



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.	Ste. Rose	PC
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
DUCHARME, Gerry, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	Liberal
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	NDP
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	PC
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	NDP
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Liberal
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	PC
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

Wednesday, June 1, 1994

The House met at 7 p.m.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(continued)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

(Concurrent Sections)

AGRICULTURE

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 Agriculture.

When the committee last sat, it had been considering item 4.(b)(1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,546,400 on page 16 of the Estimates book.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, you have indicated that we are on 4.(b)(1) on Salaries, and I want to thank the minister and his staff for their patience with me, in particular for moving into all of the sections on 4.(b) rather than just staying on Salaries. I think we had some agreement that we would be able to do that, but I am sure that it causes some frustration for some of the staff members. So, thank you for bearing with us.

I only have a couple more questions on this section and those have to do with the Veterinary Services districts. The government a few years ago decided to privatize the vet services clinics district facilities and at that time we had some concern that this would result in a reduced quality of services in rural areas and that under this situation perhaps the veterinarians would not be willing to travel. Those were some of the concerns that were raised by farmers, that they would not have equal service. There was also concern that the supplies would increase in price. So I would like to ask the minister what the result has been and whether there

has been a change in the quality of the veterinarian services that are being offered throughout the province?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, to the member for Swan River, I can report to her and the committee that I had the occasion to attend the annual meeting of the Manitoba Veterinary Services Board that continues to be chaired by a former long-time gentleman from the Department of Agriculture by the name of Helgi Austman whom some of you may remember. I spent the better part of the morning with them. Their meeting held about a month ago in Neepawa, I believe it was, I had an occasion to hear directly from a number of the people who serve as directors of the different veterinarian establishments throughout the province of Manitoba.

Now, I am referring to those that are part of the government-supported veterinarian facilities that we have. I think, in the main, although there was some concern expressed because, regrettably, as other services that we in the Department of Agriculture offer, they had to come to terms with a slight reduction in their annual grants a year ago or two years ago of some 5 percent, which was across the board to all of the facilities. But in the main, certainly, one got the impression that they were continuing to provide quality of service to our important sector for the Animal Industry branch. They are in total numbers virtually unchanged. I think we have some 29 veterinary districts that receive a total of some \$444,100 in this year's budget.

The municipal grants and provincial grants are expended to maintain, to operate, the animal hospitals and services at an ongoing standard. There have been no significant changes. There were one or two districts—I believe one of the districts in the Steinbach area had considered dissolving and moving toward a private veterinary

status. I do not think that has been completed. In fact, that has been withdrawn, I am advised by Dr. Neufeld. We continue to provide this service that the member refers to throughout the province of Manitoba in these 29 veterinarian districts.

* (1910)

The issue that came up at the annual meeting was that although a number of them have been able to effect some improvements to their facilities, the member and members of the committee ought to be reminded that in the first instances, when many of these veterinarian services were established, surplus buildings were used from different Canadian Armed Forces services bases, principally Macdonald, that often provided the main structure for the establishment of these veterinarian services.

These are now—were 30, 40 years old at the time and are now getting considerable age on them. The request was made, considerable discussion was held at the meeting for some potential ways of finding some additional capital funds to make some necessary improvements to the structures themselves. That is being entertained seriously by my government, by myself. In fact, we have before the infrastructure committee a request in for some \$300,000 that would, if successful—and I want to stress that point, that no decision has been made, that it is before the committee that deals with the infrastructure program, which involves federal and provincial. In this case, the third party would be the provincial veterinarian board that would together make up, say, meet the criteria for accessing that fund.

It is my hope that we may be successful because that would enable, under the auspices of the board, under Dr. Austman to provide in some instances much needed capital repair to aging facilities. We have about 13 or 14 of the 29 that are in some critical need. Another number of them have, in the manner and the way which they have budgeted past funds, in some instances, they have managed to accrue some surpluses. They have, together with the support from the municipal governments that make up the district, been able to effect considerable improvements to the facility. Not all

the facilities are in need, but that is something that we discussed. It is my hope that perhaps we can conclude.

It would be in my judgment a valuable contribution, further contribution to ensure the continued operation of these facilities under conditions that are on a more acceptable level.

The specific questions, with respect to the analysis or result of the withdrawal on the part of government from the drug centre, from the semen centre, I have not had brought to my attention any specific complaints. The minister's office and/or the director of the Animal Industry branch would be a natural repository for these kinds of concerns to be brought to, and that, in fact, I must say simply from my experience, has not been the case.

I am advised by staff, again, that the costs of drugs to producers are still comparable to other provinces and indeed in many situations are, in fact, lower when taken on a comparison basis with our sister provinces. Manitoba veterinarians now pay comparable prices for drugs as do veterinarians in all other provinces with a veterinarian-owned co-operative. The percent markup on drugs has not changed and will still be negotiated annually by the veterinarians and the Veterinary Services Commission.

Co-op charges a 12 percent handling charge to its members on all drugs and a 15 percent handling charge on non-members. In other words, while the government itself is removed from the day to day and direct ownership or control of the drug centre, there is still a considerable degree of co-operation existing between the users, the prescribers and the industry, which has resulted in us being able to say with some confidence that there has been no noticeable increase in the cost of the drugs that the livestock producers in the province require as dispensed through these facilities.

With the question of semen, cows are being inseminated, I presume, at the same level of service. Has there been noticeable increases of cost to producers using artificial insemination in the livestock industry?

I am advised by my director that over the years, as one would expect, a considerable increase in

on-farm application of this method of impregnating animals—there are a growing number of operators who have availed themselves of education opportunities to do this, and there are farm technicians around that provide the service. It has not been brought to my attention that this has caused any added problems or costs or difficulties to the livestock sector.

Ms. Wowchuk: I thought that the veterinarians were lobbying for an increased fee schedule last fall, and some farmers were quite concerned that they were lobbying for quite a substantial increase in their fees. Although they did not go to the level the veterinarians wanted, there has been an increase in the fee structure, to my understanding, and that is what I was looking for.

Mr. Enns: My advice is that the member is correct, that initially the demand by the veterinarians was for considerable increase in their fee structure, but that does not surprise me. That is a negotiating tactic that is used by many organizations who feel that their services are of increasing value, but following extensive negotiations the Veterinary Services Commission approved a 7 percent fee increase for the year '93, and that compares to the requests on the part of the veterinarians which was for an 18 percent increase in the fee schedules. That simply was not acceptable to the commission, and after lengthy negotiations a decision was agreed to that provided for that 7 percent increase that I just indicated for '93 and followed by a 6 percent increase in the '94 fees.

Ms. Wowchuk: That in fact is a fairly substantial increase in comparison to other people in the public sector and the private sector in comparison to what farmers are in comparison to farm costs. That was one of the concerns that was raised when we were moving in this direction, that we would see an increase in fees. I just put that on the record. I do not expect that the minister will defend it or not defend it. I just say in comparison to the increases that we have seen in other areas, this is a fairly substantial increase in fees.

* (1920)

Mr. Enns: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I accept those comments as expressed by the honourable member for what they are worth. It is always a subjective matter in terms of—particularly in these times when we as governments impose on our own employees salary freezes. Indeed when we read about other sectors in the private sector, as we do about industrial workers perhaps in fear of a plant closure, as is the case with the 500 workers at the Abitibi plant in Pine Falls accepting, you know, voluntarily, even though they are well represented by one of the stronger labour organizations in the country, the united woodworkers union of America, accepting up to 5 and 10 percent rollbacks in salary because of the economic circumstances of the time.

Even under this atmosphere, that did not prevent, for instance, this government, who quite frankly does not have a reputation of handing out raises all that generously in the public sector, from recognizing that the nurses, taken comparably across the provinces, deserved a 26 percent increase a few years ago and were provided that.

There has been considerable concern expressed by both large and small animal practitioners that the average annual net income of veterinarians in Manitoba was considerably lower than comparable services in professionals in other parts of the country.

I think the responsibility the department and the minister does accept is that precisely at a time when we are stressing the importance of an expanding livestock industry, individual farmers and producers in Manitoba are recognizing that and are expanding livestock operations. They are expanding. Our beef herd, for instance, now is approaching or is just passing the all-time high records of beef numbers that we enjoyed in the early and the mid-'70s.

We have talked at length about the expansion in the hog industry, but it is not just that. You travel the landscape of Manitoba and you will come across all matter of livestock that were not there 15 or 20 years ago. Long-legged birds grace our landscape that one would normally only see in the

sand dunes of Africa or Australia, emus—what are these other ones—the ostriches.

I was invited to attend an ostrich seminar at the International Inn a few months ago, and I was pleased to go, partly because it intrigued me. I thought I would be coming into maybe a room of 30 or 40 people who got enthused about these birds, the ostriches. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, you will not believe me; in fact, you will think that I am pulling your leg, or that I am susceptible to my style of overstating the point or that I am exaggerating, but there were 550 people gathered at the International Inn at the 8th annual or 9th annual ostrich convention held here in the city of Winnipeg, and I was just blown away, to use the vernacular.

These are some of the changes that are taking place in the livestock end of agriculture in Manitoba. So I think this minister certainly would be extremely concerned that we maintain the highest possible level of veterinary services to provide the appropriate care for these animals, particularly in a climate and a time when a lot of people are watching us, people who are not engaged in agriculture, people who are not involved in any of these animals, but are extremely concerned about the welfare of the animals, want to know that people who are housing these animals, people who own these animals, people who are operating and trying to make a commercial business out of these animals, are doing it in an acceptable manner, in a humane manner that takes into consideration the welfare of our animal populations.

Ms. Wowchuk: After that lengthy answer, I would want to assure the minister that I would not want anyone to be denied a fair salary for the work that they do. If the veterinarians, he feels, are underpaid, then they should have a fair wage, but he should also recognize—and he has said his government has made some tough decisions. I hope that he will have as broad a perspective when it comes to the salaries of other people and keep as open a mind as he has with the veterinarians in their increase in salary.

I want to move on to another area. [interjection] On that one? If you want to ask, sure, go ahead.

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): The minister talked about ostrich farming. Could he give us a few details of how many farms there are in Manitoba and what is the population of ostriches?

Mr. Enns: I can just indicate in a general way, while Dr. Taylor is just checking his information to see whether he has the actual number of people who are engaged in some form of ostrich farming, it is relatively new, but—[interjection] Well, now there it is. Just when I was starting to make excuses for staff, they just come up with the numbers again. It is a constant source of wonder to me how they anticipate the honourable member's question.

We have for instance in, what I would call, the nontraditional livestock, in the province of Manitoba, first of all, some 1,700 bison. We have some 150 fallow deer; we have some 70 llamas or alpacas; we have some 700 wild boar; some 600 ostriches; 200 emus and 25 rheas. But coming back to that seminar I attended, it was one of my constituents, as a matter of fact, just living off the Perimeter Highway in the municipality of Rosser, who has a number of ostriches. If I recall correctly, he told me there are upwards to between 45 and 55 operations with ostriches in Manitoba.

Mr. Gaudry: The minister mentioned that there was wildlife or wild boars and elks or whatever. What controls does the provincial government have over these wild animal farms?

Mr. Enns: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, allow me to correct the honourable member. We do not—and under the official classification while I call them nontraditional, they are not referred to or are they on the same designation as wild. We do not have elk ranching in the province, which are under that designation, for instance. Bison, for whatever reason, are classified in the same category as domestic animals, although my reference to them as nontraditional, I think the honourable member will appreciate. The same thing applies to fallow deer, for instance, which are not native.

My recollection is the principal difference, in my understanding, of how the Department of Natural Resources and its Wildlife branch makes

the distinction is that these animals are not native in the wild to Manitoba, which the wild boar is not. For instance, although we call it a wild boar and it is not part of the traditional hog raising and pork industry in the province, they are not regarded under the rules and regulations in the Department of Natural Resources as under the designation 'Wildlife.'

So these facilities all would come under the kind of normal attention of our animal industry branch in terms of their treatment and in terms of responding to perhaps complaints that may be registered against owners of these animals.

I would be the first one to acknowledge that understandably—you know, we did not have emus and ostriches here a few years ago. So I think in fairness to the branch, but I do not say this lightly, I think that the responsibility will be on the branch and on the department that we will in effect respond with the appropriate attention by the department and eventually with appropriate regulations with respect to their humane handling of these animals, their housing of these animals.

As I said earlier, the whole question of animal welfare is one that the department is extremely sensitive to and is prepared to dedicate more time and resources to.

* (1930)

Mr. Gaudry: Some time back, not too long ago, there was a diseased bison or something. I believe it was in the Interlake area. Has that been controlled?

Mr. Enns: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, there was a situation where an animal already dead was brought into our veterinarian diagnostic centre at the campus at the university and was subsequently diagnosed—I do not know if definitively—but was believed to have had something that we deemed could well have been anthrax, which of course is a very serious disease and one that is required under law to be immediately notified under the federal animal health act.

This was done and I compliment everybody concerned, the federal Health people, our own people who were involved, and the operator who,

in my understanding, co-operated fully because it was of course very much in his interest.

We from the animal industry branch's point of view were of course extremely sensitive and vigilant to the fact that should it have become a more serious problem that it had very major potential consequences to our entire livestock industry, in the sense that trading partners become extremely nervous when they hear of this kind of difficulty and are all too quick to impose embargoes or indeed outright bans on the movement of animals into a country, say, like the United States.

But my information, again from Dr. Neufeld here, is that all activity in the herd has been declared absolutely normal, that extensive testing and retesting of the facilities, of the herds in question, have taken place, and that the issue has been satisfactorily dealt with.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, if the minister would correct something that he just said—or whether I misunderstood him. He said that we have no elk farming in Manitoba, and I do not believe that is accurate. In fact, I believe there are large numbers of elk that are in captivity.

I wonder if there is—although the government had indicated that they were going to end elk ranching and took some steps, those elk were not taken out of captivity. In fact, there is sale of elk out of this province. There is sale of elk horns, and I am not sure about whether there is any elk being sold in the form of meat right now, but I wonder what direction the government is going in.

Is it the intent of the government to expand elk ranching, and have there been any additional operations established? Or is the government going to carry through on the commitment that they made when they ended elk ranching and see those facilities that are now operating closed? It either has to be one way or another. You either end elk ranching and have none of it at all, or you open it up. The government, although they say they have ended elk ranching, it has not happened, and there are many of these animals in captivity and being raised right now for sale.

Mr. Enns: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I acknowledge and am aware of the fact that there are animals under permit as issued by the Department of Natural Resources. There is no formal elk ranching taking place in the province of Manitoba that, for instance, the Department of Agriculture has any hand in in terms of supporting or servicing. That is a question, as the member is well aware, because of the proximity of a particular operator in her constituency. I am not privy to what the precise arrangements are that were made that permitted these animals to remain in captivity.

You know, an operation came to a halt, but under permit there are elk that are still being raised. There is no prohibition from calves being sold out of province. There are adults available that are being kept for exhibit and other reasons. My information from the department is that there is no meat that is being used for human consumption as a result from these operations, and that is about all the information I can give the honourable member. I encourage her, though, to raise this issue with my colleague, the now Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger), when his Estimates come before this committee.

Ms. Wowchuk: In other provinces there are animals such as elk and deer being raised as domestic animals. Is there any work being done, is there any research being done by this government? I remember being at a conference once where one of the staff people from the Department of Agriculture, I believe it was a Ms. Honey who was at this conference, indicated that we were losing a real opportunity here in Manitoba because we were not pursuing that. I wonder if there is any attempt by this minister to pursue that field in Manitoba.

Mr. Enns: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the other afternoon during Question Period in the House I gently reminded the honourable member for Swan River that along that dusty road to Damascus there were many strange conversions having taken place since antiquity, and some even sooner or later like, as I recall reminding her, the Liberal Party and our Prime Minister embracing NAFTA after having fought so vigorously against

it during the election. But I must confess that as I travel that road from the third floor in the Department of Natural Resources to the office of the Minister of Agriculture on the first floor, on this particular subject matter of elk ranching one does ponder different attitudes and a different outlook on the question.

We, on the one hand, are constantly challenged as a department to try to provide for our farming population every possible opportunity for new and diversified forms of farming, if you like, for finding income levels that are not dependent on government subsidies, such as we find in some of our more traditional programs and for whom there may be some reason to believe they would not always be in place.

So we encourage our producers to search out niche markets in the house products, for instance, in the sugar beets, in the potatoes and in some of the nontraditional animals that I just provided some information for the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudy), whether it is ostriches or wild boar, bison.

It has come to my attention that some of the positions I held very dearly and strongly up on the third floor as Minister of Natural Resources ought to be reviewed, but then I am that kind of a minister that believes one must always look at new challenges. If you give me just a few more minutes I will be able to say that I will not have had to answer your question.

Pass. Can we pass this item?

Ms. Wowchuk: No, you have not passed it. In all seriousness, is the department looking at the value of this type of industry in other provinces and doing any comparisons? Are there any plans in the department to pursue, to open those doors in Manitoba? Is that a direction that the department is looking at?

(Mr. Bob Rose, Acting Deputy Chairperson, in the Chair)

Mr. Enns: No. I can state emphatically that the department and the government is not changing its direction with respect to the question of elk ranching, but I take this occasion to put on the record that I have asked the Animal Industry

branch to look more closely at the situation, the economics, the possibilities, the opportunities that occur, not just with respect to elk but particularly with respect to what is happening there in the significantly growing bison herd that we have.

* (1940)

In other words, I think it is appropriate for the department to, when new trends are developing, with different producers on the landscape, that we make it our business to use, where we have co-operation from an operator, an opportunity to gain some data, some experience. In this case, we have included in some instances, in one instance, also a study of what precisely an operator is doing with a small group of elk that he has on a premises which includes bison and other nontraditional livestock.

We have no intention of any policy change in mind, but it is helpful to me as Minister of Agriculture and helpful to the department to have an understanding of how these operations operate and what in fact are, if challenged or if the policy decision, if the whole question should be raised at some point in the future, that we have some knowledge from an operation from having reviewed or taken advantage of looking in, if you like, on how some of these operators are working with these animals.

