



First Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(Hansard)**

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Louise M. Dacquay
Speaker*



Vol. XLV No. 20B - 8 p.m., Monday, June 19, 1995

ISSN 0542-5492

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

<u>Name</u>	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Party</u>
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise, Hon.	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary	Concordia	N.D.P.
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	P.C.
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	P.C.
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	N.D.P.
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	P.C.
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	N.D.P.
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Lib.
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	P.C.
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane	Osborne	N.D.P.
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	P.C.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn	St. James	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	P.C.
NEWMAN, David	Riel	P.C.
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PITURA, Frank	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
RADCLIFFE, Mike	River Heights	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack, Hon.	Niakwa	P.C.
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric	Rupert Island	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Gladstone	P.C.
SALE, Tim	Crescentwood	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin	N.D.P.
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	P.C.
TOEWS, Vic, Hon.	Rossmere	P.C.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, June 19, 1995

The House met at 8 p.m.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

(Concurrent Sections)

CULTURE, HERITAGE AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Ben Sveinson): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

This evening, this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 254 will resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship.

When the committee last sat, it was considering item 4.(a)(1) on page 33 of the Estimates book and on page 49 of the yellow supplement book. Shall the item pass?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Chairperson, I did have a number of questions that I was wanting to ask in this area. I did not quite expect to be up asking them as early as I am but am pleased to get the opportunity.

The minister and the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickey) made a number of remarks, and some of the remarks that were made I think, in part, were quite justified. Like them, I, too, am concerned and see the great potential of favourable immigration policy to the province, to the country actually, and the many different benefits of having a favourable immigration policy would be phenomenal. We need to do what we can to ensure that Manitoba does, in fact, get its fair share, if you like.

As opposed to giving opening remarks, I just want to go directly into questions and ask the minister what he believes in terms of the number of immigrants that the province of Manitoba should be taking in, in any given year.

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Well, I have said before that we have used 4 percent as a target, one that I guess we would be pleased if we got the numbers up that high. I think the member knows that immigrants, when they come to Canada, really settle wherever they wish to go. Four percent of Canada's intake, for instance, in '94 would have given us almost 9,000, and we were at about half of that or less than half of that.

We could talk about targets and move that number around wherever you like, but we also have to be able to accommodate them in terms of our programs and have work for them in many cases. I guess it is kind of a delicate balance. If you get too many immigrants in any one year, there will be settlement issues and there will be issues around accommodation and jobs and so forth, but we do have 4 percent of the Canadian population, and if we had 4 percent of the actual immigration, we would be pleased.

Mr. Lamoureux: Can the minister indicate who is negotiating on behalf of this government in terms of attempting to get a bilateral immigration agreement, and then just confirm, if you will, that the starting point from this government's perspective is to argue for 4 percent of the total number of immigrants who come to Canada?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, staff from our Citizenship Branch, including the assistant deputy minister, and certainly, we have also included staff from interprovincial relations in doing this.

Mr. Lamoureux: I just want to be sure of this; that is, if the minister and his staff along with the interprovincial civil servants or the individuals who are responsible for interprovincial relations, if you will, are from a starting point arguing that Manitoba is entitled to 4 percent of the total number of immigrants who come to Canada.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I would hesitate to use the word "entitled." I said earlier today that the federal government has an ability to direct the refugee

component of the immigrants to the country, and, in fact, they approach provinces to see how many refugees they can accommodate, and we have always said we will do our share.

Over and above that, other immigrants who come to Canada can settle wherever they want. There are no limitations put on them or strings put on them to say we will let you into Canada if you settle here, here or here. In fact, the most popular destinations are the three city states that I mentioned before: Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal. We know that the federal government cannot steer the family class immigrants or the independent immigrants to any particular place, but what we are saying, by putting undue financial burdens on potential immigrants, is that it cuts down on the total immigration to Canada.

* (2010)

There are a number of areas that we feel we could work with the federal government to assist Manitoba. One would be to have the federal government recognize that there indeed is a shortage of garment workers in Manitoba. At the present time they say no, it can be filled domestically.

Well, the fact of the matter is it is not being, and it cannot be. We have every belief that there are potential immigrants in certain parts of the world who would love to come and have a job here, but the federal government will not recognize that as one of the labour market demands.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, I guess, when I think in terms of what is in Manitoba's best interests, I would ultimately argue that it is not in our best interest to say, look, we want 4 percent of whatever number of immigrants that come to the province of Manitoba. I know the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) in his comments made reference to percentages and said, look, we only get 1.8 percent; we should be entitled—or might not have used the word "entitled," but suggested again 4 percent. We make up, I believe it is, somewhere around 3.7 percent of the overall population of Canada, thereby we should be receiving that same percentage of the number of immigrants that come to the province.

I think this is an argument that I hear from the member for Point Douglas as the NDP representative. I hear from the minister that in fact this is the argument that government is prepared to articulate, at least I am given the impression that this is in fact what they are articulating.

I would argue that is not the position you should be articulating. I would argue what you should be articulating is what you feel, what government feels the province of Manitoba can handle in any given year.

The minister himself said too many immigrants in one year could cause potentially some problems. He makes reference to Vancouver, Toronto and I believe it was Montreal, the three major cities in which the vast majority—I should not say vast majority because I do not know if it is a vast majority, but there has been concern raised from those centres that they have been receiving too many immigrants coming in and have caused a number of perceived problems.

What concerns me is that if the federal government responds to different regions of the country and says, look, we have the province of Quebec, we have the province of Ontario and B.C. saying that we are having some problems with immigrant settlement, then the province of Manitoba is a net loser if in fact we are arguing we want a percentage of whatever number of immigrants that come to the province.

I believe what you should be arguing for is whatever Manitoba's economy—go through the different classifications that are out there, not only our economy but also our social structure—can sustain in any given year. So, for example, as both the minister and the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) were quite prepared to point out, the Liberal Party indicated 1 percent. I am assuming that both the member for Point Douglas—and one should not assume, but I will—and the Minister of Family Services supports the idea of 1 percent.

If in fact that is the case, then what is 1 percent of the population of Manitoba? Well, that would exceed 10,000, closer to 11,000, give or take 500 if you will. Then, if that is in fact what you believe and the member for Point Douglas believes, instead of arguing for a

percentage of immigrants that are coming to Canada, what we should be arguing for is 11,000 immigrants to come to the province of Manitoba. You start us off in a handicap situation if you say, look, we just want a set percentage of immigrants coming.

I guess I would ask the minister responsible for citizenship has he any idea in terms of the number of immigrants and classifications that he would like to see come to the province of Manitoba?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I am having trouble understanding the member for Inkster's logic. We are getting, the last couple of years, 4,000, and we are saying that we think we could handle maybe twice as many. The member for Inkster says, well, that is not a good argument; you should be arguing for three times as many. You should have 12,000 immigrants. These are moot points.

The issue is immigration policy which is detrimental to Manitoba. We want the right for Manitobans to bring relatives here, and things like the head tax and other charges are making it nearly impossible. The member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) indicated this in his comments that the federal government is standing in the way of family reunification by putting these fees out there. We talked about the bonds and the head tax, and then there is the administration fee which is nonrefundable. These financial barriers that are being placed there by the federal government make it very difficult for us to sustain the level of immigration that we have.

We have also put some proposals before the federal government where certain pilot projects would assist us to get more immigrants, and we have had no response from the federal government, so to argue about whether it should be 4,000 or 8,000 or 12,000, I mean, it is a moot point if the federal government continues to put blockages there and is unco-operative in attracting more immigrants to Canada. I mean, those are horrendous numbers, a \$10,000 bond, when we had 0.4 of 1 percent of these reunifications fail. I mean, we can argue about numbers. The 4 percent we talk about is a minimum. If we exceed that, fine, but you are saying because we do not meet that 4 percent target here, we should put the bar up higher.

I am not sure how we are going to get immigrants to come to Canada and Manitoba unless the federal government changes these policies. We need to get the federal government to accept some of these pilots which are geared to our own community.

As I said earlier, we have 800 jobs in the garment industry, but the federal government does not recognize that that is a labour market shortage here, and they are saying, no, you have to fill that with Manitobans and Canadians. Well, the garment industry has tried, and with a little co-operation from the federal government, we would have people immigrating to take those jobs.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, there are a whole series of questions that I would like to ask with respect to the garment industry and labour demands, but for now—and I do not think the minister is actually understanding what it is that I am saying, and that is, you talk about 4 percent.

If the federal government was to decide tomorrow that they are going to have 100,000 immigrants, well, then, we would have been at our 4 percent in terms of we receive just over 4,000, I believe is what the minister had referred to. If the federal government brings in 250,000 immigrants in any given year and then we get our 4 percent, well, then we are getting closer to that 1 percent that both the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) and the minister made reference to in terms of the Liberal commitment for the number of immigrants to come to Canada.

I will argue, and I ask for the minister to give some clarification on this, because I do not believe it is a moot point, how many immigrants can the province of Manitoba—types of classification, ideal scenario—how many immigrants would you allow into the province tomorrow?

If you could decide as a minister of immigration, how many immigrants would you allow in for the year of 1994-95?

* (2020)

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, the point is I am not the minister of immigration, and I do not set immigration

policy. That is done by the federal minister and the federal Liberal government in Ottawa, and instead of allowing the 240,000 last year, they are going to downsize that to about 190,000.

Well, if we are going from 240,000 or 250,000 immigrants one year and by their policies, they are going to shrink that total number to about 190,000, I believe Manitoba will get less, because these immigrants will choose where it is they want to reside, unless we have projects that will bring them to Manitoba, or we have particular jobs that need to be filled here.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, I do not want to belabour this point. I do believe the minister is missing the boat here. He does not understand that there is an optimum number of immigrants for the province of Manitoba, and that is the reason why—for example, the province of Quebec and I believe seven other provinces outside of Manitoba, I think it is Manitoba, B.C. and there is one other province that have failed to achieve a bilateral agreement as of yet.

I am surprised that the minister responsible cannot give us any indication in terms of what he believes Manitoba could sustain in any given year. That is somewhat disappointing, because one would anticipate that the people who are negotiating the bilateral agreement should have some sort of an idea, so that if, in fact, federal civil servants posed the question, well, what type of immigrants would you like and what sort of numbers would the province of Manitoba like to receive, I would be disappointed if other provinces did not have access to these types of numbers and descriptions.

The most successful immigrants in terms of classifications who come to the province of Manitoba are under family reunification. I believe that the numbers in the province of Manitoba will clearly indicate that under reuniting of families, we have seen immigrants who come to the province in a larger percentage than virtually any other province. So I would think that this is one aspect of a bilateral agreement that should be emphasized: the importance of the reuniting of families because they come to the province of Manitoba, and they are more inclined to

stay here because they have family connections—very, very important. I guess I would ask the minister if he could provide us some sort of percentages on the types of classifications of immigrants that have decided to come to the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, I would say to my honourable friend that, yes, Manitoba has historically benefited from family reunification, and the family reunification has been very, very successful here, with very few failures where the family has agreed to look after those immigrants that are being brought here.

I indicated it was less than 0.4 of 1 percent. We welcome family reunification, but the stumbling block is the numbers that the federal government is putting up in the face of this type of immigrant, the head tax and the bond and the processing fee. We certainly feel that the family class immigrant has made an immense contribution to Manitoba and would welcome that type of immigration.

Every province in the country likes independent immigrants who come here with their own skills and their own wealth, and certainly we have always had a balance. The only way we can direct some of that is if we can get the federal government to co-operate in terms of what the needs of the community are and to accept some of these pilots that they asked us to come forward with and to fill some of these labour force needs that are out there.

At the present time, it would appear that the federal government is on a track where they are going to restrict substantially the annual flow of immigrants into Canada from somewhere around 240,000, and I think they have maybe set a target of about 190,000 for the current year. That will surely impact on Manitoba.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, I believe the question was, does the minister know what percentage of family reunification over the last number of years has come to the province of Manitoba through immigration?

What percentage of those immigrants were under family reunification? I think that is a very important stat and would trust that the department would have it.

Mr. Gilleshammer: The proportion of the immigrants coming to Manitoba who are regarded as family class, about 43 percent, a substantial number.

Mr. Lamoureux: Can the minister then share with us—because I concur, it is a substantial number, and it is somewhat what I had assumed it would be.

Can the minister provide a breakdown then of the percentages overall in terms of independent and business, entrepreneur?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, there was about a similar number of independent, and the remainder would be refugee.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, I am interested in knowing, when the minister has made a point of telling committee members that this has been a government that has continuously lobbied to get the bilateral agreement achieved with the federal government, can the minister indicate to us—he makes reference to a number of letters.

Can the minister provide us with some of the correspondence or give us some sort of indication just exactly what he has done to achieve that bilateral agreement? I was under the impression that other provinces, even of a different political persuasion, were quite successful in achieving a bilateral agreement, and I am wondering as to just how this government has managed not to achieve an agreement with the federal government.

* (2030)

He makes reference to the letters. I would definitely be interested in seeing copies of the letters, if at all possible.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, I am advised by senior staff that only the province of Quebec has a really meaningful agreement on immigration, and that some of the other provinces who have agreements, they are not what would be called substantive agreements. We are looking for a substantive agreement. Now, I am told that none of those agreements set any targets, levels or numbers, with the exception of Quebec.

Mr. Lamoureux: So the minister is looking for more of a comprehensive agreement, and this is the reason why there has not been an agreement signed, compared to seven other provinces that have signed an agreement, from what I understand.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I am told that nobody has signed an agreement for the last four years, that the really meaningful immigration agreement that is out there is the one with the Province of Quebec. We want an agreement that sets levels and a mix of immigrants and a meaningful agreement.

I do not have copies of the other agreements with me, but my staff tell me that these agreements with other provinces are not substantive agreements.

Mr. Lamoureux: The minister wants an agreement that sets levels and mix. Can the minister share with us what sorts of levels and mix he would ideally like to see?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I can give the member some background of some of the other agreements to give him a better understanding of that, but in terms of our own agreement, we are not trying to sell set, hard and fixed numbers that are there forever and a day.

We want to be able to assess the needs in the province, and the labour market needs that are out there and work with the federal government to enhance our immigration. I will just give you some examples here.

Nova Scotia in 1978 entered into a letter of agreement to outline the respective governments' responsibilities on immigration matters, and then it talks about level setting, implementation authority, policy integration and settlement arrangements. None of them contain any targets. It is simply an agreement to work together without having any clout within the agreement.

Canada and Saskatchewan have a letter of agreement also signed in 1978, and it deals with immigrant and nonimmigrant selection monitoring. Canada and New Brunswick signed an agreement in 1978. It must have been a good year for agreements. We want to have a more meaningful one than ones signed with the other

provinces and perhaps I can, at some point, get some more information on these for the member.

Mr. Lamoureux: Could the minister indicate what would be—he makes reference in terms of levels and mix of immigrants being a part of any sort of an agreement. Can the minister give us any indication in terms of the presentations that have been made to the federal civil servants, or correspondence that has been sent? To what degree of depth does it really address these issues which the minister has talked about?

Mr. Gilleshammer: My understanding is that the member wants to get some documentation of the discussions that have taken place with the federal government, and the position that the federal government is taking?

Mr. Lamoureux: Yes. The position in which this government and in particular this minister is taking with respect to the signing of an agreement.

Mr. Gilleshammer: In the area of levels and mix, we are looking for some mechanisms that we can negotiate with the federal government to influence the levels and composition of immigration for Manitoba. We want to have mechanisms to ensure that the immigrants' skills and business expertise will fulfill Manitoba's labour market requirements and I have mentioned, once or twice, the garment industry.

We want some appropriate funding arrangements from the federal government to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of these levels. We are looking for support for settlement and integration.

At the present time we do get a little support from the federal government, but that is declining. So we have been at the table and would like to—and I might say that there has been some agreement at the local level on some of the things that we want for Manitoba, but as that works its way up into the federal department, we have not got a response at this time on many of those things.

I have written to the federal minister in recent days again asking if he and I can have a face to face meeting on this. I wrote to him in December to make that

request. We have still had no response on that, so we think that our people at the table here and staff from intergovernmental affairs have worked well with the local federal immigration staff to achieve some of the goals I think we want for Manitoba.

Mr. Lamoureux: Has the minister corresponded with the Department of Immigration, in essence, what he just finished talking about, in a written fashion?

Mr. Gilleshammer: That was the essence of the letter I referred to that we got away in recent days and the letter that I sent in December.

Mr. Lamoureux: Can the minister give any sort of indication as to when he would anticipate to have an agreement signed?

Mr. Gilleshammer: We signed the Memorandum of Understanding in October, and we expect that within three or four months we would have the agreement signed. I mean we are almost eight months, so twice as long from that point, and we do not have an agreement.

Mr. Lamoureux: I want to move on to a question with respect to the garment industry, but just before I do that, the 43 percent from the family class that Manitoba has been beneficial in terms of receiving, I am wondering if the minister can indicate when he talks about his mixtures, looking at the same basic composition, mixture, into the future in any agreement that is going to be signed it would be somewhat reflective of what it has been over the last number of years in terms of percentage of which classifications of immigrants.

Mr. Gilleshammer: We are not going to put hard and fast numbers in there on percentages, for instance, some countries, the Philippines for example, the family reunification numbers have been over 60 percent. Those are historical numbers that I gave the member and there are only three classes, and you can move those percentages around a bit but it is the total number of immigrants that we want to improve for Manitoba.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, the minister makes reference to from within the garment industry there has been a request to have some 800 jobs filled.

I am wondering if the minister can give a bit of clarification. Is the industry recommending that it be filled using immigrants?

Mr. Gilleshammer: The industry has more than one strategy to solve their problem, and certainly one other strategy is to train people who are already in Manitoba, in Canada. They have other proposals out there, but they are in need of about 800 people and certainly a portion of those jobs could be filled through immigration. An industry like that cannot stand still. If that is not going to work, or if they are not seeing significant numbers coming, they have other strategies of training people as well, but it is an example of where there are jobs going wanting, and they do not view immigration as the sole solution to their problem.

Mr. Lamoureux: Have they suggested or recommended to the government what possible percentage of the 800 may be a short term. Are they talking 400 people that they would love to be able to get involved in the garment industry through immigration? Is it about short-term, long-term proposals, any indication whatsoever with respect to a further breakdown on percentages from the industry in terms of requesting immigrants?

* (2040)

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, the problem is that they have been told by the federal government that this is not a possibility, to target immigrants to fill these jobs. This is the point I was making earlier. The federal government is saying that that shortage should be made up from within, and, again, it is very difficult to train that many people. As the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) mentioned, these are sometimes lower-paying jobs as well. I think, in the minds of the industry, it is part of the solution. We have tried to intercede and suggested that we get a hundred immigrants, but the federal government has said no.

Mr. Lamoureux: So the government is on the record of requesting the federal government to allow for a hundred garment industry workers to come to the province.

Mr. Gilleshammer: That is correct.

Mr. Lamoureux: Can the minister then indicate when this actually occurred?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I am told it was in November of 1994.

Mr. Lamoureux: Can the minister indicate in terms of how long jobs of this nature have been going unfilled for, given that I can recall, when I was first elected, seeing individuals like Bob Silver and other members of the garment industry talking about the need for people to work within the industry? How long have we seen this particular problem over recent years?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I am told that this has been an ongoing problem. As people are trained and go to these jobs, there are people leaving the workforce as well, but there have been job openings there, it might be fair to say, almost on an historical basis.

Mr. Lamoureux: I want to get back to these hundred jobs that have been requested in terms of filling. Has the Government of Canada ever responded to the November '94 request?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, I am told the response was no.

Mr. Lamoureux: Was there any rationale or reasoning given?

Mr. Gilleshammer: In the view of the federal government, the jobs should be filled with existing Canadian citizens.

Mr. Lamoureux: Has the minister or is the minister aware of maybe possibly the Premier or anyone else requesting a meeting or presenting to the Minister of Immigration the seriousness of the matter, as opposed to having to go through the civil service?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, I have indicated just earlier that it has been raised at the staff level, and I have raised immigration matters in a number of letters to Minister Marchi.

Mr. Lamoureux: Has this minister or the Premier requested personally, regarding the garment industry,

that we would like to achieve an agreement that would see these jobs being filled?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I have not personally spoken to Mr. Marchi on any occasion. I have written to him on immigration matters, and I believe what the member is suggesting is that the federal government has said, no, at the staff level, to this particular project, that he is suggesting that I would take this particular project up with the federal minister. I guess I would like to know if that is what his point is.

Mr. Lamoureux: Well, Mr. Chairperson, I believe that the issue is serious enough that, not only does it warrant this minister getting involved, I would ultimately argue that it warrants the Premier (Mr. Filmon) getting involved. This is in fact a very serious, grave issue, when you have literally hundreds of jobs within the economy that have not been filled, that have been wanting for years, not since November of '94.

If this minister or the Premier were really seriously attempting to fill these jobs, I would have thought—I know, myself being put in the same sort of a situation that the minister is fortunate enough to be in, I would be inclined to be a bit more aggressive on this issue.

I do not believe it is good enough if the only thing the minister has is a letter that says no, to leave it at that. I believe that it does warrant his attention, and I would ask the minister whether or not he believes that this particular matter is serious enough in which he personally will get involved and whether it is making the trip or phoning his counterparts or writing a letter, indicating just how much Manitoba needs to ensure that this happens. I think if we look over the years that a very strong case could be built.

I was under the impression after listening to Question Period and responses when I posed the same question in essence to the Premier, was that this government has been very aggressively trying to fill these jobs. That is why I am somewhat surprised, if I understand correctly, that this minister has not corresponded himself. Yes, some of the civil servants from within the department, but this minister has never raised it at ministerial meetings. Maybe he will correct me and say that at one of the last ministerial meetings he raised it. I hope he

does say that. There is nothing that he has indicated to us to demonstrate that he himself or this government is prepared to resolve this problem once and for all.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I will just assure the member again that this has been brought up at the bureaucratic level at the highest levels. There has not been a ministerial meeting. Usually this is called by the federal minister. In two letters and possibly three requesting a bilateral meeting with the federal minister he has not responded to that.

So when we have that meeting, if we have that meeting, there are a whole host of issues that I as provincial minister want to bring up, but, again, the request for a meeting with the federal minister has not succeeded at this point in time. There has not been a meeting of ministers responsible for citizenship and immigration across the country.

Mr. Lamoureux: But the minister still does have other communication tools that could be made available for him so that he can directly get involved. In fact, there have been opportunities when our Premier (Mr. Filmon) has met with the Prime Minister, and it is not like you are talking 10 or 12 jobs. You are talking about something that is supposedly very, very important. You know, it is interesting sitting with the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) right now. When I had asked him the question about the garment industry and number of jobs, I think that he would have definitely found it most interesting to hear what the Minister of Culture and Heritage has to say about this particular issue and would actually suggest that he might even want to share some of the knowledge he has on this particular issue with the Deputy Premier.

Again, I do not necessarily want to focus too much attention on this minister's, what I would classify as lack of an attempt to try to resolve this problem, because I do not believe a letter in November from within the Civil Service is good enough. It would have been wonderful had it been accepted and they came up with a program. In the late '60s, early '70s, there was an agreement of—I do not know the details of it, but there was the Fashion Institute, from what I understand, sent down a contingent of people outside of Canada in order to fill these jobs.

I am wondering if the minister can provide us information in terms of just exactly what it was that the department did request. Did they put forward a proposal that would have seen these jobs being filled, or was it a relatively straightforward letter just asking to have a hundred garment workers come to Manitoba?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I will tell the member one more time. There was a concrete proposal from the department to bring over a hundred immigrants to help the labour market shortage in the garment industry that was turned by the federal government. That means the federal government said no. I will also reiterate that on a number of occasions I have personally written to the federal minister requesting opportunity to meet with him over immigration issues. We have not had a response to that. We have not had a federal minister who has acceded to meet with this provincial minister.

We have many issues surrounding immigration and settlement issues that we would like to talk to the federal minister about. The only time he has communicated with me is through the Winnipeg Free Press in the month of April. I dare say that is not a very effective way of communicating. I tell you that, when other ministers of the Crown, whether they be federal or provincial, communicate with me as a minister, they get a response, and they get it very quickly.

* (2050)

Mr. Lamoureux: Earlier, before we broke earlier today, the minister made comments, something to the effect that we could not get people to fill the jobs because of the bonds, making reference to the garment industry. I would ask the minister, does he sincerely believe that the bond issue will prevent these jobs from being filled?

Mr. Gilleshammer: What I tried to convey in answering the member from Point Douglas is, when the federal government puts a \$10,000 bond in place in terms of family class sponsorship, it has an exceedingly detrimental effect in bringing immigrants to Canada. The bond is being demanded by the federal government to supposedly correct a problem where the sponsors are not fulfilling their responsibilities. That is not an issue

in Manitoba. If this member from Inkster is trying to say a \$10,000 bond should not stop anybody from coming to Canada or the right-of-landing fee of \$975 is not a problem, he is wrong. These are tremendous problems in terms of increasing immigration to Canada.

I am surprised. The member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) seems to me like he is in favour of it, that he supports the federal government's activities in this area, that he supports this bond that is going to protect the federal government from the sponsorships that do not work and he supports this right-of-landing fee. I can tell you, not many people that I have talked to do support it, and I think the member for Inkster is offside on this issue.

Mr. Lamoureux: In time I will address the \$975 issue in a bit more detail with respect to the bond, but I would ask the minister—I believe it is still a proposed \$10,000 bond that is being talked about. From what I understand, it deals strictly with family unification.

Mr. Gilleshammer: That is correct.

Mr. Lamoureux: Is it the intention then of this minister that the 100 jobs, immigrants, that they would be trying to fill would then be under the family reunification?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Our intention is to increase the number of immigrants that come to Manitoba. What I am telling the member for Inkster, federal initiatives which he seems to support, like the sponsorship bond and the right-of-landing fee and the other fees that are being put in there, are not going to be helpful in improving the immigration picture in Canada or in Manitoba.

In fact, I indicated, it appears to be federal policy to reduce the number of immigrants from somewhere around 240,000 or 250,000 last year to 190,000 this year. How do you do that? You do that by putting in policies like the ones we have been talking about.

Mr. Lamoureux: I guess, to a certain degree, I am concerned about—because I have encountered it even as recent as the provincial election—the spreading of misinformation of sorts.

The minister talks about filling these jobs; he now indicated earlier today. It would have been nice to have heard sort of a response in terms of a commitment when I had asked the Premier (Mr. Filmon), but possibly the Premier was not aware of the hundred being requested from the province. But I do expect that the minister would be a bit more straightforward with some of the facts that are there. As he says, the sponsor is the family reunification.

I believe that the vast majority—I am not even too sure if there are very many who had come under family reunification during the late '60s, early '70s to work within the garment industry. If in fact that is the case and that is the intent of this government, through the garment industries, to bring in independent immigrants with the skills to be able to fill these particular jobs, then the \$10,000 proposed bond would not be applied. So what concerns me?

Well, the minister was wanting to be convincing in his argument that what the federal government was doing with respect to the \$10,000 bond was going to have an impact in terms of filling vacant jobs, or jobs that are unfilled in the province of Manitoba when, in fact he does know there is no bond that is even being proposed, from what I understand.

The minister has not corrected me on it, and I would assume then that is the case, that the bond was not going to be applicable to an independent. That is the reason why I asked, was the minister looking at having family unification as being the primary classification for individuals coming to Canada to fill garment jobs? That in itself, if the minister did respond yes, would be somewhat applaudable, but the minister might want to briefly comment on that.

Mr. Gilleshammer: We seem to be covering some of the same ground here, and I regret that the member for Inkster is here as an apologist for the federal government. I tried to make clear to him, and I think virtually everyone here agrees, that federal government policies are having a detrimental effect on the ability of various industries to try and fill these jobs.

The member can try and make this \$10,000 bond seem like it is a good idea, and I am sure he is going to

start talking about the right-of-landing fee, and, maybe, we will get to the processing fees. All of these things that are put in place by the federal government are road blocks and barriers to immigration to Canada. When we are asked to come up with proposals that would assist to fill some of the needs within the job market here in Manitoba we are not getting support from the federal government. I am not sure where the member is going with all of this, but I suspect he is saying that the federal government policies and fees have no effect on immigration and that they are sort of revenue generation for the federal government.

Well, this is their policy to bring down the number of immigrants who will be coming to Canada, and that will certainly have an effect on Manitoba.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, the minister made reference to three proposals, the first one being with respect to the Ukrainian community. Can the minister indicate what the other two proposals are?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, I can maybe indicate, one of the other ones was the domestic recruitment of foreign students, that there are a number of foreign students in Manitoba and in Canada and we had a proposal for the domestic recruitment of these students who are being educated in Canada. We have not had a response on that one yet. It has been before the federal government since February of 1994. That is a year and a bit, no response.

Mr. Lamoureux: So the purpose of this is the foreign student that gets the education at the University of Manitoba would then be allowed to stay in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, that would be targeted to those occupations where we had a demand.

Mr. Lamoureux: Could the minister indicate which occupations those would be?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, I am told that they are in a document that is drawn up by the federal government and the Department of Education. They are the occupations that are published in that document. It is called, Prospects.

Mr. Lamoureux: The third proposal, can the minister give any sort of indication on that?

Mr. Gilleshammer: It was a proposal to link up our department of Citizenship with the foreign posts abroad to have better communication with those posts and who are in direct contact with citizens of foreign countries who want to emigrate somewhere. Many of them want immigrate to Canada. In some ways, they are there providing a service and, in other ways, doing some recruitment. We wanted to develop a more direct relationship with those posts so that we could make our labour market needs known to them, and we could put information in front of those people working in those posts, which would help them understand Manitoba's needs.

Mr. Lamoureux: So this would be a kind of council of sorts in the different embassies. Is that the idea of promoting the province of Manitoba?

Mr. Gilleshammer: This is electronic communication between our people in Manitoba and those posts abroad. Those posts may be an embassy, or it may be a high commission.

Mr. Lamoureux: What would be the difference between, let us say, that and faxing to an embassy what the requirement would be?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I think that the electronic communications that we desire to have is a more interactive way with those embassies and high commissions than simply sending a fax. I suppose there was a time when people got excited when the fax machine kicked in and they were getting a fax. Now that is just another way of sending junk mail. I think what we wanted to do was to establish a relationship between our program people and those people who are directly working with folks who want to immigrate to Canada.

Certainly part of our advertising proposals within our department was to get as much information about Manitoba and the Manitoba advantage into those posts. We wanted to be able to send them some text about Manitoba, to send them some videos and images. We wanted an interactive dialogue. We do not have the

capacity to send staff to each and every post in the world. We are trying to find ways of promoting Manitoba through a folder that we have put together on the Manitoba advantage, which is intended, not only to instruct the Canadians who work in those posts, but also to make it available to potential immigrants.

Some of those posts will gather together, on a weekly basis, a couple of hundred people who want to know more about Canada. Part of our role is to make the Canadians working in those posts know more about Manitoba. That is part of the selling of Manitoba.

Mr. Lamoureux: Is this something which the province—I know, for example, you used to have an office in Hong Kong, I believe it was, a trade mission of sorts. The idea behind that, I believe, was just trying to make people better aware that the province of Manitoba exists within Canada and the promotion of the province. Would this be somewhat the same focus, summed up, that the third proposal is a promotional tool that would be used for advancing Manitoba as the destination for potential immigrants.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I think the member has mostly captured it. I guess it is important that our personnel have the ability to talk directly to the personnel at those posts who are meeting with emigrants on a daily or weekly basis and to get some dialogue and communication going from our Citizenship branch or a part of our Citizenship branch to those posts who work with people who want to immigrate to Canada.

