate that. She is a poor loser. The fact is that 1,700, virtually all of the—or half of them at least over the course of the last number of years have gone by the board because of a dismal failed program brought forward by the NDP.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I do not know why the member for Wolseley is so sensitive to these issues. I know she is defensive of the program, but I am sorry, I apologize for mentioning the word Limestone Training, I regret having done that. If I could expunge the record, I would do so.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, yes, I think if the minister is not prepared to put the evidence on the line, then he should expunge that. It seems to me that it is the minister who has a knee-jerk reaction to apprenticeship, and he has a little clip in his brain that goes off and says, oh, NDP and Limestone, and that is what went off again this time. When we actually got down to looking at the numbers of this particular year, and of the reductions in this particular year, he did not have it handy, the evidence that he needed.

Now, if he is able to provide that evidence, I think that would be interesting and I would like to see it. So far we have not heard it.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, why does the member not ask me about the 1,700 apprentices that were trained in the program and ask me how many of them today are registered? Why does she not have the courage to ask me that?

Because she knows fully well that indeed most of those do not exist because the program was a dismal failure.

The member talks about courage. The fact is I sense that the trend, if one wants to identify the largest area from which the reductions have occurred, and it probably is not the majority in this context, although we have not gone through it fine tuned, but the largest area is Limestone Training and apprentice area.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am trying to establish what the minister intends to do with the \$300,000 extra that he has applied to apprenticeships. I am getting a sense of the trends. The fact that the minister might be interested in answering questions on specific issues of Limestone Training that go back more than one year is fascinating, particularly given the arguments that he has made about not answering any questions and not having the information available on anything in Workforce 2000 that does not include in the '94-95 Estimates. So, again, the principles that the minister is following in Estimates seem to vary by the line and by whatever particular ideology he wants to put on the record.

Perhaps we can look specifically at the \$300,000 that the minister is going to apply to this program. What I was looking for was some sense of the number of new apprenticeships that would be registered under this, where they were going to be applied, what the minister had found. This was the second part; maybe I will focus on this for now.

* (2300)

The minister raised the issue of Limestone, but in fact what I was looking for is what general pattern had the minister established in his evaluation of the registrations in apprenticeship? What has been lost? Is it the carpentry ones that are a problem generally? Is it industrial welding? Is it some elements of plumbing? Where are the difficulties appearing in the historical record in apprenticeships in Manitoba?

Mr. Manness: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, first of all, the question around the \$300,000; \$210,000 is being used to facilitate the revitalization of the Apprenticeship Branch,

including the increase of four staff years, and another \$87,700 has been provided in Other Expenditure areas, particularly in Transportation, Communications, Supplies and Services.

Now we have done a lot of talking about Limestone Training, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, and I just want to point out to the member that we all understand what happened. There was Level I and II training, and then there was not the experience or the opportunities to build upon that and carry the study through to term.

The member is probably aware of discussions that have gone on over the course of the last several months with respect to another aboriginal apprenticeship training initiative, and we are going to try again to support a program that will provide Level I training towards native economic development in the North so indeed that individuals with this basic level of training may be able to be involved in, particularly, the building in the areas of carpentry, plumbing and electrical trades.

As the member would fully well know, because I know she is very well connected into the labour movement, there was some consternation around this whole issue for a period of time, but it seems to have been addressed, and there is a willingness to see this program directed toward native economic development.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chair, I want to check on that Level I. Level I in carpentry, I believe it is more than Level I in some cases.

Mr. Manness: Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it is Levels I and II.

Ms. Friesen: I and II in carpentry. Levels I and II in electrical? No.

Mr. Manness: Just Level II in carpentry. In plumbing and electrical, Level I.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chair, that was how I understood the proposal existed. What will be the department's participation in this?

Mr. Manness: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we are providing staff support, existing staff. Of course, obviously, there will be some thrust, too, from some of the new staff in support of all of our

Apprenticeship developments, but the federal government is contributing. There is a third area, a curriculum development, which right now represents the basis of discussion with respect to the federal government and ourselves and, I suppose, the native community.

Ms. Friesen: What is the source of financial support for the curriculum development?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we are in discussion now with the federal government under strategic initiatives program, the pilot programs in trying to make this a worthy candidate for federal support.

Ms. Friesen: Is there a proportion of the expenditures under this line that we are on, 16.4(j), that is appropriated for curriculum support for the aboriginal apprenticeship program, other than the staff years?

Mr. Manness: No, I believe not, Mr. Deputy Chairperson.

Ms. Friesen: So in terms of the Estimates, the provincial government's proposed support for this program rests in the staff years support.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that has always been our primary support, nothing new.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, how many apprenticeships does the government anticipate will be developed under the aboriginal apprenticeship program, and do they expect them to be any of the 600 new apprenticeships proposed for this year?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, not this year because, of course, it takes some time. The 600 is exclusive of any numbers that might be coming subsequently with respect to the new aboriginal apprenticeship program.

Ms. Friesen: What areas does the minister anticipate the new apprenticeships will come in, then?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, across the board, in the broad range of apprenticeship areas.

Ms. Friesen: So the minister is not anticipating creating any new areas of apprenticeship. These

are the existing areas, and 600 will be placed, created.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we are in the process of developing, but certainly we will not have new apprentices or trainees within these areas this year.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, when the minister looked at cancelling the registrations, what areas by trade were the areas perhaps where he found the most difficulty? Carpentry was one he mentioned, industrial welding was another, but that might have been in relationship to his argument on Limestone. I am wondering if we looked across it on a sectoral basis is there a different argument to be made?

Mr. Manness: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we do not have it by sectoral basis. The member would know fully well that it is broken out by trade. Certainly, the greatest cancellations occurred in the two areas mentioned, plus motor vehicle mechanic, plumbing, motor vehicle body repair, sheet metal worker, and heavy duty equipment mechanic, and construction electrician.

Ms. Friesen: Did the minister look at these numbers and try to evaluate at what year people were losing their registration or losing their participation? Is there a pattern here that people are going to the end of the apprenticeship, or are they losing their placements early on, or are they going almost to the end? Is there a pattern there?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, there is no pattern, and again, I state for the record, a lot of these cancellations were old in the sense they could have been performed years ago.

Ms. Friesen: Has the minister looked at the impact of unemployment upon apprenticeship, people who come particularly in electrical, for example, to their third year or into their fourth year and then find themselves laid off? Are some of those people the ones whom the minister has been looking at cancelled registrations?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we have done no analysis on that, but there is no question that recessions, in this case the North American recession that we are involved in, lasting longer than we hoped, was particularly cruel.

Ms. Friesen: Has the minister cancelled the registration of any people who have been caught in that situation?

* (2310)

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, these are people who have been inactive for a long period of time. They have been notified, and we have been in dialogue with them, I am led to believe, and we are fully understanding of the rationale for exclusion.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chair, where does the minister anticipate that the 600 new apprenticeships will come from? As he is looking at deregistering in carpentry, industrial, welding, motor vehicles, plumbing, et cetera, where does he anticipate the new apprenticeships will come? Where are the new industries in Manitoba that are going to be looking for apprenticeships?

For example, I am interested in the printing industry. Are there apprenticeships which are being developed or expanded in that area?

Mr. Manness: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, again, just because there has been a lot of cleanout of dead paper with respect to the trade, there is no relationship between that and areas where there may be new entrants.

I point out for last year, in '93, these were the areas where the greatest activity occurred and I sense the same trend will occur in '94: aircraft mechanic, 23; carpenter, 65; construction electrician, 58; heavy duty equipment mechanics, 72; 82 in the motor vehicle mechanic area; 36 in the plumbing area; 25 in painting and decorating. So they are the traditional trades and, in many areas, correspond pretty directly to the same reduction that was referenced before.

Ms. Friesen: What changes does the minister anticipate making in the connections to secondary schools? One of the critiques that is often made about apprenticeships in Manitoba is in fact that the average age of an apprentice is 27, which is considerably higher than that in some other provinces and certainly in other countries. What initiatives is the minister taking in that area?

Mr. Manness: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I cannot be as fully open as I would like to be because this will be part of the blueprint on ed reform when it comes forward, but generally speaking, we want to see students who decide to select this type of training within the high school setting be provided with high school credits for time spent on the job and, of course, in-school apprenticeship training.

Furthermore, hopefully in time, we would like to see even a contribution to first-year level standing if we could set into place the right programming in either senior—certainly in Senior 4.

Ms. Friesen: Does the minister anticipate any of those changes coming in this next fiscal year?

Mr. Manness: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, as much as I would love to see that, the reality is this is tied to the whole package of ed reform, so there is going to have to be an awful lot of acceptance of the whole package before we can begin to see parts of it being accepted. I mean, it goes forward as a whole package, and I am hoping that it will happen as quickly as possible.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 4.(j) Apprenticeship (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,256,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$297,300—pass.

Resolution 16.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$45,715,400 for Education and Training, Advanced Education and Skills Training, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1995.

We will now move on to 16.5. item 5. Support to Schools (a) Schools Finance (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$802,500.

Mr. Plohman: While the minister is getting his staff that are responsible for this area, I wonder if he could give us a bit of background on how the decision was made to arrive at the figure of reduction in funding to the public schools this year. The figure, I believe, was 2.6 percent overall. Can the minister just provide the committee with some rationale for that figure this year?

Mr. Manness: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, this would come as a little surprise, I think, to those

who had studied last year's budget. We said, given the knowledge we had at that time as to the revenues coming in to government, flowing into government, we were almost sure that on average across government there could be expected a 1 percent reduction in funding that we would need to reduce expenditure levels across the board, the \$5.5 billion of spending, if we were to move to a reduced deficit leading to a balanced budget by 1996-97. That was well identified in the last budget I brought down as the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, subsequent to that, the new Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) was in receipt of the latest estimates of federal funding and realized the federal forecasts, with respect to economic growth and taxation therefrom, forecast a lower level of transfer. Consequently, that was taken into the fiscal framework and again, given the path that we were on towards reducing the deficit amongst all the options provided, a number of 2.6 percent was determined by government to be most fair under the circumstances.

Mr. Plohman: Would the minister agree that as a result of this, and the way the reassessment and declining enrollments and other factors which I will ask the minister about later impacted on the funding formula, some school divisions were in fact rolled back to pre-1991 levels in terms of the amount of funding that they had at the present time? Does the minister accept that, that there are some school divisions that are below 1991 funding levels?

Mr. Manness: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, not knowing for sure how the enrollment numbers have impacted specifically that school division, I would sense that there would be some school divisions that have levels of support that would be close to '91, and yet there are many public funded—indeed the Province of Manitoba itself is almost back to '91 level of support. So there is nothing that stands out as being a highlight with respect to that statement. The reality is revenues to government are reducing.

Mr. Plohman: Well, we will deal with that more especially when we compare it to where some of the other schools that the minister funds are, as

compared to these ones, and some of those elite, exclusionary schools that have been increased the last couple of years. But I wanted to ask the minister whether he could tell us precisely how the reassessment impacted on affected funding for individual school divisions, just how that manifested itself in the formula.

Mr. Manness: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it seems to me, from memory, the total value of all property, real property in Manitoba increased by, on average, close to 10 percent. The '93 assessment is compared to the '91, and so those school divisions that had average increases above 10 percent totalled—those that had gains, as a result of the funding formula due to reassessment, totalled 34 of the districts and school divisions, where those that were net losers totalled 19. So \$5 million shifted away from those that lost as a result of reassessment, to the same \$5 million being received as a benefit, to the 34 who were benefactors under the strict application of the reassessment impact on the formula.

* (2320)

Mr. Plohman: Does the minister have a sheet that would show who gained and who lost under reassessment and the precise numbers for each that he could table?

Mr. Manness: Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we have that. We can share a copy of that. We can make it right now, possibly, and give it back in a few minutes.

Mr. Plohman: Does the minister have at his disposal, at the present time, also the latest completed Frame Report, I guess that would be for '93-94. It has been traditional to table these in the Estimates, and we certainly had that last year. We would appreciate receiving another copy for the latest year that is available. I assume that the '94-95 will not be available but '93-94 is.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we have '93-94, but these are budgets we have now. These are budgets of the school divisions, but they provide a myriad of information. I have only four copies tonight.

Mr. Plohman: Did the minister consider the previous year's funding level in considering the

present year's, the 2.6 percent reduction, and then, as a result of reassessment—of course, it hit some divisions harder than others did—did the minister consider what happened with those school divisions the previous year and look at the cumulative effect of the two years when arriving at a decision?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the answer is yes. After a thoughtful review, an in-depth review over many painstaking hours, we decided to maintain the status of the funding formula, letting it flow, taking into account the new reassessment information.

Mr. Plohman: Did the minister do a computer model of various funding options? Did they have the various scenarios prepared prior to making a final decision on the one that was adopted?

Mr. Manness: Oh, yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. The practice has not changed any. It has been in place for many, many years. Options are presented by the Finance division of the department. Of course, policy options are also contemplated at that time, but nevertheless, the final decision is made and resulted in the decrease announced.

Mr. Plohman: So the government was fully informed about the impacts obviously; the sheet just passed to us on the effect of reassessment was clearly available as it was a result of the modelling that was done, and the impact of the cuts and how that would impact on various divisions was clearly outlined. So there were no surprises really in terms of how this impacted on school divisions. Would the minister say that is a fair statement?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we waited with bated breath to receive this information from Rural Development, who are the keeper of all the assessed values throughout the province. So I will not say that we received this matter of factly because it has such great impact on the formula, but we did know that shifts would occur generally, and we knew that certainly within the area of real estate, within the larger centres, cities, communities, there had been an appreciation for the most part in housing stock, and that bare land, there had certainly been a decrease in value throughout the province.

We knew that in general terms. We did not know the magnitude of the shift until we were provided with this information from the Department of Rural Development as a result of running the information put into the MACS system.

Mr. Plohman: So the decision was made to decrease the overall funding first to 2.6 percent, and then along came the reassessment information after, or was the reassessment information received prior to making the final decision on the level of reduction?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, they were two independent decisions. We are well aware of the impact by school division, but the exercise around selecting the level of funding was certainly unrelated to reassessment.