Ms. Wowchuk: I appreciate that answer from the minister. I want to move onto the Soils and Crops area. One of the areas that I want to touch on in this area deals with stubble.

I would be prepared to pass a few sections. Just in the Animal Industry, and you see that there is a reduction in Supplies and Services in Animal Industry and then you go onto another area and you see a Supplies and Services reduction again. I wonder what is happening different in Supplies and Services. Is there a different way, something that is happening significantly in the way of communication or with computers, or what is the reason that we have had a reduction in that area? That is a fairly substantial reduction of some \$35,000.

Mr. Enns: Excuse me, I was momentarily distracted. The particular item on the—

Ms. Wowchuk: We were talking about passing the Animal Industry branch, and when you look under the Animal Industry branch under Other Expenditures on page 49, Supplies and Services, I just wonder what is happening that we have a—I know it may not be a significant amount, but I am wondering what is happening in differences in the operations. If we could answer it under Animal Industry it would probably be the same answer for other departments as well.

Mr. Enns: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I am advised that some of the specific reductions involve an \$18,000 decrease in the Manitoba Milk Recording Corporation's payment, a further \$17,300 decrease as a result of more in-house printed forms, and at greater efficiencies in monitoring our supplies. The member can appreciate that under the restricted budget circumstances, operating within the department throughout the department, managers have been requested and are in fact looking very closely, not just at the big ticket items, but the host of supplies that are involved in running today's offices.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): Item 4.(b) Animal Industry (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,546,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$488,700—pass.

4.(c) Veterinary Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,451,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$503,000—pass; (3) Grant Assistance \$467,600—pass.

4.(d) Soils and Crops (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits.

Mr. Enns: Perhaps I can just introduce Dr. Barry Todd who is the Director of Soils and Crops branch, now located in Carman. It was my privilege just yesterday morning to visit with Dr. Todd and his group in the facilities at Carman. It was an extremely interesting, worthwhile staff visit. With that, we commend his section of the Estimates to your consideration.

Ms. Wowchuk: I will begin by asking some questions about the Crop Diversification Centres. When we look at the department moving towards a new vision, we see that the main centre, as the minister has indicated, is in the Carberry area.

There are four satellite facilities: Portage, Melita, Roblin and Winkler areas. I would want to know what is happening—are there specific crops that are being tested at each of those areas, and also how those sites were chosen for the satellite sites? There is no site in the Interlake area, which is quite different, and there is not perhaps anything farther north. Are there plans to further extend these sites? I guess, let us begin with the four sites and what is tested at them and why they were chosen in those particular areas.

Mr. Enns: Well, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, essentially the main centre located at Carberry was a very welcome addition to our overall research and development program that was essentially instituted by the federal government. We are pleased to say that certainly with the strong influence of the provincial department and the province, we were able to include in that operation two satellite operations at Roblin and Melita.

With respect to the reasoning for the siting of these specific areas, although I do not pretend to have all the information as to what all is anticipated in the overall thrust of these production centres, I was involved in some of the initial discussions even in my portfolio of Natural Resources. The very main portion of the thrust is irrigation, and it is the need to find, continue to research the very best information about the appropriate and judicious use of supplementary water as supplied by irrigation.

The honourable member is well aware that this is a sensitive area with respect to many Manitobans, who are always concerned about how water is being used in terms of commercial operations.

Carberry is, of course, the centre of one of our major potato growing areas and probably one of the areas that has some of the most extensive irrigation, you know, in context with that potato industry that is in that area. It is also the area where there is a considerable amount of controversy. It sits on the province's largest aquifer, the Assiniboine River aquifer, and it is important from us for our province to fully understand the hydraulics of water.

The kind of question that the honourable member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) asked a little while ago, we can say with confidence how much water can we permit or allow to be used, in this case not by hog farmers but by potato growers, without doing a long-term or permanent damage to the aquifer; that would be taking away that natural resource from future generations of young farmers for years to come down the line. So that was a principal reason for locating in the area at Carberry.

* (1950)

The areas of the southwest, the Melita area, we have always viewed that area in terms of soil make-up, soil composition, of having a potential future for the kind of cropping conditions that could employ the use of supplemental water through irrigation, and it is traditionally one of our more drought-prone areas of the province with the water supply being of concern. So that was the reason for the satellite section to be set up there.

The Roblin area was another specific reason, and I am looking to my crops director if he cannot confirm it.

We are engaged in some experimental irrigation work in that area with effluent irrigation, which the members may be interested to learn. That is again an area that understandably attracts attention and one that for us to be able to speak definitively about the impact that that has on the environment, the values that has to cropping certain crops in that area, the long-term effects that it has on the natural landscape, was the specific reason we chose the Roblin area for the other centre.

The centre will have as one of its main objectives to glean the best possible information about how we can add value to our cropping productions with irrigation, and how that impacts on the landscape and how we can, with confidence, determine what our appropriate amounts of water to be drawn from this are. This is an aquifer, or ground water supplies and so forth.

Ms. Wowchuk: So the main focus of each of these centres, Carberry, Portage, Melita, all of the centres there, is to test new crops and to test how they would grow under irrigation and how we can

expand the use of irrigation to improve the amount of crop. The focus of each of these centres is to test irrigation then.

Mr. Enns: Yes, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, the area lends itself to a combination of both, to gather the kind of data that will allow us to provide the kind of advice that producers rightly ask of us, compared to what? Compared to dry land operation? There will be research and data collected on a field of potatoes under dry land conditions as compared to a similar crop being grown under irrigation, and it very much includes forages as well in this experimentation. The member is right, we want to get more information.

Much of the information about irrigation regrettably dates back to an era when there was very little known about what happens to land, to soil when injudicious use of water is applied, leaching effects, saline salts coming to the surface, the amounts, the types of water. Particularly if these questions are not researched and answered, we allow practices to develop that can affect the—not in the best interests of the long-term sustainability of the soil to carry crop production in these cases.

So that is what we look for in that centre. It is a very welcome addition to the agriculture scene in Manitoba, and although the principal contributor in terms of capital is the federal government, under Dr. Todd's direction we are taking maximum advantage of the situation by being very much involved in the program development and in the direction that the research is taking place. It is certainly in our interest to do so.

Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, just while I have the microphone for a moment, I am also delighted to announce that we have reorganized within the department and in fact a formation of a new branch that combines the Marketing and Farm Business Management aspects of the branch. The new director for that branch is Ms. Dori Gingera who joins us at the table. Ms. Gingera has considerable experience in the Department of Agriculture. She comes to this position most recently from heading up as regional director one of the most—well, I should not say this—all

regions of Manitoba are interesting and challenging, but certainly the central region with its emphasis, its concentration of value-added crops of the vegetable industry, of some of the finest traditional farm cereal crops in the area, brings that background to her new position as director of the Marketing and Farm Business Management, the new branch that has been put together. That is the next item here, and I offer to the committee members that we can switch both ways.

Ms. Wowchuk: Again, going back to the crop diversification at Carberry and in the other areas, I take it then that there is also monitoring done on the negative impacts that could be the result of irrigation on the salinization and other effects. Is that also being monitored, and if so is it too early in the program to have any results of it?

Mr. Enns: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I am pleased to have this opportunity just to provide a little broader description of what is occurring and will be occurring at this centre in the near future. There will be, for instance, under a project entitled Ground Water Protection and Agriculture Practices in Manitoba—these are just kind of general headings—nitrogen fertilizer and management on potatoes brought on by the Keystone Vegetable Producers' Association.

We have other organizations that are partners with us in the development of these programs. Evaluation of an irrigation scheduling model for potatoes. That is being done in concert with the Soil Sciences people at the University of Manitoba that we can develop a model for potato irrigation. Fertilizer requirements for sustainable production of potatoes grown under irrigation in Manitoba. Again, a project that is helped along and monitored by the Soil Sciences people in Manitoba. With this kind of work the centre is providing, I think, valuable opportunities for some of our professional people in the academic community at the university to be involved along with our own people in the department.

* (2000)

Water management and conservation is a concern that is being sponsored in co-operation

with the Association of Irrigators in Manitoba. Soil quality, water quality and soil conservation—a lot of the emphasis is on what irrigation does to soil and how best we can conserve the water that we are putting on the soil, time of application. What is frequently misunderstood—for instance, some of the best times to irrigate is while it is raining, in terms of making sure that the available water is being used for the intended purposes, to provide moisture to the growing crop, not evaporating in 85 or 90 degree high winds and sunshine, where only maybe 20 percent or 30 percent of the water that we are using actually is going to help crop development.

These are just a little aside as to the kind of research that is being done. Irrigation sustainability—and that is an important question about what is the long-term future about irrigation. As I said earlier, there certainly have been some less than desirable results, particularly in some of the southern jurisdictions in the United States, where indiscriminate irrigation has been allowed to be proceeded with, an issue that is topical and important to us and of political concern to us, the entire question of monitoring the Assiniboine Delta Aquifer, Assiniboine Delta River model, and there are some considerable amounts. The monitoring program, some \$100,000 has been established which means that hydraulic water engineers will, with precision, monitor the effects of the aquifer taking X number of gallons of water out for irrigation purposes, and over an extended period of time, a number of years I would imagine, we will be able to say with some authority and integrity that this happens if we do this.

So in the future when we in the Department of Agriculture or in the department of Water Resources grant a would-be potato producer the permits to irrigate X number of acres of land in a given area, we can with this kind of work say with confidence that the water is there, that the water can be used at these levels, at these output levels in a sustainable manner; in other words, that it will not impact the long-term level or future of the aquifer. That is what we have to get on with doing in Manitoba, where we maximize our opportunities.

Nobody, least of all this minister, least of all my government, wants to pursue economic development for economic development sake. There is a charge against us that we do develop economically and that is something that we are reminded of every day in the House by opposition members and by the general public who are concerned about the ability of governments to provide the social services that we all require.

So this is the kind of work, in my judgment, that is extremely necessary, that enables us to be able to, with confidence, talk about expanding our potato production in this area or, a little while earlier, saying we can expand hog production because we know that water is there in sufficient quantities. We know that we can institute by regulation. In this instance, the regulation would be drawn up principally by our Soils and Crops branch that spells out very clearly the kind of acceptable farm practice that will not do long-term or permanent injury or damage to our soil.

Ms. Wowchuk: Earlier in the day, the minister indicated that in the Interlake area, there is a large water supply that could be used. At that time, we were talking about hog production, but there is a lot of water in the Interlake area. There is also a tremendous interest in forage production in the Interlake. People there have done a tremendous amount of work to try to find a market for alfalfa pellets, and they have to some degree been successful on that.

I wonder if any consideration was given, when you were choosing the sites for these research centres, whether any consideration was given to establishing a site in the Interlake, because that is a different type of area, a different growth area. I know the minister is talking more about vegetable crops and diverse, various crops that are more related to the southern part of the province, but I think we also have to look at development in other areas. I wonder—as I say, the Interlake is a different land base, a different type of area, but we do know that hay can grow quite well there—whether there was any consideration to setting up a satellite site in that area in order to obtain a different database of information in the province.

Mr. Enns: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I accept that advice. I think it is good advice. I think it is certainly in the interests of the overall agricultural community to extend to as representative a base when we are expending, as we are expending in this instance, some substantial public dollars on research and development and to make that as representative of the province as we can. Officials in the department are hearing your request.

I would like to think that as we clearly get established with the centre at Carberry and perhaps after some period of time with the—gather information in places like Roblin or Melita, I, quite frankly, do not see why we cannot have a bit of a revolving of these satellites in different regions of the province or an expansion of them. It would depend on the resources that we have and the support that, in instances, we continue to receive from our federal partner in this program.

But I certainly cannot argue against the soundness of the advice that the member is providing. In different regions and different areas there are, of course, different soil conditions that lead to different cropping interests.

We just had, during the supper hour, a review of where we are heading with some of our—I digress for a moment—with where our safety programs are going, you know, the GRIP programs and the crop insurance programs, and it is a concern that should be there for all of us, these very substantial amounts of dollars that Canada and the provinces are expending on supporting our grain farmers. I certainly do not want to be misquoted. They need our support while the grain prices continue to be where they are at and where we are facing the competition of the American subsidized grain and the European subsidized grain, but the end-all kind of resolution that we should be encouraging within the Department of Agriculture is to steadily, not in an unplanned way, to examine any and all opportunities for alternative forms of production.

I was delighted, just in the few hours, the short hour that I spent with the Soils and Crops people in Carman the other morning, to hear of the different little—I think I made reference to different little

initiatives that are taking place. In some cases they are very relatively small, little programs in horticulture or in some other specialty area, but I certainly encourage the department that we ought not to turn any of these programs aside.

They are all worthwhile, and collectively it is what, quite frankly, has served Manitoba well. We have ridden out better some of the difficulties than the province of Saskatchewan, for instance, where we have one crop like wheat being sold predominantly in the overall farm income. Our producers, despite the fact that there may be setbacks in any one sector at a given time, but the greater diversification, the wiser use of our land base, we use our water correctly and we shelter our producers from price collapses if we are so totally dependent on one or two agricultural commodities. The more diversified our base is, the less chance that they will collapse all at the same time, and in fact the greater opportunity, the greater the resources that governments have available to help that particular sector that may find itself in need in a given situation.

* (2010)

So I would take that advice to heart and see whether we cannot move or extend these satellite operations. I want a little commitment from the honourable member for Swan River. If one shows up next year and it is in the Interlake, then I want her to remember that it is on her good advice that I put that satellite station in the great, grand, glorious constituency of Lakeside, for instance, that deserves that kind of attention.

Ms. Wowchuk: Well, I can tell the minister if he puts a matching one in Swan River constituency we will have no disagreement whatsoever.

In seriousness, I am pleased that the minister would consider that, and I think once you have collected the data that you need in a particular area of the province, it would seem reasonable to move to other areas of the province to collect the data and look at what crops can be developed to allow for diversification and other opportunities for farmers throughout the province.

The minister had indicated a couple of things. He said that the majority of the funding for this

program comes from the federal government. The question I have, is this an ongoing funding from the federal government? Also, how much money does this program cost the province? How many jobs are created as a result of it? Is there additional permanent staff that is hired, or is it just part-time staff? What would we look at as staff years or jobs created through this fund?

Mr. Enns: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I am advised that all of the capital funding required in the project is provided by the federal government. There is a 10-year agreement with respect to the sharing of operating costs of the centre which total in the neighbourhood of \$750,000 annually and are shared three ways, by the federal government, the provincial government, and the industry producers, principally the potato industry in this instance, but others as well that co-operated.

In terms of job creation, from our perspective there are not that many. We have drawn people from different departments, Natural Resources, Water Resources, from Soils and Crops, from Dr. Todd's shop for a total of about three additional staff and one from Rural Development. What has happened is we have contributed from Rural Development, from Natural Resources three existing staff and created one additional new position for that centre.

The federal government, of course, has hired a centre manager, a gentleman by the name of Peter Fehr, and a field supervisor and are making arrangements for staffing the office. The member will appreciate that this is still a very new centre that is just getting around to being fully operational.

I do not believe that there will be a heavy, you know, manpower component to this centre, but it involves, as I said in the brief description of the programs, a lot of other people, whether it is from the Soil Sciences branch, division of the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Manitoba, whether it involves the Association of Irrigators in Manitoba, whether it involves the vegetable growers and so forth, and, of course, some of the industry people who have a great interest in what is going on, people that are producing, processing the

potatoes, both at Portage, the McCain people and the Nestle people at Carberry. There will be some additional summer employment provided, and hopefully that will occur this coming summer. I cannot give you specific numbers—I am advised by my deputy minister that most of these projects in themselves, the ones that I earlier listed, will have some employment opportunities in various facets of monitoring or actually some physical field work involved in running the irrigation trials, setting up the equipment and so forth.

I will be in a position—we have no track record to go on in terms of what was required last year. A year from now, I will be in a position to provide more factual information. Ten years from now, as I intend to be here, I will have a good 10-year record to give you as to how the centre operated, you see.

Ms. Wowchuk: I have not had an opportunity to visit the centre. I hope to be able to do that very soon, but if I had, I probably would not have to ask you some of these questions. I assume, as I listen to how the testing is done, that test plots are on private land or that the centre does not own the land, so then some of the farmers on whose land this is being done would also be doing some of the work. Is that accurate?

Mr. Enns: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, the member is partly right. There is every intention of conducting a lot of this work on privately owned land, but I am advised that the centre did in fact include some land in the original establishment. Upwards to a half section of land is owned by the centre, and it will also be the site for some specific testing being done on the centre's land, on their own land. So there will a combination of work being done and trials being conducted and surveys and monitoring being done on both private and public land.

I am further advised that we have a further access to land that was owned by Agriculture Canada Research Station at Portage that will also provide ready access by the centre to land that they have full and immediate jurisdiction over to conduct different trials and tests.

Ms. Wowchuk: The minister also indicated that there was at the present time a monitoring being

done on the Assiniboine aquifer, and I wonder how long that is going to run before results are available and when the results of that monitoring will be available.

Mr. Enns: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I am advised that the monitoring that is described in this program is—there will be a continual process, likely over the lifetime of the 10-year agreement. I am also advised that we have of course, as one would expect, been involved in a considerable amount of monitoring in that area in the past as a result of the demand for water for irrigation purposes as well as for other proposals that from time to time have come forward. It has been a target for investigation and monitoring by the Water Resources branch of the Department of Natural Resources for some number of years.

Ms. Wowchuk: Can the minister indicate whether the department is involved in any other irrigation projects at the present time, whether there are funds going into any other project and, if there are, which projects are these?

* (2020)

Mr. Enns: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, yes, we are involved with a group that refers to themselves as the Agassiz irrigation association. This is a group that is in the south-central part of the province that essentially is looking and in fact is involved in and engaged in the capturing of surface water in that area by means of the construction of oversized dugouts, if I can use that term.