* (2100)

Mr. Lamoureux: It was interesting, one of the opening remarks that the minister gave regarding this resolution was something to the effect that the Government of Canada has 100 percent, if you will, authority over immigration. They are the ones that determine the numbers, the classifications, or the mixture, if you like, and, after making sure that committee members understood that, then went on to give a bit of a commentary on what he feels that they are doing wrong.

I am interested in knowing whether this minister or the government feels that the Government of Canada

does have too much control over immigration, that the provinces should be given more control over immigration.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, there have been a couple of attempts to rewrite the Constitution in the time the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) has been a member of this Legislature, and both of those have failed. I have no doubt in my mind that immigration is a federal jurisdiction, that people emigrate to the country of Canada and receive Canadian citizenship. I guess I am not aware of any country in the world where—for instance, in the U.S. you do not have 50 states being in charge of immigration, that you become an American citizen, or you become a citizen of France or the Philippines or whatever.

So this is a federal jurisdiction. I said that the federal government is the gatekeeper. It is the way it has been, and it is the way I believe it is going to continue to be.

Mr. Lamoureux: The minister, when he refers to some of the roadblocks that have been put in place over the recent couple of years from the federal government, makes reference in particular to the landing fee, the processing fee. I am not too sure if it was the minister or the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) then that made reference to the citizenship fee and then came up with different figures in terms of cost of all of this and how this ultimately will prevent us from receiving immigrants. And, of course, that issue does concern me. So the minister does not need to put words in my mouth, but I did not support the \$975 landing fee.

Mr. Gilleshammer: You supported it?

Mr. Lamoureux: I did not support the \$975 landing fee and for a number of different reasons.

I am wondering, because the government and—I am sure you will even find the government of Manitoba charges for a great deal of services that it offers to the public. I can recall having many discussions with respect to a processing fee even prior to this particular administration, federal administration. One of the things that I had advocated was that in fact the processing fee would be something that would be acceptable if in fact the applicant was successful and

for those applicants that are not successful that the government consider reimbursing the \$500 fee.

The minister has had many different discussions, no doubt, whether it is with staff or members of the community or within the caucus. I am interested in knowing just what the government's position is on the processing fee. I have a fairly good idea, in terms of the landing fee, what the position is, but I am interested in the citizenship fee and interested in knowing what the arguments of this government are, whether it is they are for it or against it.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I do not think you can take these fees in isolation. You have to look at the total impact. I have got two pages of fees where it indicates the old fee and the new fee, and it was the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) that pointed out a few of these. In virtually every case, the fee has gone up, and some of them have gone up in excess of 10 and 20 percent. Then on top of the topping up of these fees, a new one has been introduced, called the right-of-landing fee.

* (2110)

So, while I accept that there should be some cost recovery for immigrants who have their papers processed, and if they wanted to top up each of these fees, they would have garnered substantial revenue. They not only did that, but they created a new one, and it is one thing to move a fee from \$75 to \$85 or from \$100 to \$125, whatever, but to put in a \$975 fee on top of that, called the right of landing, is just making it prohibitive for immigrants from many parts of the world to now access immigration to Canada.

I do not think you can cherry pick and say, well, you want this one or you do not want that one. I think you have to look at the total package. I do not have the total picture of the revenue that the federal government brings in on this or their expenses. My point is that by putting in new initiatives like the sponsorship bond and the right-of-landing fee, the federal government is screening out immigrants from certain countries and they are sending the signal that it is going to be more difficult to immigrate to Canada, and that is going to affect most provinces, including Manitoba. On that basis we are opposed to it.

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

Mr. Lamoureux: Could the minister provide me information on that? I see that he is actually reading from a sheet. Would that be okay? Could I get a copy of what the different fees are?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I was not reading from it, I was referring to it. I will take a look at it and see if it is a classified document or not. If there is information on there that I can make available to the member I will.

Mr. Lamoureux: I am sure that it should all be public information in terms of fees. It is just a question of getting them on a piece of paper and so forth, and it just seems if the minister has it, I would appreciate receiving a copy of it. Part of the reason why I ask this is that I am curious to know.

The minister says, look, he wants to sit down with the federal Minister of Immigration and to express his concerns. When you express your concerns, obviously you have the resources to be able to do some research. I would assume then that you would be familiar with what other countries are doing because, ultimately, there are other countries that all compete for immigration. I am wondering if the minister can comment in terms of how would, for example, Canada's fees compare, let us say, to the United States or to England.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, we do have some information provided from other countries, but you cannot just accept the figures as raw data and think you have a fair comparison. You have to look at a number of the other factors which are part and parcel of their immigration policy. It just seems to me that this dramatic upswing in the costs to come to Canada is sending one very strong message and that is that the Canadian government is trying to control downwardly the number of people coming to Canada in the near future.

Mr. Lamoureux: Indeed, Mr. Chairperson, if the intent of the federal government is to do just that, I too, like the minister, would have real concerns and would want to equally express them. I am sure that the minister will no doubt be at the table at some point in

time with the Minister of Immigration, at least I would anticipate that to be the case. I am somewhat concerned about the manner in which this issue has been dealt with.

As I indicated earlier and tried to point out when I was talking about the jobs and the \$10,000 bond, I think that there is some excessive exaggeration that is going on. The family of four is quite often cited, for example, and with the \$975 fee that means it is going to be an additional \$4,000. Well, we do know there is, again, age where there are exemptions, loans and so forth. Even though, as I have indicated earlier, I do not personally support a landing fee, I do believe to a certain degree that the minister has been participating in exaggerating a number of things with respect to cost for potential immigrants. I do not believe that you are necessarily doing a service.

* (2120)

If the minister was to articulate what he believes is right or wrong about a policy, particularly a national policy, I would anticipate with less political rhetoric—you have to excuse me in the sense that I went through a provincial election as he did and I heard a considerable amount of rhetoric on this particular issue—and it somewhat concerns me in terms of the manner in which to a certain degree it has been dealt with.

We cannot underestimate the importance of immigration to the province of Manitoba, and the best thing that we can do in order to accomplish what is a fair immigration for the province of Manitoba is to do what we can in terms of trying to achieve this bilateral immigration agreement. I think that it potentially can resolve a lot of problems that the province of Manitoba faces, whether it is within the job sector, such as the garment industry, whether it is through the reuniting of families, a program which I feel is absolutely essential and has to be a central point, if you like, to any bilateral agreement, because it is that particular aspect of immigration that has allowed Manitoba to do so well with respect to retaining those immigrants within the province of Manitoba.

But it is important that we do achieve a bilateral agreement, and I will be watching this particular issue,

because I do have a very high level of interest on immigration as I made reference to in my opening remarks. I was pleased to hear the minister's remarks with respect to Dr. Pagtakhan, the member of Parliament for Winnipeg North, a very good friend of mine. In particular, along with the member for Winnipeg North, myself and the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski), we have sat down and we have expressed our concerns, and Dr. Pagtakhan, I think, is doing an admirable job in terms of trying to do what he can in terms of bringing facts to the table and ensuring that the right thing is done.

Hopefully, with arguments and alternatives and suggestions from individuals who are prepared to be creative with some ideas, we will hopefully prevail, because I really and truly do believe that Canada can only succeed in the future if in fact we have an immigration policy that allows for substantial growth of the economy and ultimately the social fabric of our society.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Penner): I want to remind the honourable member for Inkster to be very careful how you phrase some of your words or how you direct some of your wording. I detected that there was some reference in the remarks of the minister having been maybe questionable in his statements, and I think we are all dedicated to speaking the absolute truth and putting forward our positions clearly and concisely, and I think we all want to honour each other in that respect.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I am just wondering if we are going to wrap up soon. I am wondering if the member for Inkster will indicate, are we going to wrap up soon or do you want to go for a while yet?

Mr. Lamoureux: I have a couple of questions, but not on this line. We can pass this line.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Penner): 4. Citizenship (a) Immigration Policy and Planning (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$356,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$78,500—pass.

4.(b) Immigrant Credentials and Labour Market (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$276,600.

Mr. Lamoureux: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, I am wondering if the minister can indicate to what degree the minister has been successful in terms of building an immigrant data bank. I believe this is something that was being talked about in the past in terms of an immigrant credentials data bank, if he might be prepared to comment on it at this time.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Chairman, we have developed a program called Pathways, which is information on, I believe, a dozen different jobs, vocations, which are available sort of on a one-sheet synopsis basis for use by our department in discussions with the immigrant community and with the posts overseas.

Mr. Lamoureux: Can the minister indicate, in terms of where or what types of jobs, in particular—maybe he has a listing of the jobs where it has been brought to the minister's attention in terms of credentials from foreign lands not being recognized.

I know, for example, within health care, the nursing profession is one of them. I have concern with respect to engineering, accounting. Does the minister actually have a list, or can he indicate where it has been brought to his attention, the lack of immigrant credentials recognition?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, I guess the one area that I think I have had some communication on is in the medical field, and, again, you have to balance the rights of the citizens of Manitoba to have medical practitioners duly certified by the existing bodies versus people who have come to this country with some experience in the medical field.

I know that, for instance, with medical practitioners, if they have had their training in the English language, and, basically, in recognized schools, they have no trouble completing the requirements to be on the job in short order.

Where that training was perhaps in another language, it is often more difficult to do the appropriate testing, analysis and evaluation, but, again, we have to rely on the practitioners who have set up bodies within the province to do that evaluation.

Mr. Lamoureux: The minister indicates doctors. Does he actually have a list of other jobs or other areas, professions and so forth, that have been tabulated within the department?

Mr. Gilleshammer: No, we do not have a list, but I know that in a number of the professions—and I will use my old profession of education, where school divisions have the responsibility for the hiring and evaluation of teachers.

They obviously want someone with appropriate communication skills. They want someone with the specific training that is required to teach in that particular discipline, and, certainly, there are individuals, immigrants, who have come to Canada and Manitoba with a teaching background, but there may be a problem if their lack of communication skills does not allow them to do what teachers do, and that is teach.

So, from time to time, I have heard concerns about people who have been trained as a teacher, but, again, the responsibility for the hiring and evaluation is with the school divisions. We do provide some language training with funding from our department, as well as some from the federal government.

Mr. Lamoureux: With many different discussions that I have had on this particular issue, I do not necessarily hear immigrants saying, we want to receive special treatment. It is more consistent with them, or at least the most consistent thing I have heard with respect to credentials is, put us on an equal playing field.

I understand in terms of what it is the minister is saying, and one of the reasons why the minister makes reference to Pathways or the idea of the data bank for immigrant credentials, if you will, is to try to ensure that individual immigrants who come to Canada who have the expertise and the talents to be able to fill many of the different jobs that are out there, are, in fact, placed on an equal playing field.

One of the worst things you can do for an immigrant who comes to particularly the province of Manitoba is deny them that particular opportunity, because if they are in the profession which they have been trained to do, we will benefit that much more.

The minister makes reference to doctors, teachers. Does the minister's office actually have a listing of the different professions where immigrants have come forward and said, look, I have expertise in this area, but it is not being acknowledged?

Mr. Gilleshammer: We do have a list of folks who have been brought to the department's attention that we can share with him. We do not have it here today.

Many of these people have to be hired by outside bodies, whether it is the private sector or if we are talking about professional people like engineers or architects or accountants, and, yes, they want to be treated the same as any other citizen, but government is not in a position where it can direct the private sector to hire some of these people, so it is a matter of them perhaps gaining employment, getting their foot in the door, so to speak, and with some co-operation from accreditation bodies working within certain companies, I think they gradually find an equal footing in the workplace. It does not work for everyone, though.

At the same time, accreditation bodies cannot move the goalposts to accommodate certain critical professions.

* (2130)

Mr. Lamoureux: The minister made reference to architects, and I recall a conversation that I had with an architect who happens to be a constituent of mine, and he had argued that, look, he is working for an architectural firm. He feels that he is doing a lot of the leg work, the actual designs and so forth, and I am sure that members from the minister's department have heard this argument before, where they are virtually doing all of the work, but the seal of approval, if you will, is ultimately done by someone who has the accreditation to be able to give it that stamp, if you like.

Again, what he is ultimately arguing, as many different immigrants are arguing, is that the government does have a role to play in terms of acknowledging that accreditation should be given if, in fact, it is justified. You cannot necessarily expect this from outside organizations, if you will, because some might be in a conflict of interest of sorts, have other

things that they have to be more concerned with, in particular individuals who are currently in that workforce, but the provincial government, and it would be nice even to see the federal government participate to some degree, but at the very least the provincial government where there would be more of an attempt to acknowledge some of the credentials of immigrants who are coming here.

The minister did indicate that he does have a list and did indicate that he would get me a copy of that list, and I would appreciate that.

Mr. Gilleshammer: I would just point out to the member that I think government's role here is to assist individuals to reach that standard where they will get accredited, but most of the accreditation is done by outside bodies. It is not done by government. In the professions, it is the professional organization which does the accreditation.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

We, in turn, are working with a number of individuals to help them, whether it is to review their knowledge or to assist them to understand better the questions that are being asked or make a better presentation of themselves, but it is the outside bodies that do the accreditation.

Mr. Lamoureux: On this issue, and I hope it can be the final question on this line, does the minister believe that there are, in fact, immigrants who have the ability or the credentials and who do not necessarily need to be updated, who are, in fact, not being given the opportunity to practice whatever their profession was back in their homeland?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I have no reason to believe that the accreditation systems that are set up within those various disciplines do not do a fair job of evaluating people.

Mr. Lamoureux: Again, one of the examples that I had heard, and I seek the minister's response to it, is the example of the nursing profession, where, in fact, nurses who would come from abroad would come to the province of Manitoba, and they are not allowed to

practise their profession. Yet they can go to outside jurisdictions, in particular in the United States, in many states, and be able to—if they were working in a hospital back in their homeland—continue to work in a hospital here.

Has he ever heard of situations of this nature where there at least appears on the surface to be something that does not look right in the picture? I use nursing as a specific example.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, I can honestly say it has not been brought to my attention.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 4. Citizenship (b) Immigrant Credentials and Labour Market (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$276,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$172,700—pass.

4.(c) Citizenship Support Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$157,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$40,800—pass.

4.(d) Settlement and Adult Language Training (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$627,500—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$135,600—pass.

Resolution 14.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,845,000 for Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, Citizenship for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

Item 5. Multiculturalism (a) Multiculturalism Secretariat (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$142,900.

Mr. Hickes: I just wanted to put on record that I have a lot of questions that I wish I had time to have answered, but I have to respect the time that has been allocated to my colleagues in their other critic areas. So this time, because of that respect to my caucus colleagues, I am willing to pass all of the Estimates that come under Culture, Heritage and Citizenship.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 5.(a)(1) \$142,900.

Mr. Lamoureux: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, I am wanting to be able to co-operate with the member for Point

Douglas (Mr. Hickes) in his concerns. I just have a couple of questions with respect to the multicultural directorate's office, and then we could virtually pass things through. Maybe I can just correspond to the year with respect to the community places because I also had a few questions with respect to that.

My first question to the minister is, can you give some sort of an idea in terms of the make-up? I know, for example, that in the Supplementary Information they will give the number of staff years. What I am looking at is who now currently makes up the Multiculturalism Secretariat's office and the Access Office?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I will have that for you in a minute.

I would like to introduce David Langtry who has joined us at the table. He is the executive director of the Multiculturalism Secretariat.

In the Multiculturalism Secretariat, as I have indicated, Mr. Langtry is the executive director. We have a policy analyst position which is vacant at the present time, and we have an administrative assistant position. Do you want the names of the people there?

Mr. Lamoureux: I was just more interested in the vacant spots.

Mr. Gilleshammer: There is an administrative assistant. Then in the Community Access Office we have an outreach officer and an administrative secretary.

Mr. Lamoureux: Can the minister indicate, given that the last time there was a policy analyst officer that was appointed there was some controversy in terms of the manner in which, I believe it was, of that particular position being filled. When can we anticipate it being filled, and what is the process that is being used in terms of filling it?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, I would have to say if there was any controversy it was before my time in the ministry, because I do not recall that, but we do review vacancies from time to time. I think we have about a 6

percent vacancy rate in the department at the present time, and the positions come forward from the various units within the department from time to time up through the system to the deputy minister's office. I do not recall having seen anything to do with the secretariat in recent weeks.

Mr. Lamoureux: Does the minister have any idea in terms of when the position will be filled?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I quite frankly do not.

Mr. Lamoureux: Is the minister possibly looking at not filling the position?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Well, I will wait for the recommendations that come from the deputy minister.

Mr. Lamoureux: One of the responsibilities of the secretariat's office is to bring issues of concern regarding multiculturalism to the minister. I am interested in knowing, does the Multiculturalism Secretariat's office have any sort of an annual report or anything of this nature?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes.

Mr. Lamoureux: Is that a document that is tabled?

* (2140)

Mr. Gilleshammer: There is an annual report and we—I guess with the one—left it at the Clerk's Office. Just a couple of days ago, and this was back in the fall when we were not in session, I just made aware that it was not delivered to all of the members, so we are going to be doing that shortly.

Mr. Lamoureux: I would definitely appreciate that.

I am interested in knowing in terms of what—and if the annual report will, in essence, answer this, then there is no need for me to ask any further questions on it—are the priorities over the next couple of years with respect to multicultural issues?

For example, we just finished talking about credentials. I am sure Mr. Langtry would be familiar

with many of the problems with respect to the lack of recognition of foreign credentials. I would assume that would be one of the issues which is being dealt with. Are those issues addressed within the annual report? If not, maybe we could just ask a few more questions regarding the priorities of the Multiculturalism Secretariat's office.

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes, the priorities of the secretariat are highlighted in the report.

Mr. Lamoureux: Would the Community Access Office also be in the annual report?

Mr. Lamoureux: I am sorry.

Mr. Lamoureux: The Community Access Office, is that part of it too, in the annual report?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Yes.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 5.(a) Multiculturalism Secretariat (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$142,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$47,900—pass.

Item 5.(b) Community Access Office (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$82,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$13,000—pass.

Resolution 14.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$286,600 for Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, Multiculturalism, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

Item 6.(a) Cultural Organizations Grant Assistance (1) Operating \$7,616,900—pass; (2) Capital \$3,263,000—pass.

6.(b) Arts Grant Assistance \$4,054,200—pass.

6.(c) Public Library Services \$4,336,200—pass.

6.(d) Historic Resources Grant Assistance (1) Operating \$726,800—pass; (2) Capital \$360,000—pass.

6.(e) Recreation Grant Assistance \$734,200—pass.

6.(f) Regional Services Grant Assistance \$35,100—pass.

6.(g) Provincial Archives Grant Assistance \$48,800—pass.

6.(h) Citizenship Grant Assistance \$1,471,600—pass.

6.(j) Community Places Program (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$175,700—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$77,800—pass; (3) Grant Assistance - Capital \$3,500,000—pass.

6.(k) Manitoba Arts Council \$6,767,300—pass.

6.(m) Multicultural Grants Advisory Council \$384,300—pass.

6.(n) Heritage Grants Advisory Council \$678,100—pass.

Resolution 14.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$34,230,000 for Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, Lotteries Funded Programs, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

The last item to be considered for the Estimates of the Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship is item 1.(a) Minister's Salary, \$22,800. At this point we request the minister's staff leave the table for the consideration of this item.

Item 1.(a) Minister's Salary \$22,800—pass.

Resolution 14.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,037,500 for Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

This completes the Estimates of the Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship. The next set of Estimates that will be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply are the Estimates of the Department of Highways and Transportation.

Shall we briefly recess to allow the minister and the critics the opportunity to prepare for the commencement of the next set of Estimates? No? We will wait for the ministers and the critics. No recess.

* (2150)

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Sveinson): Would the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will be considering Estimates of the Department of Highways and Transportation. Does the honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation have an opening statement?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Yes, Mr. Chairman. I would like to welcome the new critic to the process on a very warm evening. When you get back to Flin Flon, it will be a little cooler, likely one way or the other.

I would like to make a few comments, Mr. Chairman. The 1995-96 Expenditure Estimates of \$225,130,000 represents a decrease of 1.9 percent from the '94-95 approved level of \$229,548,000. The highway construction program for '95-96 represents an increase of \$3 million in the provincial base to a level of \$97 million, up from \$94 million last year. Unfortunately, the three-year federal-provincial SHP program is winding down. The SHP program, the last two years, has been \$15 million, and there is about \$6 million left to spend. So that means, from the federal end, their commitment to capital expenditures on highways in the province is down \$9 million. We are up \$3 million, so that leaves the net result of the capital budget being down \$6 million for the year previous. That is still leaving \$103 million.

The staff complement has reduced by 38 staff years, in other words, 38 SYs '94-95 level; 41 SYs were eliminated, and three SYs were added for the National Safety Code carrier profile computer program and facilities audit. Of the 41 SYs eliminated, 18 staff were affected. Two staff accepted alternate positions; 13 accepted permanent layoff, and three have been placed on the government re-employment list.

The department is committed to maintaining and enhancing Manitoba's competitiveness with a safe, reliable and environmentally responsible transportation system. Accordingly, we will continue to promote the development and maintenance of a co-ordinated, multimodal freight and passenger transportation system, a system which will ensure the safe and efficient movement of people and goods to and from communities in Manitoba and Canada and internationally.

The department supports the continued existence of two competitive and viable national railroads, which will provide cost-effective services to our shippers. The department will continue to develop an attractive economic environment in which both railroads will maintain and expand their presence in the province. Our minimum goal is keeping Manitoba's historical share of national railroad activity in the province at its continuous level.

I think another point I might make is that 40 years ago the railroad handled or hauled 70 percent of the bulk commodities in western Canada. Today they haul 28 percent. So there has been a dramatic shift from rail to road in terms of bulk hauling in western Canada.

The department will introduce amendments to The Highway Traffic Act which will eliminate the province's economic regulation of intraprovincial trucking. Manitoba has engaged in this form of regulation since the 1930s. However, economic regulation no longer serves the interests of carriers, shippers or the communities of rural Manitoba. The proposed amendments will partially deregulate the industry on January 1, '96, and totally deregulate the industry on January 1, '98.

Right now, at this point, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and B.C. are the only provinces that carry out any form of intraprovincial regulation, and all provinces signed the free trade agreement between provinces, plus the feed barriers must be down by January 1 of '98.

Amendments will ensure that Manitoba complies with the Canadian Agreement on Internal Trade. This agreement requires complete deregulation of intraprovincial trucking in each jurisdiction by January

1, '98. Other jurisdictions had pressed for an earlier date of deregulation. However, the department negotiated the longer transition period. The longer transition will allow deregulation to be phased in to provide an orderly transition to a trucking industry which is market driven and more responsive to the needs of shippers and communities.

The department, along with Manitoba Industry of Trade and Tourism, will implement Manitoba Transportation Initiative, or MTI. This initiative will support developments in the transportation industry including services, equipment and related infrastructure. MTI will co-ordinate transportation-related research, policy development and economic development activities.

The department will continue to demand a federal commitment to the future of northern rail infrastructure, the Port of Churchill and the Hudson Bay route to facilitate northern development, bilateral trade with Russia and activities that increase tourism and to meet the essential travel needs of northern Manitoba.

The department will continue to pursue a federal commitment to a National Highways Program or, in the absence of a federal national program, a bilateral funding arrangement with the federal government. The department will continue its commitment to maintaining and improving its proportion of the national highway system to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods.

The department will work with the agrifood sector in meeting the challenges of the revolutionary changes in grain transportation. These challenges were precipitated by the elimination of the Crow benefit rail subsidy and the change in the Canadian Wheat Board's method of paying its cost to shipping grain down the lower St. Lawrence.

There is no question that dramatic change is happening throughout western Canada, particularly in Manitoba, since we are furthest from saltwater. Certainly, grain producers will produce different commodities, and there will be higher-value commodities in future. This will cause a dramatic

change in what elevators handle, what railways will haul and what direction they will haul.

I would recommend to all people in the industry that these adaptations to change will be farmer driven and will happen in a very short period of time. It will require a lot of alterations by all the players, and response to these changes will be causing dramatic considerations.

Manitoba must adapt to economic change and maintain the high quality and efficiency in its transportation infrastructure. Adaptation to change is as necessary in the public sector as it is in the private sector.

To renew and refocus the process of change, Manitoba Highways and Transportation has initiated a customer-focused, strategic planning process. Through this process, the department will review its operation to determine which activities should be undertaken, whether they should be provided by the government or the private sector, whether sufficient funds are available, and to ensure that they are being delivered in the most cost-efficient manner.

The department has made a commitment to service excellence. To deliver on this commitment, we are taking steps to build a service-oriented culture throughout our organization. We view service as a managed process and are developing strategic objectives and plans. We are establishing concrete standards based on customer expectations and will be measuring ourselves against these standards.

National Transportation Week was held the first week of June, the fourth to the 10th, with the theme, Careers in Transportation. Education and retraining will allow Canadians to develop an expertise in transportation. From the expertise will come a more efficient and effective transportation system and will improve Canada's overall industrial competitiveness.

Canada's transportation companies and systems are undergoing continuous improvement to meet the challenges of the global economy. The computer has become a basic tool of the transportation business. For example, computers track the location of trucks, trains,

airplanes and ships. The ability of employees to use this important tool in their everyday work is essential.

As educational requirements in transportation are increasing, they are being met by educational institutions, specialized training schools and on-the-job training. Restructuring the transportation industry, brought about by the federal transportation policy reform, shifting trading patterns, global economic restructuring, increased competition and many other factors, can mean more job opportunities in some modes and less in others.

The following describes the current employment situation in the truck, rail and air modes in Manitoba.

* (2200)

In the trucking industry in '92, Manitoba for-hire motor carriers generated revenues of over \$590 million, provided direct employment for approximately 6,000 Manitobans and indirectly created employment for a further 2,400 Manitobans.

Manitoba continues to maintain its position as a major trucking centre, with six of the largest interprovincial common carriers headquartered in the province.

The industry has identified a serious shortage of well-trained long-haul drivers who are also safety and customer oriented. To help eliminate this shortage, Manitoba recently announced the expansion of the Transport Driver Training initiative. Two hundred drivers will be trained annually, compared to the previous 70 students per year. This initiative is cost shared with the federal government and the trucking industry.

Manitoba has participated in Transport Driver Training initiatives with the industry and Ottawa since 1988. Of the 453 participants trained since 1989, 94 percent of those completing the program were hired by the Manitoba trucking firms.

The rail industry has been steadily rationalizing its operation and reducing its workforce to improve competitiveness. The combined national CN and CP

workforce has shrunk by 24 percent from '89 to '94. During the past decade, national employment in the railways industry dropped nearly 50 percent. Railway wages rose by 65 percent from '83 to '93, compared to 46 percent in all other sectors in the same time period.

Although Manitoba was hit by job losses in the rail industry, the province has nonetheless retained its 12.8 percent of the national employment network, with 6,700 directly employed with CN, CP and VIA. A major restructuring of VIA Rail in October '94 resulted in an 11 percent national reduction in employment, with 25 positions lost in Manitoba. VIA employment tends to rise slightly in the summer months, due to tourism.

In the air industry, Winnipeg is Canada's only centrally located 24-hour airport and offers a broad range of air passenger and cargo services, including international carriers, commuter airlines, jet freight carriers, fixed base operators and various charter operations. Annually, the airport serves in excess of 2.2 million passengers, over 14,000 aircraft movements, and handles over 130,000 tonnes of cargo annually. Direct airport-related employment is 5,800.

Despite workforce cuts nationally in the air industry in the last five years, Manitoba is optimistic that the recent open skies agreement will allow the province greater potential to attract both U.S. and Canadian air carriers, thus enhancing regional economic development strategies and increasing employment opportunities. For example, American Airlines recently initiated a three-flight-per-day schedule between Winnipeg and Chicago.

In the broadest picture, if we look at what the federal government has done in recent months with this airport policy and devolution of many airports, the fact is, there has been no decision on an active highway program at this time. They just announced fairly significant policy changes.

There is no question, the federal government is going to reduce expenditure in transportation rather aggressively. It is going to put a lot of onus on communities, particularly those communities with airports.

The change is going to be difficult; adaptation to ways of doing business is going to be required. Certainly it is very obvious that the province cannot accept the federal offloads. I would like to remind the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen), one of the really sore points I have with the federal government is the fact that there is a federal fuel tax. They collect \$5.5 billion across this country and return virtually none of it to the road infrastructure network, leaving it to the provinces to build roads. They collect the revenue. They have used the principle of user pay. Well, the user is paying but not getting any benefit back in terms of a road tax that is going toward road infrastructure improvements.

Certainly every province faces the challenges dealing with the federal initiatives. Our primary objective is to be sure that we do what we can with scarce dollars and try to maximize the safety and efficiency of our own rural transportation network.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We thank the Minister of Highways and Transportation for those comments. Does the official opposition critic, the honourable member from Flin Flon, have any opening comments?

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): First of all I want to thank the minister for his opening statement, and as a new MLA, I am certainly willing to learn a lot about this department. I do not pretend to have any great degree of expertise, but I am certainly not afraid to learn. Perhaps also, in the process, I can elaborate a somewhat different perspective.

First of all, I think that Manitoba is centrally located and is in a good position in terms of serving markets in North America. It is perched right on top of North America. We do know that the structures in transportation are extremely important and have been so historically from the fur trade on. I guess the thing that concerns me most though is the vision that stitched this country together with Sir John A. MacDonald saying transportation and rail lines were important to connect this country, that vision seems to be diminishing a fair bit and perhaps has died altogether.

I think what we had originally intended to do was to create a country where all regions had a fair shot at the

good life, and that now seems to be almost becoming a user-pay philosophy. That vision of where the hinterland, if you like, or the more disadvantaged regions could share [inaudible], that seems to have gone astray somehow, and I really lament that.

I guess what we are talking about possibly now is a lack of vision. I certainly see it with the Crow rate being tossed aside. Farmers are going to have great difficulties adjusting. Rail line abandonment, I know this is basically federal, but nonetheless the effects are here permanently.

An Honourable Member: It impacts on us.

Mr. Jennissen: Pardon me?

An Honourable Member: It impacts on us.

Mr. Jennissen: It impacts on us, right. The job losses are real. In the railroad, we have lost thousands of jobs in the last few years. Up north, and I am a northern member, so I am biased. I will say that right from the start, toward that northern perspective. We have seen VIA Rail cuts. We have seen the isolated communities with services that have either been cut or have been trimmed, shall we say.

I am worried about the airports, especially the airports that the federal government once saw fit to consider as part of a national philosophy. It ties us all together; that stitches us all across this country. Those airports are sort of tossed aside, and either a municipality or a province, whatever, has to take charge. They are downloading, and somebody has to take over. Either that or close them. I lament that because the vision that drove that first line across this country and drove the Churchill line up North, that vision seems to have gone. That concerns me.

Just one example, up north, the food meal program that was very useful for people, let us say, in Brochet, because they did not pay the full rate of transportation via airplane. That has been tampered with to a degree that the northerners tell me, for two kilograms of powdered milk, they pay up to \$40 freight charges. It is difficult enough to live in the North without putting all those hindrances in the way. That concerns me. It

concerns me because, in the long run, what is going to happen with the user-pay philosophy approach that we are using or that we seem to be heading towards—I am not blaming anyone particularly, but it seems to be developing—we are going to have a metropolis mentality and a hinterland out there, and the people that we have traditionally said were fellow Canadians and had equal access to the good life are now going to be shoved back as second class citizens. I particularly consider northerners and aboriginal people in this category.