Mr. Plohman: And were there any exceptions made in these school divisions as a result of the impact of reassessment, any exceptions made insofar as additional funding? The minister has talked on many occasions about maintaining the formula, keeping it pure, not playing with it in terms of providing additional supplementary grants to which the formula actually provided. Was there any exception made for any school divisions, and if there was, can the minister just provide us which ones?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, from memory, no exceptions were made with respect to assessment. In looking at that as a single item, we did try to offer some support to Transcona-Springfield and Agassiz, taking into account both factors, taking into account the impact of reassessment and also the general level of decreased funding, given that they had reduced professional development days as a board policy last year and also that they had in their cases virtually no surplus in which to rely, to fall back upon. So those were the only exceptions.

Mr. Plohman: So what the minister is saying is that if a division did not reduce professional development days to the extent that the minister thought was appropriate, there was no consideration given, but because there are some school divisions who were in worse shape in terms of the reductions—and what was the level if I am

reading that correctly then? Was it eight days? Is that what the minister assumed was the level that he would accept as providing the best effort by the school division or a satisfactory effort?

* (2330)

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, there were no hard and fast rules around the exception, but we were mindful, for instance, of Agassiz School Division had used eight days under the reduced work legislation. So it was a combination of the four factors of which I spoke earlier. It was not a hard formula, because indeed I do not want to start another formula that overrides the existing formula, but we are mindful that some divisions that had taken actions under the reduced work area still found themselves in a difficult position. We tried to provide some measure of relief.

Mr. Plohman: Just to clarify, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the reassessment impacted on supplementary funding. Is that correct? Is that where it finds itself in the formula, when there is an increase in reassessment, supplementary funding is reduced?

Mr. Manness: The answer to the question is yes, because of course municipalities now are deemed to have greater or lesser wealth, and to the extent they are deemed to have greater wealth then they receive less under supplementary funding and vice versa.

Mr. Plohman: The grant that was impacted was the one called supplementary funding. I just wanted to ensure that I have it clearly understood that where the 19 school divisions were losers in this and 34 were gainers was in the area of supplementary funding. Those that gained actually got more supplementary funding, and those that lost got less supplementary funding.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, those are the numbers the member is looking at. That is supplementary funding.

Mr. Plohman: Was there any effort to phase that in so that the impact of the losses for those that lost or gained was over a longer period than one year, or was that rejected as an option? Was it considered and was it rejected?

Mr. Manness: We found out we have a history with some phase-in and it is very difficult to know when you should consider phase-in, and it is very hard to convince those who have been overpaying, in essence, for years that they should hold back the benefit that should come to them right now. So you find that you are only dealing on one side of the equation and have to find additional money to offset the impact in a phased-in way on those who have lost.

When we went and looked at the list on the right-hand side and saw in almost all cases the tremendous surpluses that were available and, in most cases, also where no days had been taken off under the reduced workweek, we sensed that these school divisions that were on the right side of the ledger certainly had two options available to them.

Mr. Plohman: Well, the minister would agree though that those that incurred the losses in funding this year did not have the ability to make up those losses even though they had increased wealth to offset those losses by way of local mill rate because of the cap. Is that fair to say, that they were, on average, not able to recoup, and were there some that could recoup all of it?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, you cannot make a general statement in this area. The two divisions that I have highlighted, that we tried to find, yes, were certainly effectively capped at the effective rate of 2 percent as stipulated in Bill 16, but many of the other divisions, because of special sets of circumstances, were able to levy increases above 2 percent.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, if the member wants to generalize, most of the school divisions shown as having losses had incredible surpluses and very few of them, to this point in time, have had to even reach to the reduced workweek to any great extent.

Mr. Plohman: Well, I want to get into that question about the surpluses and see how relevant that statement is from the minister, if we could take a look at those on the losses side as well as on the gains side, because I have a feeling from information I have seen that a lot of those who gained also had large surpluses in comparison to their overall budget, relatively speaking. I would

like to be able to see that information. Perhaps the minister would be able to provide us with a listing of the surpluses by division and broken down on gains versus losses; according to this sheet, 34 that gained and 19 that lost.

Let's take a look, what kind of surpluses we see there, just since the minister has raised this, particularly in light of his statement that it seems that those with large surpluses were invariably on the loss side with regard to reassessment.

Mr. Manness: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member has two options here. He can take my word for it, or he can request that privileged information from the school divisions themselves. It is their information. When I ask for it as a department and a ministry, I treat it and I receive it on the basis of it being privileged information. It is not public information. I know the member has certainly been asking several formal questions of school divisions and he may want to ask them that question too. [interjection] Well then, you did not need to ask me.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister knows, talking to some trustees perhaps or school divisions, that in fact we have asked for a lot of formal financial information from school divisions. Of course, some have co-operated fully and provided all of the information and more. Others, up to this point, have not yet done that, and so we do not have a complete listing. So that is why I have asked the minister this. As a matter of fact, I have even been advised by some that I should ask the Minister of Education through the Schools Finance Board for this information, that we should be able to have all of this kind of financial information. So I agree that we should be able to get all of that information from the minister.

We went through this discussion last year with regard to surpluses and I, at that time, raised with the minister my concern about the fact that she did not want to provide the surpluses for each school division. I mean, we were given all of the other financial information by the minister, and they do share all of that information. It has to be approved, those budgets, by the Public Schools Finance

Board. In fact, through the minister, they are reviewed, they are made available.

Well, let's ask the minister, because we are getting heads shaking one way and up and down and sideways. What in fact is the status of budgets received at the Public Schools Finance Board. Is it just for information, not approval? Is that correct?

Mr. Manness: We do receive the budgets; we do not review them in great detail. What we do review, of course, are the audited financial statements that come in, naturally, a year after the fact. We spend more time reviewing, again, the audited financial statements than we do the budget presentations that are sent to the department.

Mr. Plohman: How did the minister determine that certain kinds of information, or his department, is confidential and is the privileged information of the divisions their possession as opposed to other pieces of financial information? He has categorically, and his staff has consistently said this is privileged information?

I do not understand why it should be, especially since the minister uses it publicly. The minister has used it publicly when he justified the cuts this year with the statement that there is some \$60 million or \$70 million out there sitting in the coffers of school divisions. They could find it, a lot of it could be used, and therefore he did not have to provide it from the province this year.

* (2340)

It was something he referenced. I think, in all fairness, the Legislature should have that information. I do not understand why the department officials, or if it is at the political level, this information is being kept from the opposition in the Legislature by way of the Estimates process. What kind of thinking has gone into that determination?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, this is a long-standing practice. This is nothing new. The member knows full well the status of the information. We can call upon financial statements, in those financial statements, if they have been properly audited, the statements themselves have to reflect the surplus accounts as to whether they exist and at what level.

Those are not our documents. There is a requirement under the act that they have to be filed with us, but they are not ours. They belong to the school divisions, and to the extent they want to make them public, then they can, and some do, not all do. Well, I am corrected, they have to make them public.

Now, if the member says that we should change the act, and that we then in receiving them should make them collectively available to the public, then I would seek the support of the Manitoba Association of School Trustees. But, at this point, they are not our documents. We do not have ownership of them, but, yes, we demand that they be furnished to us.

Mr. Plohman: Is the minister saying that it would be in violation of The Public Schools Act to make them public?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I guess what I am saying is they are not our documents to make public. They are not provincial government documents. We do not have sanction from the school divisions to release this information in a global and individual respect. If the school divisions in resolution want to give us that, then they will. Right now, it is a long-standing practice that that information be treated as privilege, and to the extent that local school divisions want to provide it, they will.

Mr. Plohman: I have a lot of them, but I am just saying to the minister that he is using this information because he has access. He has obviously had all of the audited statements. Therefore, his staff can glean through and pick out the surpluses for every single school division. We received a list without the names of the division, so we know that the minister has it, obviously.

It is a question of whom it can be shared with, and if it is something that has to be made public by individual divisions upon request to ratepayers or whomever, the minister has corrected himself and said that they have to be made public, why then can the minister not make it public? Is he so concerned about offending the school divisions? If he is, I find that rather odd.

He is not afraid to limit their amount that they can raise locally by Bill 16 or to impose other conditions, all kinds of conditions, on school divisions, but suddenly he is respecting their turf with regard to this information which he says is public information.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it is a matter of protocol; the member knows fully well. It is like the member or anybody giving me financial information which is privileged to me and saying that it is public. The tax department which has privileged information does not have the right to make it public. They do if the owner of that information says they can make it public, and to this point in time, we have not received that blessing from all of the school boards, so it is not our information to release. Yes, we have access to it; yes, we have based policy on it, and I would think that a request to the Manitoba Association of School Trustees may allow it to be provided to any individual of the public in a collected fashion.

Mr. Plohman: Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister says he does not have that clearance from all divisions. Does he have that clearance from—has he requested it and has he received it from some divisions?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we have never formally requested it. We sense that certainly some divisions would have no problem with us making it available, but we have not formally requested it because, again, it is part of their financial records, of their financial statement.

Mr. Plohman: And the minister's use of that information in his announcement of the school financing, he did not consider that a breach of that privilege in any way by using it as a public relations statement to justify his funding levels, talking about it in global terms albeit, but certainly referencing the level. Is that not in some way a violation of that trust and ethics and protocol?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we gave that information to the member last year. We will give that global information to the member this year. It is global. It cannot be identified with any school division. No division can take ownership of

any share of it unless they want to, public ownership I am talking.

Mr. Plohman: Well, I thank the minister for that, but at the same time, he has used that information even to categorize those divisions on the loss side, those on the gains, and by far and away the majority of the surpluses were on those divisions that had a loss this year. It does not provide a level playing field for all parties interested in this debate when the minister makes those kinds of references but does not share the information.

He is using it quite loosely wherever it suits his fancy or suits his case, but he does not want to provide it where it may be used against him in debate, and I think it is a simple case of that rather than—and hiding behind the fact or the allegation that this is somehow privileged information.

Would the minister be amenable to asking the MAST to provide that information, or if they would be willing to provide that information to the committee in the Legislature, or have any difficulty in agreeing to that?

Mr. Manness: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member could ask for it directly himself of MAST, and if he does, I am prepared to lend support to his request if that is what he is asking.

Mr. Plohman: Okay, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I wanted to ask the minister just a general statement about the justification—I talked earlier about the '91 levels that some school divisions were at now in terms of funding, perhaps even rolled back beyond that. Some school divisions, for two years running, have had losses or cuts of funding of 5 percent each year; that would make it 10 percent in two years, some larger than that even. Certainly 8 percent is quite normal for some of the divisions that have had a reduction in funding.

So they are clearly back at '91-92 levels or even perhaps '90-91 levels of funding. How he can justify that kind of reduction to those school divisions when he has in fact maintained and increased the funding for, in particular, private elite schools such as St. John's-Ravenscourt and Balmoral Hall which are not religious schools and yet have received increases, maintained in terms of per pupil ratio with the province, we understand.

The minister can confirm that is the case over the last two years or whether in fact they have increased in relationship to the public school system.

* (2350)

In terms of total dollars, 12 percent last year, another 8 percent this year, how he can justify that as being fair and equitable because he has in fact said that this was the fairest, most equitable decision that he could come up with this year.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, my comments on this issue are fully on the record. They have been many times. I will not be drawn into the debate by the member to try and set aside out of the total independent schools a number count of some 52 independent schools. The member and, of course, NDP want to focus on two of those 52 for their own political purposes.

I would, again, for the record indicate there is historical perspective for the support of the vast majority of independent schools, and that as a government we have no alternative but to provide greater levels of funding. Have agreed to it as a matter of policy, did so several years ago, and originally had committed that by the year '97-98 there would be, after an eight-year period, 80 percent support as to supportable expenditures which, when one takes into account all the other expenditures including capital, probably is a figure closer to 60 percent on a per capita basis.

So the government is record as having signed that agreement. There is nothing new under the sun. That was explained fully by both of my predecessors and fully provided to the public when they chose to support this government coming in to govern. So that is part of the record. It has been stated many, many, many times, and I say because of some significant discussion around the whole issue and because there have been a lot of trade offs one way or the other we are far behind. We are almost two years behind that agreed upon schedule. So the level of funding this year in support of independent schools is much lower than it would have been under normal circumstances.

I point out to the member, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, who likes to forget about the

magnitude or put into perspective what we are talking about, today we are looking at support to schools as one vote item, an amount totaling \$623 million. One can add to that another \$200 million coming through the education support levy that is not factored into any of our accounts as shown as additional support. So what we are talking about basically are two lines which add up to, when one looks purely to support of schools and factors out Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund and some of the other areas, \$750 million that this provincial government directs to the support of public schools, and now a total, I believe, of roughly \$24 million that is directed towards support of independent schools.

Now, if the member wants to try to continue to make it appear as if the public schools are significantly losing as a result of an additional million and a half or \$2 million dollars going into the independent school system, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, he is obviously going—for his political gain, he is going to try to make that point. I would suggest that there are other changes that we have to contemplate within the public school system that are more meaningful, and we talked about them the other day when we discussed the whole issue of education reform.

Mr. Plohman: Yes, well, the minister makes light of the amount of money that is going to private schools, \$24 million, and that has pretty well tripled—[interjection] Well, he seems to make light of it in terms of comparing it in relationship to the overall money going into public schools, into the public school system of Manitoba, that this really is not that significant and that I should not be quibbling about that.

Does the minister make any distinction between, in his policy, in his mind, because he is honouring an agreement that previous ministers—he was a member of the government that signed the agreement, but previous ministers signed—any distinction between those which are Catholic schools and the traditional funding or the historical obligation and those that are not, and in particular those that are not even based on a particular religious basis. That is why I mentioned St. John's-Ravenscourt and Balmoral Hall. Does he

find the same arguments would apply for agreeing to fund all of those schools, or does it make sense in his mind to break that out of it in terms of the different kinds of schools in terms of policy?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, hindsight may be perfect, but the reality is, who presented themselves as the representative of the Catholic schools? The Manitoba Federation of Independent Schools. I say to the member that the independent schools, Catholic in majority, decided amongst themselves that a fair tradeoff to all independent schools would be the decreased demand by the Catholic system to 80 percent funding rather than 100 percent funding, as they could probably win in the courts.

That was a trade-off made within the independent school movement, and it was not for the government to try and split that apart, because in reality we had no choice. The Catholic school board came in under the umbrella of the Manitoba Federation of Independent Schools. They chose the instrument on which they wanted to negotiate, and that was done long before we came to government. The Federation of Independent Schools was the same organization that dealt with the NDP government previous to us, at the same time that that government was increasing funding, before we came into government. So nothing has changed since we have been in government.