The federal government and their agency, PFRA, are helping them, and in some instances are perhaps the lead agency, I think in some of the physical works that they are talking about. Again, it involves the use of water, so we of course are involved as a province. I know that there is—I think I believe just recently there had been certain sums of money approved for the development of that.

The project is in effect well started, you might say. I am aware that if the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) were here he could be providing us some greater information, but there are eight or nine or 10 of these enlarged dugouts in place. They

are designed to essentially provide supplementary water for a given number of acres. It has some very attractive features to it in the sense that what they are using this water, which tends to, of which there is a surplus of during the spring runoff period, and if it can be brought to use in this way, it will avoid some of the other questions about the use of water that are sometimes troubling and need more information. It does not access ground water supplies. It does not access existing aquifers. It merely traps surface waters in the spring, and it is being driven to some extent by industry needs, the needs of the potato industry.

We are being told repeatedly by our major processors that, yes, there is room for expansion in the potato industry, but they are demanding more incessantly that the potatoes be grown with the aid of irrigation and supplemental water for greater consistency in production, increased productivity, and for whatever reasons the industry best knows to themselves. What areas like Morden, Winkler or Altona areas we are finding or, indeed, what precludes potatoes from being grown in the southwest in the Melita area is the availability of water. Indeed, what has driven some of these people particularly is the possible threat that they would lose their potato contracts in time unless they devise some way of bringing potatoes under some level of irrigation. It is important to that area, and I am pleased to see that they are proceeding.

I, of course, had a better solution for them, but that was not to be. I thought I would just trickle a little bit of water out of the Assiniboine and send it south, but that caused great consternation in the minds of some and so now they are finding their means this way. I congratulate them.

Ms. Wowchuk: I congratulate them as well. I think it is a very innovative project, and I wonder how much money is the government putting into this project.

Mr. Enns: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I cannot speak with absolute sureness. Through a combination of a program that we have with Canada, we are providing some \$210,000 which, in effect, I am advised is really federal money, and

I am pleased to acknowledge that anytime that we get a contribution from Canada.

There is an additional request for some additional funding through the Department of Natural Resources for an additional \$100,000, and a request before the Department of Rural Development under their REDI program for an additional \$300,000, and the Manitoba Crop Diversification Centre for \$200,000. The status of these requested funds is not known to me at this time. It is my understanding that the monies from the Department of Natural Resources, \$100,000, is more or less in place. But, again, if the member wants to pursue this matter, I would ask her to take the opportunity to direct those questions directly to either Mr. Derkach, the Minister of Rural Development, or—

Ms. Wowchuk: I guess what I was looking for was out of this department but—out of this department then it would be from the Manitoba-Canada Crop Diversification that the money would be coming from.

Mr. Enns: Yes, \$210,000.

Ms. Wowchuk: Plus an additional?

Mr. Enns: Mr. Acting Deputy Chair, I just wonder if I can interrupt for a moment to indicate that while we have Mr. Todd with us, we would not be adverse to dealing with the other resolution that comes under his jurisdiction, which is—I was just passed that paper—the item appropriation 3.7, which is the Canada-Manitoba—pardon me here. If you note on top of page 19, 3.7, the Canada-Manitoba Agreement on Agricultural Sustainability, on page 19, top of the page, that is the source. That is the program under which this \$210,000 is being flowed.

The members will note it is appreciable appropriation of in excess of \$1 million. It “provides funding assistance through local organizations which provide technical support to producers to promote soil conservation practices on the farm.”

We would not deem it out of order if honourable members of the committee would want to ask questions having to do with that appropriation at the same time we are dealing with Soils and Crops

because they both come under the jurisdiction of Dr. Todd.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I just want to go back to those numbers a little bit, because the minister had said that there was \$110,000 of federal money, and then he said from the Manitoba Crop Diversification Centre there was \$200,000. So does that mean that there is a total of \$410,000 jointly from the federal and provincial governments that is going to this project?

Mr. Enns: The member is correct—let me just correct. She said \$110,000. It is \$210,000 that is essentially federal money, and the further request from the Crop Diversification Centre for another \$200,000 should also be from the federal government. We are counting on the good graces and influence of the honourable member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) to talk to his counterparts in Ottawa and tell them that I do not really mean any of the nasty things that I, from time to time, say about his cousins in Ottawa. We need the money here for this program.

* (2030)

An Honourable Member: You seem to be getting along very well with Mr. Goodale.

Mr. Enns: As a matter of fact, I do.

Ms. Wowchuk: I want to move on to the crop residue, the stubble burning issue, and I believe that this comes under this section. The stubble burning act was implemented and has been carried through for one season. It caused a bit of irritation for some farmers, and I am not sure how extensive that was, but I know in some parts of the province there were farmers who were charged. I wonder if the minister could tell us how many people were charged under that act, how many of those charges held up in court and how many of them were not held up in court—I guess, if he has any information on how much the fines were. One of the concerns that people had, and the courts had in fact, when I talked to some of the people, they said that the fine of \$1,000 was very high and in fact they felt it was unrealistic in comparison to some other charges. That was resulting in some of the

charges being dropped, so if we could have some information on that.

Mr. Enns: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, let me, first of all, just say that it was impressive to view the maps that again the Crops branch have available and showed me in Carman the other morning about the impact, the difference of the burning last year over previous years. Taken by the remote-sensing facilities of the Department of Natural Resources, it was really quite impressive to see the impact of the regulations and how they have changed the pattern of fires and really brought that situation under control. When you see it visually in that way, it is worthwhile to do that.

Some 58 tickets were actually issued to farmers for violations for burning outside of the authorized times. They were spread through different municipalities, principally in the Red River Valley, I suppose: De Salaberry, in the southern end of the valley, receiving 11; Macdonald eight; Morris five; Cartier five. I will not go through them all. Of those fined, there was a fairly—who can explain a judge's mind? They ranged in convictions and costs of upwards to \$1,000 total severity of the fine, all the way down to \$150 and \$50 fines, one \$1 fine, the statement being made by the Justice department, I suppose, about what we were doing in Agriculture. There were several discharged with no fines; several found guilty by default; 10 were acquitted outright; five were stayed; and there are still eight pending.

So there is quite a range of penalties handed out as a result of these convictions, but the overall effects of the program, what the exercise was all about was certainly accomplished. The atmospheric conditions in the city of Winnipeg principally was noticeably different, and then that shows up again graphically when you view the fire situation.

I take this opportunity for the record to commend that there was a great deal of co-operation involved between the departments of Natural Resources and the Environment and our own Department of Agriculture. Of course, I appreciate it was not always fully appreciated, but a great deal of co-operation with, by far, the vast

majority of farmers, who all together were already facing in many instances in some areas a very difficult harvest year, very difficult harvest conditions, understandably and acceptably did not always appreciate the extra aggravation of being called on by an RCMP officer about the fact that a fire that perhaps was burning on their land was not yet out by a prescribed hour.

We will work with the Environment people as to whether or not there are some refinements in the program that can be effected, whether or not on first flush we can redraw some of the boundaries in terms of how it is applied. But, all in all, the program certainly was effective, and there were at least a few letters of appreciation to the editor of the paper and a few calls to the talk shows by urbanites appreciating the fact that the circumstances that brought on these regulations were in fact not repeated again. In other words, the job that our people were doing was effective.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I too want to say that I think that this act did work.

I remember being in Winnipeg the year before, and it was unbearable. I remember waking up one morning and you just about could not see across the city, and that is not good. There are people who have health problems, and certainly we have to change our practices in farming. This is one of the ways that we can change, although it may be difficult for some farmers. As the minister had indicated, I think that the majority of the farmers were very co-operative, although they grumbled a little bit about having to change some of their practices.

In the end, I am sure that we will all see the net benefit of this, because certainly burning is not one of the best practices that we can have. However, if we are going to move away from burning, we have to look at alternate uses for our straw. We had talked about looking at doing research into varieties of grain that would have a shorter straw on them.

So the question that I have is, is there research being done in Manitoba at the present time to look at different varieties which would result in the shorter straw? The other area that I believe we

have to look at is finding an alternate use for the straw. I know that there are people who are working aggressively to look at these, and one of them is the agri-pulp industry, which is greeted very favourably by some people who think that we have to find an alternate source of pulp.

* (2040)

So I ask if the department is doing any work in that area as to finding alternate uses for the straw, whether they are involved with it? I have one more question on this, but I will leave it at that for now.

Mr. Enns: Well, if some of these ideas come to fruition, it is going to throw a real spin to our plant scientists who—the member is correct, you know—among other things, have been working towards reducing the amount, the length of straw. But if the straw becomes all of a sudden a value-added crop, we will be going in the other direction.

Allow me just to read into the record some of the initiatives that are currently underway. We have provided various levels of funding; again, we take it pretty seriously in the department. We have the Sustainable Development fund as a source for some of the funding, because that fund is meant for innovative new ideas. It may not always succeed, but it provides some funding, which, quite frankly, the department would be hard-pressed to find if they had to find it from within.

We have a project that is looking very seriously to producing flax fibre from waste flax straw in Manitoba, and insulation for a funding approval of \$25,000. We have a program that looks seriously at the straw particle board.

There is a firm, Isoboard Enterprises that is looking very seriously in central Manitoba, even looking at the location—the members might have noted a news story last night on television on that proposal—apparently they are also looking at North Dakota for a potential site. That is a very exciting one, where they are talking about a major plant—employing upwards to 100 to 150 people—requiring a substantial amount of straw, I believe 160,000 tonnes, in that order, and talking about paying upwards to \$25 to \$30 a tonne, which, in effect, is a pretty significant income from

a product that up to now has been a problem or has simply been burnt.

The feasibility of using pelletized straw as fuel is being supported by a small grant of \$2,250 by both the Energy department and our own Agriculture department.

An agri-pulp project was getting a substantial grant of \$150,000. This is the project that is looking seriously at the potential to provide making pulp out of which various products and paper products can be made. This gentleman has had numerous meetings throughout the different parts of Manitoba—I believe we are talking about Dr. Wong here—and captured the imagination of a lot of the farmers. They have formed a group that is supportive of him. He is at this moment, as I understand, doing trial runs, or arranging for trial runs to be undertaken at a paper mill in Vulcan, Alberta, where he could make the arrangements for some of these trial runs to further the research in that regard. This is probably that project, along with the Isoboard project, are two certainly very real opportunities that would require very substantial amounts of straw in the province of Manitoba.

Then there are other projects that are before us, for requests that have not yet been approved, using straw as a heat source for grain drying by the Biomass Energy Institute, several programs along those lines using straw as a heat source, some calling for it to be pelletized into heat fuel.

Commercial straw projects, again, pulp for containers and building materials, is asking for consideration. Another particle board by a group is also showing interest in the province. So there are a whole host of very good opportunities there.

Then you come along with some requests that are just mind-boggling, that there is a serious request for compacting oat straw bales in the trade show in Taiwan, far across the sea. It is amazing what can come out of the woodwork.

I feel that there is some reasonable hope for optimism that one or some of these will come into play in the next little while. Whether they will be at the level that we would like them to is open to question, but I think if we have one or two kind of

pioneering the way, then it is going to be a question of little ranchers like myself, becoming concerned about where I am going to find straw for bedding for my livestock, and not being all that happy that I will remember my promotion of this alternate use for straw to my detriment when I am forced to pay for straw that up to now I have been able to, if I get it off in time, and do not hold up cultivation of the farmer involved, for gratis, as many livestock people are doing throughout the province of Manitoba.

Ms. Wowchuk: It certainly appears that if even a few of those projects succeed it will be a benefit to the economy of farmers, as you say. It will do away with burning of straw, which is a problem.

I missed the earlier part of the minister's answer where he was indicating where the funds are coming from. If the money to support these projects does not come out of the Department of Agriculture—and he had said earlier where they were coming from.

Mr. Enns: We are providing some relatively modest funds. I noticed in one or two of those proposals \$1,000 or \$2,000, but the majority of the projects, in fact, virtually all of the projects are coming from the Sustainable Development fund. That is a fund that is generated by various levies, taxes, if you like, that we have imposed on goods that we feel are offending the environment, like nonrenewable diapers, tires, some of these areas.

I have encouraged the department, and the officials have taken that up to access this fund for these purposes, because it is meant to be directed at proposals that have as a principal innovation, some environmental ring to it, because these are monies from an environmental fund.

Ms. Wowchuk: We are often questioned about where the funds from the taxes that are collected on the used tires and disposable diapers are going, and I certainly think this is a good cause. If we can find an alternate use, and I did not realize that they were coming from that fund.

The whole area of the stubble-burning issue took a lot of promotion. I believe there was a program, the Crop Residue Burning authorization program. What was the cost of that program, and how was it

managed, who implemented the program, and how much had it cost us to make the public aware or the farmers aware that they had to change their practices? What other information was provided through this fund?

* (2050)

Mr. Enns: Well, I would like to first and foremost acknowledge the leadership and the work that was done in this regard by my immediate predecessor, the Honourable Glen Findlay, and the department in bringing together really the appropriate people representing appropriate organizations that contributed to what I consider introduction of, yes, a somewhat controversial, if you like—it was, quite frankly, and for those who view this present government as having a heavy makeup of rural and agricultural farm representation, it, quite frankly, took a bit of political will to impose this on our farmers. After all, the idea of stubble burning was virtually regarded as a right by some agricultural users for many years.

So I take this opportunity to express my appreciation to my colleague and those in the department and also a host of other people, such as Dr. Peter Sarsfield, Director of Health & Wellness, Manitoba Health, from the Department of Health, along with our own Dale Partridge, Senior Soil Specialist; along with Bill Toews, who is a farmer representative from the Keystone Agricultural Producers organization; along with Leanne Knutson, another farm representative, also from the Keystone Producers organization; along with a Kim Lachuta, member and spokesperson for the Concerned Parents of Children with Asthma; Pat Miles, an employee of the Manitoba Lung Association; Mr. Mark Anseeuw, a farmer at large from the Oak Bluff area.

So this was a working committee that resolved to try to find a resolution to the issue—my commendation to them all for having worked diligently. The member asked for costs associated with bringing all of this together. I suspect they were minimal.

There were certainly I think some costs associated in hosting and bringing together meetings, but most of these people were public

servants who were providing their services in addition to their general job description. That, by the way, is not recognized often enough. Particularly, senior civil servants are often called upon to serve without additional remuneration added to their regular workload on these kinds of problems.

So that certainly from the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Environment and the Department of Health, that would have been the case. I am not aware, the department has not given me any specific—I thank Dr. Todd for the information. For the entire operation, which includes a considerable amount of communications, advertising, both radio and in the papers, advertising time zones, printing up brochures, and to operate the program, which was a daily program, we would have to take in weather conditions, weather information upon which a judgment would be made as to whether permission would be granted to burn or not to burn.

The entire operation cost some \$70,000, and I think that is a relatively modest and acceptable charge for the cleaner and more acceptable atmosphere that we provided to principally the residents of Winnipeg.

Just a bit of further information. To realize the total, we received, we handled a total of some 19,000 individual calls. I can give a further breakout from where they came to, but it just gives an indication that it was an active period for the committee that helped us in managing this straw burning program.

Ms. Wowchuk: Thank you for that information. I take it then that the costs with the set-up of the program would have been higher last year, and although they will be ongoing costs in the upcoming years, that they should be lower. Is that accurate?

Mr. Enns: The member is quite right. We are confident that having gone through the additional start-up costs, in some cases were first-time costs, that we anticipate that the costs of operating this program will be considerably less. We have budgeted in the '94-95 Estimates but we are now considering some \$45,000 that we believe we will

be able to operate the program. If there is some problem, then we will look to supplement it, but that is the figure that we have put in place for this year.

Ms. Wowchuk: Another, we have been talking quite a bit about crop diversification and value-added jobs to the rural communities. An area that there is a tremendous amount of interest in in several parts of the province is the production of ethanol. I wonder whether the government has done any research and is offering support to any groups at the present time who are looking at setting up such an operation.

Mr. Enns: Yes, indeed, the interest in the expansion of the production of ethanol in the province of Manitoba is being expressed in different communities. I can report to her that one of our senior people working out of the special economic development committee of cabinet has visited with the Swan River committee on this subject matter.

They are, it is my understanding, providing some assistance to that committee to provide for in the first instance perhaps an approach to the REDI program to find some necessary funds to pursue the feasibility study that would be required prior to any further decisions that are to be made.

There is, of course, considerable interest in the sense that our American friend, President Clinton, has taken some steps that could considerably enhance the market outlooks for ethanol by suggesting that his environmental people are considering passing some pretty serious laws affecting the mandated use of a certain percentage of ethanol in the vehicles of the United States.

Whether or not that comes to pass is up to question. Besides the very real belief that ethanol is a more acceptable fuel, alternative fuel to those that we are currently using in the province, we are as supportive as we can wherever we get these inquiries.

Ms. Wowchuk: In light of the fact that President Clinton has taken steps or indicates there is a possibility of the increased use of ethanol in the United States, and the minister recognizes that this would certainly be value-added jobs if we were to

be able to produce more ethanol here in Canada, I wonder if the minister has had any discussion with his federal counterparts as to the possibility of introducing legislation which would result in the need for more ethanol in Canada.

Mr. Enns: Well, I can only note that there is, I think, a growing interest in the use of ethanol generally speaking in Canada. I have some difficulty, but that is just because I am that kind of a guy, and that is what separates me from you, quite frankly, the member from Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), and I think highly of you and your brothers, as you know I do, and your entire family, but I philosophically shy away from having the heavy hand of government mandate anything to anybody, quite frankly, believing as I do that life, property and liberty are at risk whenever Legislatures sit.