That is not the Canada I knew, and that is not the Canada I came to this country for either in 1952, although I must admit I was fairly young. As an immigrant, we came to a different Canada. That is changing rapidly. I am not for one minute buying that this is a better Canada. It might be more efficient. It certainly ties in with all the rhetoric about globalization, but it seems to me, we are going to eventually end up with a two-tiered system. That scares me, I guess, because I thought we were all equal citizens. Transportation is a key element in this; it should be one of those elements that is a great leveller, and I do not know if that is the direction we are going. I guess I have great fears that it is not the direction we are going and I am somewhat unhappy with that.

I see somewhat of a contradiction as well. On the one hand we say we are pushing these great initiatives such as, to give an example, the spaceport at Churchill, AKJUIT, even the Arctic Bridge Agreement potential. We talk about that but meanwhile the railroad is being cut or possibly cut or dying. I mean those are the links we need to build that next leap into the future. I guess I am saying I am moderately optimistic on several levels but I am deeply concerned about other levels where we are heading, and I think I will leave it at that.

* (2210)

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We thank the critic for the official opposition for those remarks. Under the Manitoba practice, debate of the Minister's Salary is traditionally the last item considered for the Estimates of the department. Accordingly, we shall defer the consideration of this item and now proceed to the consideration of the next line. At this time we invite

the minister's staff to join us at the table and we ask that the minister introduce his staff present.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Chairman, I have joining me right at this point Andy Horosko, the deputy minister to my left; next Paul Rochon, Executive Director of Administrative Services; Doug Struthers, Assistant Deputy Minister of Construction and Maintenance; and John Hosang, Assistant Deputy Minister of Engineering Technical Services—Andrew, Paul, Doug and John.

An Honourable Member: Sounds like the Apostles.

Mr. Findlay: Need I say any more?

An Honourable Member: They walk on water, eh?

Mr. Findlay: Yes, they do. Right after it is frozen or dried up.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We are now on 1. Administration and Finance (b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$433,200 on page 86 of the Estimates book, the blue Estimates book, for our new member, and on page 21 of the yellow supplement book.

Mr. Jennissen: I wonder, could I ask a few questions of the role and mission statement. I am kind of new to the process and I am not sure if that is traditionally done, but just some observations, some questions. Reading the role and mission statement it looks nice and compact and tight, but just a few concerns crossed my mind and maybe I should not be questioning these, these are probably put together by real experts, but just if you will humour me.

Just what does it mean to say "environmentally compatible transportation systems?" I guess that is a nice phrase, but I am not entirely sure what that encompasses.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Chairman, environmentally compatible I guess in the broad sense means we do not want to build a road that is going to negatively impact on the environment in the broad sense, both in terms of the design of the road, in terms of the engineering of it,

in terms of the construction of it. We have been known to fill in sloughs but also known to build sloughs as we go along, the overall idea not to negatively impact the environment, wildlife in any preventable way.

Mr. Jennissen: In other words, to minimize the bad impact.

Mr. Findlay: Yes, to minimize. I would not say we would eliminate, but we would minimize.

Mr. Jennissen: The other phrase was "sustainable economic growth and social well-being of the province." I guess the concern I have here is—not really a concern, it is just an observation. There are regions of the province where economic growth may not always be possible, where more disadvantaged people live, and I guess I am again pointing the finger a little bit to the North, and even in areas where, let us say, maybe a mine once operated but now the community still exists but the mining sector has declined. It is no longer economically sustainable in the broad sense, but I would not want this to imply that we now desert the place and pull out. I presume that is not what is meant.

Mr. Findlay: When you are looking at transportation, economic growth and transportation go hand in hand, and the member talked earlier about John A. MacDonald building the railroad and certainly that brought economic opportunities to western Canada. Following that, the road infrastructure has been built over the last number of decades which has opened up communities, opened up opportunities. Our roads are better now than they were 20 years ago in terms of the kind of weights they can haul and volumes they can haul.

Certainly the air industry has opened up an awful lot of this country. There are many, many airports in the North. Without those airports those communities would not have anywhere near the access to the outside world, nor would the outside world have access to this community, whether it is for tourism, whether it is for mining or whatever.

The member talks about mines; certainly, there are some that have closed. There are also some that are

being developed. There are some that have been closed that are being looked at to reopen.

There is no question that that transportation infrastructure in the north is quite expensive. The cost of getting back and forth, whether on road or in air or on rail, is an expensive process. I think, by and large, every community in Manitoba, north, south, central, or any place in between, transportation has been a major thread in allowing those opportunities to have the opportunity to develop. We are so export-oriented as a province in so many aspects, whether it is mining or agriculture or manufacturing, we have to move products, particularly out to markets. So that is why transportation infrastructure is so important in this vastly scattered population like we really have in the province, although we have 60 percent of them in one location, we have the other 40 percent spread over a very large area, and all out there doing their thing.

The demands, as you will see as we go through, I am sure, in the various comments I will make, the demands on us are incredible. The demands on the taxpayers' pocket for highways, airports, whatever, are rather phenomenal and will not let up for any foreseeable period of time. And that is why, when I said earlier, the comment on the federal government and the road tax they collect, the fact that they do not invest in this or any other province is a disparity that we should not allow to continue to happen.

Mr. Jennissen: One last question on that with regard to the social well-being of the province, I do not know if a province has any social well-being as people can, though, and I wonder how that would ever be measured? You are sort of setting a goal here, it is a broad mission statement. What economic indicators would you use? I mean you could obviously use housing starts or job creation, but you would not want to use child poverty, that would not be a good economic-like, I mean, so how do you know when you have achieved what you say you are going to achieve?

Mr. Findlay: I think that from our standpoint, I do not say we could measure it. All we attempt to do in terms of providing transportation is to allow people in communities to move out, to go places outside, and people from the outside to go in. That allows a social

interaction which, you know, leads to a certain quality of life, as opposed to being isolated, which you would be in many, many parts of the province without some form of transportation infrastructure. It really, fundamentally, allows movement, flexibility in what people do with their lives, and whether it is entertainment or tourism or economic opportunities, it is the transportation infrastructure that improves their social well-being.

Mr. Jennissen: Schedule 1, Statutory Responsibilities of the Minister of Highways and Transportation, has a list of acts, and I noticed two years ago, G-70, The Government Air Services Act was listed. It is not listed now, and I presume that shifted somewhere else, but we still deal with northern airports. I am just wondering why, is that no longer applicable?

Mr. Findlay: The administrative responsibilities for that act are now in Government Services.

Mr. Jennissen: Schedule 2, which is the organizational chart of the Department of Highways and Transportation, sort of a flow chart, and very interesting, I compared it the '93-94 and the '94-95, and all I did was count boxes. You know, my math is not the greatest, guys. The boxes I counted in 1993-94 were 40, and there were 35 last year, and 33 this year. That would include major headings as well as the subheadings. So there seems to be a fair bit of downsizing or rightsizing or cutbacks, depending on what you call it. Would you care to make a comment on that, Mr. Minister?

Mr. Findlay: Well certainly there have been some adjustments. We will call it rightsizing for lack of a better word, essentially in Engineering and Technical Services. Fundamental services at the delivery end are still happening the same as previous times.

It would probably be fair to say, more activity at the service delivery end and fewer people at the higher administrative ends.

Mr. Jennissen: I notice that under Motor Transport Board, the D. Norquay name is there as well as under Policy, Planning and Development. Is that a bit unusual, in the sense of having two jobs here?

Mr. Findlay: He does carry the two responsibilities.

Mr. Jennissen: Under Engineering and Technical Services last year it was listed as Northern Airports and Marine and now it is listed as Northern Airports and Ferries. Is that just a name change?

Mr. Findlay: Yes.

Mr. Jennissen: I have no further questions on that right now.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 1. Administration and Finance (b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$433,200 on page 21 of the yellow Estimates book.

Mr. Jennissen: On page 20, actually, under Activity Identification, second line down: Provides leadership in the development and communication of the department's strategic plans ensuring consistency with government's policies and priorities.

I was reading last year's Hansard and there was a comment about strategic plan to be completed within the year and a half, also a comment about rewriting of The Highway Traffic Act. Just for my information, could I have an update on that?

Mr. Findlay: As I mentioned in my opening comments, the department is working on a strategic plan at this point. We will receive input from staff, receive input from the industry outside of the government. Certainly The Highway Traffic Act, the rewrite is ongoing. It is fair to say, at this time, probably behind the initially intended schedule. It is a very large act, it has a lot of elements to it and the process is being lead by Dan Coyle who has a very active stakeholder group outside of government with whom he is reviewing the act and looking at the proposed changes they will eventually bring forward in due course. It is a large rewrite.

Mr. Jennissen: Under Salaries and Employee Benefits the salary year one and the salary there, is that the deputy minister, I presume? Is that correct?

Mr. Findlay: Yes.

* (2220)

Mr. Jennissen: Looking at the division branch like for Executive Support and Administrative Services, Financial Services, Personnel Services, and so on, I know they have all gone up in terms of the managers all getting more money, but they all seem to go down a little bit less, too, from 97.8 for Executive Support and 76.8 for Administrative Services, manager and 64.2 Financial. Is that sort of a pecking order that I am looking at or like if you loose, you end up at the bottom of that scale, Occupational Health and Safety? Or just by accident?

Mr. Findlay: Which numbers are you referring to?

Mr. Jennissen: This is page 14, Schedule 5. I am just slipping around a bit.

Mr. Findlay: Are you comparing last year's to this year's?

Mr. Jennissen: No, no, I am just taking a look at what the Executive Support, under Executive Support, what the manager gets in salary and under Administrative Service, what the manager gets, under Financial Services, and so on. There just seems to be sort of a step down each time but they are still managers. I guess that is just a question I had, whether there was some kind of pecking order.

Another way of putting it, is being in Occupational Health and Safety less important managing than Administrative Services?

Mr. Findlay: A lot of this ranking is done by the civil service, and I do not think you would find it any different in any other department. It is sort of the step-by-step process of determining levels of authority, levels of salary and, obviously, if a person wants the highest salary he has to be the best person. It is the reasonable, similar civil service process to any other department.

Mr. Jennissen: And your own ministerial staff numbers and raises, could I get some information on that, and who they are?

Mr. Findlay: You wanted the five names? Okay. The five names, I will get the categories here: Rosemary Robinson, AYM—this is secretarial staff now—Katherine Hinthier, AY3; Debbie Draward, AY3; Special Assistant Jeff MacDonald; Executive Assistant Monica Bazan.

Mr. Jennissen: Could we have the pay classification on these people as well?

Mr. Findlay: You want their actual salary?

Mr. Jennissen: Their classification. It would be nice to know their salary.

Mr. Findlay: Yes, the first one was AYM, Rosemary Robinson; the next two salaries, AY3, and the special assistant and executive assistant. Do you want anything more on that?

Mr. Jennissen: Can we get the salary figures on those.

Mr. Findlay: Okay: AYM, \$37,000; AY3s, \$30,600 and \$30,800; special assistant \$48,100; executive assistant \$44,600.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 1. Administration and Finance (b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$433,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$89,000—pass.

1.(c) Administrative Services (1) \$433,800.

Mr. Jennissen: I take it we are on page 22, is that correct, of the yellow book?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Yes.

Mr. Jennissen: I go by colours here. Under Activity Identification I noticed last year there was one other category. I do not have that handy right now, but something about provides expertise in dealing with legislation. It was about the fourth one down, and it is not in this particular one. Is there any reason for that?

Mr. Findlay: As part of reorganization that was moved into the policy area.

Mr. Jennissen: Under Activity Identification the last one: provides for the administration of the Freedom of Information Act. Could the minister tell me the number of freedom of information inquiries there were and the types?

* (2230)

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Chair, in '94-95 we received 19 applications for information under the FOI.

Nine applications were granted. Four applications were denied, three applications were partly denied, for two applications the information did not exist, and one application was withdrawn.

Mr. Jennissen: Now could we have a breakdown what they were actually requesting?

Mr. Findlay: For confidentiality reasons I will not give you the names of the people involved.

The first one is request for information relating to the divestiture of the Dauphin Sign Shop, identifying terms of divestiture, identity of purchaser and amount paid.

The next one, request for a copy of a letter received by the Motor Vehicles Branch in respect to his driver's licence informing the Registrar of Motor Vehicles that he had received treatment at the St. Boniface Hospital for alcoholism.

The next request, for all fines pertaining to the construction of the Fairford water control structure of Highway 6 over the dam in 1960.

Request for access to documents that falsely state that he had an alcohol problem for many years.

Request for information of how much the department spent on direct mail in the fiscal year '92-93 and '93-94.

Request for access to a person's complete driver's licence file, particularly documents which led to the suspension of his licence.

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

Request for access for what is stated in the medical records that requires me to have a medical each time I am requesting a driver's licence.

They vary, all over the place.

Request for access to the agreement between the government of Manitoba providing for the construction of that portion of Highway 6 between Gypsumville and Grand Rapids and the construction of the bridge across the Saskatchewan River at Grand Rapids.

Request for access to any record that caused D. Coyle to send out a letter stating we have received information which indicates your use of alcohol may be such as to impair your ability to operate a motor vehicle.

Request for access to any record which resulted in D. Coyle to send out a letter stating we have received information which indicates your medical condition may be such as to impair your ability to operate a motor vehicle.

Request for access to an engineering report by Wardrop Engineering with regard to Winnipeg River Bridge on P.R. 313 completed in 1993.

Request for access to a copy of my medical records that prompted the Registrar of Motor Vehicles to request me to provide them with my medical records with visual report with no apparent reason.

Request for access to a driver's record for a certain person which would be part of MPIC's investigation.

Request for access to the drivers and medical records of the other party making allegations to do with MPIC's investigation of a particular incident.

That is the nature of the kinds of requests to do with the construction, to do with driver's licence. There is some more but that gives a general flavour.

Mr. Jennissen: Are there any vacancies on this particular staff? Any vacancies? Any jobs left open? These are all filled?

Mr. Findlay: Which jobs?

Mr. Jennissen: Well, particularly here.

Mr. Findlay: No vacancies.

Mr. Jennissen: Those are all the questions I have at this time.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Penner): Item 1.(c) Administrative Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$433,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$149,600—pass.

1.(d) Financial Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$661,900.

Mr. Jennissen: Under professional and technical, one job, one position eliminated due to regionalization, I guess. I do not understand that, I do not understand regionalization that well.

Mr. Findlay: The process of regionalization was essentially a process of decentralization within the department for more and more staff and activities, particularly financial accounting activities removed from Winnipeg to the regions or, in other words, out in the country where the actual action is happening. So it is effectively a decentralization process of the department.

Mr. Jennissen: Under the Activity Identification, the second one: prepares the department's quarterly forecasts and expenditures. Are these forecasts just sort of for internal use?

Mr. Findlay: The reports are for the deputy minister, for Treasury Board, basically internal use.

Mr. Jennissen: There are no vacancies under Financial Services?

Mr. Findlay: Two vacancies.

Mr. Jennissen: And they will be filled?

Mr. Findlay: One has gone through a competition and the applicant has been advised or is in the process of

being advised and the other will be posted in due course.

Mr. Jennissen: How long have they been vacant then?

Mr. Findlay: Both positions have been vacant for about a year.

One was because of VSIP, Voluntary Separation Incentive Program where for financial management we are required to keep it open for a year. The other one is just vacant because the person, I presume, retired, resigned or whatever, but it has been open for a year.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Penner): I am going to ask the honourable member for Flin Flon to wait until I identify you. Then the mike will be switched on so your comments are recorded or your questions are recorded. If you want your questions recorded, please wait for the mike to be turned on.

Mr. Jennissen: I guess the question I had was about whether that one was going to be filled.

Mr. Findlay: Yes, the position will be eventually filled.

Mr. Jennissen: I think I have no further questions at this time.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Penner): 1.(d) Financial Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$661,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$177,800—pass.

(e) Personnel Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$849,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$214,900—pass.

(f) Computer Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits.

Mr. Jennissen: I am sorry, I must have just missed that on 15.1(e). Can we go back to 15.1(e)? I guess the question I have under Activity Identification for 15.1(e) is "coordinates affirmative action policies and programs within the Department". Could we have a breakdown on that with regard to women, First Nations people, disabled, visible minorities?

Mr. Findlay: I will give the member the four categories as of March '94. It is the most recent numbers we have. I will give the total number of employees and the percent that those employees make up of the total employment base.

Under female, 434 employees, 22.1 percent; under aboriginal, 108 employees, 5.5 percent; under disabled, 24, 1.2 percent; under visible minority, 22, 1.1 percent.

* (2240)

Mr. Jennissen: I have the '93 figures as well and there was quite a marked increase from year to year. I was just wondering if that trend was still holding or whether that was going down. We do not have that type of information right now, but could the minister provide that when we do have that breakdown?

Mr. Findlay: For one year later.

Mr. Jennissen: Yes, for one year later, when it becomes available.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Penner): I am sorry gentlemen, I am going to have to intervene again. The mikes are shut off and the recorder is shut off. Until you get your acts straightened around we will keep them shut off. Are you willing to co-operate?

Mr. Jennissen: My apology, Mr. Chairman. I keep thinking I am just in an ordinary discussion here. I keep forgetting there are all these strictures on my verbal ability here.

I was asking the minister if he could provide me with the information, or an update for 1995-96 when it is available, with regard to not just visible minorities but disabled, First Nation, and women, the affirmative action program. I think they were going in the right direction. The percentages seemed to be increasing quite a bit and I just hope that trend continues.

Mr. Findlay: Yes, I will provide it to the member when we get it.

Mr. Jennissen: Salaries and Employee Benefits, the second line Professional/Technical, just for my

information again, what does that mean? What do those people do?

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

Mr. Findlay: These are the people who conduct the interviews, do the hiring.

Mr. Jennissen: Are there any vacancies in this particular section?

Mr. Findlay: No.

Mr. Jennissen: What is the total number of people working for Highways?

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Chairperson, 2,246-and-a-half.

Mr. Jennissen: I hope it is half a year and not half a person. Are those current numbers, like right up to date or as up to date as—

Mr. Findlay: Yes.

Mr. Jennissen: So that is a loss of 40 jobs from last year.

Mr. Findlay: Thirty-eight, as identified in my opening comments.

Mr. Jennissen: I have no more questions on this section.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: 1. Administration and Finance (f) Computer Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,458,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$582,700—pass.

1.(g) Occupational Health and Safety (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$169,600.

Mr. Jennissen: Under Activity Identification: Conducts worksite inspections and environmental monitoring. Could we have numbers and reports?

Mr. Findlay: We do not have those numbers or that information, but we will supply it to the member, hopefully at the next sitting.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): I believe, we are on 1.(g), is that correct?

Mr. Findlay: Yes.

Mr. Reid: Last year I had the opportunity to ask questions with respect to the safety programs that the department had underway. In the program, the department provided information related to the WCB premiums, the number of accidents, workplace accidents that had taken place, how many people were on LTD, the types of injuries that the department was encountering, too, so we could have an idea of what programs the department was undertaking to try and alleviate any workplace accidents.

Can the minister update on the premiums, the number of injuries that we have had over the course of the last year, how many people are on LTD and the types of injuries that the department is encountering?

Mr. Findlay: I have some of the numbers that the member is looking for. I do not have the number of people on long-term disability, and, if you would like, we will follow up with that.

To go back to the number of, what is referred to as incidents, injuries of no medical attention or lost time, I will start with '91-92, 97; '92-93, 85; '93-94, 49; '94-95, 54.

The next category is injuries involving medical attention: '91-92, 92; '92-93, 103; '93-94, 44; '94-95, 51.

Injuries involving medical attention and lost time: '91-92, 113; '92-93, 64; '93-94, 55; '94-95, 66.

I can give the member also Workers Compensation Board costs. In other words, money paid out directly by the department for work-related injuries: '91-92, \$567,000; '92-93, \$298,000; '93-94, \$296,000; '94-95, \$260,000. So the WCB costs for the department has gone down each year.

Mr. Reid: By the minister's numbers that he has given, in comparison to last year's and prior years' figures, shows that there is an increase in the number of

workplace injuries requiring medical attention from 44 in '93-94 to 51, I believe, this year, if I understood the minister's numbers correctly. We have a Workplace Safety and Health program within the department to try and prevent some of these accidents from taking place.

I know there is another section within the Estimates dealing with safety, but here is an area where it is showing—for awhile there, there was a pattern where the numbers of accidents requiring medical attention were increasing, and then last year they took a significant drop, now this year they are starting to creep back up again here. Can the minister give me some reason why the numbers are starting to creep back up?

Mr. Findlay: It is true that in the three categories I gave the member, the first three categories were where there were incidents where a doctor was required or incidents where time was lost. In every one of those categories the number went up the last year, but at the end, the WCB costs, the Workers Compensation Board costs, actually went down, from \$296,000 to \$260,000.

Although there are numbers there indicating events, the severity of them has obviously gone down. So one trend tends to counter the other trend. If you look at the dollar figure, the amount of lost time or severity of the injury is less. So the process of trying to make the workplace safer, in one sense appears to be working, although the first numbers would indicate the opposite.

Mr. Reid: I am not sure if the minister made reference to it, but can he indicate the types of injuries that the employees are encountering on the job, and is there a breakdown in the various categories by the numbers of injuries in those areas?

Mr. Findlay: I have here eight categories of nature of injury: pulled muscle or strain, the number of injuries is 36; fracture, 1. We are looking for the definition—the next category is called other, 22. Then I have got multiple, obviously multiple injuries, 10; cuts and abrasions, 22; foreign body—I would presume that is into your body, 14; torn ligaments, 9; bruises, 39; burns, 4.

I guess we will call other miscellaneous for lack of a better definition at the moment.

Mr. Reid: I take it, then, the workplace accidents that are classified under other are not as serious in nature, and that is why they are classified in there, because there is no other criteria to define them.

Mr. Findlay: That is what we interpret as the reason they are in that category.

Mr. Reid: Can the minister tell us the number of Workplace, Safety and Health audits that have been conducted by the department, and what were the findings of those audits, if any?

Mr. Findlay: The member is asking for number of times that WCB people do an audit in the department or at the internal? Okay, we do not have that information. We will try to get it for the member, but—

Mr. Reid: I believe last year we had the chance to discuss this issue about what steps the department was taking to prevent workplace accidents from occurring, and that, if I recall correctly, my understanding was that the department does do some preventative measures to prevent accidents from happening and that—maybe for lack of a better term, maybe audit is not the right term, but that is the term—we asked what efforts the department is making by way of auditing work procedures, et cetera, equipment and how employees are doing the jobs to prevent accidents from happening.

* (2250)

Mr. Findlay: In the various activity levels in the department, there are Workplace, Safety and Health committees whose mission is to reduce the number of incidents or, where unsafe conditions arise, to try to correct them or educate the employees as to how to perform their activities and minimize the risk. There is an ongoing initiative to improve the workplace safety and to decrease the incidents and then, of course, improve the lifestyle of the employee of course.

Mr. Reid: I am familiar with the Workplace, Safety and Health committees. I mean, I have been involved with them for quite a number of years in other lives before this job. I also know, too, that there are circumstances that happen from time to time where there are unresolved issues arising out of the committee

discussions that take place. How do we deal with them? I take it that there are similar circumstances happening within the department from time to time where you have unresolved issues.

Do you have any account of how many unresolved issues are there, and how are they dealt with? Do they move to the ministerial level, or are they dealt with by the senior management, senior administration?

Mr. Findlay: When the workplace safety committees hold their meetings, the minutes of those meetings are viewed by management. We are not aware there are any unresolved issues which, if there were, the committees could take it through the union, but we are not aware that there are any unresolved issues between the committees and management. Certainly there is a good working relationship and a resolving of any issues that are momentarily unresolved.

Mr. Jennissen: Under Activity Identification, the third line or third section: "Provides direction in the rehabilitation of injured workers." Could you explain what that means, provides direction?

Mr. Findlay: I will give the member some statistics on the Workers Compensation claims program which has been in place for some period of years. I could not tell you the exact number.

The department has managed the claims for 25 employees. Nine employees received training and were then reassigned to alternate occupations. Seven employees' occupations were modified to meet their restrictions. Five employees were able to return to normal duties following modified work programs. Three employees received pensions or alternate benefits. One employee's claim is still active, although a modified program is being developed.

Mr. Jennissen: Under Expected Results under Occupational Health and Safety, second one down: "Elimination of job-related hearing disorders through effective monitoring of workplace noise levels and audiogram testing." I guess I am just curious about what constitutes effective monitoring. Did someone go around with a little gadget measuring decibels, or just what happens?

Mr. Findlay: In 1994-95 approximately 250 tests were conducted. These are tests on the employees to determine the level of noise that they are working under and the level of ear protection that they should be utilizing in that particular work environment. So 250 tests in one year is a fair number of employees who are in some kind of a noise-involved environment, to test their level of hearing and their level of ear protection relative to the noise that they are working in.

Mr. Jennissen: So that is sort of after the fact, then. It is not proactive, like you test the noise level first.

Mr. Findlay: Yes.

Mr. Jennissen: Under Occupational Health and Safety, are there any vacancies right now?

Mr. Findlay: Are there any which?

Mr. Jennissen: Vacancies?

Mr. Findlay: No.

Mr. Jennissen: I have no further questions.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 1.(g) Occupational Health and Safety (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$169,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$58,400—pass.

Item 2. Highways and Transportation Programs (a) Management Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$359,300.

Mr. Jennissen: I just want to make sure we are on the same page. Are we on page 34? Okay.

Again, under Objectives, the second part: ". . . the establishment of effective environmentally sensitive standards for the use of resources and materials, and the management of waste." What constitutes an environmentally sensitive standard?

* (2300)

Mr. Findlay: I think it goes back to some of the comments I made earlier in terms of the kinds of projects we are involved in, the kind of landscape that

we build roads in or upgrade roads in. There are certain criteria established by the Department of Environment which we use as a guideline in terms of determining what we would do at a particular project.

Also, the other side of it is in terms of the aggregate that we use in highways. There is a fair bit of recycling going on. When we build roads, ditches are contoured certainly for drainage; also, topsoil is put back to be sure that some vegetation can grow. There is a broad spectrum of activities all to meet today's expectation in terms of environmental sensitivity. If we are going to build a road to a marsh or a slough, you deal with a fair bit of public input in the process of deciding whether it will or will not take place in that location.

We just do not go out and roll a road down, like the old days.

Mr. Jennissen: Yes, this particular section with salary years and dollars and so on is quite different from last year's, and I have some difficulty figuring out just what happened, and maybe you can help me. Under Managerial, last year there were four, and this year we have only listed two, and yet again there are two listed. I guess this book and that book do not seem to jibe for me. Maybe I am just doing it wrong, but—

Mr. Findlay: Last year's book and this year's book.

Mr. Jennissen: Well, according to last year's book under Management Services there were four people, even though only two are listed here. That is the green one. Administrative Support last year was listed at 12 and it has gone down to five. Technical and Professional was listed last year at 11; it has disappeared entirely, so I guess where there were 27 bodies before there seem to be only seven now. I am just wondering what happened to the missing 20.

Mr. Findlay: In the overall appropriation if you look back last year we had eight subappropriations. This year we have three. It was designed to give the department greater flexibility in terms of basically moving resources around to meet demands. Examples this year, you know, we need more maintenance on certain kinds of roads because of the soft spring and the flooding in different locations. Previously, we had

difficulty moving money around to meet an emergency one place and a lack of funds needed in another place. This has increased the department's flexibility and how they can manage. Although you see seven there now, the other 20 are located elsewhere in the overall budgeting process here. It is just a reorganization within the department from eight down to three subappropriations, causes that to happen.

Mr. Jennissen: Well, just for the record then, those 20 people have not been laid off or anything. They have just been shuffled around.

Mr. Findlay: That is right.

Mr. Jennissen: I do not think I have any more questions on this section.

* (2310)

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: 2.(a) Management Services (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$359,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$30,000—pass.

(b) Operations and Contracts (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,524,500—

Mr. Jennissen: Under Operations and Contracts, Activity Identification, the last one, I do not understand what "quality assurance systems" means: closely monitors the quality, quantity, costs, progress and delivery of the construction and the maintenance programs for various quality assurance systems.

It is just a term I am not familiar with if someone could just clarify that for me.

Mr. Findlay: In the process of what is called doing our capital projects or spending our money, we go through a process of tendering a project. The tender is called on the basis of specs for the job, whether it is a grading job, you know, certain width, depth, density, whether it is a gravelling job, again, width, density or paving job. We have people onsite, inspectors onsite whose job it is to ensure that the contractor lives up to the specs of the contract he tendered on to assure quality of the product for the ultimate user, the taxpayer who is paying for the job.

So although we have jobs done by contractors, they do not just go out and do it as they see fit. The specs are set before they tender. Then we will be sure that they meet the specs in the process of carrying out the project.

Mr. Jennissen: Under Expected Results, the second portion: "Timely preparation, advertising, award and payment of contracts for highway construction and maintenance projects in Manitoba." I guess the question I have—it is a bit of a sort of a speculative one—is that I know in the United States sometimes they have affirmative action kinds of awards or contracts.

The reason I bring it up is because in the North there are communities that say, well, we never seem to get a chance at any of these jobs. Why do they not hire northerners first or why do they not hire First Nations people first, because this is in our area. I am just wondering if you would like to comment on that. I am not speculating one way or the other. I hear this a lot.

Mr. Findlay: On the large projects which we tender, of which there are lots, for the good of the taxpayer we are looking for the best quality job at the lowest price. If a particular contractor from wherever wins a job, Flin Flon, The Pas, Thompson, he is free to hire whomever he sees fit to hire, whether it is a northerner or an aboriginal or whoever. We also do construction orders. Those are smaller jobs, and if a particular band, as an example, has construction capability they can get the construction order jobs that the department does put out.

The big tenders require bonding, which I understand is a problem for the bands that have equipment, but we have to have that. It is important. Otherwise we would put the taxpayer at significant liability risk. In the construction orders no bonding is necessary. So we do do projects in that context with northerners or bands as we do different grading contracts done by municipalities in the South. There is a lot of flexibility in the way the department has its various functions carried out.

Mr. Jennissen: Yes, the reason I bring it up is because, and I will be very specific, this occurred or has been raised and brought to my attention in South

Indian Lake. I am not sure if this is the appropriate place to ask it, but I will ask it anyway, if it is okay.

Mr. Findlay: In some of our contracts we do specify local hiring, so that could allow for northerners or for aboriginals. You know, on different occasions we will specify that in a particular contract.

Mr. Jennissen: In the South Indian Lake case, what was happening was that there is a road going to be built from, I think, it is the South Bay Road where the ferry is now, right around it. I do not know—the feds are involved, I believe, in this. I am not sure how much Manitoba is involved.

The band has made several strong hints, I guess is the way to put it, has given me several strong hints that they would like to be very much involved when those contracts are opened. I said, well, I certainly would bring it to the attention of the minister. Because they figure they are disadvantaged enough. They need jobs up there, and they think they have the capability to at least do part of that job, and apparently it is quite a lucrative job.

Mr. Findlay: The South Indian Lake road that the member refers to is part of the Northern Flood Agreement which has a 10-year window to have the road built. I believe three years have now passed, so the time is ticking. The big construction job, the basic road construction job, is a big contract. We have a basic policy of tendering in those circumstances.

As I mentioned earlier, construction orders, whether it is for clearing the right-of-way or other kinds of jobs like that that the department issues, for those construction orders, certainly consideration can be given to those kinds of smaller aspects of the total job. Maybe the big contractor who gets the job is capable of sub-contracting, capable of hiring people or equipment to do various aspects of the overall job.