Mr. Plohman: Nothing has changed except a lot of money, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, and we are talking here another \$16 million. Perhaps the minister could go back through from 1988 to 1994, but he will probably resist that unless it would demonstrate something positive for him politically.

Otherwise, I would like to have a printout which would show the increasing level of support from '88 right through to 1994 by year. It would be interesting to see where the private schools also were in 1991, if we are looking at a lot of these school divisions being rolled back to 1991 and the minister saying the provincial revenue is at 1991 levels and therefore can justify it; where they were in 1991, and if they were to be rolled back to 1991 levels, how many dollars the minister would have

to give to special needs kids in this province and so on. I would like to get that, Mr. Deputy Chairperson.

We only have another minute. I just wanted to add a couple of other things, ask the minister for a couple of other pieces of information. In addition to that, the special needs funding that is now flowing to the private schools on a per-school basis, could the minister give us that information? He has done that for each school division, the total special needs, I believe for Level I, if we could get that also for the private schools, as envisioned or as practised last year, as was the evidence in last year or as it is projected this year.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we will try and provide that information. Certainly we will be able to provide historical support to independent schools on a per-capita basis. One has to take into account the increasing enrollments, and so we will do this on a per-capita basis. We will try and provide some historical perspective.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The hour being twelve o'clock, what is the will of the committee? Committee rise.

FAMILY SERVICES

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 Family Services. We are on item 1.(e)(3), page 57 of the Estimates manual.

Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

Item 1.(e)(3) Human Resource Services.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Chairperson, the line that you referred to is the one that we have not passed yet. We were actually on 1.(e)(5).

Now that the other critic is here maybe we will give her a chance if she has any questions on lines 1.(e)(3) and 1.(e)(4). If not, I am prepared to pass those two. We will give the other critic an opportunity.

Madam Chairperson: I thank the honourable member for Burrows for that gentle reminder.

Ms. Norma McCormick (Osborne): I had some questions around the Information Systems.

I understand that there have been some secondments from some of the agencies working on this computer system. I am just wondering how close to completion the project is.

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Madam Chairperson, we did go through this this afternoon. I will just repeat it, because I know you would like to hear that there are 270 personal computer work stations throughout the province. Over 300 caseworkers have been trained in the use of the system. The majority of the field staff in 26 offices have received their initial training and are beginning to enter new cases into the system. It is expected that the Winnipeg agencies will begin to input their data onto the system in September '94 to begin implementation, with full implementation expected by December of 1994.

Ms. McCormick: I apologize for having had to go away for half an hour this afternoon. It appears then that it is fairly well on track for completion.

What kinds of data will be shared agency to agency? Can you give me some information about the kind? Is it top-line data, basically identifying data, or is there going to be a possibility of sharing other more detailed case records between the agencies?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, my understanding is that case histories will be able to be shared from one agency to another so when children are transferred they will not fall through the cracks. If there is any more information you would like, I can ask more specific questions of staff.

Ms. McCormick: When this project was first conceived, I think there was some belief that it was only going to be just what is called top-line data, but now there is an ability to share, for example, placement histories of children or a situation, for example, where a child is claiming resources from one region or agency and still has family or connections back in another.

Are those kind of linkages going to be possible with this computer system?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, my understanding is that information will be available.

Madam Chairperson: Item 1.(e) Management Services (3) Human Resource Services (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$803,300—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$108,800—pass.

1.(e)(4) Information Systems (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,138,300—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$138,000—pass.

1.(e)(5) Policy and Planning.

Mr. Martindale: Madam Chairperson, I would like to continue my questions regarding Policy and Planning.

The minister has talked quite extensively about the new initiatives in her department, and we are looking forward to getting into those in more detail later. There are some things that this minister or her staff could be doing with existing programs that would actually meet the goals that the minister has talked about for things like the solo parent project and her philosophy or her department's philosophy that she has already enunciated—I am sorry, I do not have the words right in front of me—but has to do with moving from dependency to independence, et cetera. That is some of the language that the minister uses.

One area that the minister could explore, and actually I would like to ask if Policy and Planning has explored, is in making improvements to the work incentive. We know, from the minister's Annual Report, that about 14 percent of recipients make use of the existing work incentive program. Most of those, I understand, are plugged in at the 30 percent of gross earnings. There are three different categories under work incentive, and that is one of them.

Has Policy and Planning looked at improving the work incentive, for example, allowing people to keep 50 percent of gross earnings rather than 30 percent? Whenever you allow them to keep more money of their earnings, that means that the supplement from the government is less. I would

like to know if Policy and Planning has looked at that.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, these are issues that I have some concern with. Let me tell you where I am coming from. I think that if someone is on welfare and trying to get off the welfare rolls, social assistance, in fact, the message we should send to them is that they can keep all of what they earn, and we will provide support up to X number of dollars. I think it is wrong to say that you can keep 30 percent of what you earn, and we will claw back 70 percent.

The issue here is CAP cost-sharing, as the federal government, under regulations today, only allows for 25 percent of income to be CAP cost-shared. Many of the provinces only have 25 percent. In Manitoba we are grandfathered at 30 percent, so we have an extra advantage over some other provinces, but those discussions have been ongoing. It was an issue that was raised with Ottawa. We would like to see some changes on that side, and that is something that Policy and Planning has been working on.

To date, we do not have any indication from the federal government, and with their major social safety net reform, we have no idea of knowing what direction they might take into the future. I think everything is up for review. To date, we have no understanding of what direction they might be taking, but I honestly believe that it is the wrong message to send out, to say that if you work, you will only keep 30 percent of what you earn, and the other 70 percent will have to be clawed back.

* (2010)

Mr. Martindale: I would certainly agree with the minister that if people's income was sufficient that it is much better to have them keeping 100 percent of their earnings. I have no quarrel with that.

What has Policy and Planning or what has this minister proposed to the minister of human services? Have you taken the initiative on Manitoba proposals, or are you waiting for the federal government white paper?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, I am sorry. I was otherwise engaged. I might ask if you could repeat the question.

Mr. Martindale: We will not put the member's name on the record.

I was asking the minister if her department has made proposals to the federal Minister of Human Resources about what Manitoba would like to see in terms of social policy changes, or are you waiting for the minister's white paper to respond to it?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, we have looked at different options internally, and we have had discussions. Exactly what we might formally propose as our projects under the strategic initiatives fund that the federal government has in place will be put forward in the near future, but to date we have not.

We have had broad discussions around issues of, you know, should we be able to find employment opportunities for welfare recipients, would Ottawa be amenable to changing CAP cost-sharing from social assistance to in fact employment wages. We have asked that question. To date I do not think we have a definite answer on what they might be prepared to do. If we are using the dollars for welfare anyway, is there an ability to CAP cost-share if we should be able to find employment, community service opportunities for welfare recipients? We have not had as yet a positive response to that.

Those are questions we have asked.

Mr. Martindale: The minister says that she will be putting forward proposals in the near future. Will that be to the federal minister or will it be publicly revealing what your proposals are? Could you expand on what you said, please?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, traditionally I think what happens is that if there are any negotiations between different levels of government—when I look back to the infrastructure program we looked ahead to what we thought might have been announced last year and it is still ongoing, the new urban development agreement. Usually the negotiations are done between officials at the political level, and once the determination is made what the program is going to look like, that kind of an announcement is made.

Always in negotiations there is some give and take. I think that is the traditional way that things happen. I would imagine that as we move ahead with proposals on pilots there would be initial discussions and then ultimately, with both parties agreeing, there would be an announcement made.

Mr. Martindale: Well, we look forward to those announcements. Of course we would prefer that we could find out what the minister's thinking is beforehand. I guess we will in some areas like the sole-parent project but not in many other areas.

It appears to me—and I said this before, but I think it bears repeating, that there are many areas that this minister could move on. You could improve existing programs. You could do things, you could expand existing programs and services, but instead, what I see as this minister's and this government's idea of social policy reform is to make cuts in certain areas, like closing two Human Resources Opportunity Centres and incremental cuts to social assistance benefits, which happened last year and this year, cuts to child care funding. Then this same minister, or the same government, turns around and announces supposedly new things and supposedly new money. In fact, when we get to the line with the \$3 million, I will be asking the minister, you know, where this money is coming from and if it is not reallocated.

Is it the plan of this minister to cost-share all of the new proposals, or are there any initiatives that this minister is taking which are only funded by the Province of Manitoba?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, I listened with interest to the comments and the rhetoric that I have heard many times in this House before, especially from the New Democratic opposition, where, you know, they have all kinds of ideas and suggestions without any detail or any substance to them, indicating that things could be done in different ways. I guess I might ask a very simple, basic question as how, and how within the resources that we have available to us, do we change things? Where would the money come from, or how much more would you tax Manitobans to put in place the kinds of programs or changes that are being talked about?

I really question it. It is the same old thing, critical, and I listened to the opening statements of my honourable friend in the New Democratic opposition, and it was the negative naysayer, doom-and-gloom scenario that we hear very often from that side, with absolutely no credit given to any new innovative or creative way of thinking, I might say, not only by our administration in Manitoba. I see and I sense a real desire by other provinces that might even be governed by New Democratic parties across this country that are understanding the economic reality that there is no new money, unless we want to tax our citizens more and more.

There comes a point in time when we have to change or refocus the way we do things, and that time has come. Sometimes in difficult economic times that does cause governments and citizens of our provinces and countries to think about creative new ways of doing things.

I have said many times that in the past, through the '60s and the '70s, especially in the '70s, when times were great and the average annual income increased by about 13 percent and governments had all kinds of new money, they were able to just put and add on new programs on top of old without having to really evaluate or measure what those programs were doing. That continued on through the '80s, although the average annual income grew only about 7.9 percent, I think, in the '80s, but there was still more money there and governments had additional revenues.

I remember when we first came into government back in 1988, all government departments saw an increase in expenditures. There were still tax dollars available, and it was not whether you got an increase or not but was how much and what new programs would you put in place to spend the new dollars that were being appropriated to government departments. The Department of Culture, I think, even got a 5 percent increase back in those days.

The reality is that all expectations are that through the '90s, if we hit 3 percent in increase we will be lucky. We certainly have not hit it yet into the '90s. So we are going to have to look at

spending what we have more wisely. I would love to open the debate and ask my honourable friend across the way what he would do differently and where would he take money from to put into some of the things he talks about, new ways of doing things. The reality is that there is not any government across this country that is going to find more money for new programs unless they evaluate and get rid of the old programs that were put in place 20 years ago, that are no longer meeting the needs of the 1990s. Things have changed; things have changed dramatically.

So I cannot remember what the exact direct question was, but I just thought that I had to put those comments on the record because that is reality. That is the way things are today. I know my honourable friend would have great difficulty if he were in government having to sit around a cabinet table and try to make decisions and set priorities with no new dollars. Maybe the NDP solution would be to raise taxes and tax Manitobans more. [interjection] That did happen in the past, yes. That might be their solution.

* (2020)

I think we see the federal Liberals having to come to grips with overexpenditures. We all know that we have to live within our means today. I would be interested in hearing how my friend opposite runs his household. I know that we try in our household to pay the bills off every month and not let the debt accumulate. Governments, in the past, have never done that, and I think reality has hit and we are going to have to look at how we can come to grips with increasing debt costs and no resources, no additional resources.

I will leave it at that at this point and get into specifics if there are specific questions.

Mr. Martindale: Madam Chairperson, that speech sounded very familiar. I think I heard it last year in Family Services Estimates.

In response, I did suggest an area that I think would save government money, but I guess we will have to agree to disagree on that.

I am wondering if the minister has Orders-in-Council or if her staff have Orders-in-Council with them tonight. I have a question on No.

880/1993, which is dated December 1. If not, I can show it to the staff and maybe ask a question tomorrow.

Mrs. Mitchelson: What was the number?

Mr. Martindale: It is No. 880/1993, and it is dated December 1, 1993. It has to do with the change in the Canada Assistance Plan act. I will give the staff a chance to look it up and bring it back tomorrow.

Mrs. Mitchelson: We will get the information by tomorrow for you on that.

Ms. McCormick: I would like to pick up on the member for Burrows' question with respect to the plan for co-ordinating with the initiatives of the federal government. You have indicated that you—at least I think I heard you say you would take a wait-and-see attitude with respect to some of the federal government initiatives. I am wondering again whether there is a possibility of doing some kind of joint consultation process in Manitoba.

For example, in early May, the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg held a day-long consultation with respect to some of the federal initiatives. It became very clear in that forum that federal and provincial social policy directions are inextricably tied, that whatever kinds of decisions are made at the federal level they are going to have a profound impact on provincial government program development.

I would like to again ask a question that I posed earlier. Is there any strategy or any thought being given to holding some kind of joint consultation process in Manitoba? There are three other jurisdictions we understand who have embarked on this kind of initiative with the federal government. It seems to me that as we are going through this process of analyzing what kinds of impacts federal government initiatives are going to have that you might, we all might benefit from some kind of prior consultation with respect to revisions.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, I think we have entered into an extremely co-operative process with the federal government around our pilot projects for single mothers. That is an area that I have placed some emphasis or a focus on in

the department. It seems like the federal Minister of Human Resources, Lloyd Axworthy, has a sensitivity toward the issues.

Some of the stats and the information that we have in Manitoba lead me to believe that it is an area that we have to focus some energies and efforts on, when we know that we have the highest number of adolescent moms per capita across the country. We know that over half of our single mothers are on social assistance.

We know most of those between the ages of 18 and 20 are on social assistance, and over 55 percent of our single moms were adolescent mothers. A great percentage of them do not have a high school education. We do know they are also six times more likely to have need of access to the child welfare system. Those are devastating issues that we have to deal with as a province.

So I think there is a willingness by both Ottawa and ourselves to look at the issues and try to find some new ways of doing things. We have been through a very extensive consultation process, both at the federal and provincial level, with joint working groups that have travelled the province up to Thompson, to Brandon, into Portage la Prairie and in Winnipeg, where we have met with clients and interviewed them, both levels of government together, clients, service providers, agencies, volunteer community in the private sector. I have been extensively involved in those consultations up to Thompson and to Brandon also.

What we are hearing is that there are some disincentives in the system today. There are some things, maybe some minor changes that could be made, that do not necessarily cost more money but might be more user friendly, if I can put it that way. So in that area, we have had consultation. I think those are some of the areas where we think that we could attempt to make some major reform.