I do not believe in overt government control where it is not necessary. So I have trouble with saying that you shall use 50 percent of this fuel in your vehicle. It certainly has an impact on the many thousands of people and the many millions, if indeed not billions of dollars that are currently in place and invested in the petroleum industry. If ethanol proves itself to be in the marketplace an increasingly more desirable fuel, I will be the first one, and I use ethanol, by the way, I will be the first and others will be the first to begin lining up at the stations that are selling ethanol as a fuel.

* (2100)

We do as a government provide a tax break for the ethanol fuel today and have for the last number of years since its introduction. It is several cents on the energy tax that is imposed by the Ministry of Finance to, in fact, give the ethanol industry a little bit of help in competing with the established people in the energy business, the Shells, the Essos—[interjection] No, I think that goes probably to the manufacturer. It is a tax, he could certainly pass it on to the pump and encourage its increased use but, again, that becomes a marketing decision. You see, I do not think that it need be government directed.

Ms. Wowchuk: I really did not want to have the minister change his philosophical views, but he is

spending the better part of the day talking about alternative crops, ways of enhancing the farmers, and I thought that he might extend that interest onto the grain producers, who are having a difficult time selling their grain, and that grain at a very low price, and the reason I was pursuing that is, I was just wondering whether he was looking at possible alternate uses for the grain. We have talked about using grains for fuel, for cattle feed, and we talked about the change in the method of payment which is going to affect farmers. I was only looking at whether or not the minister was pursuing some way to help out the grain producers as well, but that was the reason for the question, and whether he was interested in developing the ethanol industry. One of the ways to help the ethanol industry would be certainly if there were a mandate to blend a certain amount of ethanol into the fuel. I did not expect that that was going to happen immediately.

I just wondered whether there was any consideration being given to that, but the minister has indicated that that is not in the cards at the present time, so we will not pursue that any further, and perhaps at another time we can talk about those.

Mr. Enns: I want to be very clear that any comments that I have made on the subject ought not to be in any way misinterpreted that we in the Department of Agriculture are not in any way supportive of any initiatives that are out there to use grain for the production of ethanol. Senior department staff are ready and willing and offer all of the advice they can when they are asked by sister departments, such as Industry, Trade and technology, to follow up a proposal, whether it is in Swan River, or with an expansion at Minnedosa or elsewhere. We certainly are very supportive of that as alternative income opportunities for grain farmers.

So I just wanted to make that very clear. I ought to perhaps discipline myself a bit more not to make personal observations during the discourse of these Estimates because they might be confused as becoming part and parcel of the directions that my Deputy Minister Greg Lacomby sends out on a daily basis to the department.

Ms. Wowchuk: One of the areas that this government made changes in was the reduced funding to the weed control districts. I want to know what has happened to the weed districts as a result of that reduction of funding. Are they still in existence or have any of them been eliminated because they could not operate without the funding?

Mr. Enns: I can reply to the honourable member by indicating, yes, most, if not all, of the weed districts are very much in place. There may have been some revisions in the type and the workload that they are undertaking. They have made some changes with respect to how they are using their employees.

I know that there have been some job descriptions that have been altered to take into account their new budget circumstances, but they have also been very innovative and have found alternative sources for some of their programs. For instance, upwards to some \$81,000 was granted to different weed districts, and I as a member of the committee of cabinet that considers the applications before the Sustainable Development Fund—a fairly significant number of weed districts have been successful in getting some additional funding from that source; as I say, some \$81,000 worth.

In addition to that, I am advised by Dr. Todd, that the implementation committee on the Canada-Manitoba agreement on agriculture sustainability, which is a joint federal Canada agreement, has approved a further \$162,980 of funding to weed districts.

So, in total, the funding reductions that were serious to the weed districts, the last year of funding in '92-93 was some \$141,000, but they in fact have come back with these two funding sources alone of upwards to \$240,000, so they are running, albeit, no doubt, somewhat altered, perhaps more focused programs, but they are still in operation.

Some districts, I am further advised, have combined their weed control and soil conservation activities and taken advantage of some additional monies that have flowed to these districts for

conservation purposes. So there has been a marrying together. In some cases that has happened, and we of course in the department will continue to provide the technical support and the necessary staff training to weed districts whenever we are approached to provide that.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): Item 4.(d) Soils and Crops (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits, \$2,341,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures, \$682,700—pass.

4.(e) Marketing and Farm Business Management.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, under this section I have a couple of questions. I understand that it is under this branch that the ag extension centre, the activities are co-ordinated under this section, and I want to ask the minister what has happened with the ag extension centre. Last year there was a move to privatize the centre. I want to ask, has the centre been privatized, and if so, who is operating it now.

Mr. Enns: I wonder if I could just have the permission of the committee prior to answering the questions just posed. Could we consider appropriation 3.7, which is Dr. Todd's, 3.7 on the top of page 19? Is there any further questioning on that?

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): Is it the will of the committee to consider 3.7 at this time?

Mr. Enns: I am not pushing it, just asking. We can pass it? Can you call the item, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson?

* (2110)

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): 7. Canada-Manitoba Agreement on Agricultural Sustainability \$1,040,000—pass.

Resolution 3.7: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,040,000 for Agriculture, Canada-Manitoba Agreement on Agricultural Sustainability, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1995.

The member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) had posed a question on marketing and farm

business management. Does the minister wish to respond?

Mr. Enns: The member was asking about the Agricultural Centre at Brandon. There has been no change in the operations at the centre. There has been no contract entered into with any person or persons. There was consideration certainly given to that. We have a concern about the status of the centre, the underutilization of that otherwise very excellent facility.

I can report to the honourable member and to the committee that we are pursuing, the department is pursuing directly with some of our friends in Education, principally Assiniboine Community College, to take a hard look as to whether or not, under some of what we perceive to be the new initiatives by Minister Axworthy in the reform and the changes he is proposing to some of the responsibilities under his ministry that involve—we are led to believe could lead to considerable additional training components.

The expressed desire on the part of the federal government to change the unacceptable kind of status quo of the many billions of dollars that are being used and funnelled through the unemployment insurance program, for instance, which regrettably in some parts of the province and of the country have become virtually a way of life, the question is asked, ought these dollars not be spent in a more productive way by providing retraining opportunities for bringing people back into the workforce?

We believe that our centre at Brandon may well lend itself as a location for training, particularly rural youth or people in that western part of the province. We expect, and will no doubt see, substantial, the largest percentage of those kinds of monies being spent here in the city of Winnipeg in connection with the colleges, whether it is Red River or other facilities that we have here. We felt that this was an opportunity that we might perhaps find new use, fuller use of the facilities there. We have dormitories there that we could take in students for two-week, 10-week or three-week or one-day training opportunities, but that is what is

happening with the Ag Centre. Nothing has been concluded at this stage.

Ms. Wowchuk: Just for clarification then, it is my understanding when we were doing the Estimates last year that the staff that was at the centre was let go, but I know that the centre is open now, that you can rent the facility. How is that facility being run now, and because there is no full-time staff, has this resulted in the less use of the facility?

Mr. Enns: I am advised that we continue to provide staff when the occasion demands it. We have made internal arrangements to make that possible. We have not really fundamentally changed the situation at the centre at all.

Ms. Wowchuk: The goal, if I recall correctly, in moving away from operating the centre was to reduce the costs. If I remember correctly, there was an indication that for the amount of use it was quite high. So since the facility has not been sold to anyone, there is temporary staff being hired. What is the difference in costs? Is there a substantial saving to the operation of that facility now?

Mr. Enns: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I have to report to the member and the committee that those projected savings in fact have not been realized, simply because we have not made a change. We have examined, which included tendering out to the private sectors or the private individuals the facilities, but none of those decisions have been made. So we are essentially operating it in the reduced manner of our needs but still operating at our costs, which have not substantially changed or significantly changed.

Ms. Wowchuk: The minister indicated that there was a tender put out on the facility. Was there no interest whatsoever? Did none of the education facilities or other organizations look at the possibility of taking it over?

Mr. Enns: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I suppose the best way I can put it, there was some interest shown but not proposals that were acceptable to the department or to the government.

Ms. Wowchuk: Well, I guess if the facility is still costing the same amount of money but we are not getting the activity, maybe there should be some consideration given to finding some use for it,

because it does not seem to make sense if you are not using it to the degree that it was used before, but still paying the cost. Something has to be done to address that situation.

Mr. Enns: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, you know, just to clearly put on the record, we are still engaged in a considerable amount of activity at the centre. Just by way of comparison over the years '92-93, there were some 588 meetings taking place there, involving a total attendance by participants of some 22,324. Now, that compares with this last year '93-94, some 547 meetings taking place, again involving some 22,096 people. There were various, you know, types of meetings, both agricultural and nonagricultural, but mostly relating to rural interests that composed of these meetings and persons in attendance at that centre.

The issue really was the privatization of the dining hall and residences which partly because of the changing and our programming, the fact that in our farm management programs and our other training extension programs more of our specialists are moving about the province, are holding one-day meetings or educational courses in the various parts of Manitoba, I am sure including Swan River.

* (2120)

This has evolved over time at the request of our clients, and that has steadily reduced the need for and the call on the residences that we have at the Ag Centre or indeed the dining hall facilities, and it was when we zeroed in and looked at what the problem was at the Ag Centre, it was really those two facilities, the dining hall and the residence.

We looked and we will continue to look to see if in fact there is going to be an increased call on providing training and upgrading skills which I could see could be educational courses which may well be carried out under the auspices of community colleges like the Assiniboine College in Brandon, that rather than have Assiniboine College, people in education, spend new dollars on bricks and mortar when we have an excellent public facility in Brandon that could accommodate a number of trainees to any given program, that the community college people could do the teaching

right at the centre if need be, or if not, but still access from this space, rural youth who are looking for training opportunities to go to Assiniboine College. Those are the potential things that I see happening. If that does not happen, then we will still be looking towards some other means of getting greater activity.

The one gentleman, I do not mind indicating to the honourable member, who was interested in it looked at that as possible as running, as a private venture, the dining hall and the facility, particularly the dormitories whereby he could offer and provide for some of the junior and youth school sporting activities—people often come to Brandon for different sporting competitions, an economical and reasonable way. I am not talking about big-time sporting events, but I am talking about school youngsters who are coming in, maybe finding it a little difficult to pay the going rate at a downtown hotel, but could be put up at a facility like this at acceptable cost and still in effect in my judgment even continue to perform some kind of public function for the benefit of rural Manitobans. Those are some possible changes that could take place.

Again on the Farm Act in respect to the Agricultural Extension Centre, course registrations use, we have some \$8,000 budgeted for the coming year as compared to \$7,500 in the last year. This is revenue coming in, not expenditure.

Ms. Wowchuk: The minister indicates that it was the privatization of the dining hall and the residence that was the area that was eliminated. How many jobs were eliminated in that?

Mr. Enns: It impacted on eight cooking staff and one administrative person, but I am just advised that, officially, those jobs were eliminated, but they are still working, and they are coming back under callback when the facility is required. Now, whether the income situation has remained the same is probably questionable.

Ms. Wowchuk: That would be the question, and if they are being called—the minister is indicating that it is costing just about as much to run the facility as it did before. There have been nine people who have been impacted by this. What has

happened to their status? They were full-time employees before this step was taken. Are they now part-time employees which would result in a lesser amount of pay and certainly a loss of benefits to these employees?

Mr. Enns: I am advised that although they are on a—~~a~~—their employee status is now on a casual basis, but we are carrying on as a department roughly the same amount of activity that we carried on last year. The rate of pay is the same as what they received last year. While their status has changed from what used to be a more permanent situation to a casual, there is very little difference. Our costs have remained much the same. Our level, that is, the departmental level, of activity has remained much the same over the year.

Ms. Wowchuk: For clarification, then, because they are now casual employees, would they have lost some of their benefits that they had when they were full-time employees?

Mr. Enns: I am advised that their benefits have not been changed.

Ms. Wowchuk: I have been looking through the Estimates here, and I am looking for an area where I might be able to ask some questions about the rural stress line, and I wonder if this might be an appropriate section—the rural stress line.

Mr. Enns: I am pleased to inform the honourable member that the rural stress line has been approved, not to the full level of funding, as I understand it, that they may have requested. It is not to be found, to answer the question more directly, in these Estimates. It is being funded by the Department of Health, my colleague the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), and I would welcome the honourable members to ask him the appropriate questions.

Ms. Wowchuk: I thank the minister for that information. Although it is not under this section, I want to acknowledge that if the government has finally found the will to support the rural stress line, it will be very much appreciated throughout rural Manitoba, and I look forward to finding further information from the Minister of Health on that section in the appropriate section. However, I believe the Health Estimates are already passed, so

we will have to pursue it through another—no, Health is not done? Okay.

Then I want to just touch on a couple of areas here. Under this section, the Women's Institute is funded, and I understand that the funding to the Women's Institute, which was reduced in the last budget, remains at the same reduced level. The Women's Institute has expressed concern, and I recognize that they do a tremendous amount of work for the province. It is a very worthy organization. I wonder if any consideration has been given by the minister to reinstate the funding to the Women's Institute to the level that it previously was.

* (2130)

Mr. Enns: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, to the member for Swan River, no, there has been no change in the appropriation for the Women's Institute in this set of Estimates set before us. We are actively assisting them though to in any way possible access perhaps some other areas of funding that we believe might have some success in the course of the year. We share the member's regard for the institute, and certainly I would be more than pleased to have been able to have provided some additional funding in this budget, but one cannot.

Just as the institute was not singled out for the reduction, as the member will recall, in the course of debates on the Estimates last year, it was kind of a blanket reduction that the department was forced to accept from Treasury Board. We did it for a purpose. We were not passing judgment on any one of the organizations that were asked to take a 5-percent reduction, whether it was in this department or in the other departments of government. The agricultural societies of Manitoba were asked to take a similar cut, so it would have been difficult for the department, for us to single out this organization over the other organizations to kind of recapture that cut.

It is my hope that we will be successful in finding some additional sources and I certainly encourage and I know the department is providing other substantial support in office space, in telephone, in providing facilities for board

meetings. We provide in total these kinds of expenses provided by the department that are not listed anywhere, amount to some \$10,000 worth of value so that when their initial support of \$40,000, which was reduced to \$36,000, representing that 5 percent, we feel that we are nonetheless meeting our obligations to this organization.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, there are just a few areas in this section that I want to cover, and one of them is the home economists. Under the Expected Results it says, home economists to provide outreach to approximately 19,000 farms and rural families.

One of the concerns that I have, and I want to know the impact of this, is I understand that many times the home economists and other staff people were seconded to help out with the work, with GRIP and extra work, and that ends up taking quite a substantial amount of their time.

When that happens, what is the impact on the role that home economists are supposed to be doing, that is, providing the supports for farm families, and it is very important that they have these supports during the difficult financial times. Another area where home economists do a tremendous amount of work is in the 4-H area, and in particular since the 4-H specialists were cut by this government, there is an extra burden there.

I am wondering what the impact is on the quality of service that is provided from these offices. I have heard some negative feedback that they are not able to provide the level of services that they have provided to the families and also to the 4-H clubs in the area. I wonder if an analysis has been done on this.

Mr. Enns: Allow me just to make a general observation that I hold the services that this section of the department provides to rural Manitobans as being extremely important. We tend in Agriculture, as in other instances, we can easily get carried away and dedicate all of our time to bushels and pounds of beef and pork and production. Of course, that is the essence of the agricultural community.

There is also very much, and it is a long-standing tradition with the Manitoba Department of

Agriculture that we are often the department that is looked upon by rural people as being in many instances their one and only contact with the government. I am thinking about the many thousands of people and families that do not have to, you know, approach a social worker in Family Services or do not have to deal with problems of family breakdown, but ordinary, everyday farm folk that have a long tradition in dealing with this department.

So this division of the department that I tend to refer to as the human resources division is extremely important to me and, quite frankly, if I am allowed the privilege of serving it somewhat longer, then it would be my intention to find ways and means of providing some additional resources in this area to make up for some of the pressures that have been placed on this section because of other workloads.

I have not said that—my director informs me that, as you would expect, I had on another occasion expressed, quite frankly, my appreciation to staff who have shown a remarkable degree of flexibility, in essence providing the help and assistance to introduce such a major new farm program like GRIP, with virtually no additional staff hired.

The member is correct, that obviously was done to some extent at the expense of their normal job routine and job description. But Ms. Gingera tells me that very often particularly our home economists that were roped into this chose that opportunity to gain important entry into the farm home, into the farm management of that home which is part and parcel of the home economist's regular concerns as well, often established a closer relationship with the individual farmers that stood them in good stead. After all, whether she was there helping and assisting in explaining a GRIP application program, that home may well also have had youngsters in the 4-H program. It established an opportunity for the home economist to develop and work, yes, admittedly additional extra work, but not necessarily and certainly not at the serious diminution of other responsibilities, because the 4-H programs have carried on and, in fact, we are enjoying I believe some growth in the total

membership. So I pay my greatest respects to those employees that carried on in very exemplary fashion.

Ms. Wowchuk: I have to agree with the minister on part of his statement, because in many cases the Agriculture office, the home economist is the only contact that many farm families do have with government services, and home economists have played a very important role in offering advice.

Sometimes home economists are looked at as cooking and sewing and things like that, but in actual fact the home economists have provided a lot more services than that and been a lot of support for the families.

However, I cannot agree with the minister that the department did not suffer, and I do not believe that by taking on the role of helping out with the various programs such as GRIP that the home economists had the opportunity to enhance their relationship with the families, because my understanding and what I have seen of it is, these were mostly done in offices and they were done at a very hectic pace. At no fault to anybody, whether it be staff, there was a very heavy workload that had to be completed, and I give credit to those employees, to the home economists and others who had to, who had to take on that extra responsibility, and in most cases I do not believe it was by choice, but I do believe that the services offered by the various Agriculture departments in the rural communities have suffered because of the amount of extra work these people have had to take on.