Mr. Jennissen: Basically, I guess, South Indian Lake people were saying, we want to get off social assistance. They do not want to be trapped with the stereotype, you know, we do not want a job, they just have difficulty finding jobs. That will be one way to get people off social assistance.

Mr. Findlay: That is respected and understood.

Mr. Jennissen: Under Operations and Contracts, it was called just contracts last year. Is there a particular reason why there is a label change?

Mr. Findlay: This is part of the catchup. Remember, we were talking about seven versus 27 before in an earlier category?

Mr. Jennissen: Yes.

Mr. Findlay: Some of those people have moved in here. They are called, basically, operations people involved in construction management and maintenance management. So they have moved in here, and that is why the terminology has changed.

Mr. Jennissen: In this particular Operations and Contracts, are there any vacancies right now?

Mr. Findlay: Three of the 38 positions are vacant.

Mr. Jennissen: How long have they been vacant?

Mr. Findlay: It would appear that all three have been vacant for about a year, and two of the three are definitely VSIP positions, Voluntary Separation Incentive Program. When we accepted the voluntary separation from the individual, to save money we kept the position open a year.

Mr. Jennissen: So then only one of those three was eventually filled, is that what you are saying?

Mr. Findlay: In due course, all three will be filled. We just kept them open and vacant for one year to accommodate a break-even position on total salary, because the person who retired got a retirement incentive of something over 30 weeks, two-thirds of a year of top-up salary to a retiring person, so in order not to be double-paying you leave the position vacant for a period of time.

Mr. Jennissen: Okay, but these positions are going to be filled?

Mr. Findlay: Yes.

Mr. Jennissen: I have no further questions on this section.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: 2.(b) Operations and Contracts (1) Salaries and Benefits \$1,524,500—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$547,600—pass.

2.(c) Bridges and Structures (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,997,700.

Mr. Jennissen: Under the Rural Municipal Bridge Assistance Program, it is not anything I am really familiar with. Could I just get an update on that?

Mr. Findlay: We have a Rural Municipal Bridge Program and a Grant-in-Aid Program for municipalities. These are projects that they apply to us for for funding on a 50-50 basis. We have 400,000 in the Rural Bridge Assistance Program and 1.3 million in the Grant-in-Aid, which is for Grant-in-Aid streets in towns and villages.

Certainly, these allocations are oversubscribed, overapplied for, and the department makes decisions on who should get the whole request or a portion of the request, but they are both 50-50 programs. The municipality manages it, pays for, and then by the process of presenting their receipts, then we pay them our 50 percent.

For example, a municipality may have a bridge for \$50,000 and make a request for \$25,000 from us, and if the project ends up costing \$40,000, they pay 20, we pay 20.

Mr. Jennissen: This program—does that apply to the North as well? I am thinking of Cross Lake, specifically, South Indian Lake, or the Flood Agreement. That makes it a totally different volume.

Mr. Findlay: These are for bridges on municipal roads. What you are talking about is actually on a provincial road, so we pay 100 percent.

The grants approved under the bridge assistance program for '94-95: Dauphin received a grant for \$7,700; Dauphin received a grant \$30,000; Dufferin Municipality for \$85,000; Gilbert Plains, \$15,000;

R.M. of McDonald, \$236,000; McDonald, another \$15,000. Total utilized that year is \$388,000, so fairly close to the \$400,000.

Mr. Jennissen: Now, any rail line abandonment, would that have an effect on any bridges? Is that a factor, or is just—

Mr. Findlay: Rail line abandonment affects us in terms of use of our road infrastructure, because if a commodity is not moving down the rail, it is now going to move down first the R.M. road and then the provincial road. That extra weight—certainly on the road, more loads travelling more distances—puts more wear and tear on the roads and the bridges. And it is a major issue right across western Canada, but it is not a brand new issue. As I mentioned earlier to the member, 40 years ago railways hauled 70 percent of bulk commodities. They now haul 28 percent, so the remainder, you know, is on the roads of western Canada.

Over the course of time, if you look at our rural communities—and I can talk about the south, he knows the North, I probably know the south—we have seen communities where 25 years ago, the cars, their equipment, their fertilizer, their fuel, many other commodities came into and went out of the communities by train. Today, all the ones I have listed are moved by truck. The rail still hauls that big bulk commodity called grain, but even many of the special crops are moved by truck now.

* (2320)

So it is a changing landscape, and what I am trying to tell you is that already, over the course of the last 20 or 30 years, a lot of commodities have moved off of rail onto road. Rail line abandonment has also gone on over the last 20 years. Whether 50 percent of the total lines have been abandoned is probably reasonably accurate, and more will be. But every time that happens, more weight moves onto our roads and the municipal roads and eventually gets to a rail line somewhere, but with more road miles involved.

The other thing to keep in mind is: when commodities move for greater distances by truck, they

tend to get onto a bigger, more weight-efficient truck, like a five-axle, six-axle, seven-axle, maybe up to an eight-axle truck, as opposed to when it went to that local elevator, it usually went on a two-axle truck. And a two-axle truck is a lot harder on the road than a five-, six-, seven- or eight-axle, because the professional knows how to spread his load, and he does not overload. If he does, we generally catch him.

But that individual farmer is only travelling two or three miles. He will overload, and although it is small—he thinks he does not impact—he does have an impact on the road, particularly at certain times of the year.

So it is a changing landscape out there, and we would like to see very efficient, profitable railroads functioning out there, and the process they are going through right now is trying to be that way, and they think streamlining their system will achieve that.

We have contended that if CN or CP does not want to use a particular line, because it is low volume or whatever, inefficient for them, short line railroads are a very viable option, or an entrepreneur will feel, I can pull a number of cars up and down that line to hook them onto a train on the main line, and in different locations that has been an effective way. I think the railroads are well served by that, so they operate the main line where they are most cost-efficient and allow other people to do the gathering of the cars on the branch lines on a short line basis.

That whole picture is unfolding as we speak, as the WGTA changes and the pooling on the Great Lakes, those changes are causing the farmer to face full cost. Now he is looking at, how can I get my product to market—whatever that market is, wherever it is—most cost-effectively and is going to put a lot of challenge in front of railroads to keep their volume.

The challenge in front of the elevator system, in terms of how many elevators are needed, what kind of commodities will they handle, it is anything but a predictable scene out there right now.

Mr. Jennissen: I thank the minister for that detailed answer. I can certainly sympathize with the farmer in

the two-axle truck, having been one myself once and having overloaded it a few times, I am sure. I did not realize we were actually hurting the road that much, I guess.

Could I have one more question, or a couple more, on Bridges and Structures? Under managerial, one position was lost due to implementation of computer technology. Man being shoved aside again by machine. Can you comment on that?

Mr. Findlay: Deputy says fair, so—

Mr. Jennissen: Are there any vacancies in Bridges and Structures department?

Mr. Findlay: There are four vacancies here out of the 40 positions. That is what you are referring to?

Mr. Jennissen: Yes.

Mr. Findlay: I have more detail now. One position became vacant on February 3rd, and the individual was hired on April 18 of this year. Second position became vacant on April 1st of '94 and has been approved for filling as of April 5, 1995. A third position has been vacant since April 1, 1994. And a fourth position became vacant on March 17, '95 and was bulletined on May 10, '95, so it is close to being filled. So two out of the four, one is filled, one is close to being filled, the third one is approved for filling, and the fourth one still not approved.

Mr. Jennissen: That fourth one will be approved?

Mr. Findlay: I guess. Does it sound like I am begging for our jobs here?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 2.(c) Bridges and Structures (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,997,700—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$302,100—pass.

Item 2.(d) Transport Compliance (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,967,700.

Mr. Jennissen: Under Transport Compliance, I am sure my colleagues will probably have some questions

on this, as well, but the second one under Activity Identification provides for continuous control of vehicle weights, seasonal protection of highways and control of overdimension and overweight shipments. I guess I would like a little more information on that.

One of the things that bothers me, if I can just be off the topic a wee bit here, is when I used to travel to The Pas, people hauling the logs for what then must have been, not Repap but the company before that, Churchill Forestry or Manfor, they used to talk about a cheater's scale, whatever that meant. I mean, they pull the trucks off, unload, and then they go through a regular system. Is there some system in place that prevents that now? It probably no longer operates but I am just saying the potential was there once.

* (2330)

Mr. Findlay: Well, certainly we have compliance officers, some rove around, you know, will stop anybody at any location they see fit. We have our weigh stations, or our checkpoints, where trucks are required to stop and are weighed through or checked for shortcomings in terms of equipment safety, and so on.

We have posted maximum weights for different highways. We have B1 loading highways, A1 loading highways, RTAC loading highways, you know, the different weight categories; 620,500 kilometres are RTAC; 56,000 is A1; 47,000 B1 loading. So there are maximum loadings for those particular highways.

Also, in the spring, we have weight restriction, we have two categories. We have 350 pounds per inch width, 250 pounds per inch width, the tires, which means that the weights on those axles come down and at that time compliance officers are definitely active to protect the roads. The reason we do that is because of the spring break-up. When thaw is happening the roads get soft.

That is their job. The restrictions, the weights, the maximum weights are set for trucks in different circumstances and their job is to be sure that the trucking industry abides by them. We cannot guarantee that there are not people who will cheat but,

nonetheless, we try to maximize the ability to get people to comply. The fines are pretty hefty so it is very dangerous to flaunt the law.

I will tell you an honest little story while I am doing this here. An individual, I guess it was at a 250 pound-per-inch width restricted road, the lowest restriction, effectively could not run his semi empty on the road. It was too heavy to run empty. Our compliance staff picked him up at three in the morning on the road. He was a little upset that we were out there at three in the morning, but he did learn that the watchful eye of the law is always there.

Mr. Jennissen: Is it possible to get an RTAC map so we know exactly which routes we are talking about?

Mr. Findlay: Yes, we have one right here. I will provide the member with this map which shows the RTAC routes, the 62,500 kilometre, and also RTAC routes during the winter period when the road is frozen. I will just pass this over to the member.

During the course of the winter, particularly during the winter, we may add additional roads to that category for a period of time when it is deemed appropriate. Often that happens after a request by particular companies moving certain loads or bulk commodities.

Mr. Jennissen: I can certainly add that the inspectors are out there because I got a ride—because the plane was not flying, I got a ride from Leaf Rapids to Lynn Lake with a guy in an ore truck and he says, I always load, I think he said, 2,000 kilograms less because we were nabbed once.

In fact, the guy was out checking with the portable scale. I cannot say the road was in a great condition but certainly the inspectors were out checking weight.

Mr. Findlay: He was not overloaded?

Mr. Jennissen: No, he said never again. Something must have worked.

Under Expected Results: improved public relations through awareness programs that increase community

involvement. I guess I would like a little more information on that if you could.

Mr. Findlay: One of the things that the public often, the attitudes that they often get is that we are just overregulating, we are doing it just to harass them, not that it was for any particular benefit for us or for them.

Certain staff have done a fair bit of this kind of fence mending, for lack of a better word, to talk to truckers, R.M.s, whoever is upset, or maybe a farmer has got 50 loads of potatoes to go out and he has a restricted road at the end of his lane—to go out and to try to rationalize why we have restrictions and maybe there are accommodations to be made, say, in the early part of the spring. If the road is frozen overnight, then he can haul up to nine in the morning, but from nine in the morning till eight at night, not to use the road.

It is trying to improve the educational level of the people using the road for a greater appreciation of the road, and hopefully in the end we have happier customers and not really less wear and tear in the road but less destructive wear and tear on the road. That is the purpose of that.

We find it is very useful to talk to people. If you could get them to understand, maybe see the reasons why, they are a little more likely to abide by the rules and regulations in the future.

Mr. Jennissen: One phrase I keep running into and I do not quite understand, and perhaps the minister can explain that to me, I just do not know it. It is single trip—collects various single trip fuel tax and permit fees. What does that mean?

* (2340)

Mr. Findlay: The member is referring to the statement, collects various single trip, fuel tax and permit fees. These actually are a variety of fees for a trucker who wants an overweight or oversize permit. There is a fee collected for it. Or somebody who is not fully licensed makes a single trip into Manitoba from, say, Minneapolis. A fee is collected, or mode of fuel permits. There are a variety of fees for various activities that the department does a collection for:

oversize, overweight, single trips, upgrading of licence, those kinds of things.

Mr. Jennissen: I would like to have sort of an idea of how many inspections actually occur, violations and the types of violations.

Mr. Findlay: I will give the member the total number of vehicles processed, where there were inspections done, 342,000. Of the 342,000 inspections, 3,770 prosecutions occurred, in other words, 1 percent; 1,275 for overweight; 264 for oversize; 31 did not have the appropriate PSV license; 1,450 for faulty equipment and safety violations; 393 called driver, vehicle and licensing were obviously a violation of licensing in some fashion; 107 for dangerous goods; 95 for hours of service, in other words beyond their allowed hours of service; and 190 for violation of oversize or overweight permit.

There are eight categories of violation. The two biggest categories were faulty equipment and overweight.

Mr. Jennissen: Looking at last year's figures and the year before, the numbers are down considerably, 436,901 last year and the year before 520,897. I guess the question I have is, is it because people are obeying the law more or do we have fewer inspectors?

Mr. Findlay: I just gave you 1994-95. The total number of inspections done the year previous was 431,000. We did more inspections the year previous. We are actually doing more focused inspections where it is obviously warranted that we should do it. We did basically 100,000 more inspections the year previous. The number of violations was very similar, 3,512 the previous year and 3,770 this year. More focusing, 100,000 less inspections, but the number of prosecutions is very, very similar.

Mr. Jennissen: You are saying you are just more effective, getting a bigger bang for the buck, so to speak.

Mr. Findlay: I guess the inspectors can do a better job of focusing on who they should do an inspection on as opposed to doing an inspection where it is fairly

obvious that they are not likely to have a prosecution. So it is more effective, more efficient use of the inspectors' time.

Mr. Jennissen: There are prosecutions and fines involved. Is there a figure in terms of the money it generates?

Mr. Findlay: Total fines collected in '94-95, \$645,000, the year previous, \$556,000. So they have collected almost \$100,000 more in the way of fines.

Mr. Jennissen: And with regard to single trip fuel tax and permit fees, are those up as well? Could I have a figure on those?

Mr. Findlay: Single trip permits was \$98,000 last year versus \$162,000 the year previous; motive fuel permits, \$116,000 last year versus \$136,000 the year before; transit licences, \$1,800 last year, \$1,400 the year before.

Mr. Jennissen: Under Salaries and Employee Benefits, Technical/Professional, 46 salary-years, are all those people inspectors? Is that what we are saying?

Mr. Findlay: Yes, they are all inspectors.

Mr. Jennissen: Again I will ask the question about vacancies for this particular department.

Mr. Findlay: There are seven vacancies in this section. I might add that we have this transport compliance group of inspectors, the 46. We also have, we will call them transport inspectors, over in division of vehicle licensing. So we really have two groups of inspectors within the department, both dealing with commercial truckers.

There seems to be greater efficiency if there were some degree of amalgamation between the two units that serve similar purposes. So these positions are being kept open with the idea of the amalgamation and what cost effectively do the two services that the department now does in the two different branches.

Mr. Jennissen: So you are saying then these vacancies will not be filled?

Mr. Findlay: At this time, there is no necessity for them to be filled.

Mr. Jennissen: Could I ask a question about dangerous goods? How many permits were issued last year?

Mr. Findlay: One hundred and seven violations that were identified by our inspectors. It could be any one of a number of particular items. They may not have been properly signed, proper placarding on the vehicle, may not have had the proper permit, may not have complied with the permit that they had. So it could be any one of a variety of violations that our inspectors picked up.

Mr. Jennissen: Now, are we involved if there is an emergency, let us say, some kind of catastrophe that happened with dangerous goods?

Mr. Findlay: This department?

Mr. Jennissen: Yes.

Mr. Findlay: The emergency response is from the Department of Environment. We might initiate the call or be part of initiating the response team, but it would be from Environment.

Mr. Jennissen: If I could go back again to those seven vacancies, they were vacancies by attrition or, like, they were just not filled? Are we saying seven inspectors less?

Mr. Findlay: By attrition, yes.

Mr. Jennissen: And there is no need because of the duplication you were mentioning earlier?

* (2350)

Mr. Findlay: The department executive is going through some reorganization to be sure we fill our missions of compliance. You see our fees are up. A number of inspections are more targeted. It is an overall amalgamation, realignment of duties, more targeted duties, and it was deemed that these positions are not necessary to be filled at this time.

They may be filled in due course. I am not saying they will not be, but I cannot guarantee that they will. The idea is to have enough people targeted to serve the need that is necessary out there.

I think it is fair to say that the trucking community is more educated. As you mentioned, the person you rode with, he got one fine. The word spread, particularly to his wallet, that this is not something you do very often, and, you know, that other guy I told you about, picked up at three in the morning, that word spreads too.

So you get compliance without having to have an awful lot of heavy hand of inspectors out there.

Mr. Jennissen: I think my colleague might have a question on this.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Chairperson, just to pick up on the vacancies, I am still having a hard time understanding how we had these seven people who were doing these duties before, and then all of a sudden, we determine that the duties are now redundant, and we no longer need those seven inspectors.

Can you give us some understanding of the type of duties that they were performing, that these jobs can now remain vacant and that it is no longer necessary for them to take part in those inspection activities for transport compliance?

Mr. Findlay: I will take the member back to statistics I gave earlier.

In '93-94, we did 432,000 inspections, and next year, we did 342,000, so 100,000 less inspections, so effectively you need less people to do that. It is just that you train and educate your inspectors to be more targeted in where they do the inspecting or who they do it on; for lack of better terminology, to be sure that you are inspecting somebody who is obviously or apparently in a violation situation. There is not a lot of value in inspecting somebody who is obviously not in a violation circumstance.

So if you do less inspections and you get more convictions, more fines collected, you have really targeted and increased the effectiveness of the staff

who are there. I think that in a nutshell would say why less people can get the job done.

Mr. Reid: I know there have been 100,000 inspections less this year over last year's number, and I know that the department staff are well trained in the jobs that they do, or at least I am assuming that they are well trained, judging by the work that they have done over the years that I have been here.

How is it you determine which areas you are going to check for transport compliance? I mean, I know you have that experience, but do you also do spot inspections in other areas from time to time to make sure that there is compliance in there, and then if there is a problem that you spot, do you then target that as one of the priorities that you go and zero your human resources into those areas to do an overall check for that compliance? Is that how the department functions?

Mr. Findlay: Over the course of the past, a lot of our inspectors have been at the weigh stations, and, you know that a trucker pulling into the weigh station, he knows he better be in compliance. So, really, an awful lot of inspection is done there where it is so-called fruitless in terms of finding people in some level of violation.

So an awful lot more of the time is spent as roving inspectors, out there spot checking at unpredicted times and locations which causes, I think, a greater level of compliance and gives the trucking public an understanding that if I go out on Highway 3 before eight in the morning, I am okay. You never know when that roving inspector is going to show up.

The issue is to get the trucking public to abide by the regulations, as many and varied as they are. The issue is not to catch somebody. It is to be sure that people respect the laws and regulations and abide by them. The idea is to find those who are in violation and send the message in the process of the way inspections are done that compliance is very, very good for your pocketbook. More targeted, more educated, better trained is the process to get the job done.

Mr. Reid: I imagine then that the staff know what they are doing as far as the inspections are concerned

and they will be looking for certain areas, but I hope that they also look for things that are not part of their regular inspection programs as priorities that would be set by the department to ensure that there are not things that are slipping through here because of the number of inspections that have been decreased as well.

I have asked this question I know in past Estimates too. It relates to the weigh scale station. I think this is the section here where we can ask those questions. In the past there was a reduction in the number of hours of service in some of your key or strategic locations on your major arteries coming into the city of Winnipeg and coming into the province for that matter, with respect to the Headingley stations, the one at West Hawk Lake and I believe the ones down on Highway 75 coming into the province. Do you have a breakdown on the number of inspections that are done at each of those stations, and do you have the hours of operation for those stations as well, broken down by the individual stations, of course.

Mr. Findlay: I do not have the number of inspections, though we do have 11 permanent weigh stations currently in operation in the province. Headingley, which the member mentioned, is 24 hours a day, Monday to Friday. Emerson is Monday to Friday, various eight-hour shifts between seven in the morning and twelve at night. West Hawk is seven days a week, 24 hours a day, so it is continuous. Of the three, it is 100 percent, and Headingley is Monday to Friday and Emerson is Monday to Friday but not after midnight.

Mr. Reid: Then by the hours of operation that the minister has indicated, does that mean that the traffic flow patterns of the trucking industry are such that the bulk of the traffic coming from the east through the West Hawk station, which is 24 hours a day, seven days a week, I think the minister said, indicates that there is more traffic flow there every day of the week and that we do not see that coming from the international trade patterns?

Mr. Findlay: We are not exactly sure, but we will have to interpret that the appropriate individuals made the decisions for these hours, believe that these are the hours the trucks are coming through. I do not know whether it had anything to do with the number of hours

that the station is open, like the cross-border station is open at customs. We understand that if you are properly bonded you can come through any hour, but if you are not properly bonded, these may be the hours you are restricted to. There might be some relationship to that. If we can get a more full answer we will enquire.

Mr. Reid: I think my colleague, who is after all our transport critic, would appreciate receiving that, as I would be interested in knowing about it myself, because it seems strange. I believe the department has been trying for some time to develop through the I, T and T Department as well, the Kansas Corridor, for example, heading down to the Mexican market.

There have been some problems in the past with respect to non-Canadian equipment operating into Canadian jurisdictions that have been found to be lacking in the compliance aspect of the equipment. With that equipment running on our highways or the risk of it running on our highways uninspected for compliance of the codes that we have in this country, it seems strange to me that with an ever-growing market that we are trying to develop that we do not have a 24-hour operation in the Highway 75 area, the port of entry, as we will call it, from the U.S., our major port of entry into this province from the U.S. We have a 24-hour operation on the east side of the province of Manitoba in the West Hawk area that, although it is a feeder network from eastern Canada, I would expect that we would have a similar type of operation in the Highway 75 area to make sure that we have compliance there.

Since we are trying to build up that market, export-import opportunities, it would make sense to have some assurances that there is compliance in those areas as well and the only way to do it is to have a 24-hour operation.

Mr. Findlay: Just a quick comment. The fact that the station is not open after midnight does not mean that the roving inspectors are not out there doing their job one or two miles down the road sort of thing. The other thing is our truckers complain about the way they are treated in the States and we do not want to get the same black eye over here overinspecting or whatever,

but our codes are codes and it should be abided by whoever is trucking up here.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. The time is twelve midnight. Committee rise.

NORTHERN AFFAIRS

* (2000)

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Gerry McAlpine): Good evening. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. The committee will be resuming consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Northern Affairs.

When the committee last sat it had been considering item 2. Northern Affairs Operations (a) Financial and Administrative Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits, on page 124 of the main Estimate book.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Northern Affairs): Mr. Chair, unless the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) is finished, I believe there was a question being put for me to answer.

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Mr. Chair, as I was saying before we adjourned at six, I was asking the minister, or I was telling the minister what my perceptions of the role of the Minister of Northern Affairs was. I was asking him to explain to us what he saw Northern Affairs doing, particularly in light of the many changes that have happened.

I mentioned demographics for one thing. I also mentioned that when I came here four or five years ago the budget was \$20 million a year, a very small department, and now it is \$17 million. I was just going to conclude by saying, what if the budget of the department gets down to, you know, say \$1 million, \$2 million? It would seem to me that when it gets that low it gets redundant, and what would happen to the mandate then? What is the mandate now, the relationship between the department and First Nations people and aboriginal people, because it has got a another name attached to it and sometimes it is called Indian affairs and aboriginal affairs. So maybe I will give the minister some time to respond to that.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, I want to thank the member for The Pas for this question because it really gets to the general issue of the role and function of the department. I am glad he has asked, and I have some time to respond.

I think if one looks at the history of this department—and certainly many others were around at the time in the late '60s and early '70s in the early days of the formation of this department. But if my recollection of history serves me well, I believe there was a commission struck by the Roblin administration to look at how government dealt with northern issues in the '60s, and it resulted in a Northern Commission which then became the Department of Northern Affairs.

He, like I, when we come to this place where we have to deal with the department, one makes the assumptions that the Department of Northern Affairs deals with all aspects of the North, and to some degree, my assumption, when I came to this place. But when one analyzes a little more specifically the mandate and responsibilities and role of the department and the things that come under it, you come quickly to appreciate that many of the functions that it has could be housed in other departments.

But in the spirit of which it was created in the '60s, first as the commission, then as the department, I think the intent of government was always to have a department in which uniquely northern issues, or issues relating to the North because the North accounts for such a vast amount of the land mass of this province and traditionally has been a very isolated part of this province, that barrier has been broken somewhat. It still is a vast area with a small population spread over a large area, many isolated communities, et cetera, that it is somewhat unique from the rest of the province.

So, ultimately, the department does have a role to advocate within government or ensure, at least, within government that general issues relating to the North are taken into account by other departments.

I think in the '70s there was a period where the Department of Northern Affairs had almost paralleled departments of Highways and Natural Resources and other areas in a very large staffing, and that proved not

to work either. It somewhat took the role of the department too far, where we had parallel structures being created.

Today, what we have in the Department of Northern Affairs is really a number of things that have either no other home or are uniquely situated in the North. Obviously, the largest component of the active work of the department on a day-to-day basis has to be our communities that we are responsible for, the 56-or-so communities which are neither large enough to be municipalities, because we have municipalities and LGDs in the North. They are not large enough, either population- or tax-wise, to warrant being Local Government Districts or municipalities and, secondly, are not First Nations communities.

So they fall truly between the cracks and which no other part of the province has that particular set of communities, and so they are Northern Affairs communities, and the Northern Affairs department is their municipal authority, for lack of a better description, and I guess that makes myself the mayor and my deputy, the deputy mayor, sort of in law.

That takes the lion's share of our work, and often people forget that. But those communities have a very special relationship with us because we are, in essence, their government, and it always has been and probably will be, where the Department of Northern Affairs spends a great deal of its effort and a great deal of its time and obviously a great deal of its money with respect to those communities. And so from the perspective of Local Government Districts or municipalities—and I know the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) represents an LGD of Consol, Town of The Pas—there is a sense that the department may give special treatment to those Northern Affairs communities. That is because we are their department. The municipalities, of course, have the Department of Rural Development and have a relationship that is the same as any other municipality's across the province.

The member for The Pas talked about aboriginal people, and the other large area of responsibility in this department is the managing of a host of agreements and issues that relate to northern aboriginal people, the Northern Flood Agreement being one, treaty land

entitlement being another in which those areas have been housed in this department. They continue to occupy a very significant time of the senior staff in dealing with those agreements.

Our budget reductions over the last couple of years have been very much the result or significantly the result of reductions in dollars needed to finance the negotiation of those agreements. Inevitably, Mr. Chair, when those agreements are settled, a whole piece of our budget, in essence, will disappear. That should not reflect on the service delivered to northerners. That will reflect on the fact that a mandate of this department, a significant mandate in managing those agreements, managing or dealing with the federal government on land claims has come to an end.

* (2010)

The Native Affairs Secretariat, and as the member very well knows we have discussed before, has a mandate to manage the provincial government's relations with aboriginal peoples dealing with Status peoples and the federal government on those issues. It is a co-ordinating unit of bringing services together from other departments. That role is one that increases or diminishes depending on the set of issues that are there, and it is going to be an interesting one over the next few years as the federal government gets into the dismantling issue, but it is not a direct service deliverer.

It is a policy and contact department, in essence, a co-ordination department, primarily for aboriginal governments, their representatives, et cetera, organizations that meet or deal with government. Even though our budget is a small one, it is consistent with the mandate that we have. I must admit to the member, it is always a difficult issue being Minister of Northern Affairs when it comes to larger issues involving a multitude of departments because just getting them all to the table is not necessarily an easy task and always a challenging one for ministers of Northern Affairs. But that is only a small part of the mandate of the department. I think in the areas where we have direct responsibility, we do much better in dealing with northern issues simply because we do not have to bring together a lot of other departments and issues and co-ordination. It is an interesting overview.

The last point I make just to put it into perspective on our capital budget, which is often criticized as being somewhat small for the North, but it is a capital budget that is only there for those 56 communities which represents some 10,000 people, approximately. When we look at the per capita spending on 10,000 people on our capital budget, it is very similar, sometimes over the capital expenditure of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs on Status people on reserve. So on a per capita basis, we are fairly consistent, even though again we do not meet all the needs or wants that would be there at any given time.

We have to be judged as a department, I think, in that way and we probably never will fulfill all the expectations northerners may have from the department simply because we do not have the mandate to be a major player in all issues. I appreciate the member's comments and it is one I struggle with regularly when it comes to issues that involve a host of departments.

Mr. Lathlin: I wonder if the minister or his government—with the way the development of aboriginal people has unfolded over the last several years, both First Nations and Metis people, and he himself admits that the department has a certain mandate, maybe too restricted a mandate for the expectations that aboriginal people have, and northerners generally have, on the department. With the way things are changing, does the minister ever consider perhaps revisiting some of those statements of purpose, goals and objectives, expected results, and so forth, to reflect realistically the reality that is out there today? Does the minister see a need to change the mandate of the department, and does he see it expanding? Maybe the Department of Northern Affairs has fulfilled its original mandate and it is now time to try something else.

Mr. Praznik: If you look at the mandate on page 2 of our Supplementary Information for Legislative Review, I think it is important to appreciate that the context of that mandate is for our Northern Affairs communities that we are responsible for. When we talk about local autonomy and local control we are talking about it in the context of those 56 or so Northern Affairs communities which range in size, I guess we have some on our books that have no people—as a politician,

I must admit they are the easiest ones to represent, we never get any phone calls; Warren's Landing is one that is now just a fish station—to probably about 1,000 people at South Indian Lake. In between there are communities of the whole gamut.

Obviously the goal of the department, at least set back in the 1970s, was to build the governmental infrastructure, the community infrastructure, the experience of people locally that at some point in time they could be spun out, for lack of a better term, of the Department of Northern Affairs and become a municipal-type local government complete with a tax base to support their activities.

Some of these communities may reach that point. Some of them, two in particular, I believe, Camperville and Duck Bay, are very close to that point. There are still some issues surrounding that that have to be settled, but for many of these communities, to be quite frank, I do not know if the day will come when they will be large enough or self-sufficient enough to be municipalities in their own right, some for very practical reason. Their populations are aging and diminishing, and in another generation they may not exist. Long Body Creek is an example of that kind of community.

So you change the mandate. It is the goal, and in some communities, it is not going to work; in others it may. I guess the bottom line reality is, the expectation is, that the Department of Northern Affairs for many more years to come will be the municipal authority for most of those 56 communities simply because of their size. Fifty or 60 people do not have the tax base to have their own municipal government. Do you change the mandate? I do not know how much I would change it. I think it is still a goal, but time tends to sort out what is practical and doable and what is not.

One problem, of course, is the mandate is for those communities, and yet when one reads it, one views it perhaps as the whole North. Again, the Department of Northern Affairs, one of its prime areas of responsibility are those 56 communities, yet the perception, the public perception in northern Manitoba and elsewhere, is maybe not the same as the reality of the mandate.

Mr. Lathlin: I have just one more question on that, Mr. Chairman. You see, that is what I was alluding to when I was asking the minister whether he saw the need to rework the department, expand it, decrease it or change the mandate or whatever, because as I listen to him from time to time in the House and even in Estimates, when he talks about local autonomy and development, I know that he is referring to the 56 communities.