As far as our single employable clientele goals, which is the municipal caseload, the reality is there have to be some jobs there, there have to be maybe some community service opportunities. We talked about that earlier. I am very supportive of some sort of work for welfare and strong encouragement that it is important. I think people feel better about

themselves if they are productive in some way and if they feel like they are contributing in some way.

Those are some of the issues that I discussed earlier with the NDP critic, about whether in fact—I mean, we have asked the question. I think we know the kinds of things that we are looking at in Manitoba. We need to know from the federal government whether they are prepared to CAP cost-share, if we should go to salary dollars rather than welfare dollars. Those are the kinds of questions we have been asking.

I think around our single moms, we will be looking at pilots. I think there will be some consensus, both at the federal and provincial level, that we have done our consultations and that there is a direction that we can head to. I am hoping that will happen, because both levels of government have been involved.

On the bigger reform issue, I think the federal government is going to have to lay out some sort of a plan. We did ask for that as provincial ministers several months ago in Ottawa. We asked for sort of a preliminary plan anyway, so we had some basis to go out to our communities and find out what people are thinking. I think we are still premature with that. I would like to see what the federal government comes forward with. Not that I am sitting back, because we have not sat back. We have been out there, consulting and working with Manitobans, asking the private sector and the business leaders where the job opportunities are into the future.

* (2030)

We know that call centres are becoming very popular in Manitoba. Can we develop some sort of a Welfare to Work initiative in some of those areas? So, you know, what we need to know first of all from the business community is, where are the jobs going to be into the future? What is the federal government prepared to share? That is what I would hope would be in their draft paper for discussion. We have asked those questions. Those are some of the things we would like to see, and to date, we have not had any response. So I think it is really important that we get a sense of where they

are coming from first, before we look at what kind of a consultation.

We had specific areas that we wanted to focus on with single moms and pilots, and that is why we were able to go out and do a joint process of consultation. We knew where we wanted to focus. At this point in time, I am not sure on the major reform what the federal government's thoughts are. I would like to see something in a preliminary form at least, some sort of a draft, before we look at any further consultation.

Ms. McCormick: I would not dispute at all that there has been broad-based consultation at the project level, but when I hear you talking about the issues around CAP cost-sharing and how much a person earning should be allowed to keep and what would suit in a redevelopment of a Manitoba approach, it seems to me that beyond the representation of individuals who are the recipients of these programs and people who are in government, at both the federal and the provincial levels, there are a number of skilled and talented individuals in this province who have a long history with income security programs and have a wealth of knowledge that could be tapped.

I guess I am a little concerned about us saying, we have to see what they want to do, before we offer comment. I think, I guess I am a little bit concerned about the possibility that this will be one more area in which we lose the opportunity to do it right to everybody's satisfaction. Then we simply do more of the fodbashing type of activity: Well, gee, we cannot do anything in Manitoba, because they decided this.

I do know that there are other provinces who are embarking on joint consultation. I hear you saying that it is premature for that. I do wonder if there is not at least some forum in which preliminary consultation could go on in this province in addition to that which was pulled together by the Social Planning Council.

Is there any possibility that you might go out for public consultation among, for example, the human services community not in government, the academic community and other people who may have something to say?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, I am not saying it is premature to consult, because we have done a major amount of consulting throughout Manitoba over the last couple of months. Although I did indicate that it is focused on single parents, I think some of the other issues were raised and discussed.

I am not sure what another round of consultations would do at this point in time. I think what we have is enough information from the consultations that we have done to develop some pilot projects that will try to get people off of welfare and into the workforce or into meaningful training of some sort. We can work on that.

I said earlier, we are not in the situation we are in today as a result of an overnight process. This has been a long time coming, many, many years, and we are not going to reverse things or turn them around dramatically overnight. What we have to do is start small, evaluate. I think that is extremely important, evaluate, measure outcomes. If we have a small pilot that is working well and we see a visible difference, then we can expand upon that.

It is unrealistic to think that we are going to put everyone back to work or into the workforce overnight. What we have to do is try and match skills to job opportunities where there are no job opportunities, try to determine what the training will need to be for the future, and work in that direction.

There is no easy answer. We have been out. We have met with 300 single parent clients, 300 service providers, 100 staff internal to government and agencies, 100 private sector business leaders, 100 community volunteer groups, 100 individuals in the aboriginal community, some in the women's community. We have done a fairly major consultation process at this point. I think what we need to do is concentrate our efforts now on developing some pilots that might work, that we think could work as a result of what we have heard, and on the bigger reform picture still await some sense of where the federal government might come from, prepared to work with them at that point.

Let us see that draft, let us then take that out to the public. But to go out just to consult for the sake

of consulting without anything concrete, I am not sure whether we would hear much more than what we have heard to date, knowing that there are disincentives in the system, knowing that we need to know where the jobs are going to be into the future, knowing what kind of training might work. I do not think any longer we have the luxury of training people for the sake of training without having something at the end of that training opportunity.

I guess I am a little frustrated in that we have talked to a lot of Manitobans. We can move in one direction at this point. I still think that we need to see the bigger picture. Ultimately, we know there is only one taxpayer. Whether you are paying federal, provincial or municipal taxes, it all comes out of the same pocket ultimately.

If we are not working together in trying to find the most efficient and effective ways to deliver service and serve the people that we represent, bashing is not really going to solve the problem.

In the past, unilaterally there have been decisions made. We know that the federal government, from time to time, the Conservative federal government when we were in power made some changes that impacted dramatically what happens in Manitoba on the services to aboriginals off reserve.

In the past where they provided 100 percent funding, they reduced that to 50 percent unilaterally. It would not have mattered how much consultation we had done along with the federal government; I think we would not have reversed their decision.

We are seeing costs of \$25 million per year and rising as a result of the services that we have had to pick up as a result of a change in federal policy. So those things do happen.

The changes to UI that the federal government made just recently will have an impact possibly on our welfare rolls. UI is 100 percent federally funded, social assistance is 50-50, so it will have an impact to some degree on costs, and we have some concerns about that.

We need some detail. We need to know what direction the federal government wants to take,

what they are looking at, and then we would be prepared to go out on a consultative process with them, once we know what direction they are heading.

Ms. McCormick: Madam Chairperson, what I am trying to get to here is whether there is any possibility of hedging against there being a unilateral decision.

You have used, as the example, the Unemployment Insurance changes and that, of course, was done on the hope that it would create more employment and, in fact, that would have a positive impact on the provincial scene.

It seems to me that in saying that there is only one taxpayer, while I agree with that, I think that when you look at the potential of a revenue or of support for people from a variety of programs—we have Canada Pension disability, we have Unemployment Insurance, we have Workers Compensation, we have Income Security programs at the provincial and the municipal levels—there is, I think, an opportunity not to be missed to look at ways of co-ordinating all of these things and whether or not we should, for example, be taking a drop-down approach. You start with this one and then you wind up in this one, which is one approach that could be taken.

I do think, though, that we should look to the other jurisdictions where they are launching consultations, joint consultation. We should be determining whether—and I am not disputing that your consultation at the provincial or at the project level has been extensive. You have done, I think, quite an extensive consultation. We still, I think, are missing this element of policy consultation about what would work.

* (2040)

I am just wondering, within your framework, as you are proposing it, once the federal consultation process releases the paper in the fall, would you see then there being some kind of Manitoba response? What do you anticipate being Manitoba's position, or how even would you be arriving at Manitoba's position once the federal government does give you its clear intention of its direction?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, I guess my first meeting with the federal minister was back February, February 14, when the provinces and the federal government got together. At that point in time, we were told, I think, by the end of March, that there would be a paper presented and the ministers would be getting back together around mid-April.

Well, there was a delay for some reason or other, it was a federal delay, and the paper did not arrive at the end of March. The ministers' meeting was cancelled mid-April. Now we are almost at the end of May, and my understanding is that things are being even further delayed.

I am not so sure whether the federal government was not just a little premature or a little overanxious to move a little too quickly. I think there has been a bit of backlash as a result. Maybe they are just slowing down a little bit.

My understanding is that when a paper does come out, my sense is that the federal government does want to share something with the provinces, and it keeps being delayed, for whatever reason I do not know. We would like to see a draft paper. That is something that is supposed to be shared with the provinces.

What form that paper will take, I do not know, and when it will arrive, I am not sure. At that point in time, it would be interesting to see exactly how it is laid out. Is it going to be several different options for discussion purposes? Are they going to put forward preferred options that they might like to see? How extensive are the options, or what are the range of options? You know, sort of some lead and dialogue around discussion.

I think it is important that we get that first before we look at a consultation process that really does not have any meat or substance to it.

Ms. McCormick: Do you have any preferred approach that you would like to see the federal government take? Would you prefer them to do it on a sort of extrapolated model approach or would you prefer it to be a more theoretical, philosophical piece that you then get to respond to?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I guess it is a very ambitious undertaking that the federal government has

embarked upon. I am not quite sure whether they are planning radical change or what they are really planning to do. I indicated the last time the ministers were together that we see dollars being refocused at the federal level around strategic initiatives.

I think there was a consensus among the provinces that not every province should duplicate exactly what another province is doing. I mean, our demographics are different, our size is different. We all have unique problems, as I indicated. Single moms were a priority because we have a growing number in Manitoba, and we have the highest number per capita. So it makes sense that Manitoba does something specific and pilots something.

I guess I question whether major reform can take place and a federal government can arbitrarily or even in conjunction with provinces at this point in time put in place a new system that is going to work. I think what we have to do is test, through pilot initiatives, different models in different places and then look at what is working and what is not and expand upon what is working.

I do not think there can be a major overhaul or a major reform announced in very short order that is really going to have a major impact. So my suggestion was, and I think most ministers did suggest that we take a look province by province, and what makes sense in our province should be piloted here in our province.

We should all agree that we need to evaluate and measure outcomes and see what success we are having. Those pilots that work can be expanded upon and those that do not work will have to be discontinued and new ideas tried—no easy answer, no easy solution.

Ms. McCormick: I guess I am harkening back to your own opening statement when we began this Estimates process today. I concurred with what you had to say, that it is time to examine the old ways of doing things and to put in place some new approaches. Yet what is interesting to me as people critique the federal government process is that, for want of a better word I am going to call it sandbagging, of it is coming both from the left and

from the right, and yet if we are ever going to do it, it seems that we have to do it now.

Given that the federal-provincial cost-sharing agreements which do determine a lot of provincial initiatives, do you see that what we currently have in place as the cost-sharing agreements through the Canada Assistance Plan are at this point in time adequate to do the kinds of things you want to test out, or are there going to be necessary changes to the cost-sharing structure in order to put these pilot projects in place?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I guess we have already discussed a couple of areas where we think there needs to be more flexibility in the cost-sharing arrangements, and that is on the cost-sharing for wages rather than just for social assistance. You know the work incentive, it is 30 percent in Manitoba, but I indicated, in some provinces, it is only 25 percent of the wage that can be CAP cost-shared. So those are areas where we believe there needs to be more flexibility.

I am not sure whether it can be done under the present formula or the present plan, but those are questions that we have asked. We are not sure, and there seems to be some uncertainty around the whole question of cost-sharing into the future. We have yet to determine or hear from the federal government exactly what might happen to the Canada Assistance Plan and what forms of support there might be available for provinces.

There are some pretty definite answers needed around that. What is their vision? What kind of support do they believe they need to provide to provinces? We have not got any of those answers, and we do not know really what they are thinking at this point in time, so it would be interesting to know that.

* (2050)

Ms. McCormick: So that I can clearly understand then, you are saying that the pilot projects as you are conceiving them now cannot be implemented without there being some either revision to or temporary suspension of the current cost-sharing agreements between Canada and Manitoba.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, by the current interpretation, I guess, of the Canada

Assistance Plan there is not enough flexibility to look at changes and refocusing the way we do things. I talked about wage cost-sharing, and that at the present time is not allowable unless they can find a way around. It is not flexible enough at this point, by interpretation anyway, to do a wage cost-sharing through CAP.

Ms. McCormick: Madam Chairperson, well, this is leaving me wondering why the pilot project approach is the right one then if we cannot do it without alteration to federal-provincial cost-sharing agreements. How does it make sense to go into pilot projects as a way of determining what works and what does not when in fact we are kind of putting the cart before the horse? It seems that maybe some of these broader systemic issues which could be part of the decisions around how the system fits together at the federal and provincial levels should be addressed first before we go into pilot projects.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, and that is exactly the reason the federal government announced that they wanted to enter into pilot projects with provinces, and they would take dollars that they have put into a Strategic Initiatives Fund that would in fact test other ways of cost-sharing. So the money has been set aside. It is not in under CAP, but it is in Strategic Initiatives, and they have planned to cost-share, I believe mostly on a 50-50 basis, pilot projects, proposals that come forward from provinces, new ways of doing things. In that respect we can get around the inflexibility of the CAP system through the new Strategic Initiatives Fund and cost-share pilot projects that might be a model that could be used when we rework the cost-sharing formula into the future.

That was their idea at the federal level. They wanted to try or test certain initiatives in different provinces right across the country.

Ms. McCormick: So then I understand that these pilot projects are to be considered to be Strategic Initiatives, and where their success warrants their continuation that the cost-sharing agreements would then have to be renegotiated to accommodate them. I understand then, given that

the single parent initiative is going to—I presume, if it is oriented to getting single parents back into the workforce—rely heavily on some kind of child care provisions, is it your plan to have the child care component of the single parent initiative delivered through Manitoba's own child care program, or is it your intention for there to be something additional or supplementary or integral to the single parent program which will cover off these child care needs?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, I think in our discussions and dialogues and consultations that child care has been an issue that has been raised over and over again. I do not think that you can look at opportunities without looking at some form of child care. I think it would be absolutely ideal if we could get some single parents to appoint where they might be able to parent well enough to look after someone else's child for maybe a half day of training. Those are all kinds of things that have been tossed out. Maybe one single mom could train or work or whatever in the morning, and you could do a part-time training opportunity and part-time looking after someone else's child. I mean, that is an option that I think we need to take a look at.

We have met with the community and I have to say there has been some very positive feedback from the service community, from the church community that I have met with, that had told me that in the past, governments have indicated, and I guess that was when governments had lots of resources and all kinds of money and all kinds of new programs, had almost pushed the volunteer community off to the side and said, this is our role as government, we will provide these services.