* (2140)

Mr. Enns: Well, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I do not wish to take issue with the honourable member for Swan River. It is obvious that when you add additional work responsibilities that that creates some pressures, but I am reassured again by my director that in many instances, and I just pick up on the point that the member for Swan River herself put on the record. She is absolutely right, that the role of the home economists often in the past are seen in a kind of traditional, you know, cooking aides and help. Many of them volunteered, chose to move. This moved them

precisely in that area of getting a more serious understanding of the farm families that they were dealing with, opened up opportunities for them to do a lot of follow-up where, with their knowledge of program availability, as being sponsored by the department or this section of government could steer and could involve, encourage additional training programs to be entered into.

In other words, the home economists really maximized the opportunity that that farmer who normally might have only asked her for some advice on a more restricted or more traditional consumer item, all of a sudden was providing information about the financial management, the financial administration of the entire farm operation, and that often, and I again compliment, that shows me that the departmental person, in this case home economist, was thinking and was taking that opportunity and saying, this family could benefit from these farm management courses or from this farm management advice.

As I say, and I have already said, they found that these even admittedly hectic and all too brief maybe half-hour sessions or hour sessions that they may have taken in the office or on the phone, but often were pursued by the home economists in follow-up calls to the advantage of the farm family being served and I think to the advantage of the division in terms of providing meaningful and important service to the farm communities.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): I just wonder, it appears to me as if we have moved into consideration of 3.5. Is it the will of the committee to pass Marketing and Farm Business Management? Am I reading it incorrectly?

Ms. Wowchuk: We are on Marketing and Farm Business Management.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): Okay.

Ms. Wowchuk: Just on item 4.(e), there is some \$375,000 that is provided in grants. I would assume that one part of that grant would be the Women's Institute. Can the minister provide us with information to whom those grants were provided?

Mr. Enns: The total of \$375,000 that the member refers to is the Women's Institute grant of \$36,000, and then the substantial \$339,000 grant to the PAMI organization, which is the Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute, located at Portage. The grants total listed here do not include the 4-H council grants of some \$6,800, the competitive council for another \$12,900, nor the Canola Council for an additional \$8,100.

Ms. Wowchuk: Can the minister indicate, he may have indicated earlier in the day, but I do not recall how much money will be spent this year on trade missions out of the country and on trade missions that come into our country. Is that in this section?

An Honourable Member: Trade missions coming into the country?

Ms. Wowchuk: Well, you have the responsibility of entertaining these people when they come into the country, but there is another set of trade missions when you send people out of the country. I see that there are plans to take trade missions to the United States, Mexico and Japan. I wonder what the budget is for both of those.

Mr. Enns: We spent some \$20,000, slightly over \$20,000, for the hosting and the looking after of incoming trade delegations last year, and we intend to spend about the same amount again this year, and some \$36,000, \$37,000 for sending trade missions abroad.

Principally the ones that, of course, are most costly are the ones to the Far East. We are intending to send three to Mexico in the coming budget year, an additional three to Japan, and four to the United States, and one more to what is just described as the Pacific Rim country. I do not think that Japan is part of the Pacific Rim, is that right? I am just joking. And Europe, and one to Europe. New Zealand, one to New Zealand.

Ms. Wowchuk: With the opening up of Europe and, hopefully, markets building up in the eastern European countries, the minister indicates that there is one person going to Europe to look, and I would hope that is to develop markets, does the minister see—we have talked about the Pacific Rim countries—the potential for markets

developing in Europe? I look particularly at eastern Europe countries.

Mr. Enns: I want to take this opportunity to put on the record that, to date, the department has not let me go on any of the outgoing trade missions. They have been quite happy to make sure that I am around to buy the toast and tomato sandwiches and bowl of soup for the incoming ones that we all host right here in the building, in the Legislative dining room. There is always hope that perhaps they may let me go sometime in the future.

The inquiries from Europe are not many. I personally am aware of the one inquiry that we had for a substantial amount of processed meat, pork and beef, from Russia. It is a bit of a confusing process in dealing with some of those countries. I know that certainly our marketing people, our livestock specialists responded with dispatch; they put them in contact with some of our meat processing people here in the province. The product was offered; it was not the price range that the customer was willing to pay; but we will continue these kinds of efforts.

* (2150)

We we had a request for a shipment of wild turkeys to Britain, of all places, but regulatory regulations intervened from us being able to pursue that exotic order much further.

I would think that there may well develop a more serious pattern of trade with some of the east European countries, notably perhaps Ukraine and others, but one wishes them Godspeed in bringing their affairs to some sense of order so that normal trade relations can be entered into with these countries.

I think at least for the immediate and foreseeable future there could well be significant market potential for us in those countries. On the other hand, I think we also recognize that further down the line, particularly for those of us who have knowledge about the capacity and the potential of a particular agricultural production in those countries, that those markets may be not there for the long term, but from a political perspective I think it always was an unreasonable expectation to think that those economies could be brought to

order in anything less than several decades, quite frankly.

It is still mind-boggling to believe that Canadians allowed themselves to be so brainwashed, if you like, as to the severity of the economic circumstances in that part of the world, where I am told upwards to today, upwards to 50, 60 percent of the entire agriculture production of countries like Ukraine and the Soviet Union annually and regularly rot and spoil in the fields, never even get into the system.

We take it for granted. We have our problems with a shortage of a few railway cars, and when we think about some of our problems—but the infrastructure that has been built up in Canada and in the United States, most of the western democracies, is truly remarkable when you compare them to the problems that the east European and the former Soviet Union face in trying to come to terms with their potential, particularly in agriculture production.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): Item 4.(e) Marketing and Farm Business Management (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,532,700—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$871,200—pass; (3) Grant Assistance \$375,300—pass.

4.(f) Less: Recoverable from Other Appropriations (\$47,200).

Resolution 3.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$10,363,000 for Agriculture, Agricultural Development and Marketing, \$10,363,000 for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1995.

5. Regional Agricultural Services (a) Northwest Region (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,985,600.

Mr. Enns: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, allow me just to make some further staff introductions. We are joined by Mr. Roger Triotta, Chychota—pretty close; a good Mennonite name—Director of the Northwest Region and Acting Director, Agricultural Crown Lands.

Director Chychota has had recently, I think, a visit to some of the countries that we were just

speaking about. [interjection] Right. In fact, he favoured us with a display of slides when I visited the region earlier this year. I encouraged the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) to carry on our conversation about that part of the world.

We have with us Mr. Bert Flemming, from the Chief Field Services, Agricultural Crown Lands. I think I have introduced Les Baseraba, who is the Assistant Deputy Minister for Regional Services and Financial Administration for the department on an earlier occasion.

Ms. Wowchuk: I just want to ask a question for clarification. I believe it was the agreement in the Chamber that we would do Estimates until ten o'clock tonight. I am willing to go a little bit longer, or is it the plan to quit exactly at ten o'clock?

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): Is it the will of the committee to carry on beyond ten o'clock?

An Honourable Member: No.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): No.

Mr. Enns: I appreciate the fact that government House leaders of all parties have worked with a considerable degree of co-operation. This was the agreement that was indicated in the House, and I would not like to take on the responsibility, even for the best of purposes, of breaking that agreement, and I would suggest that we adjourn at ten o'clock, as previously agreed in the House.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): Thank you. If that is the will of the committee, we will continue.

Ms. Wowchuk: I have a few questions on how the regions are operating, but I want to begin with the Northwest region. I want to ask if The Pas falls under the Northwest region or whether it does not?

Mr. Enns: The Pas does fall under the Northwest region.

Ms. Wowchuk: We had discussed this earlier on the impacts of the GRIP, carrying through the responsibilities of GRIP, and what the impact was on various staffs. I wonder if we look at the Northwest region. I want to know how that was

handled, and particularly the area of The Pas. I know that there is, I believe, only one staffperson at The Pas, but there are quite a few farmers in the area. So how was that handled? Were people seconded from another area to help out or was all the work done by the staff people at The Pas?

Mr. Enns: The specific situation in The Pas was, in fact, handled by the one representative of the Department of Agriculture there. There was a total of some 36 farm applications to be considered and he was able to look after them all. [interjection] The honourable member just pointed out he is a she. My mistake. I am of that generation of stereotyping; ag reps have to be he's, you know.

Ms. Wowchuk: And you will run into trouble in the Swan River office, too.

* (2200)

Can we have some indication as to how many people in the Swan River office were required, seconded—was it only the ag rep and the home economist, or were there other staff people that also had to help out with the GRIP applications?

Mr. Enns: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I have said it now several times, but it is not saying too much that, firstly, the entire resources of—when I say resources, the human resources in the department, aside from some specialist positions, but ag reps, the home economists, the farm management people, the various specialists in the Swan River area, particularly people—the livestock specialist was involved. Administrative secretaries were involved. All of them were involved to provide the necessary manpower to introduce this new program.

Once again, I think that it demonstrates some of the flexibility in the staff of the department that enabled us to do that. It was a multimillion-dollar program that had to deal with many thousands of individual clients, and it was done successfully.

Ms. Wowchuk: I recognize that it is ten o'clock, but if I could just finish this one question here.

Were the hours or the time allocations monitored and then allocated back to the federal program? Was there an adjustment made from the provincial salaries that would have been paid, then

allocated back in a cost-sharing to the federal government since this is a federal-provincial program?

Mr. Enns: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I will give staff the opportunity, perhaps overnight or for next when we meet, to provide the actual numbers. There was a good reason for us to fairly carefully monitor the actual hours expended on the introduction of that program, because it was to our advantage financially, the program being cost-shared by the federal government. For us to recapture the federal monies, we had to show with some reasonable integrity the actual time and hours spent by our staff on the program.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): The hour being 10 p.m., as previously agreed, committee rise.

* (1900)

JUSTICE

Madam Chairperson (Louise Dacquay): Order, please. 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 Justice. We are on item 2.(d), page 110 of the Estimates manual.

Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): With regard to the special constables training program, would the minister advise what The Bay, for example, will pay for the training?

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

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): My understanding is that they pay their employees, and other arrangements would be then with the City of Winnipeg Police who I understand deliver the program.

Mr. Mackintosh: So is it the minister's understanding that there is no fee for service?

Mrs. Vodrey: It is my understanding in the special constable program that there is not a fee for

service between the two companies and the Winnipeg city police, though I could check that.

Mr. Mackintosh: The minister advised that there were services in kind; in other words, I do not know if that is the appropriate term, but that there were staff resources assigned to this program. Would the minister advise the committee what the estimate is of the cost of those services? For example, what would that be in parts of an SY or in dollars?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed that it is in kind. Yes, it is part of the usual liaison which is provided between Law Enforcement Services and the Winnipeg Police. There is not a staff here assigned to this particular project. It is, as I said, part of the regular liaison between Law Enforcement and the Winnipeg Police.

Mr. Mackintosh: Would the minister tell the committee what positions are involved in this program?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed that it would be Mr. Bob Chamberlain whom I have introduced as the Director of Law Enforcement Services, and that is part of his work to liaise with the Winnipeg city police, also the registrar of private investigators and security guards. That individual's role would be to increase and to provide some input into the training manuals.

Again, that is an area where, during the course of the afternoon, we have had quite extensive discussions around how we would actually work with policing services around their manuals and their policies, and then finally a Crown would review policies for arrest and release procedures. Again, this is also something which Crowns in relationship with police, Department of Justice in relations with police would take an opportunity to review certain policies. As I said this afternoon, as well, in policies specific to policing and their internal procedures, of course, they have the opportunity to say no if it is on their specific matter of policy.

Mr. Mackintosh: Following up with a question from Question Period two weeks ago about informants and the issue of an effective policy to deal with informants so that hopefully we can

avoid the kind of trial and associated costs and the anguish for the individuals involved, I am wondering if the minister has now reviewed the city of Winnipeg police department's informants policy in light of Judge Newcombe's decision to ensure that any concerns raised by Judge Newcombe have been reflected in the policy.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, just to clarify for the member, Judge Newcombe heard the preliminary hearing, and the trial was a jury trial, and so the remarks that the member speaks about flow from the preliminary hearing. The policy was revised after the investigation and before the trial.

As I have said around several matters of this nature, the Department of Justice certainly remains willing, interested and prepared to assist the police service, but as I said earlier as well, the police service does have the right refuse.

Mr. Mackintosh: Judge Newcombe's decision or his writings, some 84 pages, which address critical issues, indeed was from the preliminary hearing, and its contents were not made public as a result of the pending trial. Now that the decision is public, I would suggest that it is appropriate to review that in light of the City of Winnipeg's policy, and I would ask the minister to consider that.

I understand the minister's comments about working in a partnership with the police in Manitoba, although I do not think the minister should underrate the value of ministerial judgment, and I think the zero tolerance directive is a good example of that. The police certainly take heed of such directives and involvement, and I wonder if the minister will now work with the other police forces in Manitoba to ensure that there is a comprehensive Manitoba informant policy, so that we can learn from what took place in the city of Winnipeg.

* (1910)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, we have a comprehensive and uniform policy in prosecutions, but each individual police force has the opportunity to develop its own individual policy on informants. We certainly would encourage a uniform approach, and it certainly is

possible for us to discuss that uniform approach, but I do have to come back to the starting point of saying that the police services and police forces across the province do have the right to refuse. I understand the member's point of saying that certainly opening a discussion might be a useful point.

Mr. Mackintosh: I just want to make two final comments, just to reiterate comments earlier when we began. I think we have to seriously look at The Provincial Police Act and that scheme in light of the reality of the 1990s, and I think that the police forces in Manitoba would welcome a process to begin to review that legislation.

Finally, I want to make a comment. I am increasingly pleased with policing in Manitoba. First of all, in the city of Winnipeg, I think, under the direction of Chief Henry, we are seeing a new era in policing. I think we are on, as I said recently on a broadcast, the verge of a new era in policing in Winnipeg.

I am heartened to see that Manitoba has not only the City of Winnipeg accredited, but that Brandon is moving, I believe, within a very short while, hopefully, to accreditation. A tremendous amount of work goes into the accreditation process. I had an excellent visit with the Brandon police chief and the senior inspector, and I was really encouraged by all the work that they are doing in so many progressive areas. I think that it is a tremendous accomplishment for Manitoba to have its two largest municipal forces either seeking or having been accredited.

Those are my comments on this line.

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): I thought Mr. Duncan was going to be here. I should have asked it before, but in relation to issuing firearm acquisition certificates for people who are under psychiatric or psychological care, right now it is self-reporting. It still involves self-reporting. Even though there are now other measures that were introduced after a recent tragic incident, there still is that problem of self-reporting.

Has the minister ever considered or her department ever looked at a registry, something similar to the child abuse registry, with no access

by law enforcement officers other than in the same way that a registrar would check to see if a name is on there, someone who is under care, not someone who has a history, but someone who is under care, with an obligation for psychiatrists and psychologists to enter people who, in their opinion, are a danger to themselves or others.

I understand some of the civil libertarian issues involved in it, but I also know that in many instances of suicides that I have attended, family members were concerned about how their relative obtained a Firearm Acquisition Certificate, and I think it is not only a service to the public, but it would be a service to people who are under psychiatric or psychological care if there could be such a registry.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chair, an action such as a registry, though I understand the member's purpose in suggesting it, would really require a great deal of consideration by this or any government that decided to institute it. It would require, as he knows, the compelling of psychiatrists and psychologists, and it could extend beyond there. People are able to seek help from any number of individuals—priests, ministers, social workers, other types of family therapists—and to compel those individuals to divulge the names of the individuals whom they work with. So it would require a great deal of thought to move in that direction.

Currently, however—the member, I am sure, is well acquainted with this, but I will mention it just to be sure that it is known—right now, in order to secure a firearms acquisition certificate, it does require two professional references. Of those, I understand at least one is then interviewed. So there is an effort to seek out information about the background by way of a reference of the applicant. That is, at this point, the way the issue is covered, and to move further would certainly require a great deal of consideration.

Mr. Kowalski: In my experience, some of the people who may avail themselves of or obtain the firearms acquisition certificate and may be under psychiatric or psychological treatment can be very manipulative. I think it was a good step to move to

get those character references. I think that was a positive step, and when dealing with human beings, there is going to be no solution 100 percent perfect. You know, it would take a great amount of effort. I hope that someone in the Justice department looks into this and considers it rather than be reactive to a tragic incident where we will have someone who, even under the present conditions, obtains a firearms acquisition certificate. So it is just a suggestion for further study and research into the possibility of this type of registry.

The other thing I wanted to talk about just briefly was this store loss prevention officer program for Eaton's and The Bay. I have already congratulated the government for it, because it is not only a service to the store. It is a service to the accused in that I know many times people who have allegedly shoplifted have waited five, six hours for a cruiser car to be free and even longer. It is a service to the police in that countless hours of police staffing were used to attend a number of shoplifters, especially during the Christmas season. These loss prevention officers were already there, and all this training—I should not say all—but this training will make it now possible for them not only to arrest and detain these individuals but to also release them.

* (1920)

The one concern I do have, although I think it is a wonderful thing, one thing that will have to be monitored. We have staff paid by the store to protect their property, and one of the reasons why police attended was an unbiased person who was reported to, to make sure that the arrest was lawful, that all the conditions for an arrest were there, and that the person was treated fairly, and that they were informed of all their rights, that they were not treated with abusive behaviour, that they were not assaulted, so that the first question I have in regard to that is: Will these loss prevention officers who obtain a special status, if there are complaints against them of abusive behaviour, of assault, will it be before LERA?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I would just like to go back then to the member's first part

of his comments relating to the Firearms Acquisition Certificate. I would just like to say that of the applications received, there was in the past until this year, generally a rejection rate of approximately 0.06 percent, and that this year it has jumped to 2.6 percent as a result of the screening. When the amendments to the Criminal Code were being made, Manitoba, through the Senior Officials Committee, made representation in which we did ask for the individual to have a doctor's certificate; and that, secondly, should a doctor—we asked that the certificates be valid for one year and that in the course of that year, should the individual, as a result of a review under The Highway Traffic Act, doctor's review for driving, or whatever, if something occurred and showed up during that checkup, that the doctor would then be obliged to report that to the firearms acquisition authorities.