I am not misunderstanding him, but when he talks about 56 communities striving to achieve those goals that are listed in the book here, or at least the department is, we are talking about two and a half million dollars worth of infrastructure money, and I know that earlier he talked about the capital allocation process, how it is done. I know the communities do it at the regional level, and then from there they go to the central body.

I often talk to those mayors and councils who take part in those proceedings, and I also know how it is done on the First Nations side because I did it myself for quite a few years, both as a chief and also as a government employee with the federal government.

As far as I can gather, just from observing from the outside and also from talking to the people, I think that is where, because of the way the process is set up, a lot of these people that the minister talks about as falling between the cracks, through the cracks, I think that is where a lot of that happens.

* (2020)

When you have, for example, a community of, say, 55 people being invited to participate in this capital allocation process, and even though some neighbouring communities may be submitting supporting resolutions and all that, the bottom line is the department decides at the end as to which communities are going to be receiving capital funds.

So, for me, that always makes the exercise a bit redundant because, yeah, the mayors and councils go there, perhaps sincerely, but I think for the most part, they realize that it is not a useful exercise. They know that, ultimately, the decision lies with the department.

So that is why I was asking the minister as to whether he had plans or whether his government had plans in reorganizing the department or maybe even changing the mandate, because, to me, that is how I see it. He says we help a lot of people out, particularly those who are in those 56 communities, but if we have a department like that, that is more or less outdated, its mandate too narrow, to me that has more potential for people being left out, communities falling through the cracks and attaining nothing in terms of community development and especially their own people development.

So that is why I am asking the question.

Mr. Praznik: Yes, Mr. Chair, if you do a quick calculation from our Estimates book, our operating budget for those 56 communities is about \$6.8 million. I look to my financial staff. It is about \$6.8 million. Our capital is about \$2.6 million.

So we spend approximately 9.4, just under nine and a half million dollars on just under 10,000 people. That does not include staff time, those costs. That is what we spend in the community. So it is just under a thousand dollars on a per-capita basis to provide municipal government in essence. I think if you compare that to a number of municipalities throughout Manitoba, it is probably somewhat higher, the total amount.

I appreciate the member's point. Let me say that, first of all. I guess the answer or my comment depends on which community you are talking about at any point in time.

Some of our larger communities that have elected councils, because they are large enough to have elected councils and have mayors and councillors who work very hard at it, are much, much closer, I believe, to municipal autonomy and make a fair number of their decisions on their own. Some of the smaller communities where you are 50, 60 people, sometimes with two family groupings in a community, it is much harder to see that autonomy.

I share with the member some of the trials and tribulations that the department has told me about over

the years that they have had in decisions that get made. I think the member is aware of some communities that have been added to the list with a very, very small population and asking right away for a whole bunch of municipal infrastructure that with their population and their circumstance it makes very, very limited sense to make the investment.

So there is a balance that goes on. I appreciate for smaller communities it may be more frustrating because they do not necessarily get everything that they particularly want or they may feel they are very small, and even in the organization of NACC, that they get pushed out at the particular table.

There is no magic to any of this, I guess. When you are investing as provincial dollars approximately a thousand dollars per capita on these communities, you want to make sure that the money is spent reasonably well. I can tell the member, from time to time we have had situations that there has not been a good use of funds, and the department has had to take a variety of steps to ensure that this did not happen again.

We had one community, it was brought to my attention where they received a fair bit of advice on their operating budget, and this year before the end of the fiscal year ran out of money. If you compare their operating to most other communities, they were just overdoing it, quite frankly.

So they learned a very strong lesson. When you run out of your budgeted money you have to close down your operations, which they did for a while. That is a hard lesson to learn.

Needless to say they were not happy. If I guess, yes, they complained. I am sure some of the complaints made it to the ears of members of the opposition, but ultimately not everyone gets what they want. When you are dependent on another government or source of revenue for your expenditure or for your budget, you are still going to have to live with rules and regulations probably to a greater degree than one does when you are entirely self-sufficient with your own revenue base.

We as a province accept a fair bit of money from Ottawa that comes with a host of rules that we do not

always agree with, and we have to live with those rules and regulations. The same is true here, so we try to develop a sense of ability to run one's communities.

I have to share with members as well, we had one particular community that had an elected council and mayor. It was a small community, Princess Harbour, I believe it was, where they just made the decision that this was not for them. They were too small to continue to elect a council and they asked us to remove the elected mayor and council authority, the delegated authority, and to take it back and just appoint a spokesperson for the community, which we did, because they just found it was not really practical, given their size.

The member's point is noted. It is one that one struggles with in the balance of running the department, but its application varies from community to community.

Mr. Lathlin: I wonder if the minister can tell us, on the federal infrastructure program, in addition to the \$2.6 million infrastructure money, provincially under Northern Affairs, how much additional money was accessed through the federal-provincial program? What would have been the total amount of extra money, additional money, that would have been added onto the \$2.6 million of Department of Northern Affairs capital money?

* (2030)

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, we are endeavouring to get the exact amount of money that was spent, from my staff, as they go through the notes. We did two projects, water service for Brochet and a similar project in South Indian Lake. We spent somewhere in the neighbourhood, in infrastructure projects, of around one and a half million dollars, of which two-thirds would be the provincial and federal share. The Department of Northern Affairs would have paid the one-third municipal

So it added, and I am guessing here as we get the exact information for you, approximately probably just under a million dollars of additional infrastructure for those communities.

Mr. Chair, the exact amount was, the Brochet project, \$710,000, and as I look to my staff, I understand that would be the project funding. So we would have paid a third of that, and two-thirds would have been paid for by the province under the agreement and the federal government. South Indian Lake was about a \$415,000-project, so two-thirds of that, somewhere in the neighbourhood of just over \$800,000, would be additional funding.

Mr. Lathlin: I do not know where we are on the book, but I would like to move on to other areas. Before I do that, maybe I would like to ask the minister one more question in this area before we move on, and that is, most of the communities that the minister talks about, the 56 communities—I know it is the case with Easterville, Cross Lake, Moose Lake, Norway House—many of these communities are right adjacent to First Nations communities, and I had suggested this to the former Minister of Northern Affairs here, I think it was the second year that I was here, during Estimates, I asked him whether he had ever considered doing joint ventures with First Nations communities, whenever the First Nations communities are able to access some federal money through the Department of Indian Affairs.

I have been asked that question many times by the Metis communities. To me, it would make sense to encourage those 56 communities whenever they are right adjacent to First Nations communities, to encourage them to work with First Nations.

I am sure the First Nations community would be only too willing to—you know, like after all, most of these communities, their families—brother living on the treaty side and the sister living on the Metis side.

That is how most of these communities are. I am sure the First Nations communities would be more than willing to go into joint capital projects like that, you know, for example, in Moose Lake, Easterville, Norway House or Cross Lake.

Has the minister ever considered, or has anybody ever approached the minister with that kind of approach from those 56 communities or even from First Nations communities? Would he consider doing that?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, the member for The Pas asked the question and there are two parts to it, I would believe. One is obviously on municipal infrastructure joint venturing, and one would be other things outside of the infrastructure.

I am pleased to tell him it has been a regular practice for joint venturing in the area of infrastructure. A host of our communities have agreements now with their neighbouring First Nations to provide for water, sewer, garbage disposal, in some cases, fire services, grader service, et cetera, where they share equipment, and they share costs for those types of projects.

So that has been underway in the department for some years. The War Lake Band is one. South Indian Lake has an agreement with Nelson House. I know Cross Lake has an agreement. Moose Lake, Brochet, again, have water-sewer-water agreements, so on the infrastructure side that is underway.

If it was other projects, or another area project, that the member is talking about, whether it be economic development, et cetera, we have not had any proposals to date coming forward. Certainly if we did, I know I would work with my colleagues, the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) and the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey) to pursue them if they were certainly viable projects.

To date we have not had any that I am aware of as minister.

Mr. Lathlin: I have one last question on that, Mr. Chairperson.

My question was really this. How many Metis communities do you have where sewer and water lines were actually installed as a joint program with the neighbouring First Nations community? By that, I mean one system for the two communities with Capital coming from Northern Affairs and the other Capital coming from Indian Affairs. Do we have any communities like that in northern Manitoba?

Mr. Praznik: Yes, Mr. Chair, I certainly appreciate the member's question a little more with his supplementary, and he raises a very interesting point.

I am advised by my staff that although we have lagoons we share and lines that we share on occasion and a host of other things, very rarely have both projects been done at the same time. Often one community or another would build a lagoon first and set up their system, and the neighbouring community would follow a year or so later and work out an agreement to share the lagoon.

There is an interesting psychology to this, and the member for The Pas, he raises a very interesting question, because I asked my staff, have we had any proposals come forward, to their knowledge, where a community has said, look, the neighbouring First Nation is putting in sewer and water. Could we advance our project this year and build it at one time as part of one contract?

They tell me that to their knowledge, we have not had that request. It does not mean it has not been made or been lost somewhere on the way up, but from my experience in the last two years as minister, what has impressed me considerably, as I have travelled in many of our Northern Affairs communities, is the uniqueness, the distinctive nature of those communities.

You can have a few hundred people in a very isolated area, half of whom belong to a First Nation and half of whom belong to a Northern Affairs community or a Metis community, and their sense of individual identity is very strong. Where we might think that 300, 400 or 500 or 1,000 people living so close together in such a remote area would have one identity as a community, it does not often seem to be the case, and yet again, is that unusual?

I have communities of Pine Falls, Powerview, and the surrounding LGD of Alexander, all of whom are three different government entities and for the last 40 years or so, they have not been able to work out an arrangement where they have been able to form into one community. They tend to, up until recently at least, not co-ordinate their municipal services together. Their own identity as Powerview or the LGD of Alexander or the town of Pine Falls is very strong and very important to them, even so much so that two high schools until the last two years had two separate graduations on different nights.

It does take a long time to build that sense of co-operation, and one does not know if it is because one side feels poorer than the other or weaker than the other or if it is family relationships over years.

* (2040)

It is interesting to note. The member asks a very logical and good question, and the answer to it is that, to the best knowledge of my staff, we have not had to date this kind of a proposal, although one should make the observation that with the coming of greater local autonomy, certainly with the dismantling of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, we may see some more of this happen, but to date we have not had it that common.

Mr. Lathlin: I would now like to move on to another topic that the minister and I discussed during the last Estimates.

That topic had to do with the—it was an arbitrator's decision which had been made favourably to the Cross Lake First Nation, but apparently or subsequently after that decision by the arbitrator, an appeal was made by governments, federal, provincial, and whether it was made by Manitoba Hydro, I do not know, but in any event, an appeal was launched, and I spent quite a bit of time asking the minister or trying to get him to clarify why an arbitrator's decision would have been subject to an appeal.

I have since understood a little bit more about arbitration proceedings, but, in any event, the appeal was made, and it was during the end of those discussions that the minister was given a letter by one of his senior staff members. Apparently the letter said that there was light at the end of the tunnel, that eventually the Cross Lake First Nation would realize their objective and that negotiations were going to resume.

Since then, I have been sort of following the issue whenever I go to Cross Lake, and so, today, again, I am interested in hearing from the minister as to what happened to that bridge because, incidently, I read the arbitrator's decision, and I thought it was a very good decision.

Mr. Praznik: I just hope, as my deputies pointed out to me, that the light was not an oncoming train coming through the tunnel but, indeed, the end of it.

If I may, for members of the committee, introduce two more of my staff who have joined us. Mr. Harvey Bostrom, who is the director of our Native Affairs Secretariat, has joined us. Harvey is no stranger to this room. Having served as a minister in a previous government he had to defend Estimates in this very chair, I am sure, and he is a very valued member of our staff today. Of course, Mr. Merv McKay is one of our senior negotiators on the Northern Flood Agreement.

The particular question and letter being rushed in last year, I remember it well. It was Mr. McKay who rushed in to tell me, if I remember correctly, that we had reached an agreement to negotiate further on that particular issue. If the member will allow me a moment, I will have an answer, more fully, to his question.

If I remember correctly the details of the issue which the member for The Pas raises, what we had was a dispute over whether or not the current road and ferry system was in fact an all-weather road. That went to arbitration. The arbitrator made the ruling that was not an all-weather road.

After some discussion, negotiation, it was determined that we would appeal the decision of the arbitrator. That appeal is not yet heard. I have to say to the member, I appreciate the people of Cross Lake wishing to have a bridge access as opposed to a ferry access. They, of course, continually petition their local member to pursue this issue. Whether that be built as part of the Northern Flood Agreement or part of the regular budget of the Department of Highways is in itself an issue.

Northern Flood is one means of settling that; the regular budget of the Department of Highways is another. If the construction of that bridge does not, in the final analysis, form part of the agreement with Cross Lake for the Northern Flood, then that does not mean that a bridge will not be built at some time. But I raise that to put a context around the member's

question because there is an issue, and I think a legitimate one, whether or not a bridge is in fact part of the package that was contemplated in the agreements that have been signed to date with the Cross Lake First Nation.

Mr. Lathlin: I guess the only other question that I would have of the minister on that issue is, as I recall it, the arbitrator was a part of the negotiation process, I guess, with Northern Flood. So from there I took it to mean that there was a connection with Northern Flood. So I am wondering, what is that, a year ago or less than a year? How long would it be before we would get a court decision, even though we had already received an arbitration decision?

Mr. Praznik: Yes, Mr. Chair, I think it is important to appreciate that the issue whether or not the road is an all-weather road, whether a bridge or a ferry make it an all-weather road, is only a decision within the negotiating process. The end of the day, all of these issues come together to form a package. So even if that particular point were to be concurred to at this time without another further appeal, as provided under the process, but, yes, then that bridge is part of the package and there is a value allotted to it.

That does not mean it is going to be built because we do not have an agreement on Northern Flood yet with Cross Lake. And there I can inform the member today that there are a host of new issues that have been brought to the table, as I understand it, by Cross Lake, that were not acceptable to the administration, and at the current time both parties, although there is some discussion going back and forth, we are not in active negotiations.

* (2050)

So even if that one issue were to be settled tonight or tomorrow, it is until the entire package is satisfactory to both parties in its entirety that we have a deal and anything would be acted on. So I would not want anyone reading or listening to this record to have the impression that that particular issue being decided by an arbitrator means that point gets built. Even if we were to cede that point or we lose that appeal, and that point is established that it is an all-weather road, it is

still in the purview of Cross Lake to say, okay, we will give up that point for something else that we particularly want.

So it is part of a larger negotiating table, and an arbitrator's ruling does not result today in the construction of the bridge if, at the negotiating table, we accept the construction of the bridge, and it becomes part of the regular trade-offs of other issues, and we have a complete agreement, and it is ratified by the community, then if it were a term, then we would move it towards construction. So we are still a long way from that point.

Mr. Lathlin: Yes, I do recall that that is one thing that I tried to impress upon the minister, when we last had Estimates, was that the decision was made by the arbitrator. It was appealed, and then it was chased up to the courts, and I was suggesting to the minister at that time that if that is how eventually this issue is going to be settled, we could be sitting here forever and ever, appeal after appeal, depending on what level of court that it would be chased to.

Now the minister is saying that even though if a decision was made to build a bridge, it would not be built until the entire agreement had been gone through and a signed agreement was in place. But, in the meantime, we have a whole community of some 4,000 people who are left without certain services in the fall and in the spring. I realize that where the ferry crosses it is fast flowing so they are able to get rid of the ice a little bit faster than Norway House can, so the disruption is not all that long as compared to Norway House. But still, we have a community there that is cut off from the outside world other than the airport. I wonder then if he can give us an update as to where things are at in terms of the Cross Lake negotiation with Northern Flood.

For example, I would like to ask the minister to tell us, are we a third of the way there? Are we half way there? Are we three-quarters of the way there? Or are we back down to square one? Or where are we?

Mr. Praznik: As in all of these negotiations or any negotiations, sometimes one can be right around the corner from seeing them resolved and not even realize

it. I would not even begin to indicate we are a third, half, or three-quarters of the way. We could be halfway there or we could be just around the corner from being there. It depends on a host of things.

Let me tell the member that, as he may have seen in the Free Press, in the advertisements from Nelson House and York Landing First Nations, in both those cases, we are down to a couple of issues that, from my point of view, have been resolved in principle and both sides are working through now their appropriate field work that has to be done. I have some things to do internally in government on one of their issues at Nelson House. They have some work in terms of specific land selection. We have been working things through the system. So Nelson House, York Landing, I think, very close, where we are down to really the short strokes and I think the principals, barring some unforeseen problem that we cannot deal with, both see the resolution of this and have a meeting of minds. It is now just specific details, which could cause a glitch. Certainly land selections have a tendency to do that. But I would think we are going to see them resolved before we are here at the table again.

In the case of Norway House First Nation, again to put into context, Norway House has had a host of internal debates going on over the last year or so with their chief, between their chief and council. They still have a fair ways to go with us at the table in terms of specific issues where we have to find a meeting of minds, but it is moving ahead in a very positive and constructive way.

It is Cross Lake, as the member asks about, where at the current time we are not at the table directly dealing with issues. There are still discussions going back about how we get back to the table and back on track.

The member may be right in that the bridge may be a significant issue to be resolved, but I can tell him that there are a lot of very significant issues that are on the table there now. It is unfair, although this is certainly a place to have a discussion generally about the negotiations—and I must say, I appreciate the advice that he offers with respect to the importance of the bridge to that community, but there are, as I am told by our negotiators, a host of issues on the table.

I would suspect at some time in the next while—I am hopeful we will see a willingness on both parts to get back at it in a stronger way and see our way clear to resolving the majority of them. His advice with respect to the bridge or the importance of the bridge to that community and the internal politics of the Northern Flood Agreement and reaching a settlement are certainly noted by me at this table, and I appreciate his advice.

* (2100)

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Chair, following up on that bridge issue or going from there, from the bridge issue, you see, when the minister talks about certain issues that are being negotiated with regard to the Northern Flood Agreement, sometimes, at least the way I understand it, sometimes the understanding that I am given or the messages that I am given is that some parts we cannot touch because of the way the negotiating is going.

Some parts we can proceed, in some cases without prejudice on the part of both parties, and when that happens, whatever funds that may be expended on the project could be charged to whatever settlement money that the band might come on to at a later date.

So when I was apprised of the ferry situation in Cross Lake during the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs conference here—I do not know who to be the most upset with, but in any event I was made to understand that the ferry operation will be expanded in terms of hours. It could run on a 24-hour basis. It could run into December provided that Cross Lake First Nation paid something like \$45,000 towards the cost of the ferry operation.

I found that quite disturbing because, as I told Cross Lake councillors, Ernest Monias and others, I do not see any other community in Manitoba having to pay additional money in order that they have some kind of road access. As far as I am concerned, the ferry is not really an all-weather road, as the arbitrator has decided once already.

I find it disturbing that this department would enter into that kind of an agreement with Cross Lake First Nation, charging them \$45,000 to increase the hours of

operation for the ferry. I am wondering if the minister can elaborate on that and perhaps clarify the issue for us. In what context was the agreement made and so forth?

Mr. Praznik: I appreciate the member's question but the detail would be better answered by the Minister of Highways who administers that particular ferry. His comments are certainly noted and appreciated with respect to settlement of the Northern Flood Agreement and I would hope he would have an opportunity to put the specific questions to the Minister of Highways.

Mr. Lathlin: Thank you for that answer. I will make it my business to approach the Minister of Highways if the Estimates are still going.

The other area that I wanted to move into, Mr. Chairperson, is the meeting that was held in Thompson, I believe it was in the spring of this year. I do not know what format the meeting took but I understand it was like a workshop where, for example, roads and highways in the North were discussed. I was listening to the minister on the radio, on one of my trips back down to Winnipeg on a Sunday evening, talking about how fruitful the meeting was, how successful it was. I am happy to hear that the meeting was successful because now whenever I go to Cross Lake or Norway House I will be driving on paved road and everything will be all right.

I would like to ask the minister what, if anything, has transpired, anything concrete? Are there any roads paved since last spring? After all, when I listened to the minister on CJOB the meeting was quite successful.

Mr. Praznik: I know that the Minister of Highways has included some of the projects that were discussed in his Highways program for this year. One will have to discuss with him those specific projects. I would not want to speak for the minister. My job was to facilitate some of those communities working with the department to set some priorities off the list of projects that were asked for in northern Manitoba.

Just generally on that meeting, what I was trying to achieve as Minister of Northern Affairs—and I think it is somewhat of a difficulty when you sit in government

offices, and northern Manitoba is no different from any other part of the province. When its elected officials come, whether they be First Nations, NACC, municipal, to lobby government, it is most difficult when you have a number of groups coming and saying to a minister or to government, these are our priorities, and the priorities are different from the next group that comes in and still different from the next group.

Government, at this particular juncture in our history, is more about making choices between projects than it is about funding everything, as maybe it was in the 1970s when money seemed to be a lot more plentiful in those inflationary times and governments were borrowing, the beginning of their great borrowing that has got us into the situation we are today.

So what I endeavoured to do, after discussing with many of those people locally and following up on the Northern Manitoba Economic Development Commission report was to see if we could forge some sort of working group between the elected northern leadership—First Nations, NACC and municipal—and perhaps modelled on the MAUM or UMM examples where that elected leadership would get together on a regular basis a couple of times a year, have an annual meeting, do some prioritizing, meet with provincial government ministers in certain areas of interest and speak not with a totally united voice on every issue, no organization does that, but at least be more involved in the planning and policy development and creation of infrastructure.

I left Thompson that weekend feeling pretty good because we had reached an agreement between those three groups to sit down and put together that working relationship. With some regret I tell the member tonight that it has bogged down somewhat, and I have to say not because, in my opinion at least, the provincial department or our person at the table, Mr. Boulette, or my ADM has bogged the thing down.

I think it is bogged down somewhat because within those three groups, and one in particular, there is not agreement as to what that organization should be or how it should be funded or some tough choices that have to be made internally among northern leadership. As a result, there is a considerable difference of opinion

between the three with our department as to what is doable.

The easy answer is just to come to the provincial government and say, give us a half million dollars or \$400,000, we are going to set up another bureaucracy, and we are not going to review the current economic development we have in the North, Norman and their contribution and operation. That is the easy way of doing it, but the ground rules at the beginning were that there was not more money to fund bureaucracies. We would have to look at how we could do this effectively, inexpensively and by reprioritizing what was spent.

I think both MKO and NACC have been very cooperative in that regard, but the urban industrial communities have a very big difference of opinion internally as to their expectations and how they want to be involved, and until they work that out—and if there is one thing I have learned from First Nations people in my dealings and following of issues in the last few years, it is you sometimes have to let people work these things out for themselves before you have got the kind of agreement that is going to work in the long run, so I am hopeful.

I plan on meeting with the three principals over the summer when I am in northern Manitoba, and I am hoping that they can still hammer out something that will see the group in a working form by the fall and being able to have another meeting with us as ministers and get down to some of the important infrastructure issues.

Mr. Lathlin: Yes, when I was listening to the minister on the radio that evening, driving to Winnipeg, as I recall it, he seemed to have spoken with a great deal of authority, I thought, for example, on roads. Not once did I hear him say, well, I will have to consult the Minister of Highways. I mean, I heard him clearly on radio saying that, yes, they had discussed roads, and this is what was decided, and this what was going to happen.

I guess what troubles me when I listen to the minister talk about northern groups not being able to decide as to what to do, you see, it is akin to blaming, it was like the Premier one day blamed the weather for all his bad

economic works in Manitoba. The minister in fact is blaming northerners for the fact that there are no roads and highways or good roads, decent highways up north. Because when I listened to him, he said: You know, you see, guys, if only you would have come to this kind of an agreement many, many years ago. Hell, we could have had roads here by now. But you know what? It was your fault, because you could never agree to work together. And now that you have finally agreed to work together, gosh, we are going to do things.

That is what he told them. That is what he said on radio. That is what I heard. I heard the minister say that, and when I listened to him, I thought, how can you blame northerners? You do not say that to southern Manitoba. You do not say that to Morris or Emerson or Steinbach, you know, like, if you guys would work together, we would do a lot of things.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Chair, that there is \$117 million in the Highways budget, and the minister knows full well that around 5 percent of that \$117 million is spent for road work up north.

Now, is that the fault of the northern leadership? No, they do not sit at the table. They do not sit in the cabinet, deciding expenditures for up north. This government and this minister in cabinet, they do that. The northern leadership absolutely has no input. They have no say as to where that \$117 million is going to be spent.

* (2110)

So do not give me this whatever, that it is the fault of northerners, it is because they cannot work together, they cannot get together, that we have roads that are in dire need of repair up north. That is simply not the case, Mr. Chair.

So I thought I would say that to the minister, just to bring him down to earth a little bit.

He talked a little bit about the Northern Economic Development Commission. My last question is on this because after this I am going to give it to my colleague member for Rupertsland. There were, while the commission was going—incidentally, the commission

was talked about, I believe, in 1988, I used to hear about it. In 1990 I heard about it, and, finally, 1992-93—no, 1992, I guess, it was finally commissioned. Eighteen months later it was supposed to be finished. It was finished when—a year and a half ago? Much money was expended. A lot of good people volunteered to sit on a commission, mostly northerners; I was glad for that. A lot of good ideas were put forth in the recommendations. There were a lot of women who went to the hearings to give their ideas, women's groups, women's programs. There were aboriginal groups who went in.

KCC was talked about as providing post-secondary education up north. There were all kinds of other ideas relating to economic development that were talked about. The Port of Churchill was talked about. The rail line. And on and on we go. But, since the release of the report, we have not heard too much from this minister as to what he is going to do as far as implementing those recommendations.

I would like to ask the minister: Is he going to do anything about implementing those recommendations, or can we just forget about that report because nothing has been done to date?

Mr. Praznik: First of all, let me say to the member for The Pas, the purpose of getting people together was not going to solve every road problem. But, after I was appointed as Minister of Northern Affairs, I was invited, almost on a regular basis, to meetings in the Minister of Highways' office, as community by community groups came in and said, we want this piece of road fixed, and it should be a priority now. By the way, we get that regularly in all our regions of the province, and, if I remember correctly from the Deputy Minister of Highways, just that one project alone—I think it is the road to Lynn Lake—if we did everything on it that those communities wanted, it would consume almost the entire Highways budget for a year. So the reality of it is that in every area of the province you never get all the road projects one would like done.

What makes it much easier for a Minister of Highways, and which, I think, gives northerners a greater input into how the road dollars are spent, is when their elected leadership can sit down and give a

list of priorities, so the Minister of Highways (Mr. Findlay) knows, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, 10, what are the priorities to be done in what order across the region. There may be some very good reasons for prioritizing that have to deal with local economic development.

The member talked about the road into Cross Lake or the bridge into Cross Lake. That is a six- to 10-million-dollar project. It is not a small amount of money. It is a very substantial amount of money. I will tell you, if Cross Lake is successful in putting together its mining project in the next while, the kind of revenue that that potentially could create would more than pay for that bridge, and it is going to happen very quickly, just like we have seen other roads developed in the North and other parts of the province that have come or been created because there has been a major significant economic development take place that creates and generates the revenue that pays for the infrastructure.

So I hope that his constituents in Cross Lake, who now are dealing with their partner, Gossin Resources, DuPont and others for the development of, what we understand, could be an active mine and generate a significant amount of revenue and will lead to a speedy construction of that particular bridge.

But that is a story that is repeated over and over again throughout all of Manitoba. There would not be a highway to Pine Falls today if there were not a paper mill there. Those stories get repeated over and over again—or a road into Bissett because of the mine. The examples go on.

The member for The Pas makes it sound as if no one else prioritizes. I can tell the member in my constituency of Lac du Bonnet, as I, year after year, lobby for highway work in my own constituency, I have to make choices in my recommendations to a minister representing that region, and that I have to work with my municipalities because we cannot do every project all at once. It took many years to get, in fact, Highway 44, the four-laning to Beausejour, which his party began when they were in government, we are now just finishing this year because it had to be a phased-in project. Resources were scarce. Again, there are road projects in my own constituency where

I get regular complaints. Highway 59 is one of them that is a major hazard on the weekends with that traffic.

When rated against some of the other highway needs in the province including northern needs, the resources have not been there to do it over the last number of years, and it remains undone. So let it not go unsaid, or let it not stand as the member would have it that northern Manitoba is always hard done by on road construction across the province. I think if one looked over a 20- or 30-year period, you would find that there was a very significant amount of dollars, probably a similar amount by whatever standard you are using, spent in northern Manitoba as the rest of the province.

I want to just say to him on his general question about the Northern Economic Development Commission report. Economies are not built by reports. Reports give us some benchmark, they give some ideas and some direction, and they give us a sense of where we may be at and some opportunities that are there. As I go through the Northern Economic Development Commission report, a number of those recommendations that were felt to be critical to long-term development, one being the settlement of lands claims, have been very much a priority with this administration and with my department. In fact, I would say now, in the Department of Northern and Native Affairs, the settlement of Northern Flood and advancing on our land claims or at least the creation of interim protection zones to give certainty to both those with claims and those who want to do economic development in those regions is our No. 1 priority over the next while which was one of the significant recommendations of that report.

If you look at one of the largest generators of wealth in the North, it is certainly mining. If you look at the history of mining in Manitoba over the last 30 years, you will see a stretch of time, 15, 20 years, where we virtually had no exploration of consequence throughout most of this province. That was the result of a host of policies that made us, for a time, one of the worst places in Canada to be involved in the mining industry. My predecessors in this department, particularly the former member for Pembina, Mr. Orchard, worked very hard. The Deputy Premier Mr. Downey worked very hard to make Manitoba the place to be involved in

mining in Canada. My perspective and my mandate as new minister is to make it one of the best in the world.

If we look just at explorations it takes 15, 20 years of exploration often to see the development of new mines employing people and creating the wealth. Most of the exploration we have had has been by the major companies in their own neck of the woods, in the Flin Flon, Thompson, nickel belt, et cetera. We have seen very little on the eastern side of the province in a host of greenstone belts that have great potential, perhaps another Voisey Bay, and that is absolutely fundamental. This government has invested and will be investing more, I suspect, in the next few years in seeing a great increase in the exploration programs in northern Manitoba done by junior companies and others in areas that have not yet been explored. That is absolutely critical to the future economic development of the North and that is long term.

One of my challenges, and something that I have never seen happen yet, is where we are working with northerners to make them aware of opportunities that come with the mining industry to be suppliers to that industry. That is one of the projects I would like to take on this winter.

If I may, Mr. Chair, on Cross Lake for a moment, and the potential mine—more than a potential mine, because the evidence we have to date suggests there is a significant enough deposit to lead to a fairly significant mining operation in that community. Those mining claims are held jointly by Gossin Resources and by the Cross Lake First Nation.

* (2120)

I hope, very sincerely, that we will see that development happen there, because it will be the first time in the history of our province where we have a First Nation actively involved as an owner in a mining development, with the wealth that comes with that going to that community as a partner.

Just to give the member a sense of the potential investment there, a mine in the kind of smelting operation that they could put into place has an estimated capital value of half a billion dollars. Just

think about it, half a billion dollars in construction going on in that community. It would be a huge, huge boom to that part of the world.

So again this government has made that a very top priority, and if you look at the future of northern Manitoba, that is very much a part of it.

So we work there, we work on settling land claims, certainly to issues. We work on a number of other fronts that are there that we hope to develop.

I will say this to the member for Cross Lake, if he asks whether or not this government will establish another commission to talk about economic development or another bureaucracy to talk about economic development, and not get down to those key fundamental issues and do some of the things that have to be done, as I have said, in mining that we have taken on, the answer is certainly not. I do not mind being judged by what we are doing, but I think one has to look at the whole plate, which involves some of those very significant infrastructures.