They felt like they have been shunned to some degree, and they have felt that they want to be a part of the solution. They told me quite clearly that they want to hear where the pressure points are, what are the needs, how can we augment the supports around single moms. Tell us where those pressure points are and we will come up with some creative solutions on how we can work with you in partnership to try to provide some of the services. So there may be opportunity out there for new

ways of developing partnerships with the volunteer community.

I have had some stay-at-home moms, and I know there are not a lot of those around today, but I do know I have some in my community that have stayed home and their youngest children are now in school full time, and they seem to feel that they want to be a part of helping to find a solution. A couple have said to me, we would love to have a single mom and a baby in our home. I would love to be able to teach a young mother how to parent, how to cook, how to provide supports. I would want to be a mentor to that young mother. I think, hey, is this not an opportunity, when you have someone who is willing to do that and not prepared at this point in time in her life to enter the workforce or maybe does not need to or has chosen to want to be there before and after school because she has the ability to do that?

I know not every woman can do that, but is there not an opportunity to try to match a stay-at-home mother with a young single parent, an adolescent mom, or an older mother even, that needs some support system around her. I have had church congregations say that they might like to be, you know, the mentoring support, the foster support, so to speak, around a few single moms. I think those are really creative and innovative ways of looking at things, and I am not sure at this point in time what will work.

I think it is very important that we try to assess the individual needs. You know, we have talked much about systems today and whether the system is doing the right thing or the system is not doing the right thing, but we are dealing with individuals and people. Each one of them is different, and each one has specific individual needs. Until we get to an assessment and look at a holistic approach—and it is not only the single mother that we have to worry about, but it is the children of that single mother that are so extremely important in the whole overall picture. You cannot deal with one in isolation of the other. You have got to try to find an approach that is going to work best in that circumstance for that individual, no matter where they are at in their developmental stage.

There are very difficult issues to deal with, with the young adolescent moms, and we are seeing a lot today that are 13-, 14-, 15-year-olds having babies and keeping babies. You know, when I have talked out there to the public health nurses that are basically the front-line deliverers—because we know that women, when they have their babies, are only in the hospital for 24 to 48 hours, and then they are out. The first contact very often in the community is the public health nurse. Public health nurses have grave concerns about, you know, the parenting abilities and the supports that are in place in some instances for these young adolescent moms.

* (2100)

Then you move to those that are a little older that are on the welfare rolls at 18 and 20 with still the message, because we still have a policy in place that says we will provide welfare supports until your youngest child turns 18, and then we expect someone at 45 or 50 to go out and get a job, with no self-esteem, no training, no ability to enter the workforce and wonder why they cannot make a go of it. So it is not my preferred option, career option, for women. I think we have got to change the way we look at things. We have got to change the message that we send out, and we also have to realize today that governments alone cannot do it all. We do not have all of the answers. If we had the answers, we would not be in the situation we are in today, spending more and more money and seeing more and more problems. So we really do have to look at different ways of doing things, and we have to involve the whole community, right from the grassroots community up to those who are providing the opportunity for employment.

Ms. McCormick: So I am hearing from all of this that the answer to my question is no, that you do not plan to turn to your own provincial child daycare program for the major amount of support for the daycare component of a single-parent initiative.

Mrs. Mitchelson: No, I did not say that. I said that we are going to have to look at all kinds of options and opportunities, I think. I was just out at the

MCCA's annual meeting, and we have changed and focused on early childhood educators.

I think there is a major role for early childhood educators to play throughout the system, whether it be, you know, in the formalized child care system or whether it be in other opportunities, as we look to refocusing and shifting our emphasis toward early intervention and early child development. I think there is a major role for our early childhood educators to play in the whole process.

Madam Chairperson: 9.1 1.(e)(5) Policy and Planning (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$819,100—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$323,100—pass.

1.(e)(6) Residential Care Licensing.

Mr. Martindale: I would like to ask the minister if this would be an appropriate place to ask a couple of questions about Chalet Malouin in St. Malo?

I did write a letter to the minister, and I got a reply on April 7, for which I thank the minister. I am wondering if all the concerns of the staff there and the family members of the residents have been taken care of, or whether there are still some ongoing concerns that people in the community and the facility have, or if there are any ongoing concerns that the minister has.

Mrs. Mitchelson: First of all, I would like to indicate that I have received several letters from families of parents, I guess, who are in Chalet Malouin, who have expressed their complete confidence in the facility and the ability of that facility to look after their aging parents.

I think we have to understand what residential care is and know that what we do, through the Department of Family Services, is license residential facilities, but the family pays the full cost for support and service of those individuals. The family very often makes that choice to put relatives in a certain facility because they believe they are going to be well looked after.

We all know that as people age, circumstances change. Health circumstances change, too, and somebody might be admitted or might be placed in a facility by their relatives and their condition may

deteriorate. That happens very often as you get elderly. I am starting to feel it myself these days, but I want to get my name into a good facility soon so I will be on the waiting list and have the ability to be there when my time comes.

Anyway, there are families that are very adamant that people stay in facilities.

We all know that people, even if they are living in their own homes, deteriorate as they get older. We know that people are panelled, whether they be in a facility, in a hospital or in their own home, for a nursing home placement, and just because you are panelled on a list does not necessarily mean you are going to get a nursing home bed the next day. We know that there are people that wait for long periods of time on a waiting list to get into a nursing home. They might sit in a hospital; they might sit in their own home, or they might be in a residential treatment facility.

There were some issues at the Chalet Malouin, and it was a conflict within the community. I think we have been working—there was some dissension among board members. It seems to me that we have a new board in place now, and the department has been working with them. We know that all of those that were in a situation where they should have been panelled for a nursing home, I believe, have been panelled now and are on a waiting list.

If their condition should deteriorate to a point where they need crisis intervention of some sort, they would be transferred out to a hospital bed, a facility where they could get that kind of care. That does not mean to say, once they are stabilized that they would not come back to Chalet Malouin just like they would go back into their own homes, if circumstances warranted, to await a nursing home placement.

Madam Chairperson: 1.(e)(6) Residential Care Licensing (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$312,900—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$26,500—pass.

2. Income Security and Regional Operations (a) Central Directorate.

Mr. Martindale: Madam Chairperson, first, I would like to ask the minister if it would be

appropriate under this line to ask the minister questions about the new, I believe, investigative unit that is investigating fraud or people inappropriately enrolled, et cetera.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes.

Mr. Martindale: Okay. Maybe I will give a little bit of a preamble to my questions.

One of the interesting changes that people like me undergo when switching from being an advocate in the community to being an MLA in this House is that you gain a new perspective. When you are an advocate in the community, it is very easy to only advocate for one side or one group in the community, but all of us here I think have to be concerned about the public interest.

In this case, the public interest has to do with very large sums of money that are spent on social assistance, so on the one hand, while I will be asking numerous questions about the levels of financial support to people on social assistance, on the other hand I have a legitimate concern about people that may be inappropriately on the system. Consequently, I have some questions under this line.

* (2110)

First of all, is it correct that people in investigative unit are people that have been redeployed from other areas of the department? It was not new people that were hired. It was existing staff. Is that correct?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, they were not new resources. Those were people that were redeployed in the department.

Report

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Deputy Chairperson of Committees): Madam Chairperson, in the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255 to consider the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training, the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) moved

THAT the minister has not provided adequate public information on the curriculum effectiveness and educational outcomes of many training grants

and millions of dollars spent in the Workforce 2000 program.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that 16.4(h)(1)(b), Other Expenditures, be omitted.

The motion was defeated on a voice vote, and subsequently two members requested that a formal vote on this matter be taken. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Formal Vote

Madam Chairperson: A recorded vote having been requested in the Committee of Supply dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Education, call in the members.

Both sections in Chamber for formal vote.

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. The motion before the committee, moved by the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen),

THAT the minister has not provided adequate public information on the curriculum, effectiveness and educational outcomes of the many training grants and millions of dollars spent in the Workforce 2000 program.

THEREFORE be it resolved that 16.4(h)(1)(b) Other Expenditures be omitted.

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 26, Nays 26.

Madam Chairperson: Among the principles to be considered by a Chairperson when called upon to exercise the casting vote is the concept that he or she should vote in such a manner as to retain the status quo. In this case, the status quo is the original Estimate, as tabled by the Minister of Finance. I must therefore vote against the motion to reduce the Estimate now before the Committee of Supply. The motion is accordingly lost.

Order, please. Will the Estimates Committee of Supply in section Room 255, considering the Estimates for the Department of Education, please resume. This section will be dealing with the Estimates for the Department of Family Services.

FAMILY SERVICES (continued)

Madam Chairperson: Item 2.(a) Central Directorate.

Mr. Martindale: Madam Chairperson, I was just starting to ask what will be a series of questions about the special investigation unit.

First of all, can the minister tell us how long the unit has been in place?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, if my honourable friend is asking how long the central investigative unit has been in place, it was started about two years ago. It has been enhanced since last September.

Mr. Martindale: Could the minister tell us what results the special investigative unit has come up with? Has there been an increase in the number of people who are found to be ineligible, for example?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, the investigative unit is doing several things besides checking on fraud. One of the things that they do is a process of developing information-sharing agreements. I think you have probably heard that other provinces and Manitoba are looking at sharing of information so that we do not have fraud from one province to the other. Staff have been trained in control techniques. They do record and track all third-party complaints.

I guess one of the positive outcomes of the investigative unit has been that initially we were able to check with more resources those that were on the unemployment insurance rolls plus on the welfare rolls. As a result of the enhanced training and the ability to check more carefully up front, I think probably some of the positive results would be that we are not seeing people come on to the welfare system that are in the unemployment system as a result of being able to do more up-front assessment and checking. So I think that is positive. We were able to determine those people who were in both systems and rectify that plus do some up-front investigative work and checking to ensure that those kinds of things are not happening into the future.

Mr. Martindale: I understand that one of the things that happens either with the investigation unit or is a normal part of the job of front line workers is to do home visits. I also understand that as a result of home visits, I think probably to check whether there were people in the household who were eligible or not, some of these home visits found that there were single parents on provincial assistance who were living with someone who was probably employable and on municipal assistance.

Is that the case? Have there been some of those situations uncovered?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, from time to time we do come across those circumstances. Then a full investigation is done as to whether there are other sources of income. We might find a single mother on the provincial rolls that I guess on occasion has been living with someone who is working, employed. So then those circumstances would have to be investigated to see whether there are additional sources of income and whether there has been overpayment or fraudulent use of the system. From time to time, there are those who might be living in a common-law relationship, where one is on the municipal caseload and one is on the provincial caseload. In those instances, we might have the ability to close a case. We might refer that couple then to the municipal assistance system.

Mr. Martindale: Could the minister give me an idea of how many people might have been referred to the City of Winnipeg, because one member of the household was deemed employable?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, we do have cases, we could have 50 to 60 provincial cases that are closed per month. That is not necessarily because they have been referred to the City of Winnipeg rolls. There are, from time to time, reconciliations within relationships, where people no longer require assistance. There are other circumstances, where people might find employment, so there is not any specific tracking of how many of those cases would be referred to the City of Winnipeg. There are several reasons why people could roll off the caseload.

* (2210)

Mr. Martindale: Could the minister tell us if the Province of Manitoba has entered into an agreement with other provinces regarding computer identification of individuals who might be claiming assistance in more than one province? I know that B.C. entered into an agreement with Alberta and that they were negotiating with Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and I am wondering if that agreement has been concluded.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, we have formalized an agreement with B.C. We are working presently in discussions with Alberta and Saskatchewan, and we are in very preliminary stages of discussion with Ontario.

Mr. Martindale: Has the agreement with B.C. resulted in very many people or anyone being caught claiming social assistance in two provinces?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, the agreement with B.C. was just signed within the last month. So we are just in the process now of starting to get things up and running.

Mr. Martindale: My understanding is that social assistance fraud is not very great. For example, I believe it was this government that hired a chartered accountant firm to do a study, I think, in 1988, wherein they assessed something like 287 social assistance cases and found maybe three cases of fraud, two of which were administrative error. So I think the amount of fraud is quite small. However, it does exist, and very large sums of money are spent on social assistance, which we will get into in the next line, \$358 million. So I think it is a legitimate concern of all of us here.

Has this minister or her department ever considered requiring people to pick up their cheques rather than have them mailed, say, on a one-time basis in order to see what happens, see who does not pick up their cheque?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, I am trying to think of the last time that happened in Manitoba. I believe it was during a postal strike in the mid- to late '80s. I cannot remember exactly the year. As a result of that, I think, initially there were a few cheques that were not picked up, but

when all was said and done, there were very few cheques that were not picked up.

We have a unique circumstance here in Manitoba, because we do have a two-tiered system, where we have municipal and provincial caseloads. The provincial caseload is basically the handicapped, the disabled, plus single mothers. The majority of the employables are on the municipal caseload. We all know that the City of Winnipeg and all of the municipalities have their own administration that deal with their caseloads.

Thoughts have run through our minds, and we have discussed the issue. I am looking at the people whom we deal with on the provincial caseload, and those are the disabled. I am not so sure that we would find a lot of fraud or abuse in that community and that it might be very inconvenient and create some hardship for those individuals—that is about half of our provincial caseload—to pick up cheques. The other half are single mothers.

I guess the issue is, are they living in a common-law relationship? By picking up their cheques, I am not so sure that we would be able to determine that. I would imagine that the home visits would be a better way of attempting to determine what was happening in a household. If they were required to come in and pick up their cheques, I am not so sure that we would discover the kinds of things you might be looking for, but you might with home visits.

The municipal caseload is another issue, and I do not know, I think, from time to time, the City of Winnipeg anyway does require a pickup of cheques.

Mr. Martindale: Does the Province of Manitoba have an agreement with Revenue Canada to share information, and if so, what kind of information is shared?

Mrs. Mitchelson: We do have an agreement with Revenue Canada, and what we do is get a signed agreement from the client to check on a sample basis.

Ms. McCormick: Madam Chairperson, I am curious with respect to the movement of people back and forth between the two levels, given this

change in their circumstances. Granted, there is unlikely to be a change when someone is determined to be disabled, but with respect to the definition of employable versus nonemployable, can you give me some sense of how much movement there is back and forth between city and provincial welfare? What is the duration of time that people spend on one system, before they wind up back on the other?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, there was a policy change back in 1991 that no longer required single mothers, if they did end up separated or on the welfare caseload, to go to the municipalities. Initially, they were enrolled immediately on provincial social assistance. I think that was where the biggest turnover would have been in the past. That has been eliminated.