We also wanted this to apply to ammunition, and I can tell the member that that was rejected and was not included in those amendments. So there has been some certainly thought and action put forward by Manitoba to deal with some of the issues that he has raised, but we were not able to achieve that through the Criminal Code; but the registry, as he has said then, would certainly require other kinds of thinking.

To a second part of his question, would the special constables be subject to LERA should there be a difficulty. I am told the answer is no, they would not. Their responsibility would be to their employer who would deal with the situation. However, I would say to him that as in any civil wrong, obviously, there is the opportunity to go to court. Stores have been taken to court; they have been sued as a result of the actions of their employees.

Mr. Kowalski: I understand this is a pilot project so there will be an assessment done, and I hope that is part of the assessment. Part of the assessment is the number of complaints received of abuse or assault or anything by any of the store security officers, also the perception, because they are paid by the store and they are not unbiased. The police did serve that function in being an unbiased person there.

I had another thought, but I have lost it, so I will pass.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Reimer): Item 4.2(d)(1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$526,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$140,500—pass; (3) Grants \$60,000—pass.

Item 4.2(e) Victims Assistance (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$518,700.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): I have some questions in this area. I think there is a recognition on the part of the minister and members of the House that there are some concerns and perhaps some lack of information on what is particularly going on with the Victims Assistance Fund and the groups that are making application and that kind of thing. So I have a series of questions on the Victims Assistance Fund.

My first question is, when will the 1992-93 report be tabled in the Legislature?

Mrs. Vodrey: I would just like to take a moment to introduce to the committee Jocelyn Probaska, who is the provincial co-ordinator for Victims Assistance.

I am informed that we are in the process of the report being printed and so it should be available for tabling within the next week or two.

*(1930)

Ms. Barrett: Could the minister give to us tonight the revenue for '92-93 from both surcharges and interest, which I understand from the '91-92 annual report are the two basic areas from which the funding for the Victims Assistance Fund come?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed that we have a total number from surcharge and interest. I do not have them broken down. Actually it is an average number. It is an average because we do not have the number for this year yet. However, this is an average over the last two years. The average number is about \$980,000.

Ms. Barrett: For the last two years—I am unclear. The amount of money that was reported in the '91-92 annual report was \$905,000 I believe from all sources. I was asking not so much from '93-94 because I know we have just concluded that fiscal

year, but for the '92-93 fiscal year. Is there a figure of revenue for just that year? If not, I need some clarification on where that \$980,000 average comes from, which years.

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed that the figure I was giving, the \$980,000 would be the figure for 1992-93. However, it is not the exact figure. We can undertake to get the exact figure, but that is the range of money that in that year was a total of surcharge and interest.

Ms. Barrett: On page 7 of the '91-92 report, it states that at this point there was an evaluation being initiated of the Victims Assistance Committee and the kinds of agencies and services that were funded since the committee was established in 1986. The evaluation will be completed in June of 1992.

I would like to ask the minister if that evaluation was completed in June of 1992 and if the evaluation is available for us to take a look at.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chair, I am informed that there was not a report prepared. This was an evaluation which was done within the committee. A person within the department did this with the committee, so it was not a formal report in which there was something printed following.

Ms. Barrett: It states on page 7 of the annual report that the Policy, Planning and Special Projects Division of Manitoba Justice conducted the evaluation. Is that the person that the minister was talking about who did the evaluation on behalf of the Victims Assistance Committee?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chair, yes, the individual came from the Policy and Planning area and did the evaluation I am told with the committee.

Ms. Barrett: So this was an internal review that was not ever meant to be shared with anyone other than the Victims Assistance Committee.

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed that this was an internal review. A review had not been conducted in the five years that this had been operating, and the review was to look specifically at what happened when grant funding was completed to

certain groups, what then happened in relation to the programs that had been funded.

Ms. Barrett: No quarrel at all with a need for evaluation of any activities of government and certainly not something that was as new to the province of Manitoba as the Victims Assistance Committee and process was.

However, what the minister was just saying to me about what the purpose of the review was does not, to my reading, quite connect with what the statement in the annual report said, which was: "The evaluation will include the number of agencies/projects funded, the amounts granted, the number of victims served and the cost per victim." That, to me, says that this kind of quantitative evaluation—the data from which I think it would be very interesting and useful for all of us to have, not just the Victims Assistance Committee. Secondly, can the minister explain, was this in effect what the evaluation undertook to do, or were there additional or separate activities on behalf of the evaluation?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chair, I am informed that the efforts of that particular evaluation were to look at the issues that the member had referenced in the annual report and those that I have spoken about tonight, to also look at all of those in relation to the policy framework so that should there ever be any changes to the policy framework. Then we would be able to at least forecast or look at what effect those changes might have.

As a result of the evaluation, my understanding is, and I am informed that there was no change to the policy framework and that things remained as they had been from the beginning of the policy framework.

Ms. Barrett: Can the minister, now that she has mentioned policy framework, that was another area I had questions about. How old is the policy framework? Is it as old as the Victims Assistance Committee legislation, or is it something that has been instituted since 1986?

* (1940)

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed that the policy framework was developed over the time 1989-90 with assistance from the Victims Assistance

Committee. The chair of that committee sat on the committee to develop the policy framework as did a representative from government, and the framework was first used in June 1990.

Ms. Barrett: I am wondering if it is possible to get a copy of the policy framework document or if agencies that make application to the Victims Assistance Fund have access to the policy framework document.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chair, I am informed that when an agency applies or an agency contacts our office for information about funding through the Victims Assistance Fund that they are sent a copy of the policy framework and also they are sent a copy of The Justice for Victims of Crime Act, and included in that is an application.

Ms. Barrett: Would it be possible for the minister to provide for the critics a copy of the policy framework?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes. We do not have it here tonight, but I will certainly see that the critics receive that.

Ms. Barrett: I would like to ask the minister, because we have not had a report since '91-92, if she has available or would provide us tomorrow or very soon a list of the grants that have been supported under the Victims Assistance Fund for '92-93 and I suppose '93-94, if that is available.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chair, I will certainly undertake to provide the member with a complete list. I do have some information available this evening which would, I think, be important to her in the line of questioning she is pursuing.

I can give her, first of all, the actual disbursements: '88-89, \$90,689; then in the year '89-90, disbursements \$274,870; in '90-91, \$361,284; in '91-92, \$444,112; in '92-93, \$343,680; then in '93-94, \$774,363, and I see of that there was \$135,000 carried over from '92-93. So that '92-93 figure would in fact then—well, you could either add the \$135,000 to that or leave it and take it from '93-94 or leave it where it is.

I can give the member some of the organizations that have received funding. These would have been some of the new organizations that received funding. I do not have available tonight those who

also received continuing grants, because the grants are for more than one year.

For '92-93 Cornerstone Counselling Service; in '93-94 Community Legal Education Association, that is to revise and translate and reprint two publications. Those were the domestic violence and also the peace bond pamphlets that they had. Also in that same year, '93-94, Women's Legal Education and Action Fund, LEAF, and that was the establishment of the Manitoba Litigation Fund one-time grant, and also Mediation Services, and they received a grant to provide mediation services to the criminal justice system.

I do not have the list of continuing grants in those years, but I can undertake to provide them.

Ms. Barrett: Can the minister provide us, and I am sure she does not have this tonight, but can she provide us with a list of the agencies that had made application to the Victims Assistance Fund and were denied?

* (1950)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chair, the policy under the Victims Assistance grants is an agency may apply, and when an agency applies, until such time as their grant is given it is treated as confidential information.

Ms. Barrett: Could the minister provide for us a statistical analysis or a listing of the number of agencies or groups that have made application to the Victims Assistance Fund in each year and then the total that were approved and the total that were denied and perhaps the total that are pending?

Mrs. Vodrey: In providing those statistics I have some concern in that, as the member knows, sometimes there are applications which simply do not meet the criteria, so in looking at a list of numbers of applications versus those received and those actually approved, there would not be a way to distinguish in that list how many simply did not fit the criteria. They were just in the wrong place.

I am trying to find a way to answer the member's concerns but to answer them in a way that would be the most accurate and helpful.

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Acting Chair, I understand that. I realize that any statistical analysis such as I have

asked for that was provided, that did not have the confidential material attached, does have the potential problem of including both of those two elements within the not applicable or the denied applications. However, I think given that, we could, if we had an analysis over the period of time that the Victims Assistance Fund has been in existence, of the three categories that I asked for, since the policy framework has not changed since its implementation in 1990, while it is not completely scientific, it would at least give a sense of the number of agencies that are applying to this funding body and the number that were approved, versus not approved, and you could then make some analyses from that information, again realizing that it would not be truly as clean as one would like it.

Mrs. Vodrey: I have a couple of comments—to say that the Victims Assistance Committee is a recommending committee, and so there would certainly be reasons that some of the applications would not be approved and would not be approved at that level, because they simply did not fit within the policy framework, even though having been sent to the group with an application.

I am informed also that of those declined, it is primarily because they do not fit the criterion, so I am trying to look at what the statistics themselves would show when the answer is that it does not fit within the criterion. I have available tonight some of the reasons that applications may have been denied, but I am still trying to get at how I could be more helpful in what is provided that would actually get at the issues that I am trying to uncover for the member.

Ms. Barrett: The minister has stated that she has a sampling of some of the reasons why applications are denied. Is that an extensive list, and if it is, could it be handed to us, or if it is not, could she share that with us now?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, what I can do is compile a list for the member which would provide for her at least a sampling of why some of the applications were denied.

Ms. Barrett: Yes, that would be very acceptable, and I would appreciate that.

The minister stated that the Victims Assistance Committee is a recommending committee. Can the minister explain exactly to whom the Victims Assistance Committee recommends and has this always been the case?

Mrs. Vodrey: The committee is a recommending committee to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General, and that has always been the case.

Ms. Barrett: How often does the Victims Assistance Committee meet?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chair, the practice has been that the committee meets monthly, and monthly they deal with administrative issues, ongoing program issues. They meet quarterly to determine funding.

* (2000)

Ms. Barrett: In the newspaper today, and I would like to share with the minister that I did not do all of my research on this section out of the newspaper today, but there is an article in the newspaper today that states that a Justice department spokesperson said that only about a third of the money from the Victims Assistance Fund goes to outside agencies now, while the rest is spent on government programs for victims. I would like the minister to respond, if she would, to that statement.

Mrs. Vodrey: As I answered in an earlier question today, of the approximately over \$1 million which is available to assist victims across Manitoba, about \$517,000 goes to grants to outside agencies and approximately \$624,000 assists victims through programs which are currently offered through the Department of Justice. Those programs are Victims Assistance programs including Women's Advocacy, the Child Witness Program. That funding goes to the programs which are directly related to the Department of Justice, because in fact they deal with those victims who are going through the court process, who are going through court proceedings. That has allowed us to expand those programs and expand them to Brandon, Thompson and The Pas.

So now there are parts of Manitoba, western Manitoba and northern Manitoba, that in the past did not have access to these programs for victims. This is now an expansion of this service to those

parts of Manitoba and particularly to those victims who have need of a program such as Women's Advocacy and also the Child Witness Program.

Ms. Barrett: The minister is stating that in the budget, the \$517,400 figure under Grants for Victims Assistance, all of that money will be disbursed to external agencies.

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, that is correct.

Ms. Barrett: There has been a substantial decline over the years in the amount of money in this line item, and I am trying to get at the reasons for that decline. I think that it reflects on the impact of Bill 53, which was passed at the end of July last year in the Legislature, which changed the victims assistance act to allow the government to—the term that I used in my speech in July of 1993—raid the Victims Assistance Fund in order to put monies into the other Justice programming.

I guess maybe the question I will ask now to try and get at this more accurately is: Can the minister give me as up to date as possible figures for the amount of money that is actually in the Victims Assistance Fund?

Mrs. Vodrey: The information that I have is the projected opening balance as of April 1, 1994, was \$2,947,000.

Ms. Barrett: Of that money, going back to 1991-92, which is the last annual report of the Victims Assistance Committee, the revenues from all sources were \$905,000. The administrative expenses were \$56.5 leaving a net of just under \$850,000, which I assume would have been the pool of money that could have been used to access grant funding. Is that \$2.9 million figure comparable to that one, or is it comparable to the assets which were \$2,800,000 in March 1992?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed it would be similar to the \$2.8 million, the total accumulated assets.

Ms. Barrett: So while the fund itself has been increasing, now not as great as perhaps one would like, but there are, I am sure, good solid fiscal reasons why that is happening. There is still just under \$3 million in the Victims Assistance Fund, and yet the money that has been allocated to external projects out of this fund is decreasing. It is

almost 12 percent less this year than last, and it has declined over the last several years by almost 40 percent.

I would like to ask the minister the reason why, given the fact that there is a fairly substantial amount of money in the fund, the amount of money that is being generated or being taken out of that fund to support external agencies and projects and research grants has been declining steadily.

Mrs. Vodrey: The member speaks about declining or widely declining. I would just like to make a correction because, first of all, until last year, I am informed that the grants were made directly from the trust fund. They were not within the budget line.

Starting last year, they were then shown in the budget line. However, they were enhanced grants. They were expanded. They were, then, money available to meet the needs of witnesses within our own department, and as the member says, there is this money available, and it is being used to assist victims.

Then I would add to that we also have to replace some of the offload from the federal government for the offload in the Criminal Injuries Compensation.

* (2010)

Ms. Barrett: I think now we are getting down to the basic argument of principle, if you will. Before I get into that statement of where I think we are diverging, I would like to say that I have some specific questions about the process so far, which I will come back to after I have made this point.

This is the point. The current minister and the minister before her both are making the same point, I think, and that is that services to victims are services to victims. The whole point of the Victims Assistance Fund when it was established in 1986, one of the major points of that establishment was to enable there to be a fund of money not generated out of general taxation revenue, but generated specifically from investment income and surcharges on individuals who had been found guilty of crimes.

Monies from that fund were to support external, nongovernmental projects that were pilot projects, that were research projects, that were projects that were designed to be in addition to, an enrichment of the basic funding of the necessary programs that the government undertakes.

My understanding also, Mr. Acting Chair, is that another element of this fund and these projects was to act sort of as an incubator of these ideas. The information that could be gathered out of the research projects, the programs that were developed as pilot projects, all of that information after the one, two or three years of those projects could be then used to better provide government services to victims of crime. It was not designed to support ongoing governmental programs.

Mr. Acting Chair, 1993, Bill 53, very clearly made a change in that, and the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) admitted as much that this amendment to the bill, to the victims assistance act, now allowed for the government to go into the Victims Assistance Fund to use those revenues for operating purposes for other very worthwhile and necessary programs for the Department of Justice, which then meant there was less money available for the external agencies' pilot projects, the kind of grants that had been undertaken and had been used as a response to the basic principle of the Victims Assistance Fund.

Even in comparing last year's grants to this year's grants, there is a decrease of \$62,500, while the fund itself continues to grow or certainly does not decline. The only thing I can gather from what the minister has said in Question Period, from what the previous minister said in discussion and debate about Bill 53 last session and what the minister has said tonight is that there is, yes, has been a specific determination on the part of this government to open up the parameters of the Victims Assistance Fund and allow for the government to take money from that fund to support their ongoing operations, and as a corollary of that, to also decrease the amount of money they make available to the external agencies and the Victims Assistance.

I would like to have the minister respond, but I would like to backtrack. I do not believe the

minister actually answered the question I had about the accuracy of the comment in the paper today that, in effect, one-third of the money from the Victims Assistance Fund that is actually taken is to outside agencies and two-thirds to government agencies, unless the minister's comments about the \$624,000 versus the \$517,000 is the response to that question. For clarification, I would like that as well.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chair, let me try and answer some of the questions the member has spoken about. I am just shocked. I cannot believe the kind of distinction the member wants to make among victims. I am absolutely shocked.

The member across has drawn a distinction between the kind of victim who might be exclusively served by an outside agency and a victim, maybe not so worthy to receive money from the Victims Assistance program, who served through a program that, yes, is tied to the Department of Justice, but it is tied to the Department of Justice so that there is a very careful and appropriate sharing between the Victims Assistance program, such as Women's Advocacy and the Crowns and the courts.

The member somehow feels that those victims are not the same kinds of victims that should get money from the Victims Assistance Fund, and I frankly do not understand that. So I will say that it is our position that victims have concerns and needs which have to be met, and it is important that they are met. The member's view is that the Victims Assistance Fund, the only people who should have exclusive right to those funds are those people who are perhaps served by an outside agency, who may not offer the service that is needed, who may not offer the service that the victim requires by going through the court process, who may not offer the service the victim needs if they are a child witness, those should not be dealt with.

It is our view that those victims should be dealt with, that they are victims who fall into the same—and have the same concerns as victims, and so they are now receiving funds through the Victims Assistance. We obviously do not hold the

same point of view that service to victims, not those victims but others, be the exclusive right of outside agencies.

I also would say that in terms of the money spent, I would draw the member back to an earlier answer in which I gave her a list of the disbursements, and the disbursements are significant. Even by removing from the '93-94 disbursements \$135,000, if we add that back on to the '92-93, still is over \$600,000, or \$500,000. It is close to \$600,000—I cannot do math in my head.

* (2020)

But it has increased. The disbursements have increased, and so I think that speaks to a commitment to victims and to the kinds of services which victims need, the expressed need of victims. Then when we look at applications received by the Victims Assistance Committee, we have to see if they meet the criteria, but they also ask for differing amounts of money. They do not all ask for the same amount of money which would make the disbursements the same in each year. They ask for differing amounts of money, and as the member knows, there is also a carryover for disbursements where there is still money outstanding for second- and third-year commitments, and for those, there are differing commitments of money.

So the amount of money may not always be the same, depending upon the projects or the disbursements required for the projects.