Again, the development of the northeast power line into the Island Lake communities, which I understand is just about ready to go, there are a few things that are being sorted out. Once again, it was this government that took the initiative to see that project completed with the federal government and those communities. Bringing lower-cost electricity into the Island Lake area is a big plus to what they are able to do in the future. That is economic development.

I see at this committee my predecessor, the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey), has joined us. In his tenure, whether it be in mining, basic infrastructure issues, he has worked very hard to ensure that Manitoba has become the place to be. That is where the future is. It is not a future in more committees to talk about a host of things that often do not turn out to be practical at the end of the day.

I hope that I have made this perfectly clear. Thank you.

Mr. Lathlin: One final question, absolutely final question.

You know, the need for road repairs, road construction, pavement, and so on, the need for that is not as great in the South. The need is greater in the North. Who can argue with that? I travel around the South all the time and there are lots of good roads in the south. Do you know why? Because that is where the votes are. That is where the people are.

Yet, when I look at that \$117-million budget, Mr. Chair, the minister says—and again I can tell when he says that that he was not listening to the people, because the people are not suggesting for one moment that all of those roads are going to be magically fixed in one swoop, in one year.

That is not what the people are saying. What the people are saying is, hey, how about sending more than 5 percent of \$117 million up here, because we need it too. Even if you do it over five years we will be happy. As long as we know that something is getting done, we will be happy. That is what people are saying. They are not saying to the minister that we are going to fix that road to Norway House or Cross Lake or to Lynn Lake in one project. The people are not stupid, they are not. They understand that.

For example, as far as I am concerned, the South could well afford, without suffering anything greatly, could well afford to wait for five years, send \$60 million or \$70 million to the North for five years and then you can do something, over five years, not in one, because it is needed.

The former minister of Northern Affairs used to talk to me incessantly about tourism. What do we have to have in the north if we are going to have the tourism industry? We need roads, we need infrastructure. We need all kinds of things. Otherwise, people are not going to come.

* (2130)

For the minister to say, we cannot afford to do that road to Lynn Lake because do you know how much it is going to cost? Hey, people understand that. Do it over two or three years. They will be happy. I guess, when the minister talks like that—for example, he said that bridge that Cross Lake is looking at is anywhere

from \$6 million to \$8 million. Well, if we were looking at the amount of money the Jets are getting, you know what, sir, we could build five bridges, each worth \$8 million. We could do that. Of course, you would have to pay it back. I just finished telling the minister, Mr. Chair, in tourism and everything else that comes along with a well-developed infrastructure, we would have payback. I can guarantee him that.

Another example is whatever is happening in the back here somewhere. [interjection] Yes, over there. If we started prioritizing, as the minister likes to say—I do not know what we are building back there—a fountain? We are laying asphalt anyway. I am sure it costs a lot of money. If we could prioritize just a little bit more, send that money up north, people would be happy. Anyway, I just thought I would say that because I did not want the minister to create the impression that northerners want everything in one swoop. They are very reasonable people. They will wait five years if you phase in the project.

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupert's Land): Mr. Chairman, there are some questions I have. I do not want to take too much time. There are other members of our caucus here that have questions as well.

I took some interest in the remarks by the minister on the mining activities that are potentially going to be happening in this province of ours in the next little while. We fully understand that there have been a thousand mining jobs that have been lost in this province at Lynn Lake, Snow Lake; others have shut down. But there is potential for mining activity, most of it in northern Manitoba at Pipe Lake, in Thompson, Snow Lake, Pipestone Lake and Bissett, and I look forward to the Energy and Mines Estimates. Perhaps we can get into greater detail about those potentials that do exist in northern Manitoba with respect to this same minister's responsibilities in that area.

I, too, heard the radio program that the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) was referring to on the northern round table, and was most enthused about the—just that we were, I suppose, looking for a hockey game that night. But driving back from our constituency, it just so happened that we turned the radio to this certain station in a lower band section and we found—I found

it anyway, that the minister was on this program. I was enthused by what I heard, particularly in relation to a Northern Development Agreement that we did once have in this province and which expired about five years ago.

I would like to ask, as a first question, Mr. Chairperson, to the minister as to what stage this government is at in negotiating a new—we used to refer them as ERDA agreements with the federal government.

Mr. Praznik: Yes, Mr. Chair, there are no ERDAs anymore. The federal government is not doing them. We all as provincial politicians watch federal budgets. It is very obvious that the federal government is reducing its obligations everywhere, and my expectation is that for many, many years to come we will not see the kind of dollars provided for those economic development agreements as we have seen in the last 20 to 30 years, nowhere near. In fact, we will not see any.

Mr. Robinson: Have there been discussions with federal counterparts on that very same issue with respect to Northern Development Agreements involving the other levels of government, including, particularly, the federal government?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, there has been no interest shown to even get to having any kind of discussions. The federal government is just not in the business and not open to talking about it.

Mr. Robinson: In this province we have the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs that has undertaken with the federal government, particularly the Department of Indian Affairs, what has been referred to as the dismantling process, a long overdue process in the opinion of First Nations leaders in this province. They have geared in on three particular areas that they would like to move on immediately, that being education, capital management and fire protection.

I would like to ask what the minister views is the provincial government's role in the whole dismantling process, or what was referred to by the federal Indian Affairs minister as something different than

dismantling but rather empowerment for First Nations people in this province.

Mr. Praznik: This will take a few minutes, which I would ask for the indulgence of the committee, because the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) has raised an issue which I think is at probably one of the most challenging facing First Nations people and all governments over the next few years, very exciting process, and the relationships between the parties become very important as to their roles that they have to play in this process.

As minister, I am very cognizant of the importance of jurisdiction and relationships. In conversations I have had with other governments that have gone through these processes, particularly in the Territories, their advice to me has always been understand and respect and appreciate jurisdiction and relationships. That does not mean one cannot be supportive of the overall thrust of where things are going, but one must respect the differences in jurisdictions.

Manitoba as a government was not invited to the table as part of the discussions on the dismantling agreement between First Nations and the federal government, and I say very clearly to the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson), I am not in any way offended by that. That was not a place for us to be. We are not in the jurisdictions involved. We are not a party to that agreement because we do not have jurisdiction in those particular areas. And so it was not appropriate that we be there, and I am not insulted, offended. I appreciate that fully, and I respect that position.

As we study where we fit into this role, obviously there are some very practical areas and some jurisdictional areas where the province will probably be asked to come to the table, and I would like to just take a moment to review those for the benefit of members of the committee who may not be as cognizant of this issue as I know the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) is.

Under the Canadian Constitution with respect to, and I use the constitutional phrase of Indians and Indian lands, the federal government has a jurisdiction if they

so choose to exercise it. If they do not—and, this, of course, is putting aside any relationship, or special arrangements between the federal government and particular bands because of treaty.

I want to just remove that from the discussion for a moment because those are clearly obligations from the federal Crown to those bands. But in terms of constitutional law, in the case of Manitoba, or any province, our laws of general application where we choose to exercise our authority under the Constitution apply, of course, equally to all our citizens, whether they be First Nation citizens or not.

It is only where the federal government has exercised its jurisdiction over, and I use the constitutional phrase, Indians and Indian lands, that a special scenario or situation arises. A good case in point is the Indian Act which exempts taxation for purchases or payments on reserve. Our general tax laws apply except the feds have used their jurisdiction and taken that area out of the jurisdiction.

The reason I raise this with the member for Rupertsland is that I suspect that, on some of the issues that are going to come forward in the dismantling process—and the signal I have had from the federal minister, Mr. Irwin, is that the federal government will be looking to the province to, by agreement, cede part of its jurisdiction to this process.

The area that comes to mind very quickly where this is likely to be the case is that of Child and Family Services. Under the constitutional scheme, the laws of general application apply, so our Child and Family Services legislation applies on and off reserve unless the federal government uses its jurisdiction to override ours.

So what we are asking in this process—and this is what I would hope the member for Rupertsland appreciates in our position, as we develop it as we go through this. What I envision as minister, what the province is looking for, is where the federal government and the First Nations communities wish to see that empowerment of First Nations or the establishment of that right to make decisions or that jurisdiction or responsibility, whatever term one wants

to use. What we would expect as a province is they would do it, not through an administrative agreement, where the jurisdiction may still end up lying with the province, but we would want to see that jurisdiction created through the federal authority where it exists or through treaty where it exists so that the lines of authority and responsibility are firmly there.

Now, having said that, that does not mean, as a matter of practical fact, that the province of Manitoba will not want to deal with those new entities that are created to share information, to work together, to have coservice agreements, to develop standards together on a shared basis or do all of those practical things that, I think, become important to the success.

But our insistence is that the federal government use its proper authority, that the Parliament of Canada, where they so wish to see a jurisdiction created for First Nations, so use the authority of the Parliament of Canada to create it, as opposed to coming to the province to have us seceded in some administrative arrangement where we really cannot secede that jurisdiction. And I fully expect that there will be implementation periods, et cetera, that can be accommodated by federal legislation.

My one disappointment that I share with members of the committee and the member for Rupertsland is that Mr. Irwin, the federal minister, in discussions we have had with him has said to us that it is not his mandate from the Prime Minister to go to the Parliament of Canada and that he will have to do things without going to the Parliament of Canada. I find that very disheartening, because it is the authority of the Parliament of Canada that will be needed to fully give constitutional and legal life, in the opinion of our legal advisors, to some of the things that they want to accomplish.

If I may, I know the member for Rupertsland has many other points that he wants to raise, but he raised three particular areas of education, capital management and fire protection.

In the case of capital management, in my opinion, that is very simply an issue between the First Nations and the government of Canada, which now provides

that capital budget, and I look forward to I hope a very successful program that the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs will be able to create.

In terms of education, now, in most cases, the authority for education, if I remember my briefings correctly, there is some obligation relationship under treaty with respect to education, so that is an area that already has a special role, and I would expect that when, as First Nations develop their educational planning at the primary and secondary levels, that they will be speaking to us about working, as happens now already, about common curriculum and grading and those types of things so that students are able to enter outside institutions. I do not know what plans are for post-secondary, so I really do not want to comment on that.

* (2140)

I leave for last probably my personal favourite of the three because of my involvement in the Fire Commissioner's office, and that is fire protection. We have an anomaly in our law currently in Manitoba that I share with members under our Fires Prevention Act.

The act clearly defines municipalities as not including First Nations, and just as a matter of practical fact now, every time there is a fire on a First Nation, the firefighters, whoever they may be, who enter a premise, commit trespass because they are not afforded the protection of our Fires Prevention Act, and just as a very practical consequence, because our legislation does not apply, I have raised that with Mr. Irwin and with Grand Chief Fontaine as this is one area, clearly, where the establishment of the proper authority just to ensure that First Nations firefighters are legally protected when they fight fires on First Nations, that something will have to be done legislatively to ensure that.

We have had meetings with the native firefighters association, who I understand have a mandate from the chiefs to be working on fire protection issues, and we started to build a relationship with the Manitoba Fire Commissioner's office, our training facilities. We do not charge any additional fees for accessing our programs, et cetera, for those First Nations firefighters,

any out-of-province fees or any of those types of things.

We have also started to work with them to develop a relationship with the Manitoba Association of Fire Chiefs, which is a very significant organization in fire protection in the province. I am hoping as the aboriginal fire service develops, as many communities are fairly far along now—I think of the Opaskwayak Cree Nation at The Pas being one—we have to work out some arrangements for mutual aid. Many aboriginal fire departments are in close proximity to nonaboriginal fire departments, and it makes perfect sense to have mutual aid agreements.

The problem we have now is those aboriginal fire departments are not covered by our fire protection act, nor is there federal legislation. Consequently, there is a legal void that has to be filled. I think the fire protection one is going to be one of the first where we are going to be able to work out some of these difficulties. There is a very good relationship developing. I think on the others, as we go along, in practical terms it will be very exciting. Obviously, mistakes get made. That is how we all learn.

I have to come back to my first point. We as a province are very insistent that the federal Parliament provide under the constitution for the jurisdictions that it wishes to see transferred or the empowerment it wishes to see transferred to First Nations as opposed to looking for administrative agreements, tripartite agreements which really do not transfer the jurisdiction or authority.

That would be our one concern with the process to date. That concern only arises because of the comments of the federal ministers to both us and the First Nations that they do not want to have to go to Parliament to do that.

We think they should go to Parliament and will have to go to Parliament if they want to give legal effect to some of things that I think they are planning. That does not mean we intend to stand in the way, we just want to see it done correctly in law, as opposed to through administrative agreements which may satisfy no one at the end of the day.

Mr. Robinson: I want to thank the minister for his response to my question on those three areas that I wanted to talk about, about the dismantling process that is currently underway in Manitoba. He mentioned, and I am very concerned about the issue about the fire protection program that it is going to be fast track in the next little while.

I was glad to hear about some of the gaps that appear to be evident in The Fires Prevention Act restricting First Nations people in becoming recognized, if you will, as communities, as municipalities are recognized. I want to talk a little bit and ask a question on the Fire College.

The way we understand it right now, \$50 per day is required of an individual to attend the Fire College if that person is not from a recognized municipality according to The Fires Prevention Act. I believe it is section 67(1) of The Fires Prevention Act. I am not totally familiar with The Fires Prevention Act. I wonder if the minister would comment on why First Nations people have to pay that \$50-a-day fee.

Mr. Praznik: Yes, Mr. Chair, I thank the member for the question. As he is well aware, I was the Fire Commissioner's minister up until a month or so ago in the cabinet shuffle, and I recall a meeting earlier this year between the representatives of the association of native firefighters and our Fire Commissioner's people.

That issue was raised, and at that time I understood that they would if they were members of a First Nations fire department—that additional charge was to be waived. If that has not been carried out, I do not offer this as an excuse, but in the interim the member may appreciate that our Fire Commissioner, Mr. John Matheson, who has passed away, was quite ill during that period and there may be some gap in the flow of information. So I will endeavour to raise this with the new Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews).

My recollection of our discussions at that time was that fee would be waived for members of recognized First Nations fire departments in the province of Manitoba. That whole issue, of course, stems from The Fires Prevention Act, which specifically excludes First Nations under the definition of municipalities.

As the member can appreciate, there is some sensitivity here about whether or not we should amend our Fires Prevention Act to include them and define them as municipalities because there are some sensitivities in the First Nations communities with that definition or that wording and how that takes place.

So, when I left office—and the advice I will offer to the new Minister of Labour when we discuss this issue is, this is certainly one of the points that has to be raised with the First Nations about the legislative scheme that they wish to govern their fire departments. Today they have none.

If they so choose to want to opt under the provincial Fires Prevention Act, that will require an amendment of this Legislature that I do not think we as a government have a difficulty in making. We would want to do it, of course, with the concurrence and the recommendation or request of those First Nations. If they want to have their own jurisdiction for a Fires Prevention Act, then the federal Parliament in essence will have to provide for that amendment because First Nations themselves today do not have the authority to do it. It is not one of the delegated authorities.

So they are in a void, and when they decide which route they wish to take, if it is one where they want provincial amendment, I am sure the Minister of Labour (Mr. Toews) would be willing to provide for that. If they wish to deal on the other side, then the federal Parliament will have to provide for it. In the interim, my understanding is that a \$50 fee was to be waived for members of recognized First Nations fire departments.

Mr. Robinson: I do want to move into some other areas, but this, as the minister indicated, is a very important area that we are talking about here, the area of fire protection. The way I understand it, The Fires Prevention Act, section 66(2) provides for an amount to be paid annually by the insurers to a fire protection fund. Now, under Regulation 2991, section 1(c), since 1993 and for the subsequent years, the rate has been set at an equivalent of 1.25 percent of premiums written off for property insurance less any return premiums, cancellations or money returned or credits allowed to subscribers in respect of property insurance.

* (2150)

Now, insurance companies pool all property premiums received and annually submit the equivalent of 1.25 percent to the Minister of Finance. They do not track premiums by ethnic origin and in fact are not permitted under legislation to even ask the question. This latter point will make it difficult to determine what percentage of that 1.25 percent First Nations should be requesting as their fair share. Per capita or percentage of population formula might be the easiest and best course to pursue. We do not know.

Now, the disbursement of funds: all money paid under Section 66 shall be credited to the account known as the Fires Prevention Fund and the money at the credit of the account shall be paid out of the order of the minister, which order shall certify that the expenditure is for the purposes of this act only. Part I of the act deals with forest and prairie fire, fire protection, powers of fire guardians and forest officers, wooded districts, burning permits, travel permits, fire hazards, fire suppression, fires resulting from railway operations, and the duty and responsibilities of the fire commissioner.

Section 35.3(e) and (f) provide for the establishment, maintenance and operation of a central fire college and the establishment and operation of regional fire schools for the training of fire officers. From the Public Accounts money that is transferred from the fund to the operation of the college, the authority to do this would seem to come under section 66. The Legislative Library review had Orders-in-Council for such authority and found them, so it confirms what the minister said.

I do want to talk about what the minister was talking about earlier in his assessment in the situation and the predicament that First Nations people find themselves in with respect to this one very vital area. I wanted to ask the minister, Mr. Chairperson, what ideas he has to influence his government in correcting some of the deficiencies, if you will, that do exist in this particular area.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, I appreciate the question from the member for Rupertsland because although fire

protection may seem like a very small issue in the overall table of dismantling, it is one that is probably very vital and very important and one which I believe can be an early success to the process.

By way of the budget and the use of the fire fund, the fire fund has been used primarily in the province for the operation of the Fire Commissioner's office which provides an investigatory element, a training, public safety element. We have used it for the operation, construction of the Fire College in Brandon and our training programs we offer across the province. We offer to the 17 southern and three northern mutual aid districts, and the reason why we make the difference between southern and northern is because in the north it is very hard to offer mutual aid in many cases, because fire departments are physically just so far away, but we use them for the purposes of training and equipment.

The fire fund has been used to pay, over the years, somewhere between \$8,000 and \$10,000, depending on the year, of match dollars to the mutual aid organizations for training that is offered to the mutual aid districts. When I was minister, we put a great emphasis on train the trainer. So we were training individuals in the mutual aid district who then could go back and train individuals in the department, various departments. We also did a number of equipment purchases over the years for the Fire Commissioner's office in support of mutual aid districts, not to individual fire departments. We have provided air compressors for mutual aid, radios for emergency equipment, training tapes and the like.

It is very important to note that we have not been funders, under that fund, of individual fire services. We have not bought firetrucks for departments, we have not built firehalls for departments, we have not bought equipment for departments. We have provided some equipment for the mutual aid system that they share, which no department owns but the Commissioner's office had put in place, but we have not funded individual departments. It is important to keep that in mind, how the fund is used.

Because of the definitions—and the member has the act in front of him, I believe—dealing with First Nations

and municipalities and who is who, First Nations fire departments have not been part of the mutual aid system. It is my personal belief that as First Nations fire departments develop, becoming part of local mutual aid systems is going to be very important. Mutual aid systems have a host of rules that they require any department to meet before they join. They have to, obviously, have the equipment and the trained personnel and be able to respond to calls in other jurisdictions when they are needed in order to have those jurisdictions come to your area when you need them.

So it is going to be important as First Nation fire departments build up their equipment and their training when they meet those standards that are there. Some do already, The Pas is a perfect example, the Opaskwayak First Nation, and I think they have some arrangement with The Pas fire department now, outside of mutual aid. But if they choose to become part of the mutual aid system, then they of course could be the beneficiary of those same resources.

If they choose to go on their own, and this is a decision that the chiefs have to make and one that I had some discussion with Phil Fontaine about when I was the minister, and if the federal parliament provided for the jurisdiction for First Nations to create their own fire commission or whatever avenue they chose to pursue, then there is certainly the ability for them to levy the same kind of 1.25 percent levy as we do on fire insurance premiums written on First Nations property.

In that case the division of dollars becomes fairly clear. If the policy is written on a property situated in the First Nation, then the 1.25 percent of whatever levy would go to that fire commission or body that was created under the jurisdiction that the federal government would pass or provide for First Nations. If First Nations want to be part of our regular Fire Prevention Act, then obviously we would have to look at amending that act to allow for that. I do not think that would be a significant problem, but I would say this to anyone reading this record. The dollars raised under those premiums now for the fire fund have not been used to pay for individual departments. I would doubt if that kind of arrangement could be made to fund individual departments because if in one case, yes,

why not everywhere, the fund gets quickly depleted. If that option of joining the provincial Fire Services is the one First Nations would choose, then certainly they would be entitled to the same as part of mutual aid districts, the same training grants, the same access to joint equipment, the same access to expertise and support as any other fire department.

So there are two possible streams that I see now; there may be more. First Nations' native association of firefighters is very much a lead in this. They are going to have to decide where they want to go. In the interim, however, we have waived that \$50 fee, and we have been providing some support, et cetera, to date with the training and the contacts and the use of the Fire College and advice to those departments as we would do to any other department in the province.

Mr. Robinson: I have the honour as well as representing some Northern Affairs communities, including Manigotagan, Seymourville, Bissett, Gods Lake Narrows, Stevenson Landing, and Aghaming, and I have had the privilege of talking with the mayors and councils of those communities on some very specific issues. Aghaming is, you know, next door to the Hollow Water First Nation. Of course, there are some communities, I guess, that we can call—basically, nobody is at home, including Long Body Creek for the time being, but I am sure that they will be occupied again at some point in the future.

* (2200)

We want to address some issues as well for those communities, particularly Manigotagan, Seymourville and Hollow Water, which is a First Nations community. They have rallied around in their opposition on a Pelican Harbour resort. I did communicate with the minister on March 10, 1994, and he responded to me promptly on the 31st of March of that year on the Pelican Harbour resort development initiative.

I am wondering if the minister has had dialogue with the mayor and council of Manigotagan, of Seymourville, and chief and council at Hollow Water with respect to what is happening there. I know that the argument is that the development initiative is not

located in the local boundaries of Manigotagan or Seymourville, but is located within Northern Affairs jurisdiction.

But there have been some concerns raised by the community members of those three communities that I am talking about with respect to the initiative because some of it could be over traditional territory. Some of it could be on traditional land that our forefathers once used for ceremonial purposes. I believe that, for the most part, most people in Manigotagan, Seymourville and Hollow Water, a good proportion of them, are of the aboriginal ancestry. So I am just wondering what dialogue the minister has had with respect to this concern that was expressed to us by the three communities through their leadership.

Mr. Praznik: I must admit to the member that I am not going to be able to give him as full an answer as I would have liked. As the member may appreciate, my assistant deputy minister, who looks after these particular areas and I know has been very actively involve in working with these communities through this project—I am speaking, of course, of Mr. Oliver Boulette—is not able to be with us tonight as he has remained in Thompson, his base of operations, due to the evacuations that are going on. I apologize to the committee. As minister I believed it was just far more important that he be in the North tonight doing that work as opposed to being here, and I am sure no one would disagree with that decision.

I can tell the member that over the last year or so, it is my understanding that many of the concerns have been met locally and there are a number of different issues that were raised. I might just run through with him some of those specific concerns.

There were some concerns with regard to commercial fishing, and now the Department of National Resources has had some discussions there with fisherman, and that issue seemed to have been alleviated. There was a bald eagle nesting area and the development is not near the existing nesting area. There was some concern with respect to graves, particularly where there were graves. We understand that the Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship located the grave or graves and stipulated a variety of methods to ensure

preservation and respect for those graves. Those have been agreed to by the developer.

I think the member, who travels Highway 59 from time to time with me as we share some communities and a common boundary, appreciates the difficulty that can be as there is a gravesite in the meridian between the two highways. It was one of those things that happens from time to time. I also know there is one in Bird's Hill Park. One must treat them with respect and of course try to preserve them. I would trust that this would be better than what we have done on Highway 59 over the years.

There are existing trails that are used by local communities. Their new access survey was developed by the developer, which will ensure that there is no interference with the existing trail system. Seymourville Community Council had some concerns and there was some land within Seymourville boundary and that was removed from the particular application to purchase.

I believe most of these have been worked through and, as I have indicated, Mr. Boulet, my ADM, is in charge of this particular issue. I wish he was here tonight, but I will arrange if the member so wishes when he is next in Winnipeg following the fires to perhaps arrange a meeting with the member if there are any particular issues the member wishes to have an update on.

Mr. Robinson: I appreciate that, Mr. Chairperson. I look forward to sitting down with the ADM and going over some outstanding issues that have been raised with us by our constituents in the Manigotagan-Seymourville-Hollow Water area.

There is another concern that has been expressed to us, and I have had numerous conversations with Mayor Brenda Boulet [phonetic] and the members of her council and the mayor before her, Mayor John Deer [phonetic], and others, on issues that they have there. Sewer and water and issues of that nature have always come up. The whole area of septic fields in Manigotagan particularly, because of the kind of terrain that it is built on, I understand according to local community members I have talked to, the people there will be faced with a problem

in the next few years. I am just wondering what the minister's department's officials have done with respect to addressing those potential problems that we may be faced with in Manigotagan particularly.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, a concern I share with him. I remember visiting that community and its neighbours when I worked for its Member of Parliament, the Honourable Jake Epp, some years ago. And those were certainly issues then, and I know on the federal side, with respect to Hollow Water, there was a fair bit of federal dollars that went in on sewer and water upgrades.

I can report that Phase 2 of the single water treatment plant in Manigotagan is in our capital budget for this year, which is now just going through its final stages of approval. There are significant dollars for carry-over on the water treatment plant and sewage work that has to be done there. So the answer, it would appear, is to go to the water and sewer system in the community, and we are working towards that as we have with the capital budget. So we certainly want that addressed, and hopefully this year's work will bring it pretty close to completion.

Mr. Robinson: There are other issues that I would like to bring up with the minister, including matters that are very important to the constituents that I represent in this Legislature, but I want to give my colleague, the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), an opportunity to ask some questions that are very important to her as well and the constituents that she serves in her area.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): As my colleague has indicated, there are several communities in my constituency, in fact nine, that come under Northern Affairs' jurisdiction, and I have some questions that I would like to ask relating to these communities and the services that are provided there.

Earlier on in the day, I had the opportunity to ask a few questions about the allocation of capital funding to Northern Affairs communities and the community of Camperville and the process that takes place to allocate the funds and, in particular, on the Camperville firetruck. Now, the minister indicated that one of the

things that went against the community of Camperville was that their firefighters were not properly trained.

So I want to ask the minister, since he has known for some time that the community of Camperville has been trying to get a firetruck so that they could provide better protection for the area, including Duck Bay, which is another Northern Affairs community. They tell me that they do some work when there is need for fire protection at the Pine Creek Reserve. They also help out there. And they also have a mutual aid agreement with the LGD of Mountain, so they do serve a fairly large area.

The minister had indicated that the firefighters were not properly trained, so what I want to ask is, if the minister is aware of that, and he knows how important it is that they have proper fire protection, does the community provide the opportunity or the resources to ensure that people are properly trained, so that there is the fire protection and the people in place, should they be so unfortunate to have a fire, as they did just a few years ago when the hall burned down in Camperville?

Mr. Praznik: First of all, Mr. Chair, I think three issues with respect to the Camperville firetruck: One, of course, that that project had to be judged against other projects throughout the province, and I think when I am able to table the list of capital projects, which is still in the final stages of approval for Treasury Board, once it is completed, I will be pleased to share it with her. I think she will appreciate some of the other priorities in other communities. That is one.

* (2210)

Two, the first question that has to be answered is the state of the current firetruck. Is it adequate, does it work, et cetera, is it a useable piece of equipment? That obviously is going to change the priority of that project compared to other choices that have to be made.

Following the member's questions in the House, I spoke directly with the acting Fire Commissioner whose staff recently inspected that firetruck. He assured me that although there are better models of truck, it is certainly a useable piece of equipment. It is not state of the art, but it is comparable to the type of

equipment used in many fire services in rural Manitoba. I think it is a 1976 body with about 1981 pumping equipment. Although the member may look somewhat surprised at that age, I can tell her in terms of lives of firetrucks that is not an old piece of equipment.

I recently opened the Bird River fire department in my constituency which has been in training for about four years now. Their firetruck is a 1964 truck with, I believe, original tires. Fire equipment does not wear out. It has a long life. The fact that it is a '76 body and engine does not mean it is a poor piece of equipment. It has been inspected by the Fire Commissioner's office and they have reported to Northern Affairs staff that it is certainly a very adequate piece of equipment.

The third issue in terms of training of firefighters, and this again I learned from my own staff who were part of the process of prioritization and work with Camperville, is that—and I may be wrong here but I do not believe that currently the Camperville fire department has any firefighters who have achieved Level 1, or very few, if any, who have achieved Level 1 firefighter training. The Dauphin regional office has worked with that community and made available offers to get their firefighters into that Level 1 training program, and they have had no response from the Camperville fire department.

I just have to share with the honourable member, someone who has been fire services minister for the last number of years, that there has been a big push across our volunteer fire services across the province to achieve Level 1 firefighter training. Most departments now across the province have a number of firefighters, if not all, who have achieved it, and those who have not are working through the program.

So I think there was a sense from our program staff that to invest in a significant piece of new equipment, which is probably in the \$100,000 to \$150,000 price range, and I know the new truck that was purchased by this department for the community of Waterhen, which I happened to be there when it was presented and turned over, it was around \$150,000 for that truck. That fire department had worked very hard to build up their own training and took great pride in achieving a

higher skill level. They put the horse, in essence, before the cart. The Bird River fire department, which is a new fire department, began training about four years ago. Their firefighters have all been working towards or have achieved Level 1 training, and they are working with some very old equipment. They have a new truck with a water carrying unit but it is not a firetruck, which their municipality purchased for them.

Another bit of history to this that my staff have shared with me is that in terms of, sort of, three—and competition between fire departments is a good thing, do not get me wrong.

Rivalries of departments are part of the fuel of building the pride in fire services. But of the three relatively neighbouring communities of Waterhen, Camperville and Duck Bay, it was Waterhen who had the, I think, first firetruck and first department, then Duck Bay and then Camperville. Now it is Waterhen and then Duck Bay got new trucks and there is a bit of a rivalry in there among communities. I may be wrong but this is what my staff have pointed out to me.

So, inevitably, I would think Camperville at some point will get a new truck. When, I am not going to commit to that, but while they have a usable piece of equipment I think there is a challenge to their fire service to get into the Level 1 training and demonstrate the kind of commitment to excellence that we are trying to instill in all of our fire services and the vast majority are responding to.

You know, I just see when you visit some of our very isolated communities, and I think of Cross Lake for example, the Northern Affairs community, I know the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) is very familiar with it. Darlene Beck, the first woman fire chief for the province of Manitoba who I think almost single-handedly built that department, you see the work that goes on in training and building up course after course and the skill level, it is certainly where we want fire departments to be. I think staff were somewhat disappointed when the Camperville fire department did not respond to the offers for Level 1 training.

So my message to the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) and to Camperville is to, you know, put the

shoulder to the grindstone and to be building up their own expertise. A firetruck does not make a fire department. In essence that is only part of it. It is the training that is probably one of the most significant parts of fire fighting, and their piece of equipment will be kept in good repair.

At some point, you know, there likely will be on the agenda a new firetruck, but not having one is not the end of the world. They still have a perfectly good firetruck. They have a fire service. They need to do some more work in the training. That they do have control over, that they are not dependent on this minister making a decision or the capital process producing that decision. I would hope they would continue to work at it, demonstrate their commitment to fire service through the training, and inevitably they will have a new firetruck at some point in time.