As I said earlier, our caseload provincially is basically single parents and the disabled. Single employable, the caseload is the City of Winnipeg, and they also have some families on their caseload.

Ms. McCormick: So I am hearing you say that there is very little movement then between the two. Has anyone, with respect to the program analysis, determined whether there are duplicate costs and whether any savings could be achieved by having one as opposed to a two-tiered system?

* (2220)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, as we looked to standardize the rates last year, which were done, there was major discussion with the municipalities and with the UMM and MAUM organizations. At that time we did standardize rates, but we allowed some flexibility for municipalities to set higher rates if they so chose. At that time both MAUM and UMM and the municipalities, including the City of Winnipeg, were very supportive of a two-tiered system. They wanted to manage municipally their caseloads.

Since that time I think UMM still feels that way, but MAUM has put forward a resolution asking for consideration of a one-tiered system. We are in the process of looking at that to see whether it is feasible. No decisions have been made, but they have requested us to look at that.

Ms. McCormick: My question was specifically with respect to the cost of the duplication. Has anyone done any analysis with respect to the cost of, first of all, adjudicating which system people ought to be under and, secondly, the costs of maintaining a duplicate system?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, I guess it is incumbent upon us to look at that when we are looking at inefficiencies within government. We look to other provinces across the country. We are one of two now I think that has a two-tiered system. Most have moved to a one-tier system. All of those facts will be taken into consideration as we look at whether it is feasible at all.

We do know that the municipalities spend a fair amount of money on welfare, and they have a bureaucracy. I might say the City of Winnipeg probably pays their employees at a higher scale than we do provincially.

I believe it is incumbent upon us to take a look at an efficient and effective way of delivering the service. If it seems feasible to move in that direction, then we will have to contemplate that, but we are not yet at a point where we have made that determination.

Madam Chairperson: Item 2.(a) Central Directorate (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,214,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$600,600—pass.

2.(b) Income Maintenance Programs.

Mr. Martindale: Madam Chairperson, I would like to continue the line of questioning that my colleague began.

First of all, going back to the caseload and the reasons for closure—and I would like to thank one of the minister's staff Mr. Sexsmith for providing me with some monthly statistics.

One of the categories that intrigues me is the medically ineligible. Just by way of example, in April 1994, 40 people were I believe discontinued under the medically ineligible category. I wonder if the minister can expand or can tell us why this happens. I assume that in order to get on provincial assistance, the person would have to prove that they were unemployable due to some kind of

physical or mental handicap. In fact, that may even require a letter from the doctor. Yet every month a fair number of people are discontinued under this category.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, we do know that from time to time people have medical conditions that do flare up for a period of time that become a crisis situation but might not be long term. You might look at arthritis or rheumatism or something like that, that might have a flare-up where for a six-month period of time you are disabled, and then you might go into remission where there is the ability to attempt to work again. So those kinds of circumstances do occur.

(Mr. Edward Helwer, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

Each person who is assessed with that medical eligibility is reviewed from time to time, and depending on the nature of the illness when they are initially assessed, there has to be a medical review process either at six months, a year, two years. There are some people, of course, who we determine up front have long-term disabilities. Those might be the mentally handicapped individuals in our community, where we know that it is a long-term problem and there likely will not be a change. But then we are also working on the other side of trying to get those who are mentally disabled into the workforce, too, through shelter workshops or some sort of programming. Those circumstances do change too, but every client is assessed on an individual basis when they come on to the provincial caseload. From time to time, if the medical determination is that they are no longer a problem and they are fit to work then that would change.

Mr. Martindale: The other category I would like to ask about is common law union. For example, in April 1994, 72 cases were closed under the common law union category. I am wondering if the minister can explain what that means? I have before me the monthly stats for April '94, and it says, reason for case closure by category, the third category is common law union and there were 72 cases closed. Could the minister explain what this means, this category?

Mrs. Mitchelson: That was the issue that we discussed just a little while ago where we said that sometimes there might be a reconciliation and people get back together again. There might be a new relationship that develops. You are shaking your head, no.

Mr. Martindale: Reconciliation is another category.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Oh, reconciliation, okay.

When you realize the number of provincial caseloads, somewhere around 24,000-25,000, and half of those are sole-support parents, I do not think that the number of 72 in a month—people do come off and on to systems. So when you look at 12,000 sole-support parents on social assistance it is natural that there might be a relationship that develops for some of them that might take them off the caseloads. So that is the reason for that.

* (2230)

Mr. Martindale: So if I could paraphrase, these people entered into a relationship where the other person earned income, and therefore, they were no longer eligible. Is that correct?

Mrs. Mitchelson: There could be, you know, different circumstances. It is difficult to sort of categorize every relationship in the same manner.

Mr. Martindale: I think I would like to talk about some specific issues under income maintenance programs, maybe some of the smaller issues, and then get into the larger or broader issues.

The minister has received correspondence from—well, I am sure this minister receives correspondence from a lot of people and a lot of organizations, but I know that on a monthly basis, St. Matthews-Maryland Community Ministry sends this minister a letter and sends copies to the local city counsellor, MLA, member of Parliament and opposition critics. In their correspondence of April 25, 1994, they referred to the Nutrition and Food Security Network of Manitoba and its publication of April 1994 regarding the social assistance rate for infants.

I believe I raised this in Question Period one day with the minister, so I think she is familiar with the issue. Basically, the issue is that there is a big

difference between the amount of money provided by the City of Winnipeg and the amount of money provided by the Province of Manitoba. In fact, there are pros and cons as to having a one-tier system, and this would be one of the cons, because the city rate is substantially larger than the provincial rate.

My question is, has the minister considered or reconsidered this report from the Nutrition and Food Security Network and particularly its recommendation that the amount of money allocated for infant formula be substantially increased?

Before I let the minister reply, I would point out that in their excellent report, which is written by nutritionists and home economists, they do point out that their priority—and it is in their first recommendation—is that mothers should be encouraged to breast-feed and that this is the preferable way; it is also the cheapest way. But they point out that there are a number of barriers to this happening with everyone. In fact, when I discussed this report with someone, he pointed out that it is actually difficult for some individuals, in particular, women who have been victims of sexual abuse. But after they talk about breast-feeding being the first option, the best option, they realistically, I think, point out that many parents are using infant formula and that the amount of money being provided is not sufficient to cover the cost of it.

I am wondering if the minister has had a chance to reconsider her position and would consider increasing the amount of money provided for infant formula.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I have to indicate at the outset that although the City of Winnipeg's rates are higher, and we all recognize and realize that they are, they are the highest rates across the country. I guess, I question if we tried to put things into comparison, we recognize and realize that we certainly do not have the highest cost of living in Manitoba, as compared to right across the country. So that should be the first issue that is addressed when answering this question.

We do know that our basic levels rank in the mid-to-higher range on an interprovincial basis. While we have one of the lowest costs of living in Manitoba, when you look at the food rates that are provided under our Social Allowances Program, they exceed the thrifty, nutritious food basket that is provided by a considerable amount. I can get those exact numbers for you.

In April 1994, the cost of Agriculture Canada's thrifty basket for a Winnipeg sole-support-parent family with two children was \$362.53 per month, while the cost of the regular basket was \$412.10. The monthly social allowance food basket for this family is \$405.80. So we are considerably higher than what it would cost under the Agriculture Canada's assessment or analysis of the thrifty basket.

The other thing I would like to indicate is that since we have been in government since 1988, the overall increases for CPI for Winnipeg was 18.7 percent, while the social allowances rates increased by 19.4 percent during that period of time. So we have increased our social allowances rates at a greater level than CPI has grown in Winnipeg.

The reality is that we cannot as a province be paying the highest social assistance rates when we certainly do not have the highest cost of living. I would venture to guess that some single mothers who are living in metropolitan Toronto or Vancouver might have much more difficulty trying to make ends meet than they would have here in Winnipeg with the cost of living being what it is. We do have certainly some positives and some things to brag about in Manitoba, and those are that we can live here more economically than you can in the other larger centres across the country.

Mr. Martindale: We are not talking here about the thrifty food basket. We are talking about the realistic cost of infant formula.

The Nutrition and Food Security Network has six pages of prices of infant formula, and their conclusion is that the infant formula prices range from \$85.29 to \$191.01 per month with an average of \$124 per month. The province allows \$84.90 for

babies, whereas the City of Winnipeg allows \$179.00.

So it does not really matter if this minister thinks that the city is being too generous or if Manitoba has rates that are higher than other provinces or if your CPI increases or annual increases have been greater than CPI over a number of years. What we are talking about is what is a realistic amount to supply infant formula to a baby in the city of Winnipeg. Your rates, according to these people, and I agree with their analysis, are unrealistic, and I would like to know what this minister is prepared to do to bring it in line with the real costs.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I do have to reiterate that in Manitoba our cost of living is lower than many other centres and our social assistance rates are among the highest, in the upper half of provinces right across the country. All I can say is that I honestly believe that in some other provinces, full-support parents would have great difficulty raising their children, more difficulty than they would here in the province of Manitoba.

I understand the issues, and I do know that there is the ability to use some of the tax credits that are not allocated for anything specific to enhance whatever area that parent might choose. All I can say is that we have kept pace as a province. We have exceeded the increase in CPI for Winnipeg with higher increases in our social assistance support since we have been in government.

* (2240)

Mr. Martindale: I find that response quite unacceptable. We are not talking about whether or not we have the highest rates. What we are talking about is what is an adequate amount for infant formula? I think it is quite ironic that this minister should talk about using tax rebates when I believe by Order-in-Council, in January, I think, of this year, there was a change in the income exemption, whereby the federal child tax credit, which was previously exempt, I believe, is now being included as income. Maybe before I go on any further, I would like to check that and have the minister verify that. Is that correct?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Acting Chairperson, no, that is not correct. There is a child tax credit of \$85

plus another \$17.75 per month, which gives us a total of \$102.75 in tax credits that is available for discretionary spending.

Mr. Martindale: Just to clarify then, is the federal child tax credit income still exempt then?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes.

Mr. Martindale: Going back to the infant formula, is the minister suggesting that people should use some of their housing money, household needs, personal needs money to subsidize an inadequate infant rate for infants?

Mrs. Mitchelson: All I can do is repeat the answers that I have given in the past, that our social allowances food rates exceed the thrifty nutritious food basket in Manitoba. We allow considerably more than the thrifty nutritious food basket for our food allowance. I can only reiterate that we have increased social allowances rates by more than the increase in the CPI in Winnipeg since we have been government. I can indicate that there is exempt income over and above the social allowances basic rates of \$102.75 per month, and I can reiterate again that our basic levels rank in the mid-to-higher range on an interprovincial basis while we have one of the lowest costs of living in the country.

That is all I have to say at this point. I will keep repeating those answers because I believe that we fare fairly well as compared to a lot of other major centres right across the country, some of those major centres being located in provinces that are administered by a New Democratic government.

I would say that our full-support parents here are probably, on a comparative basis, able to have their dollars stretch a little further than they might in some of those centres.

Mr. Martindale: I have the minister's press release of November 9, 1993, which basically has to do with cuts to people who are single employable recipients on municipal assistance. In that press release, the minister said that the annual adjustments in social assistance rates would be made April 1 rather than January 1. Could the minister tell us what adjustments were made on April 1?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Acting Chairperson, the rates were maintained status quo as of April 1.

Mr. Martindale: Except that the purchasing power of people's income was less because the consumer price index actually increased, for example, for March '94 over March '93, all items increased by 1.5 percent. Some individual categories increased by more than that. Could the minister tell us why people did not get the usual consumer price increase on April 1?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Acting Chairperson, we have, I think, been quite fair in our social allowance rates over the last number of years. Not every province has increased social allowance rates on a yearly, regular basis. I do know that CPI was up 1.5 percent in March. We do also know that many people throughout our Manitoba society are living on less today than they have in the past.

I know, for example, of a few people who are in business who are making half today what they made last year and in years previous. I do know that everyone within the civil service or everyone that is funded by government has had to take a reduction in their annual income, and in very difficult economic times, it is incumbent that we try to do things as fairly as we possibly can. We did not reduce social assistance rates as we reduced salaries throughout the civil service or in external agencies, and I do know that many Manitobans are living with less disposable income today than they have in the past.

(Madam Chairperson in the Chair)

Mr. Martindale: Madam Chairperson, the difference between the examples that the minister gave and people on social assistance is that people on social assistance are living at the bottom, and I would say that all of them are living substantially below the poverty line. Those people on social assistance to whom I am referring were hit by two changes. One is the cost of living increased, and for many of them, not all of them, but many of them living in publicly assisted housing, they experienced a 2 percent increase in the cost of accommodation. Because of a change by CMHC and Manitoba Housing, their rent is based on 27

percent of income now instead of 25 percent of income, so their cost of living has gone up.

The minister was trying to tell me in reply to a question in Question Period—well, I guess she was trying to tell me that her interpretation is different than mine. I was repeating the fact that Manitoba has the highest child poverty rate in Canada. This is according to 1991 statistics. If the minister has more recent statistics that show that that is no longer true, I would be interested in hearing about that.

* (2250)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, we do have the 1992 statistics that indicate that for family poverty rates, we have moved from first to fourth, and for child poverty rates, we have moved from first to third, still not anything that we want to brag about in any way, but I do have to indicate that no longer can we be known as the ranking No. 1 province for family poverty and child poverty.

Mr. Martindale: I would like to go back to two groups that the minister has talked about quite extensively. One is sole-support parents, and the other is people who are disabled and therefore on social assistance.

One of the categories that the minister has referred to is adolescent parents. We know that, and I think the minister has already said this on the record, there is an increase in the number of adolescent parents in Manitoba. I think what we need to do in response to that particular situation is to have more effective programs to prevent teenage pregnancy.

I am wondering if this is part of this minister's responsibility. I suppose we could ask under grants to external agencies, but does the minister believe that it is part of her ministry's mandate to do something about this problem in our society, since it does have an impact, not just a budgetary impact but an impact on individuals and families, as well?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Absolutely, I believe it is part of my mandate and an issue that is very near and dear to my heart. I really feel that there is a job that needs to be done in trying to delay or prevent teenage adolescent pregnancy.