As I pointed out earlier to the member, the disbursements actually increased, and we believe that the victims who are being served through the programs that happen to be included in the Department of Justice, because they are very closely tied to the court process and the need for communication with Crowns and with the courts, that those victims are in need of support through the Victims Assistance Fund.

Ms. Barrett: I really do not want to get into a long debate on this, because it is a complicated issue and I feel clear in my own mind that we have a—I am fairly clear in where we differ.

I do want to say that we are not saying there is a distinction in whether certain kinds of victims are

better or more worthy than other kinds of victims. Our whole point in our concerns about the changes to the Victims Assistance Fund is precisely because victims come in all sizes, shapes, ranges, circumstances and situations. The beauty, to my mind, of the Victims Assistance Fund as it was first envisaged was that this was a separate account that could be used to do the kind of programming, not even so much programming, but pilot projects and research grants and things like that that were in the forefront of the whole kind of work that needs to be done with victims, and then out of that nongovernmental funding, because it did not come from the normal tax base, could come ideas and things that could help all victims later on with enriching and enhancing the kinds of services that are provided by the Department of Justice.

For example, I do not believe this organization certainly at its beginning accessed money from the Victims Assistance Fund, but the Women's Post Treatment Centre, when it was started almost 10 years ago, was a brand new idea. It was an idea that said that there were presenting problems and underlying problems that were different for women who had both chemical dependency and the results of childhood sexual abuse. So you had to deal with drugs and alcohol, and that does not present necessarily the same kinds of symptoms. Someone who is trained to deal with alcohol addiction might not have the same kind of training as someone who deals with drug addiction, particularly for women who are victims of childhood sexual abuse. This was a new idea at the time.

This idea has been supported by the government in various guises and now is an agency that is doing marvelous work and has broken new ground in this whole area of helping women, something that if they had not had—and I am not sure exactly—I think this is an example rather than necessarily a specific that came from Victims Assistance, but the sort of project that Victims Assistance Fund was set up to help, because it did not fit under the normal governmental programming, legitimately did not fit under it because it was new and different, it now does, because it has done its work and was fertilized, if

you will, by the kind of thing that Victims Assistance can do.

We are not disagreeing on the fact that victims need to be assisted. I am not, for a moment, suggesting that money does not need to be spent on the governmental projects that the minister is talking about. I am saying, however, and I think we are just going to agree to disagree on this, that there needs to be that ability of agencies to come forward with new ideas and pilot projects. It has nothing to do with the fact that they are better or worse. They are different, and they have a role to play in the continuum of service.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I understand what the member is saying in terms of the ability to fund pilot kinds of projects. That is why I want to assure her and make the distinction that we still do fund those. As I quickly looked at the grants to outside agencies over the past five years, I see that on an average they were about \$440,000, and this year the amount of money available to grant to those outside agencies is \$517,000. It is a little over \$500,000. There remains a commitment, there is a commitment to assist those groups that are wanting to pilot a project, to try something new. I certainly understand, in some areas, that we have to look at new projects. I think that one of the important points to take away tonight is that there is still that ability.

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Acting Chairperson, when the minister talked about the \$624,000—I have it written down here—that means internal government programs, and \$517,000 to external agencies, Do both of those sums come from the Victims Assistance Fund?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, they do.

Ms. Barrett: The programs that make up the 624,000-odd dollars that are internal programs, do they, because the money, do those programs have to go before the Victims Assistance Committee and follow the same criteria for acceptance of that funding that the external agencies do?

Mrs. Vodrey: Those programs go through the Estimates process.

Ms. Barrett: Some of the money that is dispersed from the Victims Assistance Fund goes through the criteria that has been established over the years for projects and granting, while other money, actually quite substantially more money, goes to programming that does not have to follow the same criteria as the external grants do? Is that accurate?

Mrs. Vodrey: The member has made a distinction which I answered that the programs funded from the \$639,000 do not go through the Victims Assistance Committee. They do go through the Estimates process, through the scrutiny and through the whole Estimates process in terms of government's planning.

Lest there be anything left on the record that these programs may in any way not be substantial, let me just give the member again what those programs are: the Victim/Witness Assistance Program in which we receive 24,000 inquiries a year; the Child Witness Support Program, where we provided service to approximately 203 child victims a year; the Women's Advocacy Program, which initiates and provides services to approximately 2,755 female victims of domestic violence a year.

In addition I spoke earlier about the obligation to the criminal injuries compensation which is a result of federal offloading. So each of those programs is a very substantial program to a very significant type of victim.

Ms. Barrett: As I have said before to the minister, I have no quarrel with the programming that is being undertaken by the Department of Justice in this area, nor would I wish to not have adequate funding made available to those programs. But they are not treated in the same manner as the external agencies that apply for funding under the Victims Assistance Fund.

* (2030)

I would like specifically to ask the minister about the process of the Victims Assistance Committee in the last year or two. Many of the organizations from outside the government that have made application, and some of which have in the past received funding from the Victims

Assistance Fund, have waited upwards of two or more years for a final determination as to the status of their grant application. We all know the problems that causes for agencies trying to operate on minimal funding and trying to do programming.

I would like to ask the minister why there has been such a delay in many of these agencies getting a final answer on their grant requests, whether it has been a denial or an acceptance of the grant. It seems to me there is something strange happening with the process.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I am told that there was an effort to review the Victims Assistance Fund to look at how the money could best be used to serve all victims. So while that was being looked at, when groups wanted to submit an application, they were told at that time that there was a review going on. They were advised that because of the review that there would be a waiting period—though there was some granting, because I gave some information in an earlier answer—that these groups were advised that there would be a wait. I understand that the groups were anxious to know. Certainly, I made the commitment to them when I met with them after I became minister and during this budgetary process that I would certainly make it a priority for them to have their answers. I understood that they just wanted an answer. It might have been a yes or a no, but they did want to know where they stood.

I believe we have now accomplished that goal, that those outstanding applications where people were waiting as a result of the review and even though they were told there would be a waiting period, I understand that we have now accomplished being in touch with each one of those applicants and letting them know the status of their particular application.

Ms. Barrett: When did this review start?

Mrs. Vodrey: During 1992, I am informed.

Ms. Barrett: So there were agencies who were making application to the Victims Assistance Fund during 1992 who were told then that the fund was under review and they would not have a decision on their application until the review was completed. Was, at that time, there an undertaking

on the part of the Victims Assistance Fund or whoever was talking with these organizations to say to them the review should take an estimated period of time?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, they were not given a definitive amount of time. They were told that there would be a wait, though I am told that they were given some indication it could take up to a year.

Ms. Barrett: Yet, Mr. Acting Chairperson, some of these agencies have been waiting for two years or more.

The minister stated that during this period of time when the review was underway, there were external agencies—I believe there were external agencies—who were given grants and others who were told that they would have to wait for the review to be completed.

Can the minister give us some sense of what criteria were used to determine which agencies were given funding during the review process and which agencies were told that they would have to wait until the review was completed?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I am informed that applications which were received before the review, there was then an effort to grandfather those applications. If they met the criterion they were grandfathered. But for those whose applications came in after the review was in progress, those were not grandfathered, and those were then the ones who had the extended waiting period.

Ms. Barrett: I have a specific question about the content of some of the letters I have seen denying agencies. There are at least three that I know of, and this is a question of clarification.

The letter states in all cases: This request, i.e., for funding was denied as it does not comply with subsections 2(c)(4)(d) of the policy framework, which states, the fund will not provide funding for services already provided by existing programs delivered or funded by government.

Then, there is another sentence that I do not understand in this context, which says: Your agency was in receipt of government funding

when the Victims Assistance Committee considered the request.

* (2040)

I do not understand the two sentences together. The first sentence says that the fund is not going to provide you any money because these services that you are asking for are already provided by programs delivered or funded by government. I can understand that statement, because the original purpose of the fund was to provide for services that were not already provided for. I understand that statement. I do not understand it in the context of the fact that the government is taking money from the fund to provide for services that it already funds.

The second sentence, which says the agency was in receipt of government funding, I do not understand why that is a reason for denying an application. It does not make sense in the context. I am wondering if the minister can explain it, because it is in at least three of the agencies' letters.

Mrs. Vodrey: I am told that that final sentence was to fix for the agency the point in time at which their application was being considered.

At the time of the letter, because in some cases there was a lag, they may not have been in receipt of funding, and what was important to fix in time in the letter with that final sentence was to point out to the agency that at the time their application was being considered, they were in receipt of government funding.

Ms. Barrett: Yes, but does that mean then that this was another reason why they were not considered for the Victims Assistance Fund?

Mrs. Vodrey: I think I have the answer. If those agencies, at the time they applied to the Victims Assistance Fund, were already in receipt of government funds, funds from elsewhere in government, then they would not have been considered for Victims Assistance funding.

Ms. Barrett: So, according to this letter, any agency that had money coming from any other part of government would not be eligible for grants under the Victims Assistance Fund. Is that an

accurate restatement of the minister's response to me?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed that at the time of the review and in interpreting (4)(d), that then where agencies were in receipt of other government funding, they were not at the time of the review eligible for Victims Assistance funding.

Ms. Barrett: What is the purpose of the phrase, at the time of the review?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chair, as I explained to the member, it attempted to fix in time when agencies made their application. If they made their application at a time that was before the review, then we made every effort, if they met the criteria, to grandfather them. If they made an application during the time of the review, they were informed that there would be a time lag and that final phrase "fixed in time" when their application was reviewed by the Victims Assistance Committee. So at the time that they received the letter they might not have been in receipt of government funds, but at the time they were reviewed they might have been. So an agency was not able then to say, we are not receiving funds, because at the time of the review they may have been receiving funds, they were receiving funds.

Ms. Barrett: I think I understand now the final sentence. Thank you. However, this still does not clarify for me the end result, if I could state it and ask the minister if I am accurate. If an agency at the time of the review was receiving any money from the provincial government they were not eligible for Victims Assistance Fund grants.

Mrs. Vodrey: That is correct.

Ms. Barrett: The minister, earlier this evening, said that the policy framework had been reviewed but had not—is part of the evaluation but had not changed and so obviously this was part of the reason why these agencies were not given funds, because they did not follow through the policy framework.

However, I am looking at Schedule 1 of the '91-92 annual report which shows the funds that were given by the Victims Assistance Fund to agencies. It includes: the Selkirk Co-operative On Abuse Against Women, otherwise known as Nova

House; Citizens Against Impaired Driving; the Thompson Crisis Centre; Women's Post Treatment project; Main Street Project; Mediation Services; the Brandon city police department; Age and Opportunity; The Pas Committee for Women in Crisis; the Thompson Crisis Centre and several others. All of those organizations, when they received funding from the Victims Assistance Fund in '91-92, were also in receipt of, in some cases, quite substantial and in some cases virtually all government funding. Now, if that is accurate, then how does that compare with the letters that are being sent to agencies now which in effect say, because you have been given government funding, we will not fund you out of the Victims Assistance Fund.

That is not the same thing.

* (2050)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, it does sound like a complicated issue, and I will do my best to clarify the issue. Prior to the review that I have spoken about, there was funding to groups who received government funding but who had received no funding for victims. Then, the review was done. The review did not result in any amendments to the policy framework. However, what it did say was, look at the policy framework and make sure that the policy framework is followed. As a result of that, looking at the framework being specifically followed, then it did cause the committee to look very carefully at the applications and to say, was there any government funding? That was, if it appears to be a change, it was not a change in policy, but it was a result of a very careful scrutiny of the policy that existed and a close adherence to the policy.

Ms. Barrett: So what the minister is saying is that a strict interpretation of the existing policy leads one to say that if an agency or organization is in receipt of any provincial funding, whether for victims or not, this agency is not eligible for Victims Assistance funding.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chair, yes, that is the correct interpretation that the member has just stated.

Ms. Barrett: Let me maybe see if I understand it by using a specific example. The Family Centre of Winnipeg has been denied funding. Children's Home of Winnipeg has been denied funding.

Point of Order

Mrs. Vodrey: Just so that the record being read reflects exactly what occurred in the Chamber, the member made a statement that the Family Centre of Winnipeg had been denied. That is not correct, but we will go on to her second example of Children's Home.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Reimer): The honourable Madam Minister did not have a point of order. It was clearly a dispute of the facts.

* * *

Ms. Barrett: We will use the Children's Home, which was denied funding for an application under the Victims Assistance Fund. According to what the minister has said is now the strict interpretation of 2(c)(4)(d) of the policy framework, Children's Home, because it provides services for individuals who can be classified as victims and because it gets money from the provincial government, may as well never apply to the Victims Assistance Fund because it will never be accepted even though the project that it might specifically be asking for money for is something that it has never done before and is not being undertaken by any other government department. Is that an accurate statement of the interpretation of the policy framework?

Mrs. Vodrey: Earlier this evening I was careful to say that it was a concern to me to speak about denials, because we have treated those applications as confidential. I want to be careful not to speak about any specific application.

What I would say is, where an agency is receiving government funding, they may at that point wish to look at the priorities of how they are spending that government funding and also it would be important in the review of any application to look and see if the project being requested is in fact being done in any other place, without being specific to any application.

I gather that one of the issues to be weighed in all applications was, is this work being done elsewhere? I gather, certainly in some cases, yes, it was. It might be new for that agency, but not necessarily new within the whole range of services offered.

Ms. Barrett: Perhaps I should not have used an actual agency, because I do not even know what the project was that was denied for Children's Home. I should have said, agency X, which has money from the provincial government. Okay, let us take that example a step further. Agency X wants to do a research project into an element of a problem for victims that has never been done before, is looking at it from a different angle, but agency X currently has funding from the provincial government and also does deal with services to victims. Would that agency, would that project be denied under 2(c)(4)(d)?

Mrs. Vodrey: I really hesitate, on the record in this Legislature, to give the member a definitive answer one way or no, because it is a very speculative question. We are dealing with hypotheticals in all cases. The issues that would always be looked at are, is this kind of a project a genuinely new project which absolutely is not being done anywhere and is consistent with the kinds of therapeutic areas or areas that are to be looked at in terms of treatment.

So it is so speculative, it is really difficult to answer the question, and I can only take her back to the kinds of information I have available to me now which say that, though some agencies might want to expand the kind of service that they do, that service in many cases is being offered in other places. It is very difficult to speculate if it is an absolute brand new idea, which makes wonderful sense. What might happen in that case, I really cannot say.

* (2100)

Ms. Barrett: The minister is not saying that because the agency is in receipt of provincial funding and because the agency currently works with victims, automatically that would preclude that agency from making application for a grant under the Victims Assistance Fund.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I will try again to be as clear as I can. I would remind the member that everything that I say is dealing with a hypothetical, speculative issue around which it is impossible to give any guarantees.

However, some of the things that are looked at, I am informed, by the Victims Assistance Committee are: Does a project have a specific beginning and end? Does that project have no future implications or cost commitments and will that project benefit the most number of victims? So there are a number of criteria to be considered.

The answer, it is very difficult to give an absolute because we are dealing in hypotheticals. I think we have covered tonight certainly the general principles, which must be known by agencies and which will be communicated to agencies, are communicated to agencies; and, with that, in applying for a grant, as in most cases, agencies then put together the project that they believe will be the most beneficial. We have to look and see, the committee has to look and see if that meets the criteria.

Ms. Barrett: Absolutely. I would not have it any other way myself. That is, by definition, the kind of projects that were looked at, my understanding is, from the very beginning of the Victims Assistance Fund. I do not disagree with that at all, and I do not think agencies would either.

The area I am trying to get at, and I do not know how to do it if I cannot talk speculatively and I cannot talk specifically, but what I am saying is any agency that follows those parameters and guidelines, which are perfectly legitimate, and they are judged on those guidelines, those criteria, are they also automatically kicked out of the system if they currently service victims and if they currently are in receipt of provincial funding?

I think that is fairly important criteria to have understood, and it does not seem to me to be either a speculative or a specific thing. Yes, you judge each project on its merits. Those are legitimate criteria the minister has outlined, but are there additional criteria that say, we will not even look at your specific request if you currently are in receipt

of government funding and you currently provide services to victims?

Mrs. Vodrey: I think the best answer I can give to a fairly complex question, which is not a simple answer, is to say that the committee and government would always make every effort to exercise common sense, to look at the project with its merits under the criterion that we have discussed this evening.

The groups in making their applications would be made aware of the principles and should be thinking of them, and where they had questions or wanted to know about whether or not things fit the guidelines, I am told that we are certainly happy to assist groups that are trying to make application.

So we want to work with the community groups. We want to help them with their application. We cannot grant outside of the criterion, but under some of the extraordinary circumstances that the member has outlined, should they perhaps occur, I think the best I can say is we make every attempt to use common sense.

Ms. Barrett: I am trying to just understand the criteria. I just want to know if one of the criteria for—you have to have a checklist. I mean, if you get 300 applications, there is no way you can really legitimately look at all of those applications thoroughly, so you take a look at them the same way you do when someone is applying to you for a job.

The job requires someone who has experience in or understanding of issues in social services. Well, if an engineer who has never done anything in his life but be an engineer, you are going to take a quick look at that and say, I am sorry, he/she does not make the first cut.

What I am saying is, that first cut, does an agency that received government funding and provides services to victims make that first cut, all things else being equal, or is that one of the things that kicks them out of the system right away?

(Madam Chairperson in the Chair)

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, I had believed that I had answered this through the course of the discussion. One of the points that I have tried to

make is obviously the decisions would be made based on the facts of an application. I do not have the facts of an application. I only have the speculation of what might be, and maybe parts might be, and other parts may not be. So I am not able to give an answer about if an application would be approved under certain circumstances.

All I can talk about is, here are the criteria for application. They are contained in the policy framework that groups need to be aware of in their application. If they have additional questions, then we will certainly make every effort to help them through the process.