Ms. Wowchuk: The minister indicates that they will get a truck at some time and I can accept that, but what I want to know is Camperville has been applying for a firetruck for some three to four years. They were told they were on the list before their community centre burnt down, then they said they had to go on hold because of the insurance that had to be paid on that hall but they would get a truck the following year. That was the commitment that was made to them.

Now if their crews, if their volunteers were not properly trained that is one thing, they should have been told that. I do not know that they were but if they are not properly trained, I can accept that. They have to do some work, but I have difficulty with the fact that they were told their firetruck was put on hold because their hall burned but they would be getting it the next year.

This is a few years down the road, and if there are problems with the way their volunteers are trained they should be told about that, but they should not have been told they were going to get a truck when it actually was not in the cards and that is the area that I have difficulty.

If there is a problem that they do not have the right requirements, if there is a problem with the volunteers there, then tell them that is how it is. Tell them that

they have to get their firefighting volunteers up to the level that is required. Do not play games with them and tell them, oh, yes, you cannot get a truck this year because your community centre burnt down but you are on the list for next year, you are going to get the truck next year.

Then now, two years later we find out that no, they are not going to get a truck because even though they have the support of the surrounding communities, the problem is their firefighters are not properly trained. I think that the message has to get to them to say, and the first question I asked was also what kind of resources, are their resources available to ensure that these firefighters do get trained? It is a very important service, that we have the protection in that area for all the communities.

* (2220)

Mr. Praznik: The member for Swan River makes the assumption that someone has said they were going to get it. I have not heard a name behind that assumption. I do not know who would have committed it, but it is not a commitment that I find a record of and it was not a commitment I made. So I was not minister when their hall burned down. Maybe others have made the commitment, but it is not one that I certainly made at that time.

I want to clarify for the member for Swan River it is not because their firefighters are not properly trained. You do not have to be a Level 1 to be a firefighter. You can start and be at a certain level, but the fact that the course is offered and that no one responds is indicative of a fire department that is not committed to ongoing improvement and training or has the commitment that we would hope most fire services have. So it is not a matter of necessarily training for a truck, but it is the commitment to the fire service.

Obviously, if you are going to expend \$150,000 on a piece of brand new firefighting equipment, you want to ensure that there is a commitment there to carry through. I share with the member out of my own constituency or next door to mine in Mr. Robinson's constituency, Fort Alexander which is in the process now of setting up a fire department and a fire service.

There was a fire there just a few days ago at the All-Care Centre and only three firefighters arrived on the scene from the Fort Alexander department. It was in the evening, and the Pine Falls department came to put out the fire and save the building.

That is not necessarily an unusual scenario in the early stages of a fire service. Before one is going to invest significant equipment, one wants to ensure that the commitment is there. The Bird River fire department—I will just tell you—when that fire department started off, they had 30 or 40 volunteers and they worked at it a number of years before they were able to prove to their own municipality that they had the commitment to make even the investment in an old firetruck and a hall.

So Camperville has to demonstrate that kind of commitment as well before one makes that purchase, but I think a critical factor in that decision was the fact that they have a piece of usable fire equipment now. They have a truck. It may not be state of the art, but they have a truck that has been inspected by the Fire Commissioner's office, is a usable piece of fire equipment that in fact is newer than equipment used in many fire departments throughout the province and certainly whether or not that be replaced with a state of the art—we are not talking about a community that has a fire department with no equipment that has no truck and is fighting fires with an old tanker and a pump. We are talking about a community that does have a firetruck, a usable firetruck. It may not be as new as its neighbour's. It may not be state of the art, but it is still a firetruck and it will be kept in repair.

So I think there are a multitude of issues. My message to them would be they have a piece of equipment. They have to work I think to demonstrate their own long-term commitment to fire service and will have to wait on the priority list to at some point that they are high enough on that list to be eligible for that type of capital piece of equipment within the budget.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Chair, I wonder if I can make a suggestion to the minister seeing as how we only have so much time for the Northern Affairs Estimates. Could I respectfully request the minister to try and

make his responses to the point so that in that way instead of asking two questions we may be able to ask six questions. Thank you very much.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chair, I am pleased that my colleague for The pas brought the point up because the answers are getting very lengthy.

I have a question to ask with respect to the Louisiana-Pacific deal. I have asked the minister many times during the last session on what role he was playing in ensuring that the negotiations on treaty land entitlement were taking place and that the reserves in the area and also the NACC communities—first of all that in the NACC communities that they get jobs from the Louisiana-Pacific plant. With respect to the reserves, there is a concern with the cutting on treaty land, land that has not been settled.

I have asked the minister many times if he would meet with these people and ensure that treaty land entitlement is settled. Where are we at? Have there been any negotiations with the Shoal River and Indian Birch bands?

Mr. Praznik: First of all, the two First Nations in the vicinity that the member refers to have been represented in this whole process by the treaty land chiefs entitlement committee and that is the process we have used to deal with all of these issues. So it has not been my habit to go around that established process.

Secondly, we offered this winter to that treaty land chiefs entitlement committee the concept of—actually their request of interim protection zones for treaty land entitlement, and it is the obligation of the provincial Crown to provide sufficient unencumbered Crown lands to the federal government to satisfy their treaty land obligations. The treaty land obligation is not owed by the province directly. We have proposed those interim protection zones. We have made the offer. Each one is to be dealt with individually. I have asked the treaty land chiefs to come forward with their proposals, where they wish to have those interim protection zones.

We have set some criteria for them by the 30th of September in which case I must take each one back to

cabinet for approval and then we will hold any issues or any entitlements in those areas in abeyance for two years pending the settlement of those land claims. So a vehicle is available to deal with those issues and those chiefs are aware of it. It is up to them to avail themselves of it.

Mr. Robinson: Keeping in mind what the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) advised, I will try and speed up my questions here as well.

The community of Berens River is a unique one as well. The community is governed by the Northern Association of Community Councils.

In discussions with Mayor Lawrence Disbrowe and members of his council and some of the elders of the community of Berens River, he told us about the high number of medivacs that have occurred there for the period of January 5, 1995, to March 1 of this year; 144 medivacs took place in that community. I expressed deep concern with respect to the condition that the roads are in in that community and the lack of material that is available in the community, particularly gravel.

Now, I have written to the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Findlay). I have still yet to get a response with respect to Berens River Metis community. I did get a response on the Metis community, excuse me, but I did not get a response on the reserve portion of the community, the 10 miles of road that the reserve community wanted to maintain on its own at Berens River.

These are some of the concerns that the Berens River community council has. In addition, the arena is in very poor condition. It was never completed and it is not suitable for use or safe use at the current time, but yet it is an opportunity for the community to participate in such activities as hockey and other activities. They look forward to this government's support in addressing the arena issue in Berens River. Yes, we do have an arena issue in Berens River as well.

As well, again, the problem of the \$50 user fee was brought up by the residents of the Berens River Metis community with respect to that fee being imposed on non-Status and Metis people.

Another very serious issue has been job cuts at the airport and also the budget of this department. They believe that with the job cuts at the airport there in Berens River that it puts the travelling public at risk. I think that the minister has heard me say this before, particularly when we have raised the issue of northern airports, which I would like to ask his opinion on a few matters as well as we go on here.

I would like to ask the minister very briefly if he could respond to me on how he and his staff are going to respond to some of these very deep concerns that Mayor Disbrowe and indeed his community share.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, it is so hard to respond with short answers to four or five questions in one block, but the member for Rupertsland and I could go on together for hours in these discussions in such an amiable way—only wish the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) would go find another committee in which he was interested.

* (2230)

All of these specific issues, there are many of them, I share with the member some information but he is probably far more aware than I. With respect to the road, I gather there is an issue of difference between the community council and the First Nation there. The road which runs through the First Nation is owned by the province and the band would like us to give them jurisdiction and they will maintain it. The community council does not want to give it up, and I understand this is further complicated by the fact that there are only three graders in the community that can do the work. There seems to be a great disagreement over who can hire who to do what. As a consequence, it is a rather messy situation that may require the wisdom of Solomon, which I do not possess, to inevitably solve.

We will try to do the best. If the member for Rupertsland has some specific advice that he would like to offer us, perhaps even privately, on how we can resolve the situation here, I would be most willing to hear it. With respect to the other issues he has raised, the arena issue, I am not really familiar with that particular issue. If perhaps he could provide me with some more specific information, I will endeavour to

discuss it with him and again he might have some solutions to the problem that I might be able to do.

Thirdly, with respect to northern airports, we have certainly seen generally as the federal government has changed its airport policy on the airports it maintains, I do not know where we are going to go on this. Obviously we have to push the feds to continue to maintain safe airports because they are the most vital link to most of these communities. They are virtually the only way to get in and out most of the time on a regular basis.

I do not know where this is going to lead but I know the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Findlay) has had a number of meetings with federal officials and, hopefully, we will be able to maintain in the long run, as a nation and as a province, this very vital link of northern airports. It may have more technology associated with it than human endeavour, as it has in the past, but certainly to maintain those airports is absolutely critical.

Mr. Robinson: Another very quick point, Berens River is in the area of the need for a permanent detachment of policing in that community. I have asked this government previously its position on a First Nations policing policy, otherwise known as a 52-48 formula which is a federal initiative that was driven by the previous government prior to the current government that we have in Ottawa today.

I believe it to be a program that has a lot of potential and I do believe that it has a lot of potential here in Manitoba. I did take my hat off to this government when it announced its participation with the Dakota Ojibway Tribal Police force, and finally there was an agreement made to police those communities that are part of the DOTC.

I would like to ask the minister whether or not he has given some consideration on the First Nations policing policy and at the same time trying to work out arrangements for Metis communities like Berens River to have policing services.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, first of all, I thank the member for his compliment on the initiative. I think

this has been one that my colleague, the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey), who negotiated this agreement with the federal government, has been a win-win for everybody. The provincial taxpayer pays a smaller share than we used to on policing. First Nations are able to support a policing service.

I can tell him that we do not have that particular information, because this issue has been dealt with primarily by the Department of Justice, but I can tell him from my recollection of my latest briefing from the Minister of Justice that we have of course signed the agreement with the DOTC, and we have numerous other agreements now in process of being negotiated.

With respect to our neighbouring Metis communities and policing, I would find it, just from probably the sheer weight of organization of trying to establish in some small communities equivalent policing authority, probably very difficult to do, just the logistics of it.

What makes the policing agreement work, in my opinion, is the fact that you have the tribal council system. You have a number of communities sharing in that central administration, setting standards, being able to move officers around, et cetera.

I do not think we would be able to do it given the size generally of the communities that we are responsible for, but that does not preclude at some point in time working agreements with neighbouring First Nations police forces to share in policing and maybe even sponsoring some members of the local Metis community, et cetera, into that tribal police.

His point is taken, and perhaps we can find a way to do it as these tribal police forces develop in Manitoba.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Chairperson, another area of concern that has been brought to our attention—and I know that this is primarily a federal issue, but I would like to ask the minister if he has taken any action since it was first raised more than a year ago, a couple of years ago, and that is on remoteness allowances for employees of community councils, and particularly it is not particular to the community of Gods Lake Narrows but indeed to other communities that are part of the NACC.

I would like to ask the minister whether he has intervened with the federal government as a correspondent with the federal government on the remoteness allowances.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, if the member for Rupertsland is speaking about a tax treatment by the federal government of dollars paid in the North, no, I have not communicated with him. If he is talking about the salaries we pay our own employees, I think we did have some increase last year in our budget for them.

We are certainly cognizant of the levels of our salaries to community council employees in relation to social allowance, the incentive, et cetera, issue and we struggle each year with our budgets to try to augment those salaries and will continue to do so.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Chairperson, another issue that was raised with us from the community of Bissett, and the minister and I have communicated on this matter now, is the property taxes that were assessed to some individuals in their community.

I would like to ask the minister as to the process of assessing property taxes in some of these communities, particularly Bissett.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, we do the assessment on property in Northern Affairs communities the same basis as is done across the province, a market-value assessment. I think there was a specific issue of a place the member and I have corresponded on, and there were some changes made in the rate of tax as opposed to the assessment.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Chairperson, there is a quick question I would like to ask on the Provincial Municipal Tax Sharing Program, otherwise known as the unconditional grants system, to First Nations communities and also Northern Affairs communities.

The money, I understand, comes from the Department of Finance, is given to Rural Development and then to Northern Affairs. The numbers that were authorized by Order-in-Council to Rural Development are less than what Northern Affairs says it did receive

from Rural Development in their annual report. The shortfall seems to add up to about \$80,000 from the year 1988.

I would like to ask the minister, I would like to get an explanation as to this imbalance.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, I believe this question flows from a similar one in the House the other day to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) with respect to First Nations.

* (2240)

I look to the member for Rupertsland if that was the gist of the difference between the populations that the community says it has and the amount paid to those communities. I can tell him this was an issue that was brought to my attention when I first became minister. I know a number of First Nations have raised it with me.

The numbers that are used for the distribution of those tax-share dollars are the numbers of the last Canada census, so we have appealed from time to time on certain communities in terms of the way the census was done, but very rarely. This is a problem that happens everywhere, but more so in northern Manitoba.

I think just by the nature of people being out of communities, et cetera, at census time, that the numbers always seem to be lower than what the community says its population is. It is particularly true with bands, where their band list will be a certain size and their census will be considerably lower.

We use those numbers because they are the basis on which the federal government makes its transfers, et cetera, to the province, so the census number, although not always accurate, is the one consistent number that is used by all governments in terms of making these transfers to other entities.

It has led to a lot of confusion and a lot of problems, and I guess I do not know another way in which to do it. If the census is wrong, we lose considerably as a province.

All I can suggest is that we all have some responsibility the next census to ensure that we put a little more effort in our communities in making sure we get people recorded, because it does mean money both to us as a province and to those communities individually. I believe that the genesis of the problem that the member has raised is the difference between what people think the number is in their community and what actually is recorded on the census.

Mr. Robinson: It is an issue that we could probably talk about all night, but I know that we have to move on to other areas. There are indeed some concerns with respect to the unconditional grant system currently being used in this province, Mr. Chairperson, and I raise it because it was raised with me by the constituents that I represent.

I would like to ask about—and this is something that I raised in the last process of Estimates that we went through—the urban aboriginal strategy. In 1988-89 there was an extensive consultation process undertaken with the aboriginal organizations in the city of Winnipeg. Some 79 consultation meetings were held with organizations in the city of Winnipeg in developing an urban aboriginal strategy and this government issued a draft Memorandum of Understanding on addressing the Indian and Metis situation in the city of Winnipeg.

I am just wondering if the minister, with the new mandate that he and his government have received, will do something in trying to address the long-standing issues faced by off-reserve Indians in the city of Winnipeg and also, overall, aboriginal people as the broader term is now used. I am wondering if he has given that any consideration since his new mandate and his government's new mandate.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, this is an area where I am sure the member for Rupertsland and I could have an interesting and I think mutually informative discussion for several hours.

Since the new mandate it is an issue that I certainly want to address with some thought. I have mixed feelings on approaches that have been tried in the past. One thing that is for certain as one looks at census data

and others—and we just spoke about census data—is year by year people from isolated communities, whether they be northern and aboriginal or nonaboriginal and southern, have been voting with their feet in moving into urban areas, whether they be at Dauphin, Brandon, Winnipeg, Thompson. With that comes a host of difficulties and challenges for them, whether it be access to education, housing, opportunity, they come, I believe, to look for a better life and more opportunity for them and their families.

With each generation that passes or each generation that comes forward, we seem to see success and advancement and people move into the mainstream of society and have lives where they are full contributors to society. How do we ease that? How do we deal with some of those difficulties? How we accommodate those needs is obviously a great challenge to all of us. I do know, Mr. Chair, as I look at some of the traditional methods that governments have used, such as developing a host of programming and bureaucracies to support it, they have not always been successful. Sometimes they have—I hate to generalize—but many times they have not been.

I am not sure where we are going to be or where we have to be, and I do not want for a moment to pretend that I have any or all of the answers certainly. But over the next number of months, as I settle in in the beginning part of this mandate, that is an area that I want to have a very fresh look at about some of the things we can be doing. I do not believe that they have to be dramatic or necessarily put into a grand program that we as politicians love to announce from time to time.

I think probably some of the most solid things that can be done are already happening, things like the Children of the Earth school, we have seen such a good success with that or at least apparently so. As we see more aboriginal people take up jobs, become trained for positions, begin businesses, we see the successes there. How do we see more people work their way through to those successes?

Over the next number of months, as I sit down and figure out where I want to advise the government that we should be going in this area, I would welcome most

sincerely the comments and advice of the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson). I know his colleague the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) is very much interested in this area.

Perhaps we can sit down come the early fall or when we return to this place in September and have some lengthy discussions about this and share some thoughts and ideas. I would make that invitation to the member.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Chairperson, I do welcome that invitation, and I will look forward to it when we come back here in the fall.

* (2250)

I believe it is an issue that we all have to address. I think it is an issue that knows no partisan politics. I believe it is an issue that has to be dealt with, a critical situation. I think seeing aboriginal people in soup lines and a high proportion of them in jails, I think that collectively as members and as responsible people we have to begin addressing this issue. I thank the minister for his comments with respect to the urban aboriginal strategy.

Another very important issue that I would like to ask the minister, Mr. Chairperson, is the potential all-weather road that the Norwin company has been talking about. The Norwin company, of course, is primarily the southeast regional development corporation chiefs and the member First Nations of that company.

The possibility of an all-weather road, I know that the minister does have some influence within his cabinet with respect to the development of that, and I know that the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) was talking somewhat to some degree on the potential of improving the road situation in northern Manitoba.

In this case, I am talking about an area where we do not have a road, but there is indeed the potential there, an all-weather road. Over a period of time, I think that it is entirely possible through cost-sharing arrangements with the federal government and with the First Nations and with the provincial government that such things could be achievable.

I would like to ask the minister's opinion on the all-weather road along the southeast side of Lake Winnipeg. I know there is a road that was previously built, I believe 18 miles this side of Bloodvein, and the potential is there.

I want to get the minister's ideas on what he feels is possible in beginning dialogue seriously with the Norwin organization on the possibility of an all-weather road along the southeast side of Lake Winnipeg.

Mr. Praznik: I thank the member for Rupertsland for this question. He and I sharing a common boundary in a part of a common region, both I think have an interest in seeing a road inevitably push its way up along the east side of the lake in the future.

Whenever one is asked this kind of question on a very significant matter of policy, significant because of the dollars attached to it no doubt, and the minister uses the opportunity late in the evening to muse a little bit about his thoughts, one does not know if one is just adding to the long history of rhetoric about a road or one is a visionary who, in a few short years, well, people will point to this moment and say it was laid out this night in the Legislature.

What we do know today is that there are a number of players who have an interest in seeing a road constructed and either are spending money today on some degree of road construction or are suffering the consequences of not having a road and very high freighting costs.

We know that we have the Pine Falls paper company who every year spend several hundreds of thousands of dollars on pushing road systems up resource roads.

We know that Manitoba Hydro has an interest in some road access in that area to service its transmission facilities and its generating facilities in isolated communities.

We know, as well, that the First Nations in those areas represented by the Southeast Resource Development Council have an interest in reducing their freighting costs, so they have a block of money that

they spend in high freighting costs. If all or a portion of it were to become available for road construction, again, it would be another source of dollars.

How one puts all of those dollars today that are being spent, whether it be by Hydro in serving its installations, Pine Falls Paper Company in the expenditure it is already making, Southeast Resource tribal Council, our Northern Affairs communities that are in there, our winter roads program—how we bring those together and what mechanism we use that we see year by year, bit by bit those resources being available, to advance at least a resource road up the coast of the lake is an issue that this ministry is going to have to explore in the next number of months.

I can tell the member, as I am sure he is already aware from his constituents, that there have been discussions among those parties. I suspect that sometime within the next number of months some proposal could find its way to government between them with a proposal how this can be done with the kind of resources that is currently being spent. I am impressed with the kind of co-operation I have seen to date in some of the preliminary discussions those groups have had, and I would hope that in the not-too-distant future they could come forward with a financially feasible proposal that makes this happen. Certainly, the mining incentives that we are creating in exploration and other things that are possible add to the viability of that kind of road.

I sincerely hope that the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) and the member for Lac du Bonnet can some day, in the not-too-distant future, share a platform at the kick-off or the completion of such an endeavour. I do hope Mr. Robinson and Mr. Praznik are the two sitting members.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Chairperson, I know that in the earlier comments of the minister and the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) with respect to the responsibilities of this minister over 56 communities and roughly 10,000 people throughout northern Manitoba—and I know that I have heard about the progress that has been made in Brochet. I have heard it I think more than once, I am quite sure of it. I would like to know that—just about every community has

raised the issue of basic needs that almost all Canadians, I think, take for granted: sewer and water, going to the bathroom in relatively warm weather as opposed to going outside in 40 below weather. I think that members in our caucus definitely were raised in that sort of environment. We are also very familiar with the problems in the urban environment as well.

There are a lot of needs in northern Manitoba with respect to sewer and water, catching up with the rest of the world, so to speak, with respect to the conditions that many northerners have to live with every day, and particularly aboriginal people. What course of action or what plan of action has this minister considered to begin the process? I know it is a long process. It is a very hard process. I know in the early '70s we did make some dent into some of the needs that were required in northern communities. I am just wondering what sort of long-term plan of action there is by the minister with respect to dealing with these outstanding issues in northern communities.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, obviously, in terms of responsibility, the First Nations communities, as the member is very well aware, are involved in the dismantling process, control of capital budgets. Obviously, part of that is the ability to address many of those infrastructure needs.

Over the last few years, just to give you an example, I have mentioned Brochet. We have spent a fair bit of money on water and sewer projects there. South Indian Lake has been another where we have spent dollars in the North; Easterville, a community where we last year put in a sewage treatment plant. The list goes on over the years with that budget.

My plan as minister with the department—and this is why we are into this new capital program. Obviously basic infrastructure like potable water to the house and decent sewage disposal are going to rank as the highest priorities. We are hoping through that program over a number of years we will be able to address in our 56 communities where that need exists, the sewer and water infrastructure needs of those communities.

When I was in Brochet—I speak a lot about Brochet because I enjoyed my experience there so much. To

see, for those of us who grew up in the South, I can remember 1966, when my great uncle got running water in the house and gave up his cistern and the outhouse. I was five years old and that was a big deal. It was hard to appreciate, as you who are northern members see more regularly when you get into a community like Brochet and you are taken into people's homes, just absolutely spotless. They are so proud to have you in there, and the big thrill is to turn on that tap of water. "We take that for granted every day.

* (2300)

As a society we spend a lot of money on different things. I hope with my limited resources in this department that we are going to be able to ensure that we have clean running water and appropriate sewage disposal systems in the communities that I am responsible for.

The member asked me earlier about my objectives in a renewed mandate. The completion of our significant water and sewer projects in our Northern Affairs communities would be one of my prime goals over the next four years, four and a half years of this mandate.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Chairperson, the budget of the department has gone down from \$26.5 million in 1987 to \$18,481,000 last year and then this year to \$17,771,000.

I believe that the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) did say that he did have some concerns as to whether or not we can deliver in being able to address the many needs of northern Manitoba to catch up with the rest of the world, as I said in my comments prior to the question that I asked with respect to the minister's objectives in his new mandate.

There has been no change from what we understand in regional services or grants. The Selkirk region, as we understand it, has lost a job when the budget was announced in March of this year. The \$100,000 for corporate projects I understand has also been terminated. The Northern Flood program was cut by \$430,000 to over \$1,230,000. I am grateful that we do have a Native Affairs Secretariat, but I guess, like the member for The Pas, I would like to see that given

more meat, so to speak, particularly in this time of the dismantling and huge undertaking by First Nations in this province. I would urge the minister to consider that suggestion in a time to come that the Native Secretariat have a much more meaningful role within the Department of Northern and Native Affairs. As I understand it, there have been no increases in capital expenditures for Northern Communities and Community Access and Resource Roads.

Mr. Chairperson, I just want to conclude my comments by thanking the staff of the Department of Northern Affairs. We did not have the opportunity of giving our welcoming remarks, but I do thank the staff for the help that they provide and as well to the minister for the help that he—give Harvey a raise definitely—and the other staff that are not here tonight.

I am bound by tradition to always acknowledge the efforts, whether or not they are to my liking or not, of people who do work for the good of people in this province. I think that we are here for a common purpose, the way we share our constructive criticism, although sometimes it is not viewed as such. But I think that particularly as aboriginal people we are like that anyway by nature. So thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Praznik: I would like to thank the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) for his comments. I always enjoy this part of my Estimates with him and the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin). I enjoy our discussions immensely. The member may not believe this, but I do from time to time gather information and comment from him which I find very useful carrying out my work and appreciate his advice.

I just want to indicate to him that, despite the reduction in the overall budget of the department, the capital budget has remained consistent or has grown somewhat over the last number of years despite the general budgetary restraint of the province.

Some of the issues that he has referred to where there have been reductions have to do with completion of negotiating certain segments of the Northern Flood, moving to a comprehensive settlement instead of claim by claim, which is much more efficient and cost-effective, et cetera.

It is not always fair to judge a department by its total expenditure but rather where it is being spent. This department, as I pointed out earlier to the member for The Pas, has some very significant portions which at some point in the very near future I hope will end, Northern Flood and Treaty Land Entitlement being the case. When those are resolved there will no longer be a need to maintain staff and spend dollars in those particular areas. When that happens our budget of course will go down, but I think all will hail that as a good thing.

With respect to the Native Affairs Secretariat, I cannot think of a more significant player to have in charge of that department than a former minister of the provincial government. I say to the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) the current occupant of that directorate, the director, Mr. Harvey Bostrom, bridges both the current member for Rupertsland and myself in that he is a former member for Rupertsland when it included parts of the Lac du Bonnet constituency and parts of the current Rupertsland constituency.

He knows our respective areas very well, and he was a very able member of the cabinet of this province and certainly a very high-profile member of the administration of this department.

I say this today very proudly, that I am very honoured to have Mr. Bostrom as one of our staff. Mr. Bostrom is a very capable individual, as I said, and I think very effective in working on the issues that we have to address.

I am very glad to have him here. I know he shares part of the world with the current member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) and myself. We know him well, and I cannot think of a more prominent individual to have in that particular position.

So I thank the current member for Rupertsland for his comments.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: Item 2.(a) Financial and Administrative Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$382,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$113,700—pass.

2.(b) Program and Operational Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$233,700—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$90,600—pass; (3) Community Operations \$5,040,800—pass; (4) Regional Services \$692,300—pass; (5) Grants \$258,900—pass.

2.(c) Thompson Region (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$459,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$167,400—pass.

2.(d) The Pas Region (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$238,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$101,100—pass.

2.(e) Dauphin Region (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$404,700—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$116,600—pass.

2.(f) Selkirk Region (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$357,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$148,100—pass.

2.(g) Technical Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$308,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$100,100—pass.

2.(h) Northern Affairs Fund (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$325,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$58,000—pass.

2.(j) Inter-Regional Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$352,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$82,900—pass.

2.(k) Northern Co-ordination Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$517,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$163,400—pass; (3) Corporate Projects, no amount.

2.(m) Northern Flood Agreement (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$113,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$24,500—pass; (3) Northern Flood Program \$1,230,000—pass.

2.(n) Native Affairs Secretariat (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$458,500—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$137,300—pass; (3) Aboriginal Development Program \$637,600—pass.

2.(p) Communities Economic Development Fund
\$1,434,100—pass.

* (2310)

Resolution 19.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$14,748,500 for Northern Affairs, Northern Affairs Operations, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

Item 3. Expenditures Related to Capital (a) Northern Communities \$2,379,600—pass;(b) Community Access and Resource Roads \$ 235,000—pass.

Resolution 19.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,614,600 for the Northern Affairs, Expenditures Related to Capital, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

The last item to be considered for the Estimates of the Department of Northern Affairs is item 1.(a) Minister's Salary. At this point we request that the minister's staff leave the table for the consideration of this item.

19.1(a) Minister's Salary \$11,400.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Chairman, when we first got going here earlier I got totally muddled up in where I was supposed to go. I know that the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) and the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) asked several questions. I know that the member for Swan River asked questions on treaty land entitlement.

I wonder if I can ask the minister at least one question on treaty land entitlement and ask him to bring us up to date as to where the treaty land entitlement negotiations are?

I know that earlier he described a process that is being followed by the TLE chiefs committee and his department and the federal government. But I would like to nevertheless ask him to perhaps bring us up to date on how many bands, and has land been set aside by the province? That is part of the process. If that has been done, when does he think that these negotiations will be completed?

In addition to that, I would also like to ask him whether he has been in communication with the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger) when the provincial parks were designated in the northern part of the province, because although there is treaty land entitlement activity going on in the South, for the most part I think the activity in regards to treaty land entitlement work will be happening in the North. Therefore, I am interested in getting some sort of an indication from the minister as to whether the designation of provincial parks are in fact conflicting with the direction that has been set by the TLE chiefs, the province of Manitoba, as well as Canada.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, I thank the member for The Pas for this question, a very important area.

First, just by way of background, the province's responsibility and obligations flow solely in law from The 1930 Natural Resources Transfer Act in which is contained provision that the province, in receiving federal Crown lands, must make available to the federal Crown such unoccupied or unencumbered Crown lands—I believe it is unencumbered Crown lands—as is agreed upon for the federal Crown to meet its obligations for unresolved claims for land by various bands arising from treaty.

Our obligation is not to the bands per se but to the federal government. We have a double bilateral process where the treaty land chiefs and the federal government are at the table negotiating the specifics, and we are at the table, too, with the federal government. That process has worked reasonably well.

To date, outside of that treaty land chiefs' table, a number of communities with claims have negotiated outside of that table. The four communities, or First Nations, at Island Lake have concluded an agreement a year or so ago.

I recently had a meeting with their representatives, and I believe they have completed some 90 percent-plus of their land selections both for the acreage they are entitled to under TLE and the additional 100,000 acres that the province has agreed to sell in fee simple at \$25 an acre. That was an option under the agreement. There has been some slowness in working

that entirely through the process. We hope to have that done over the next couple of months where we can take that to cabinet as we get down to the final selections.

Long Plain signed their agreement with the federal government. Because there was no provincial land directly involved, the province was less a participant in that, but Long Plain is done. I believe Swan Lake is also the community that is just completed. We gave our approval, and we should be into a signing ceremony there early in the summer. So those six communities are done. There are approximately 20-some other communities represented by the TLE chiefs.

The issue, or the crux of issue, that the member for The Pas raises is availability of unencumbered Crown land to meet the federal government's obligation. What we have indicated that we are prepared to do, and, again, there are a lot of processes at play here, but we have indicated to the treaty land chiefs and to the federal government that we are prepared to create, as a province, interim protection zones with criteria attached to them. We have made that offer to the TLE chiefs that if they could identify—not entirely all, but about 90 percent of, we would expect about 90 percent of their entitlement to be chosen from these areas.

We have established some guidelines around them—two for one acres. For every acre to which they are entitled, we would set aside two, some continuity to the First Nation community. We have asked that they give us their proposals for those zones by the 30th of September. I must take each back to cabinet for specific approval.

If we are in agreement on those interim protection zones, and there are not encumbrances, et cetera, in them, we would be prepared to set them aside for a period of two years to be available for settlement of those issues. In this way, we would have clearly defined some boundaries on land in which the province would no longer place encumbrances for that period, so that it is available for settlement, and then we would know the area that is outside of these zones where we could carry on the regular business of the province.

If the communities do not wish to avail themselves of that method of giving some certainty to availability of

the land, well, then we are on the current course which is one, from time to time, there are going to be conflicts between people wanting to do things on Crown land or wishing Crown land or current encumbrances. I hope that most communities will avail themselves of this zone.