Interestingly enough, when I travelled up to Thompson and visited with the Cope program at the community college up there, they are doing some interesting things in Thompson right now. What they are determining is that the Grade 7 level, as young girls enter junior high, they are identifying those that they believe are high risk. I think they have a public health nurse and a social worker right in the junior high school, and they are finding that in some instances they are able to delay pregnancy from Grade 7, Grade 8, Grade 9 to Grade 10, Grade 11.

Now in my mind that is not good enough, but it tells me that they are doing something that provides the ability at least to give a young girl a few more years to mature. They are not able to prevent pregnancy at this point in time, I guess, is what I am saying, to any great degree, but they are delaying pregnancy, and I find that very interesting.

I know that officials that were there were provided with much more detail than I was able to get, but we will be looking at examining what they are doing there, what they are doing right and seeing whether it is something that might be applicable in other parts of the province.

We do know that the adolescent pregnancy rate is extremely high in the Thompson area, and there are some issues that need to be addressed, and they might be specific somewhat to demographics. It is interesting to see that they are working through the school system and trying to identify early on those that are high risk and work with them.

Some interesting articles in some papers that I have read from other jurisdictions are looking at providing some additional financial resources for women or young girls that have already had one baby to prevent them from having a second, so that there is a financial incentive to not getting pregnant again which seems to be having some positive outcomes in some areas. I think those are some of the things that we have to take a look at and see whether it is anything we might want to implement here.

It is devastating in my mind to see that young girls, and girls are getting younger and younger

and becoming pregnant at an earlier age, and I have raised that issue and that concern with our Child Welfare agencies asking whether there is some way, along with the refocus and the redirection of dollars, that we cannot look at early intervention. I think we are seeing second generation, third generation single-parent families. There has to be a way that we can come to grips with, and I do not know what all the answers are, but I do know that I believe it is a serious issue, and it is one that we will focus on in some of our pilots.

Now we talk about Welfare to Work being a pilot project, but it has become very evident, as we have consulted and looked at the issues, that we have got to do something on a pilot basis with our teenagers, our adolescent moms. I am fairly convinced that we have to start talking about parental responsibility, and when I am talking about that, I am not necessarily saying that the parent can control whether a young girl becomes pregnant or not, but I think along with pregnancy has to come an understanding that there is a responsibility to parenting. There are many different reasons why young girls get pregnant, but when you do, I think you have to understand fully what responsibility comes along with carrying that baby to term and keeping that baby and looking after it. There is a responsibility to love; there is a responsibility to nurture; and there is a responsibility to learn how to parent.

How do we put some of those processes in place? I believe that our Child and Family Services agencies have to work with us, and I believe the community has to work with us and wants to work with us around some of those issues. I am struggling with it right now myself, but I am thoroughly convinced that we have to find some way of delaying pregnancy or preventing teenage pregnancy.

Mr. Martindale: The minister and I are in agreement here because it certainly is a serious problem. Nineteen ninety-one census data reveals that 75 percent of unmarried female parents between 15 and 20 years of age in Manitoba do not have a high school level of education and, of these, 83 percent do not attend school. Almost all of these women are on social assistance and, on average,

will remain on social assistance longer than adult women who came on assistance as a result of a marriage breakdown. It is also obvious that there is a connection between level of education and adolescent pregnancy, so we need to attack both problems together.

Fortunately, there are some excellent resources in the community. For example, Winnipeg School Division No. 1, as I am sure the minister is aware, has the adolescent parent centre, where there is a child care centre in basically a high school, exclusively for women single parents. Perhaps we need more centres like that. I know that many high schools are putting child care centres into their schools, which does at least increase the level of education of these individuals, which makes it more likely that they may get off social assistance.

Going back to prevention, certainly delaying or having children at an older age is only part of the solution. Would it be correct that the main organization that this minister, her department, funds would be Planned Parenthood, under External Agencies, or would there be other organizations as well?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, I think that we fund a lot of external agencies that do counselling services right across the board. Villa Rosa we fund. We fund Mount Carmel Clinic; that has a component. We fund Rossbrook House, Family Centre of Winnipeg. There is a broad range of services that are available, counselling services. There is Pregnancy Distress, Planned Parenthood. There is another, Ma Mawi.

* (2300)

You have raised a good issue. You have asked who we fund. I tend to think, and I guess we did find that out through our consultative process, the service providers, that there is not necessarily a major co-ordination of services that are out there. There are a lot of people doing a lot of things, not necessarily just one agency or organization know what another is doing.

I am not so sure that all the information and all the services that are available are readily available to all young girls. That is an issue that we have to deal with in some way. There has got to be some

co-ordination; there has got to be sharing of information. That was one of the issues that was raised by service providers as we did our consultations. We have to look to better information sharing, and I guess that will be the challenge for us as we move towards a more co-ordinated system.

We also have talked about government departments working together, those that are working in the public health area. I met with some public health nurses who work for the City of Winnipeg. We have public health nurses who work for the province in some of the suburbs and in rural Manitoba. We need to ensure that, you know, the Child and Family Services agencies are working with the public health nurses, are working with the education system and the external agencies that have the ability to provide counselling services in a more co-ordinated fashion, with a more co-ordinated approach. That has been a challenge that has been around, and hopefully we will be able to make some improvements in that system.

Mr. Martindale: What is this minister doing to co-ordinate services?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, I guess that will be one of my challenges as we work to develop pilot projects. There was a federal working group and the provincial working group that were out talking to the service providers, to the clients and to the community.

I guess one of our challenges will be to come up with a pilot project that can bring those resources together around assessing the needs of the individual client that we serve and determining how we can bring those supports around. It will be a challenge then to the agency community and to the volunteer community to see whether we can develop a co-ordinated approach in partnership, government with the volunteer community, with the service sector, to ensure that there were services known about and available to individual clients. That I think should be part of one of the pilots that we do implement.

Mr. Martindale: Madam Chairperson, one of the reasons that there are such a large number of people on social assistance and living in poverty is

that there are many people who should be getting maintenance payments who are not. Now those who are, my understanding is that they can either receive it and it is deducted, or they do not receive it, the department receives it. I guess I should stop and ask the minister if that is correct, that if you are on social assistance, there is really no benefit from any maintenance payments.

Mrs. Mitchelson: You are correct when you say that someone on social assistance really does not benefit necessarily from the maintenance payment. But I guess our ultimate goal should be that we want to work with that woman to see whether we cannot move her off of welfare and into the workforce, provide some training opportunity. It would be to her long-term benefit to pursue maintenance, because if in fact our ultimate goal was to ensure that she be in the workforce—and that is our ultimate goal. I know it is going to be a long, slow process to try to accomplish that, but as people do move off of welfare and into the workforce, that maintenance payment is an enhancement to their salary that they might earn. So the long-term benefits, I think, are important. That is a goal to focus on, that ultimately maintenance enforcement should not be the only opportunity; it should be an enhancement to some sort of work opportunity in the future.

Mr. Martindale: I understand that in Ontario they have a system to secure payment of maintenance via deductions from paycheques. It seems to me that if people do not pay voluntarily and if governments have to spend a lot of money trying to track down this social and legal obligation of parents to pay, it makes sense to at least look at alternative systems. I am wondering if Manitoba has or if Manitoba would be interested in looking at the Ontario system of deductions from pay cheques.

Mrs. Mitchelson: As my honourable friend would know, that maintenance enforcement is, of course, within the Department of Justice. It is my understanding that there is the ability to garnishee wages through the Department of Justice. I know that the minister is looking at ways and means of trying to enhance maintenance enforcement.

I would think that question would be more appropriately asked in the Department of Justice Estimates. But ultimately our goal should be that interprovincially we should be able to go to other provinces, and it should not be that easy to escape, I suppose, your responsibility to pay support.

Mr. Martindale: I think the goal of government should be to try to prevent as many people from going on social assistance as possible in the first place. We have already talked about examples of that, one of them being teenage pregnancy. If we can prevent young women from becoming pregnant, chances are they are not going to go on social assistance.

Another way, of course, is full employment. So I would like to ask—well, the next page has to do with the Welfare to Work, so we will have lots of questions about that, but going back to some of the policy decisions of last year, I believe this government has actually made cuts in some very positive areas such as the Human Resources Opportunity Centres.

Now, maybe they are not very visible. They probably do not get very much publicity, but as far as I know they have been reasonably successful in training people and getting them off social assistance and into paid employment. I do not know what the current statistics are, I do know that in about 1986 or '87, I had a tour of the Winnipeg centre and, at that time, the minister claimed that something like 62 percent of the graduates were gainfully employed six months after they graduated.

I would be interested in knowing for a start, does the minister consider that this is still a successful program, and what is the success rate. How many people are able to find employment after graduating from a Human Resources Opportunity Centre or program?

* (2310)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, I guess, was it with last year's budget that those programs were transferred to the Department of Education? So I cannot give any detailed information on what evaluations have been done since they have been moved and what the outcomes have been.

Mr. Martindale: I am sorry. I forgot about that change in government departments. Are there any job creation programs that are left in Family Services now?

Mrs. Mitchelson: No, there are not, Madam Chairperson.

Mr. Martindale: Could the minister tell us what the effects of the legal decision regarding 16- and 17-year-olds has been, the Clemins [phonetic] case, I think it was. For example, how many 16- and 17-year-olds does the department anticipate will switch from Child and Family Services to assistance?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, we do not know how many at this point in time. We will attempt to enroll on the caseloads. I do know that the City of Winnipeg, as a result of the decision, had about a dozen cases come forward to apply—I am trying to think of how many. My understanding is they have enrolled at the City of Winnipeg level about a dozen cases. They have had maybe three times as many as that apply. As far as the provincial caseloads go, we have had some inquiries, but we have not enrolled anyone as yet.

Mr. Martindale: My concern here is that when these youths were a part of or are a part of the Child and Family Service Agencies, that there are a number of resources, including staff that are available to them and services that are available to them. I am wondering, when they go on social assistance, are there any resources or supports that will be available to them on that system. Well, that is my first question.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, as a result of the ruling, we met with City of Winnipeg officials, and the question was asked whether all of those who might come forward might be referred to a Child and Family Services Agency for evaluation, and we have put a process in place with the City of Winnipeg. It will ensure that Child and Family Services is consulted on each individual case. If there is a protection issue, the services will be offered through a Child and Family Services Agency. It is only in those instances where those youths refused, or are in no need of protection as such under The Child and Family Services Act,

and apply for social assistance and want that kind of support that it would be granted.

Mr. Martindale: So, if these young people are in school or employable, it would be logical that a vast majority of them should end up on municipal assistance and, therefore, this minister would not have any direct control over what kind of supports they get or do not get. Is that correct?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, it is a recent decision, and we are still looking at what all of the implications might be and studying it very carefully, but as I indicated earlier, for each child, because they are children, that comes forward requesting social assistance, they are referred to the Child and Family Services Agencies. There is an assessment done to see whether they are in need of protection and in need of the services of the child welfare system.

If there is not a protection issue, then there is a good possibility they would be enrolled on the city caseloads, and they would have to determine at that level, at this point in time anyway, whether in fact there were counselling services available, whether they would try to place them into a work environment and all of those things that the City of Winnipeg would normally go through in their assessment of a social assistance client.

Mr. Martindale: Madam Chairperson, I am concerned that since Child and Family Services have so many clients and since this is a direct cost to the provincial government that there might be some pressure to download some of these individuals to the city of Winnipeg or to municipalities. Does the minister share my concern that this might happen, that there might be an offloading from Child and Family Services to municipalities?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I would question where my honourable friend is coming from when he would think those that are employed in the services of our child welfare agencies would not assess under the act the issue of whether a child was at risk or whether they needed protection. If they did need that, I think it would be incumbent upon the child welfare agency to provide that kind of support.

Mr. Martindale: Well, I can appreciate that staff have obligations under the act, but we also know that they are under tremendous pressure, that because of Bill 22—also known as Filmon Fridays—there are many fewer days to provide service, that staff have very large caseloads. If a convenient way was to be found of decreasing their workload or pressure that some staff might find it advantageous to refer someone to municipal assistance, instead of being a ward or a recipient of service by a Child and Family Services agency, can the minister see that that might happen?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, I would certainly very strongly recommend that any child that needs protection is protected under the act. I ultimately have responsibility for children under the child welfare act in the province of Manitoba, and I would be extremely troubled if I felt that those children that were at risk and needed protection were not being protected.

Mr. Martindale: Well, I appreciate the minister's assurances and if that is not the case the minister can be sure that we will bring it to her attention.

I would like to go back to an issue raised by the member for Osborne (Ms. McCormick) having to do with a one-tier social assistance system. As I said before, I think, there are many pros and cons. My understanding is that the last time the provincial government considered a one-tier system, I believe they looked at a one-tier system excluding the City of Winnipeg—I believe it was before the government changed in 1988—and at that time the cost was estimated to be about \$8 million.

Now, it seems to me that there could be cost savings in terms of administration but also there must be an increased direct cost if the province were to take over municipal assistance, because my understanding is that municipalities are now paying 20 percent of the cost. That is the portion that is not cost-shared under CAP.

If we look at Municipal Assistance in the budget Estimates, \$106 million, we are looking at over \$20 million, which would be 20 percent. Is that correct, that if the province were to take over municipal assistance, there would be actually quite

a large cost to the Province of Manitoba? Because you would be paying 50 percent and the federal government would be paying 50 percent instead of the current 50-30-20 cost-share, is that correct?

* (2320)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, yes, that is the correct assessment, and that is one of the issues. As we go through the whole process of examining a one-tiered system that would have to be looked at very carefully and addressed.

Mr. Martindale: Well, I guess that is the reason why the provincial government probably would not want to take over municipal assistance. Has this minister talked to the City of Winnipeg about a one-tier social assistance system?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, I have not had any direct correspondence from the City of Winnipeg with that request. As I indicated, it was a resolution through MAUM, I believe, that did ask the province to take a look at a one-tiered system, and I cannot recall any direct correspondence. Let me check on that and get back to you tomorrow with that answer. I can check all of my correspondence, my files, but offhand I cannot remember any.

Mr. Martindale: I have been giving the minister my guesstimate of the increased cost. Does the minister or her staff have more exact figures on what the increased cost would be to the province if there was a one-tier system?