* (2110)

Ms. Barrett: Madam Chairperson, I am not asking for a decision on the ultimate outcome of an application. I am asking for a simple statement. Is one of the criteria that an agency will not be in current receipt of government funding? Is that one of the criteria? I would like to have—if I had a copy of the statement of policy framework, maybe I would know the answer to that. But there are agencies that have been asking these questions for years that have not gotten answers. So they have asked me to ask the simple question.

Mrs. Vodrey: That is one of the criteria. It is one of the criteria that I have spoken about this evening. It is not a dispositive criterion in that we would have to look at the facts of the particular application. However, during the course of the evening I have said that is one of the criteria to be considered. If the groups had a special case that they wanted to put forward, then I have said during the course of the evening that the Victims Assistance group will make every attempt to assist them.

I just want to say that if the member makes a comment about groups not knowing—I do not know what part they do not know. We certainly have informed them about their status now, groups have been informed about their status. We have made every attempt to deal with what was that lag time between application and when people actually found out the results of their application.

Ms. Barrett: Madam Chair, I will not belabour any more this particular issue and will await the

receipt of the policy framework and perhaps have a dialogue individually with the minister and certainly will talk more with agencies.

I would close my remarks on this, because the other critics have comments on this and other sections, just by saying I think the criteria and the hoops, if you will, some of which are legitimate—I am not for a moment suggesting that there should not be criteria—but what agencies outside of the Estimates process have to go through compared to what agencies within the Estimates process have to go through, are, I think, quite distinct and substantially different.

Again, I will just end by saying that I think the changes made to the Victims Assistance Fund granting authority by Bill 53 last year, I have not changed my mind from July 23 last year when I said it was a reprehensible piece of legislation that is going to have very negative effects on services for victims. I think there are a lot of agencies in this city and this province who would agree with it and would like very much to see the fund returned to its original intention.

Mr. Kowalski: As a new critic in this area of Justice, I am trying to learn the Justice department so I can better do my role as a critic to both commend and condemn the actions of the minister's department, and it is helpful for me to know the minister's staff. I see we have a new member of the minister's staff here. I would be interested in knowing the name and position of that staff member.

Mrs. Vodrey: Perhaps the member missed it when I did introduce the person now at the table, on the record, but let me take a moment to introduce her to the committee again. This is Jocelyn Prohaska, and she is the provincial co-ordinator for the Victims Assistance Fund.

Mr. Kowalski: Thank you very much. As a new critic, I am not as well versed in this area as I would like to be.

The member for Wellington made a statement, and I would like the minister to confirm that the statement is correct, that when this legislation was first brought forward for this Victims Assistance Fund, one of the purposes of the fund was to be an

incubator for being a fund for new projects, for innovative projects. Would the minister agree that was the original purpose for the legislation for this fund?

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. Does the committee wish to take a five-minute recess? No.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, the purposes of the fund are to be found in the act which covers the fund. So I can read to the member from the act which covers the fund, the promotion and the administration of the victims services fund and research into victims services, needs and concerns; distribution of information respecting victims services, needs and concerns; remuneration of members of the committee for their service and reimbursement for reasonable expenses and any other purpose that the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council or government considers necessary.

Then there are some underlying principles, which I will also read for the member. The principles that should guide society as a whole in providing justice for victims of crime are set out in this part. This all comes directly from Part 1 of the act.

I would just like to put that on the record, as well, that when the laws of society are offended victims suffer consequences and have needs and concerns that deserve consideration separate and apart from the interest of society as a whole, that the hardships created by an offence against the laws of society should be shared by society as a whole, and victims should be assisted in addressing their particular needs and concerns, and that when a person offends the laws of society, that person shows a disregard for persons who may be harmed by unlawful acts, and that person owes a debt to society generally, and to victims, whether or not the offence has affected a specific identified victim.

It is recognized that victims should have access to social, legal, medical and mental health services, and that law enforcement court, health and social services personnel should, at the earliest practical opportunity, inform victims of the services and remedies available to them and their responsibilities.

* (2120)

Mr. Kowalski: I thank the minister for that. I am going to make a statement and ask the minister if I am right about it. The Victims Assistance Fund runs three types of programs, police programs such as a victims services unit run out of the Winnipeg police, government-based programs such as the Women's Advocacy Program and community-based programs such as Family Survivors Of Homicide. Would that be the three type of programs that the Victims Assistance Fund funds? Is it in those three categories?

Mrs. Vodrey: Those are the kinds of categories—I just would like to say the member used the example of the Winnipeg Police Victim Services which we do not fund at the moment because there is a time limit to the funding available through the Victims Assistance. It is usually three to four years. We are, however, at the moment funding the RCMP Victim Services, and we did in the past fund the Brandon Police Victim Services, but the member is right in the other two categories, specifically, yes, programs which come from the community, and yes, programs which deal with the victims such as Women's Advocacy.

Mr. Kowalski: For community based programs the Victims Assistance Fund provides short-term initial start-up grants to a maximum of four years? Is that correct?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, that is correct.

Mr. Kowalski: If using the principles that the minister has read to me in the criteria, why is there a difference between the length of funding for a community-based program as opposed to a government-based program? Why are there two standards for something like Women's Advocacy program? You know it will be ongoing, and I imagine it is going longer than four years. Why is there that standard where for community-based programs that are successful and are helpful, they limited to four years and one-time funding only?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, the outside programs are seen as pilot programs, and they are funded for in the range of four years, and groups know this when they apply for the funding. The funding of the programs such as Women's

Advocacy and Child Abuse Witness Programs is scrutinized every year and evaluated through the Estimates process, and so that is a way that they are evaluated, whereas others are evaluated outside of government. I am not sure if the member is suggesting then that we should now stop funding Child Witness Program or Women's Advocacy.

Mr. Kowalski: Of course, I am not suggesting that we stop funding that, but when I heard the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) talk earlier and I heard the minister's reply, I felt I heard something different than the minister heard, that there is a difference in understanding of the original intent and the application of the fund as it is now in that this fund was meant to be an incubator, meant to be funds for new initiatives, creative initiatives, and not to be used for operating funds for government programs. Once those programs are established, whether they be as an outside program or within government, the same as the outside programs are directed to find funding elsewhere from other government departments or from other funding sources, I believe the original intent was for this fund just to be an incubator, and it has become now operating funds for a number of witness assistance programs.

I think it is just something we are going to have to agree to disagree in that this was not the intent of the fund, and I do not think it is the right application. That does not devalue the programs that are funded by the government as ongoing programs. No one could argue about the positive effect of the Women's Advocacy Program and the Child Witness Support Program or Victim/Witness Assistance or Criminal Injuries Compensation. No one could argue the value of those; it is just that, as they become ongoing projects, they should not be used using the funding that was meant to develop new programs and for pilot projects. Or, if that is the way they are going to be used, then these outside programs should have the same opportunity as the government in that if these programs are successful, they are doing a good job, why should they not continue to operate under these funds, as do the government funds?

The next point I would like to bring up, and I know it is dealing with the minority of victims out

there, a very small minority, but that does not make their pain any less or any less serious: men who have been abused by their spouses. We have a Women's Advocacy Program, and if a male spouse is abused or is in need of supports, right now I am not aware of any place where a man can go for the same type of supports that the Women's Advocacy centre performs. Is the government planning any initiative, or are there any proposals coming forward to the government by any outside agencies to cover this shortfall in resources for victims?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, I am informed that we have never received an application from an agency requesting funding to do the work with male victims. However, if such a request were to come forward, it would be considered as others are considered.

Mr. Kowalski: Has there been any research done for the need for such a service by the Justice department to indicate that there is a need for such a service?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am told that male victims receive support through the Victim/Witness Assistance Program. They also receive support through the Criminal Injuries Compensation and the Child Witness Support Program. Again, if any other agency wanted to put forward a program, then that could be looked at, but as I said, there is some service available which indicates our recognition of their need for support.

Mr. Kowalski: Just going back one moment to the Victims Assistance Fund, I just want to make sure I understand correctly. The Virden Victim Services project, for example, has been receiving funding for a number of years. Does that preclude it from ongoing funding such as the Child Witness Support Program or Witness Assistance Program or the Women's Advocacy Program receives, and the fact that in that community it is the primary deliverer of support for victims in that part of Manitoba?

* (2130)

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, the Virden victims assistance program is a project of the RCMP victim services. If the member's question was, can

those victims also seek support from the Victim/Witness Assistance run by the Department of Justice, the Criminal Injuries Compensation or the Child Witness Support, yes, they can. But, if the member is asking, is that project able to be funded in future by the Victims Assistance Fund, if that was another part of the question, the answer is that the community in signing the contract with the RCMP knew that that was time limited and the requirement was on them to find community funding following.

Mr. Kowalski: Yes, it goes back to that philosophical difference in that if it was a government program and it was successful and doing good work, it would be continued to be funded, but because it is outside of Winnipeg and an outside agency, it will not be continued to be funded, no matter how good the work is that it does.

Mrs. Vodrey: This actually had really just everything to do with the contract that was signed. The member is trying to make some issue between urban and rural kinds of programming. That is not accurate. That would be entirely wrong.

Mr. Kowalski: No, it was not so much rural/urban. It was the idea that between government-based programs and outside-based programs the difference is if it was a government-based program that was successful and doing a good service for victims, it would be continued to be funded, but because it is an outside program it will not be continued to be funded.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, the member has indicated that he has some disagreement with the projects that are funded or the way projects are funded. The answer remains the same. For this particular project in Virden, they signed a contract with a clear understanding of what would be expected at the expiry of the contract. That was the way that both parties entered into the agreement.

* (2140)

Mr. Mackintosh: I just need some clarification on the victims services programs that were developed in northern Manitoba in 1992.

There were the victims services centres in Thompson, Dauphin, The Pas, Flin Flon, Portage,

Virden and Selkirk. I understand that was a program that was funded—it was a two-year program, the funds to run out this November as a result of funding from the Victims Assistance Fund.

In the line on page 40 under Expected Results under Victims Assistance it says: Implement the Rural Victims Assistance Program in three rural locations—Brandon, The Pas and Thompson.

I just would like the minister to clarify the difference between the Rural Victims Assistance Program and the ongoing soon-to-run-out program that is RCMP provincially run or provincially funded.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, the programs provided through the RCMP are offered under a two-year contract, and they are for general victims services.

The expansion of the Victims Assistance program offered through the Department of Justice is the Women's Advocacy program and the Child Witness Program. These are currently not being offered with the same level of specialization and now will be through this expansion.

Mr. Mackintosh: What is the minister's view as to what is to happen to the Victims Assistance centres at Thompson, Dauphin, The Pas, Flin Flon, Portage, Virden and Selkirk?

Mrs. Vodrey: For these programs, which have been run by the RCMP, the community will now assess whether these are priority programs in their community, and the understanding always has been that these communities would then undertake to find other funding which would continue the programs, whether or not it was funding that was achieved through community fundraising or funding achieved through another kind of community commitment.

The kinds of programs that we are putting in in our expanded service deal with those individuals who are children and who are women and who we were particularly concerned would receive services. The other program, the general Victims Assistance program, which is being offered by the RCMP, again, communities will have to determine

whether they would like to find alternate funding for those or not.

Mr. Mackintosh: It may be that the Thompson and The Pas Victims Assistance needs will be met in part through the expanded provincial programs because I presume that the majority—I could be wrong on this one—of victims seeking assistance were women, perhaps to a lesser extent children, in those communities.

So some of the needs may be met by the provincial program, but many will not. What we are seeing then is in Dauphin, Flin Flon, Portage and Selkirk, the potential loss of Victims Assistance. I wonder if the minister would comment on that observation.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chairperson, these projects were undertaken by the RCMP. They were RCMP proposals, and they were always undertaken with the clear understanding that alternate funding must be found.

The member is suggesting now that all pilot projects, even where there is the clear understanding that alternate funding must be found after the pilot project, should perhaps somehow be assumed by government or continued indefinitely.

We have been speaking this evening about projects funded by the Victims Assistance, those community programs as incubation. That has been the term that has been used, a program, an opportunity to start and then to continue on if there was support and funding provided elsewhere.

These funds were not ever given with the understanding that they would be funds given indefinitely, and these are operated by outside agencies. They are not subject—and I see the member is assuming there is some difference. They are not subject to the Estimates process. They are not subject to—and all the members opposite have never been in government, so they have no idea about the Estimates process, have absolutely no idea. So I would say to them that there is a process in which they have never been a part, that government projects undergo a certain scrutiny.

These pilot projects are projects being offered by the community on a pilot basis. There was a clear understanding from the beginning that they

would seek alternate funds if the communities decided that these were projects of a priority to the community, and that, I believe, is what the communities are doing at the moment.

* (2150)

Mr. Mackintosh: I really feel called on to respond to the allegation that members on this side or any particular members have no idea about the Estimates process. I think that that is neither fair nor is it accurate. I think what we got to do is talk about the merits of this particular program and how these communities are going to be affected by the end of these programs.

Now there is nothing wrong with an incubation program. Let us call it that. That is good. Now the funding is going to run out. These programs have a proven track record. We can all agree in this Chamber that Victims Assistance programs have to be an essential part of the justice system in Manitoba. I say, what is the government going to do to ensure that there are Victims Assistance in Dauphin, Flin Flon, Portage and Selkirk? Is that not a function of the provincial government?

Just because we have an incubation program does not mean that once the pilot period is up those programs should die. Why can these programs not then receive funding from another program in Justice? Why is the government not going to ensure the continuation of these essential programs for these towns?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Chair, well, I would like to spend a little bit of time considering the question of the member opposite and asking what action this government will take and asking whether or not programs for Victims Assistance are valuable and whether or not every pilot project should be continued to be funded by government.

Starting with that, which the member has ended with, I think it is important to say, then, that he would assume that really no project is a pilot project, and that it would be assumed that all projects would continue to be funded by government at the end of a pilot term. That is what I would consider to be very typical of the kinds of thinking of members on that side of the House.

Members on that side of the House who continue to think that there is an absolutely bottomless pit and that the only place that people should ever go for funding is government, and that there should never be any responsibility of communities or any agreement by communities that they would then continue the terms of an agreement which are to look for alternate funds.

The member suggests in his question, and demands in his question, that government now continue to fund these and, I am sure, other programs that in fact, as the member said, all programs funded by Victims Assistance should be incubation programs and pilot programs; and, following that, government should then pick up and continue to fund. Perhaps he has in mind that government should continue to fund even expanded versions if these projects are ones in which the member believes government should continue funding and that the continued funding should be for all programs. I have not heard that there should be any way to measure the efficiency or what the controls might be on these programs.

Where government funds a program directly as part of a department, it is subject to the scrutiny of government and to the policies, and we are answerable to the people of Manitoba for that particular project. In the case of a grant, we have granted under certain conditions, and those are the conditions which the community is expected to abide by and we assume that they will.

In the case of funding for victims services and Victims Assistance, I have explained this evening, and we have been talking for some time about the money available to fund those programs. We have spoken about an average amount of money of \$440,000 over the past five years, \$517,000 in this year, and I add up in my mind then how much money, year over year, funding pilot project after pilot project would the member continue to obligate government to year over year?

When there were no pilot projects, when there was no beginning and end, the government should continue to pick up project after project, and I cannot, even at this point, even begin to work out what kind of a continued obligation that would be

for the people of Manitoba. So the agreement that people entered into when they became a part of this program was a pilot project, that following the pilot project they would then look for other sources of funding. I can say to the member that because it is his view that we should step in and provide an assurance of a provincial funding that communities then would never have the desire to look for the alternate kinds of funding.

Madam Chair, I know that communities would, I am sure, be able to enter into partnership for very worthy projects. I am told that in other jurisdictions, in Alberta for one, that this is exactly the way projects are going, and that communities are looking actively at fundraising within their communities or perhaps at partnerships with other organizations. We know now that government cannot do it all, that that has been a piece of knowledge which government and which the people of Manitoba have understood. That is why the people of Manitoba have said, let us look at other kinds of partnerships because government simply cannot do it all.

The member opposite continues on the theme that government should do it all, that government should continue to pick up where a pilot project has ended, and the obligations become endless.

However, I would also like to speak about the kinds of projects that are funded from the Victims Assistance because the member has also asked about the importance of these programs. I would like to say that programs that assist victims, no matter what the program, programs that we have been able to talk about tonight that have met the criteria would be important, that certainly the programs such as the Women's Advocacy program is an important one. It deals with women very specifically; or the Child Witness deals with children; and the program which has been agreed to as a pilot with the RCMP deals with general witness issues.

It is not only does government think it is important, Madam Chair. It is does the community also think it is important. Does the community also believe that the project is one to be continued, and that the project is one in which they would like to

see funding to continue? Is there a commitment from the community themselves to consider the funding and to continue the funding for this particular program?

We spoke earlier today about the rights to make decisions. Do the decisions all flow from government or are decisions also made by communities? Is it communities which have the opportunity to decide if they want programs to continue and to take an active part in the continuation of those programs? That was the understanding in the specific project, and I think it is important when we look at the partnership that is required now across Manitoba in all areas that through that partnership that communities have a determining voice and that also other groups who might wish to become involved in the partnership have a determining voice.

So, Madam Chair, I would just like to summarize by saying that these are pilot projects, known to be pilot projects. They are entered into with the understanding that government cannot continue to do it all, government cannot assume and pick up every program, that we have to look for other kinds of partnerships, that again was always the understanding and the expectation.

Following that, we will be happy to work with the communities.

My understanding is that the RCMP will certainly be working with the communities to look at how they might achieve their funding in this as in other projects. There have been many worthy projects funded to the community by Victims Assistance. All of those groups, not only these communities but other groups as well, have known the circumstances of their funding, and that they also have understood that they have to either determine that the project had a beginning and end. That was one of the criteria that I spoke about early in terms of the granting of projects: Is there a discreet beginning and end, and does that project continue to obligate government to future funding, because that would be a consideration?

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. As previously agreed, the hour being 10 p.m., committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Madam Deputy Speaker (Louise Dacquay): As previously agreed, the hour being 10 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Thursday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, June 1, 1994

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