Mrs. Mitchelson: We do not have exact numbers, no. We are not into that kind of detail. I think we are probably in the ballpark when you talk about, you know, I think you said 20, it might be \$25 million, but that is not an exact. That is a guesstimate at this point. We are, as I said, as a result of the resolution request doing some preliminary work around the issue of a one-tier system, but there has not been any definite conclusion reached at this point.

Mr. Martindale: I would like to ask if the minister has received a copy of a survey called *A Crisis in the Making*, a survey of health facility based social work practitioners concerning the income security system in Manitoba. There are half a dozen authors on the title page, but two of

them are from Manitoba, Craig Posner of the Department of Social Work and Psychiatry, Health Sciences Centre, Winnipeg and Ronald Bewski, Department of Social Work, Child Development Clinic, Health Sciences Centre, Winnipeg. Has the minister received a copy of this survey?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, if I could see a copy of it—I cannot offhand—

Mr. Martindale: Well, I do not really want to ask questions if the minister and her staff have not had a chance to read it or study it, but I would ask a couple of general questions based on this survey of social workers who work in a health care setting.

I wonder if we could take a five-minute recess, Madam Chairperson.

Madam Chairperson: Is that the will of the committee?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

Madam Chairperson: This committee will take a five-minute recess and reconvene at 11:30.

The committee recessed at 11:25 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 11:30 p.m.

Ms. McCormick: There are two areas of questioning, Madam Chairperson, that I would like to follow up on. One is the whole area around parental responsibility, and, in fact, I think it is abundantly evident that when these young people take on the responsibility for parenting that it is disproportionately placed on the mother.

* (2330)

One of the things that concerns me with respect to the demographic data that we have available is how quickly one child becomes two. I am curious about what kind of information you have available to you with respect to whether the initial pregnancy results within two or three years with the young woman becoming pregnant a second time, at that point seriously diminishing the likelihood that she can return to school or can mobilize any kind of supports if powerful enough to get her back into training program or into the workforce.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, we do know that very often one child does lead to two. All we have is, really, anecdotal data. We do not have any hard data that would tell us or indicate how far apart children are in those circumstances. We might have information if we can find it on how many of those on our caseload have more than one child. We will try and get that and pursue this maybe tomorrow for you. It is an issue that causes me great concern.

Ms. McCormick: Madam Chairperson, I am also interested in parental responsibility appearing to be assigned primarily to women and to pursue the questions around maintenance support for these young women. There is, and we have identified this, a systemic problem which makes it almost unnecessary, if the young woman is on social assistance herself, for her partner or the father of the child to contribute because any amount that is contributed is in fact taken off. So there is no incentive for the father to contribute to the support of his children.

Another problem that we have is if the presumption is that at some future point when the mother is employed, at that point the maintenance can be retained in addition to her employment income, what we have is a delay between the time when the mother passes through that training phase and then into the employment phase. So, in fact, the child's father may well have been disconnected for a goodly period of time, and the likelihood of getting an order and exercising it after there has been an interruption, is pretty remote. These are systemic problems which have in fact made a mockery of the whole maintenance and child support system because there are all kinds of disincentives to fathers being expected to accept their responsibility.

I am interested in knowing of any plans you would have with respect to encouraging responsibility, whether any of these are directed to the male parents of these children.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, I guess there are a lot of issues surrounding maintenance enforcement. It was interesting, I was at the Infant Lab program at Murdoch Mackay and had the

opportunity to discuss with a young girl who was there, who was really trying to get her life together and was being pretty successful, but she had been for four years trying to, through the courts, enforce some maintenance support from the father of her child and had been unsuccessful. I guess the court had ordered him twice to go for tests, and he had not showed up. It is a major cost to the system on the legal side, too, to continue to enforce, but she was not giving up; she was continuing.

The father of her child was an employed person, someone who was working. There are other issues surrounding how old the father might be, and whether he has the ability to pay.

I think we found when we were up in Thompson that many of the young girls who were becoming pregnant had their children fathered by young males in the school system also. That seemed to be rather predominant there. Many of the girls were telling us that it was the same male who had fathered many children in the system, and they were peers; they were the same age groups, whether it be 14-, 15-, 16-year olds.

I think the circumstances are a little different in the city of Winnipeg. We are finding that many of the males who father children are older—20 years and older—so it is a different circumstance or situation in the city of Winnipeg.

Along also with some of the concerns that were raised by our young clients was the abusive situation that resulted in the pregnancy. Along with maintenance enforcement and payments comes an ability for that father to have some input or some visitation rights or some ability in some circumstances to have a say in and be a part of that child's life, and there are some women, some young girls, who do not want that. So there are different circumstances in situations, and I can understand that there is no one easy answer. I would be interested in hearing what the Minister of Justice has to say during her Estimates on what they are looking at on the Justice side. But there is no easy answer, and there is no one answer, I guess, to maintenance enforcement.

Ms. McCormick: Madam Chairperson, I do not dispute what you are saying, that there is no easy

answer. It just seems to me that in your remarks it appears that we are writing off a responsibility assignment to the fathers of these children and that in fact the system works against these young men taking responsibility, that there is no incentive.

I guess the other thing that I would like to challenge would be a presumption that somehow the paying of maintenance enforcement gives a person entitlement to visitation or access to children. In fact, if we are going to assert that that is true, then the converse should also be true, that failure to pay maintenance would disentitle a parent to access to the child, and that is certainly not true. In fact, that is one of the overwhelming issues that we will have to deal with in the Department of Justice Estimates.

I just do not intend to badger you, but I would like to put it on the record that I think when we are determining responsibility, as you indicated in your earlier remarks that we are wanting to do, we have to take equal consideration, given that these children are not products of immaculate conceptions, that there has to be a male person who has some responsibility, that the system has an obligation to hold those people in some way accountable.

* (2340)

I am really, in terms of asking the question here, wondering if there is any kind of co-ordination with the Department of Justice to look at the ways in which the assignment of responsibility back on to the income security programs is facilitating the passing off of responsibility by these young men.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, I appreciate the comments that have just been put on the record by my honourable friend. I do share some of the concern, too, being a woman, in understanding not only—I guess I have more difficulty understanding because I have not had a lot of close contact or association in my own personal life with young adolescent mothers. I am coming to understand, as I meet with those young girls, with my new responsibility.

I can relate to marriage breakup and those women who are in my age group who married and had families at a fairly young age and were, if

anything, the second income earner, very often on a part-time basis, back in the days, 20 years ago. They did stay at home and work on a part-time basis for a little extra income, in the days when you could do that, and ended up in a separation situation where their husbands left and oftentimes had a fairly decent paying job.

You found a woman 30-, 35-years-old that had not worked on a regular basis, had maybe nothing much more than a Grade 12 education and maybe a little bit of secretarial skills or whatever and was faced with the situation of possibly living by herself, bringing up her children and working until she was 65 years old at a job that now pays maybe \$25,000 a year, and a husband that provided some support or maintenance support for the children until they turned 18.

Many of those kids are almost grown up. So you are presented with a situation where a woman is starting into the workforce at a minimum income level and will have to work till she is 65 with very little pension, and a husband, in many instances, that has remarried and even started, in some cases that I know very personally, a new family and a new way of life with much greater income and ability to have a much better lifestyle than the first wife he has, sort of, left behind. I can relate to those kind of circumstances and situations and recognize that there are some inequities there. We are moving, I guess, in the right direction with pension splitting and that kind of thing now.

Getting back to the question of male responsibility, I think there needs to be more work done in that area. How we make it happen I am not sure yet, but you are quite correct in saying that two are responsible for the circumstances or situation of bringing a new life into the world, and maybe there needs to be more focus on male responsibility in situations. How we come to grips with that and deal with that, I am not totally sure we have all of the answers, but I guess we need to be working on it.

Ms. McCormick: This is a very thoughtful and thought-provoking discussion. I think that what I would ask you is whether you could explore with the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) the ways in

which some of these issues could be addressed, whether we could count on you to identify those ways in which the definition of parental responsibility could be defined beyond the responsibility of the mother of the child, and, similarly, whether you could do some costing out in the department with respect to the consequence of clawing back all the maintenance, whether an incentive could be created in some way to encourage the male partners to take some responsibility.

So I guess it is not much more than a question of commitment to explore this, because I think that the longer we perpetuate it the more we do impose an unfair burden on the mothers themselves and de facto on the public purse.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I know that we are in touch with the Department of Justice and officials on a fairly regular basis around this issue, the Family Law branch. I know that the deputies in both areas have had discussions around this issue. I guess we are going to have to continue to pursue stronger enforcement where that is possible.

I understand the issue you raise about allowing some of the money to be passed through and kept by the spouse. I am not sure what can be done in that area, but I am sure that we can look into it.

Ms. McCormick: Again, I think that—we call it child support, child maintenance, in a sense to say that it is money that can be passed through and kept by the spouse I think is manifest of the problem we are talking about. The purpose of these orders is to support children and to recognize that the support of children is not just the mother's responsibility but the father's as well.

If there is a way in which the money ordered by the court or paid voluntarily by the father could in fact get to the child to improve the quality of the child's life, then we have it right.

It is important to recognize that it is not money that goes to the spouse or the mother for her benefit. It is the money that would go to the child for the child's benefit.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I understand your comments. I want to thank you for the dialogue around this issue. I think it is important that we highlight some

of the problems. We so often talk about the system, as I said earlier. There are people who are in the system that we need to be concerned about and try wherever possible to look at the unique circumstances surrounding certain issues and deal with them in an appropriate fashion.

I appreciate the comments, and we will keep the dialogue going with the Department of Justice and see whether there is a way that we can improve things.

Ms. McCormick: I would like to now move to the question of the services to 16- and 17-year-olds, and again I share the concerns of the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) with respect to the implications and the potential complications arising from this change.

I think, having canvassed the opinions of many people in the child-serving community through the Child and Family Services agency, there is some good news and some bad news. In fact, there is recognition that many of these young people are not amenable to the interventions of the Child and Family Services agencies. Where this creates a difficulty is where the agencies are under pressure not to have children on their caseloads for whom there is no interest in the service that they have to provide.

* (2350)

The member for Burrows spoke about the possibility of these becoming dumping situations where simply providing the livelihood or the means of support for the children through the municipal support system frees the agency to count these children on their caseloads and from any obligation to provide services to children who are not necessarily at this point in time very interested.

The problem that I see, and I am wondering if you could give us some indication of how this could be addressed, is with respect to children then claiming this kind of support because they are simply disconnecting themselves from their families, if it is going to be seen as an entitlement to an alternative source of support rather than the parental home and the parental control, which may in fact go along with this. Has any thought been

given to the possibility that by taking this move you could be creating a nightmare for the city?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, I guess what we have to recognize and realize is that it was the city that was taken to court over this issue. The court ordered the city to pay. It has very far-reaching implications. I do not think the city at this point in time has determined definitively exactly how they are going to deal with the issue. They are exploring all of their options. One of those options might be appeal of the decision. We have not heard as yet what their final decision is going to be around that issue, what option they might choose on how they deal with it.

I understand your concerns, but I recognize and realize, too, that the city has to first and foremost make a decision on how they are going to deal with the issue, whether they do choose to appeal the decision and see if there is any other course of action that could be followed.

Madam Chairperson: Item 2.(b) Income Maintenance Programs (1) Social Allowances \$228,124,700. Shall the item pass?

Mr. Martindale: I wonder if we could back to the paper that I loaned the minister earlier this evening. I just have some general questions on it. I wonder if I could get it back so I could refer to the last page.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, I have not seen this document, to my knowledge, as yet, except for your sharing it with me.

Mr. Martindale: I will photocopy it and send it to the minister. My questions are going to be general on this.

Referring to the last page, the paper concludes by talking about the present income security system in Manitoba and the inadequacies of it. I think it is significant that people who are social workers in the health care system are raising these concerns. I would like to relate it to the health reform policy paper of this government which has some excellent observations about the relationship between poverty and health.

While I guess I do not expect the minister to be familiar with this in detail, basically it talks about

Healthy Public Policy. It has some charts and graphs on the relationship between poverty and health, I believe. I am just going by memory here. So we know that one of the hidden costs—and I suppose it is a hidden cost because we may not be able to quantify it—of poverty is that those people are in poorer health and make more demands on the health care system. For example, people who live in poverty have a shorter life span. We know that babies who have low birth weights have more health problems and that they are more likely to be born to poor parents, et cetera.

My question is: Has this minister or her staff looked at the Healthy Public Policy sections of the health reform policy paper of this government? Has the minister discussed this with her counterpart the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae)? Has this been discussed with the human resources committee of cabinet? Is there an attempt to co-ordinate policies of these two departments since there is evidence linking poverty to increased use of health care resources?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, in fact, we are looking very seriously at what the implications are of a healthy lifestyle and the incidence of poverty. There is a correlation, absolutely no doubt. We have had Dr. Fraser Mustard come and speak to us in our department. He has been dealing with the Department of Health on a regular basis. He also ties in exactly what you have talked about, economic circumstances and child poverty, low birthweights, use of the health care system.

We are thoroughly convinced in our government that we need to be looking at early intervention, early child development, up-front concentration of resources to ensure that children get off to a healthy start to their lifestyles. I guess it goes even back further than delivery day. It is at inception that we have to start thinking about keeping pregnant women healthy, understanding the implications of poor nutrition and adverse circumstances, whatever else they might be, whether it be smoking or drinking or drug abuse and what impact or effect that does have on the new life that is being formed.

It is an issue that we are dealing with. I think there is real correlation between poverty, healthy public policy and the tie-in to our economy. We have to look seriously at what we can do for early intervention, early child development and working with pregnant women to ensure they understand those implications.

Mr. Martindale: I am pleased to hear that the minister shares my concerns.

I would like to move on to another area with a specific question. One of the staff from Pregnancy Distress Service says that they have heard from their clients that welfare workers are threatening to cut off welfare to people who use food banks. I also talked to staff at Winnipeg Harvest food bank, and they have also heard that people are being threatened with being cut off if they use food banks. They are also hearing the opposite, and that is, they have heard that some workers are referring people to food banks.

I would like to ask the minister if her department has a policy on their clients using food bank services.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Chairperson, I guess if those are the kinds of things that people are hearing out in the community, I would certainly like specifics around those issues. We have no policy in place within the department that has looked at those issues at all.

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. The hour being after 10 p.m., committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Madam Deputy Speaker (Louise Dacquay): The hour being after 10 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 24, 1994

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