* (2320)

With respect to the parks that you asked the question, I know that the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger) and his staff had written to neighbouring First Nations about the parks on some issues with the parks. Perhaps, those letters were not as clear as some would have wanted them to be. I know when the issue was raised with me as minister, I looked at the area where the parks were being created and the First Nations communities in the vicinity who had land claims and we did some from checking to see the size of the claims and how close some of them get to the parks.

In all of the cases, the areas designated for the parks were fairly distant from the area that would be likely available for Treaty Land Entitlement, but I think the point those chiefs were making was one of principle. I certainly respect that principle, but I must make a fundamental point that when the parks were created they were created with the caveat that if, by chance, the Treaty Land Entitlement areas came within their boundary that the area would be removed from those parks to satisfy Treaty Land Entitlement.

Mr. Lathlin: One last quick question, Mr. Chairperson, and that is sometime in February or March—I was not given this directly but I certainly got the impression from Norway House First Nations that Northern Flood negotiations might be close to coming to a conclusion. Then in February or March there was some anticipation and then all of a sudden there was nothing.

I am just wondering if the minister is aware of why after all that anticipation that an agreement was on the horizon when all of a sudden there was nothing.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, the intricacies at the negotiating table on Northern Flood continue to amaze

and puzzle me from time to time as all of us who have watched this and many who have grown old watching it will probably note. I notice the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) had more hair when he started this business than he has today.

With respect to Norway House, one of the difficulties that has been there—and I am sure the member for The Pas will appreciate—that over the last year or so there has been an ongoing dispute between the chief and councillors and that has added somewhat to the process because the chief has, on occasion, raised issues and been at odds with the councillors and that has caused some concern. My understanding is that over the last while that things are still progressing.

I would expect, although Nelson House and York Landing are likely to be settled earlier, that Norway House is on, I believe, a positive road to settlement in the not-too-distant future. I only wonder how many other ministers have said this at this table only to find five or 10 years later we were still dealing with this issue, but I would hope that it will be settled. [interjection] Yes, be settled on a fast basis.

The only one of those negotiations that currently is not back at the table but deciding how to get back to the table is Cross Lake. All the others seem to be moving ahead positively.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the minister one or two questions this evening.

Last Friday in Question Period the minister was reading a copy of a new book out by Sheila Jones Morrison called *Rotten to the Core*. I see he has a copy with him for easy reference. Perhaps he may want to take advantage of that. I would like to know what action the minister has taken as a result of reading this book.

Mr. Praznik: I have not finished the book yet. I am glad the member has noticed that I am reading. I notice the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) issued a press release before the book was even issued, so one has to wonder whether or not the member has himself read the book cover to cover. I am sure he

would enjoy particularly the early chapters and the political history of the MMF and its relationship to the party of which he is a member.

Having said that, I think the crux of the issue that he raises is the relationship or the concern raised by the auditor's report, the Deloitte and Touche report, which has been discussed in the *Free Press*. I can tell the member for Elmwood that during the interim period when, as the member knows—and I know his Leader, Mr. Doer, and I had some discussions about that when we were both at The Pas at the Trappers Festival and in the House.

There was certainly a recognition that there were two warring factions within the organization. A great concern was being raised, in fact, even with me, by an individual who sought the nomination for the member for Elmwood's party in the Flin Flon constituency. She raised with me a host of concerns about the interim board and its executive director, who, I understand, was the member for Elmwood's candidate in Ste. Rose in this recent election, about the way things were being handled on the interim board.

What I did as minister at that particular time was that I had a number of discussions which are referenced in the book, not entirely accurately, with representatives of the interim board. What the book is missing because the author never bothered to ask, quite frankly, was what I think is some important information. One is the letter which I provided to the interim board on March 31, 1994, in which I was prepared to pay to the interim board the annual grants. The MMF and I imposed a number of, I believe, reasonable conditions to ensure that the money was used for its intended purposes, which were staff salaries, building costs, accounting fees, costs of the elections, et cetera. The interim board, of which Mr. Shreyer, Ms. Szwaluk, and, I think it was, Mr. Wiebe—I may have the name wrong—were members, said that they were not prepared to accept those fairly reasonable conditions, so the money did not flow.

Following the completion of the election, and it was obvious that the MMF had a significant constituency, several thousands of people casting ballots, and there were no irregularities in the election or things that

would void the election, I forwarded the quarterly operating grants for the next fiscal year that were due the day after the election. They were received by Mr. Morriseau, who is still the executive director of the organization, despite the accusation in the book or the inference that somehow they were being sent to Mr. Delaronde because he won the election. That is not true. They went to Mr. Morriseau. I would remind him that Mr. Morriseau, I believe, was his party's candidate in the Ste. Rose constituency in the last election. So the money did flow.

We also had a number of meetings between members of my department with the interim board and discussions with the new board that was elected respecting the Deloitte and Touche audit and discussing the changes that had to be made in their flow of accounting procedures, et cetera. The staff who were in charge of this in my department were satisfied that the proper steps were going to be taken to ensure that those items were corrected. They have been in contact from time to time, and we are awaiting, of course, this year's audited statements.

If the new management, the new executive of the organization, have not taken significant steps to improve the shortcomings that were highlighted, then obviously we will have to look at whether or not we continue to fund. If the organization has made its significant improvements and met the auditor's report, that is a different story, and I would hope that they have in fact done that.

And, as I have said, members of our department, both with the interim board and immediately following the election, held those meetings and have satisfied themselves, and the advice that they have offered me as minister is that those items are being corrected.

* (2330)

Mr. Maloway: I thank the minister for the answer. According to the book, the minister handed over cheques totalling over \$230,000 the day after the election, for the Manitoba Metis Federation president. Can the minister confirm that he approved such cheques for \$140,000 and \$98,300 the day after that election?

Mr. Praznik: Well, I do not have the exact amounts. Obviously the member has waited until my staff have departed for me to give him the exact amounts. What they received was the regular operating grant, which goes to them and which goes to other organizations that we fund.

I believe the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg, I think there is the Indigenous Women's Collective—are also two organizations that we fund. Their annual operating grant is paid in quarterly instalments, and when we got into the new fiscal year there was one—I think it was one or two that were due, I cannot remember exactly. I look to my staff. The interim board, who was in office up to the period of the election to conduct the election, had not agreed to accept the conditions that I imposed on those dollars.

And just so the member is aware what those conditions were, I had asked that the funds were to be deposited in the trust account of the board's solicitor, that the funds were to be used for the following expenditures only, and each expenditure was to be approved by the interim board, that being salary and benefit costs for regular MMF core program staff, mortgage payments, rents, utilities, maintenance costs for premises leased or owned by the MMF and the seven regional corporations, legal fees associated with the operations of the interim board, accounting and auditing fees associated with the operation of the interim board, fees or honorariums for the interim directors and the costs incurred by them in conducting the business of the MMF, and operational costs incurred in the conducting of the court-ordered election.

I also asked that the province be provided with an accounting of these funds, either upon request or following their total expenditure. With respect to tripartite, we wanted to ensure that those dollars, again, were dealing with the specific issues.

Those were the conditions under which I would have paid the regular quarterly instalment to the interim board. They did not accept those conditions. At that particular time there was a fair bit of accusation being made about one side or another, how money was being spent by the interim board or the executive director. In

fact, the member's leader and I had a discussion about this in The Pas that winter, and we both recognized, if I recall correctly, that there was a dispute and no one should be in the middle, nor should funds be perceived to be being used by one side or the other.

Immediately following the election, when the issue was resolved as to who the leadership of the MMF would be, we forwarded the two quarterly payments, I believe, and the appropriate quarterly payments on the tripartite funding to the MMF offices, and they were received by their acting director, Mr. Morriveau, because the issue as to who the governance of the MMF was settled by the election and the interim board would shortly be turning itself over to the new governance. So it was an appropriate time to send the dollars. In fact, they were somewhat late because they were not accepted by the interim board. So the allegations, or the way they are written in the book, I do not think are quite accurate.

Mr. Maloway: What legal advice, what sort of legal advice did he get before he issued these cheques? Presumably, given the situation, he would have had some sort of legal advice.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, I am not sure what the member is getting at. We had an obligation and the approval of our Estimates, which were voted on by this committee, that there was, in effect, an operating grant and tripartite funding to the MMF. I do not recall any members of this assembly moving to delete those items from my budget. That organization, to some degree, once those approvals, have some reliance upon those particular grants.

Our concern was, because of the nature of any major internecine fight in an organization, until it is settled at the ballot box, that there has to be some, I think, tight controls to ensure that one side or another is not perceived or, in fact, using those dollars to further their cause in the election campaign. Those are the reasons why we imposed those conditions upon the interim board.

After a discussion with my colleagues in cabinet, and once the election was over, the governance issue was settled and so the dollars were forwarded per the

regular process as allotted by this legislature and this committee and approved by the legislature of Manitoba.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Chairman, this is from the same government that in 1993 withdrew all the financial support to both the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and MKO along with Indian and Metis Friendship Centres.

I would like to ask this minister to explain why his government withdrew all the funding from these organizations but continued to financially support the MMF.

Mr. Praznik: Again, the member forgets to also mention that we continued to support the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg and the Indigenous Women's Collective. I was not minister at the time that those decisions were made, so I cannot answer directly as to the reason behind them.

I know in those particular years there were, if I have the information here with me, there were a host of organizations where either funding was eliminated, advocacy organizations where funding was eliminated or reduced.

The Native Affairs area also had reductions in its budget like most others and, if I recall correctly from the discussion that took place at the time, there was a sense that in terms of aboriginal issues, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and MKO were organizations whose prime area of discussion and advocacy was with the federal government and that in terms of priorities of a provincial administration, since Metis issues and Metis people are within the jurisdiction of the province, that the funding that was available would go to the MMF as opposed to organizations that represented Status people dealing with the federal government.

We also maintained the aboriginal Women's Collective because it was felt, I believe, that they were dealing with issues relating to women with the provincial government and also the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg because of their representation of aboriginal people in the urban scene with the provincial government. So, I think the member's questions have to be put into that context, the proper context.

Mr. Maloway: I would like to ask the minister whether he has read the Deloitte and Touche audit of the MMF.

Mr. Praznik: Yes, I have read the accompanying letter that outlines from Deloitte and Touche, a review of their report which highlights some of the inadequacies in their structure and makes recommendations. I also understand that our financial staff and my staff, who is assigned to dealing with the MMF, have reviewed the report. When that report was issued, following that report, our staff met with the interim board at the time. I believe we had three senior staff attend that meeting, including the Director of the Native Affairs secretariat. They had discussions with the interim board and the executive director about the shortcomings in that report.

* (2340)

My understanding is that report does not highlight or make accusations of wrongdoing but of shortcomings in accounting processes and procedures, if my recollection of my briefing is correct, and as the member appreciates I do not have staff here with me who are more familiar with the specifics. There were discussions with the interim board that led to commitments on how the organization was going to attempt to achieve, to meet those recommendations of Deloitte and Touche. Following the election and the decision by the MMF membership as to who would be its governance, discussions I understand were held with the new board, and the staff that I have to entrust with this responsibility were satisfied that the board was taking the steps that were necessary to meet the shortcomings and problems that were outlined in that report.

Ultimately, the test of that will be when we receive this year's audited financial statements, which are a requirement of the grant. I spoke with our staff, Mr. Morrisseau, who is the main contact here, and he expects that report sometime within the next 30 days. That will tell us whether or not, in fact, all of those recommendations have been met.

Mr. Maloway: I am interested in knowing what efforts this minister has taken to deal with the

irregularities that were outlined in the Deloitte and Touche audit, and they ranged from double-billed expenses, unauthorized expenses and salaries. I know the minister—I will let the minister answer the question.

Mr. Praznik: I think, first of all when they came to light, our department, the staff of the Department of Northern and Native Affairs is certainly on the ball on these issues. As I have outlined earlier, they endeavoured to meet with the interim board to discuss this report and the specifics. The interim board, I think, recognized that there were problems and were endeavouring to work them out in their reporting relationships.

My understanding in discussions I have had with MMF executive members from that time was that the genesis of these problems stemmed from a move to decentralize decision-making in budget and operations within the MMF from their central office to their regional offices and that proper accounting procedures and the like were not necessarily put in place to allow for that kind of accounting responsibility.

The interim board, I think, recognized that, once the report was out, and they were endeavouring to remember at that particular time they virtually shut down all of those regional operations as they worked out those relationships. I know one member for The Pas region, who members opposite are very familiar with and who was a candidate for nomination for a northern seat and whom I have a great deal of respect for, was raising many of those issues and concerns about the fact that the regional office was shut down.

Having said that, the interim board endeavoured to, I believe from the information I have, put in proper procedures. The new board when they assumed office, we were assured—and our staff monitor this as best they can. We are endeavouring to do that. The ultimate test as to whether or not those undertakings given to us are met will be this year's audited statement for the previous fiscal year.

If they have not been met, then obviously the department is going to have to review its continued funding even for this year. If they have been, well, that is obviously a different story. Then the problems that

the member for Elmwood is concerned about, just like anyone else should be, then have been rectified.

Mr. Maloway: I would like to know what efforts the minister has taken to recover some of the money which, according to Deloitte & Touche, was documented at at least \$18,000 and likely more than that. What efforts has the minister taken to recover some of this money?

Mr. Praznik: First of all, one has to appreciate that the MMF budget, which is, I think, significantly over \$1 million, has a small percentage, a relatively small percentage composed of our provincial core funding. Consequently, when these things happen, the question for us is whether or not we continue to provide our funding to an organization if it is unable to have proper accountability and proper processes and has difficulty in its flow, or if there is wrongdoing. Ultimately, I understand that the responsibility of the organization, the interim board, the new board, as to recovering these monies, is to ensure that they are recovered for the benefit of the organization.

I think the member will recall, over the last year or so, the MMF has been working at cleaning up its financial situation. I think the member will be aware that there have been issues that have been settled and cleaned up with respect to expenses, and dollars returned, and proper tax being paid, et cetera, as these have been sorted out.

The question for us this year when we receive the audited financial statement is, has the MMF been successful in recovering any double charges or overpayments, et cetera, that were made? If not, why not? Those are questions we will answer. We have given them a period of time in which to clean up their operation, and we will know very shortly, when we receive that audited report, whether or not they have done that.

Mr. Maloway: Has the minister employed or used any forensic accountants or forensic accounting methods in this case?

Mr. Praznik: First of all, we have to appreciate the time frame in which events occur. I would appreciate that the premise for many of the member's questions

arise from this particular book that was released last week. The auditor's report is over a year old. I know that members of the party had access to that report like anyone else. I do not recall these specific questions coming at another time.

This book raises a host of questions about the funding of advocacy organizations in general anyway, and it has some specifics, as I have indicated to him. Some of the references to myself in this book and to some of my colleagues who were never asked about them, or given an opportunity to provide any other information, are not always accurate, or they tend to, I should say, omit some very relevant facts. So I gather his questions arise with respect to forensic audits, et cetera, out of this book which has only recently, as I said, been released.

The Deloitte & Touche report did not in itself, from the briefing I have had from my staff who have been working with this, raise with them the need to be requesting anyone to do a forensic audit. They, I understand, in examining that report, and the advice they offered to me, was that their problems had to do with accounting, bookkeeping and processes in the way they were dealing with things and that they had recognized that and were endeavouring to correct them.

I should tell the honourable member that one of the major funders has been the Government of Canada, which even recently awarded a \$15,000 contract to the MMF with respect to doing intervener work on the application of Atomic Energy of Canada for their proposal of a system of dealing with long-term nuclear waste. Their people have been in contact as well with our staff, and they have not felt the need to do a forensic audit, I understand.

Revenue Canada has had some issues which have been public over the last year relating to the way that per diems and other things have been paid. They, in fact, have done work and have issued whatever notices or paper they have to to collect back taxes. There have been a fair number of governments and government agencies dealing here, and the need for a forensic audit has not at the current time been raised by any of those other parties nor have the staff that advise me made that suggestion.

I should just remind the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), although a great deal of public money through various governments is involved here, the fact of the matter is, the question for us—because we are not the only funder, nor is this a government agency, nor do we probably have the power to ask for a forensic audit. The choice we have to make is one as to whether or not we continue funding. It is up to the members of the MMF to seek that or an agency that is concerned and has some power with which to do that.

* (2350)

Because the issue has not been raised with me, no one has pointed to a particular legal provision that I would have to require a forensic audit. So it does create a bit of a problem if one were to proceed with it.

The real question becomes, is one satisfied enough that things have been corrected that one will continue to fund?

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Chairman, it seems logical to me anyway that a forensic audit would be the logical route to take when there is a situation of unaccounted sums of money. I am surprised that the minister is telling me at this point that the department, if not only for its own purposes, has not embarked on forensic audits in this particular case or perhaps in others when it has found things amiss.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, perhaps the member for Elmwood and I have different views as to what a forensic audit is. We have the Deloitte and Touche audit of the MMF operations which flagged a host of problems, very specific problems, that the interim board was working to address and the new board has committed to address. My view and perhaps his are somewhat different. The current auditors had the power to go through and deal with all of these issues. The fact that the Deloitte and Touche audit flagged all of these issues, some very specifically, should point to the various problems that were there.

If the member for Elmwood has more information about wrongdoing, I am sure within the MMF as they review and clean up their books—and I understand that there was some court action or some concern or

seeking of an injunction by Mr. Delaronde when he was elected president before he was sworn in to deal with preservation of property, et cetera, which the court rejected, that there were not sufficient grounds.

I say to the member for Elmwood, we have an audit. We have a very good audit, and it has flagged or pointed out a host of inadequacies, some very specific. Those are being addressed. If the organization fails to address them and come to grips, then this government will have to certainly question and will no longer likely fund. If they fulfill the requirements and obligations of a proper audit, then they are certainly to be treated like any other organization.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Chairperson, clearly the government's current auditing procedures are not adequate. It seems to me that the minister in this particular case should have been looking at this much earlier. Certainly the fact that they have left it go this long I think makes it almost certain now that somebody will be conducting a forensic audit into the affairs of this particular organization.

I would like to ask the minister, how much money has been recovered as a result of provincial government action so far? What sort of efforts has he been taking to recover these bad-debt losses that were identified in the Deloitte and Touche audit?

Mr. Praznik: As I said, Mr. Chair, to the member for Elmwood, the bad debts or some of the issues that he flags are recoverable by the organizations from the people who owe the dollars. The new board has endeavoured to do that. We will see the results of their work over the past year when the next audit comes out.

If they as an organization are loaning money or losing money to their own members in an improper or unaccountable way, that is a matter they as an organization should be dealing on with the appropriate legal authority, and we as a government, if that is their practice, certainly have to question and likely remove their funding as it would be not appropriate.

They have undertaken to work through these problems over this last year. One has to appreciate that, in their election last year after a very divisive

period, they elected a new president and a board of directors who undertook to assess and clean up their financial inadequacies. I think it is only fair that we give them the opportunity to do it.

From the tenor of the member's questions, I get the impression that he is painting all the members of the MMF with the same brush, and he is saying as an organization that they are unable or should not be given an opportunity to meet the issues raised in the auditor's report.

Mr. Maloway: On the contrary, Mr. Minister, we have a situation where we have—

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable member, when you are making remarks, make your remarks through the Chair.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Chairman, the minister is well aware that we have asked questions about certain grants that have been made, where allegations have been made that a \$12,000 grant that was supposed to go to a rare birds sanctuary ended up for the purposes of building a road.

We are holding the province accountable here, and we want to know why the province has not done a forensic audit to find out exactly what has happened to that money. That is just one example that we want to discuss with the minister.

I would like to ask the minister whether he could table tonight a list of all the grants that have been given to the MMF under this government. I would like them broken down by the year and the amount, along with an explanation as to what the funds were allocated for and what the results were of each grant.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, first of all the member for Elmwood raises a question of some grants, and I was in the House when he asked the question about a Community Places Program. What I found most interesting was he raised, as this book does, the question of a grant for the purchase of land and building for the MMF regional headquarters in the Interlake and community hall. He raised it with great accusation that somehow my colleague, the member for

Lakeside (Mr. Enns), and this government had done some terrible thing. I think he played up somewhat on the way this same grant is referenced in this book, with again the author not even bothering to do, I would think, proper research to ask the government about this grant, because I can tell the honourable member for Elmwood, who comes to this issue with such certainty—if I may share a letter with the member for Elmwood.

It is regarding this exact grant. It says: An initial review of the Manitoba Community Places Program applications has been completed, and I am pleased to inform you that a Manitoba Community Places grant of up to \$50,000 has been tentatively approved to assist your organization with this \$109,000 project.

I am sure that you can appreciate that the program cannot formally approve your request for funding at this time. We are aware of and sensitive to the fact that organizations such as you are anxious to get underway. It is signed by the Honourable Judy Wasylycia-Leis, minister, on the 18th of April 1988.

The member for Elmwood, like the author of this book, came with a story with great intrigue about this terrible \$50,000 grant that his colleague who sat next to him in the Legislature had approved during a provincial general election campaign, no doubt to try and influence the people of that community to support her party.

I would suspect the Minister of Natural Resources has undertaken to the House to look at the other issue he raises about another particular grant. It may very well turn out to be similar to this one that the member raised, that there is no issue at all. I find it somewhat interesting that the member for Elmwood did not do his homework in checking out that particular grant.

With respect to funding to the MMF, I cannot say to the member that I can provide a list of every grant the MMF has received from any provincial department or agency. What I can do is provide a list of the core funding and tripartite funding that the MMF has received since it was incorporated as an organization in the 1970s, because I think if the member reads this book, which I hope he has done, I think if one looks

into the early days of the MMF you will see the reference to his party on many occasions.

I know now Metis Senator Ed Head making a comment about how his organization was all there for the New Democrats and, you know, had helped to get them elected and expected things in return.

I think if you look to the references to the 1981 election here you will find that the MMF, which was just about bankrupt at that time, was revived by the new Pawley government with very significant dollars.

Needless to say, if the member wants to look at these issues, I would be more than pleased to provide the complete history with respect to their core funding to the MMF over all those years. If the member wants to discuss the issues related to whether or not government should fund any advocacy organization, I would be more than pleased to have that debate with him.

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

An Honourable Member: Carry on tomorrow.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: Committee rise? Committee rise.

JUSTICE

* (2000)

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

We are on Resolution 4.1 Administration and Finance (b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits.

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): When we left for the supper break, we were talking about the Family Violence Court and we were pursuing a number of questions regarding whether there was in fact a Family

Violence Court in Brandon or not. We were talking about the role of the Crown attorneys.

I wondered if there are particular judges who are assigned to dealing with family violence cases in Brandon.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Chair, I am told that one judge in the Brandon area has been designated as the lead in the Family Violence Court, though I am told that the three judges, be your cases in Brandon, are all seen by members of the legal community and by those who participate in the Family Violence Court as being very interested and certainly willing, to my understanding, and happy to be there.

Mr. Mackintosh: What judge is so-called lead?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, Associate Chief Judge Giesbrecht is seen as the lead judge.

Mr. Mackintosh: Are family violence cases for all of Westman dealt with in the Brandon court?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, the cases are primarily ones which are brought forward by the Brandon Police Service, although the Women's Advocacy Program worker has been making contact with police services outside of the city of Brandon, and we will expect to see some of those cases coming to the Domestic Violence Court in the Brandon area.

Mr. Mackintosh: I am wondering if the minister can advise when the domestic violence day, as she calls it, takes place? In other words, is there a particular day of the week, or are there a certain number of days in a month? Can she somehow describe how often those days are scheduled?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, the Domestic Violence Court docket is usually scheduled approximately twice monthly in the Brandon Court area. There are not preset days.

It does depend, as was recommended in the committee which recommended it being set up, that there was to be—obviously, we had to look at

population and caseload. Caseload is usually two to three cases, and as I said, usually the hearing is about twice monthly.

Mr. Mackintosh: I wonder if my understanding is correct, that the Family Violence Court Implementation Committee is the organization that recommended how the Brandon unit should be established?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, yes, it was the Family Violence Court Implementation Committee, but for the Brandon area.

Mr. Mackintosh: So I take it then the composition of the committee was different with regard to the Brandon implementation?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, yes it was different from the Winnipeg committee, different people who sat on that, but it also was somewhat different in its make-up, as well, in terms of who was represented on the committee. I am told that there was a representative from the defence bar, not the individual named in the research that the member did from the defence bar who said, yes, there was a court, this was another person, and also representatives from the women's shelter. I believe it was a representative from the women's shelter in the Brandon area.

Mr. Mackintosh: Is there any fast-tracking of family violence cases in Brandon?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told that the in-custody cases can be seen within three weeks and the out-of-custody cases within four to six weeks.

Mr. Mackintosh: Without being familiar with the turnaround time in the Brandon courts, I just want to know whether domestic violence cases are fast-tracked in comparison to other types of offences.

* (2010)

Mrs. Vodrey: They are given a very high priority. I am not sure if that answers the member's question about where they are seen in relation to other cases, but I am told and can confirm from the information I hear

this evening that, yes, they are given a high priority. The time frame I have already provided to the member.

Mr. Mackintosh: The minister said that the Family Violence unit in Winnipeg was not really used as the model for Brandon, and she referred to the discreteness that had to be recognized. I am wondering if she could just elaborate on what she meant by discreteness.

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, I am happy to do that. I was referring to the distinctiveness of the area. It is a discrete geographical area, and there is a population to be considered, and that would, of course, be important in the setting of the dockets.

Mr. Mackintosh: Is there any pamphlet produced telling people about the Family Violence unit in Brandon?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told that there is no advertising per se, but the Women's Advocacy Program worker receives a list of the victims from the Brandon police service or police services which are co-operating. She writes to each of the victims and advises the victims of the court and, I am told, has a personal contact with approximately 75 percent of those victims.

Mr. Mackintosh: Has there been any analysis of the workings of this Family Violence unit in the Brandon court?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, no, there has not been a formal outside analysis of the Brandon family court. However, I am told that the quick rate of cases progressing through the court is one way to look at its efficiency.

I am told by people who are very familiar with the court that participants have expressed satisfaction about its operation, and there have been few challenges to the decisions which have been brought down in that court.

Mr. Mackintosh: I wonder if the department has any documentation at all regarding the Family Violence Court procedures, an outline how it works, an estimation of the staff years appropriated to it.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, the member is asking if there is a specific document that outlines how the system works. There is not as of this time.

One of the reasons that there is not a formal document outlining exactly when the court sits and a great deal of detail about it for the public is that, I understand from the implementation committee that the community itself expressed some concerns about a great deal of publicity and formal information, because when someone was seen going to the courthouse on a certain day or at a certain time then members of a smaller community might be able to identify that person as a victim or make assumptions about what was happening in that person's life.

There was some concern that within a community of this size and with the number of cases there not be something which really spoke about the court very widely and in a great deal of detail.

I see the member looks somewhat concerned about that. That came from, as I am told, the implementation committee, who were dealing with the fact that this was a distinct geographical population area and obviously knew their community. That was accepted.

Now if the member is wanting to make a suggestion that something be put forward, I am happy to hear about that, but in his suggestion I would ask him to consider what members of the community have indicated themselves.

Mr. Mackintosh: My only comment is that whatever works best then fine, but from talking to concerned women in Brandon and given their lack of knowledge of such a court, I think it would be worthwhile for the women in particular of Brandon to know that a specialized, prioritized service is available in the community.

(Mr. Mike Radcliffe, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

It may be that the number of victims who come forward will increase because they will have more confidence in the judicial system in dealing with their challenges and their tragedies.

So that is my concern, but I will consider the comments of the minister. I mean, I am not sure if you can call this a family violence court or not really? I mean, it is a strange breed of cat. I certainly support the view that you do not just take what is in Winnipeg and dump it on another population with different characteristics and different needs.

I will reserve judgment on what I think about this, but I certainly would encourage the minister to do some review of the Family Violence Court or whatever it is in Brandon so that there will be some objective analysis as is being done in Winnipeg by Jane Ursel.

* (2020)

Quite frankly, I think the minister was as surprised as I was about the Family Violence Court in Brandon. I was just wondering though if the minister would comment as to whether the department has any plans to implement family violence units in other population centres in Manitoba as recommended by Pedlar?

Mrs. Vodrey: The member obviously is confused. Certainly I was well aware of and well aware of fully understanding how this court operates in Brandon. The confusion seems to be his. The confusion is his in being unable to understand anything that operates differently from his own experience in the city of Winnipeg.

He is a person who lives in the city of Winnipeg; his experience is the city of Winnipeg, and he has obviously had a great deal of trouble in our discussion getting his mind around the fact that a Family Violence Court operates in Brandon that operates according to the wishes and the system which is in place in the city of Brandon and according to the needs identified by the people of Brandon.

The hurdle in the understanding that such a court exists appears to be his and not mine, so I would like to make sure on the record that the difficulty in comprehension belongs to the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) and that the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) has been able to explain I hope to his satisfaction in this Estimates process how things are working.

He asks if there is any effort to expand this court further. I am happy to bring him up to date. The Director of Regional Prosecutions has written to our Crown attorneys in 1995, this year, and has asked that our Crown attorneys in various areas of the province sit down with a group of individuals who would work in such a court, the judges and the defence bar. He has now most recently written a follow-up letter to the information which has come back.

There is consideration by people who live in these various communities to look at setting up of Domestic Violence Courts in the areas of Thompson, The Pas, Portage la Prairie and Dauphin, so this is under consideration at this time.

Mr. Mackintosh: Just to respond to the minister's comments and just so her staff know full well where I am coming from, I rely for information on the minister's own report, the annual report. It says in there, and I quote: Based on the model of the Family Violence unit in Winnipeg, a Family Violence Court has been established in Brandon.

The information I have is that given by the minister's own department. Second of all, the minister knows full well that in Question Period last week I asked her twice if there was or was not a Family Violence Court in Brandon, to which she did not answer, which I take to be that she did not know. Otherwise I know, from other occasions in this House, she is more than happy to share her information with Manitobans.

I just want to move onto another issue—

Mrs. Vodrey: I just think it is important to have the opportunity to reply while we are on this question. Yes, I am pleased that our annual report does say based on the model. It does not say exactly the same as the model, it says based on the model.

Crown attorneys who are trained, judges who are participating, a day set aside to deal with those cases, and that is exactly what happened. But in fact it even dealt very much with its own area including people from the women's shelters who were on their implementation committee and members of the defence bar.

Mr. Acting Chair, let the member's misunderstanding be now corrected, exactly what was intended in that annual report, very literal and understanding and reading of the annual report by the member. I am very pleased to have had the time to provide him with the additional information so that now he understands the functioning and how we arrived at it.

Mr. Mackintosh: Is the minister telling the committee that she indeed was aware of a Family Violence unit in Brandon before the question was posed in Question Period?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, yes, let me just tell the member that obviously as Minister of Justice I do spend a great deal of time reviewing the work that is being done by all divisions of the Department of Justice and in the answer to that question made it clear to him exactly what was done with all our Crown attorneys, as a matter of fact.

Mr. Mackintosh: The Pedlar report also recommended that consideration be given to establishing a Family Violence unit in the Court of Queen's Bench, at least in Winnipeg. As we note from the information provided by the minister today in writing, there is no tracking of the number of Family Violence cases heard in that court. Based on that information and the questions from last go-round in Estimates on this issue, is the minister aware of any discussions ongoing to establish a Family Violence unit in Queen's Bench?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told that at the moment, though I understand that the Pedlar report asked that some consideration be given to a Family Violence unit in the Queen's Bench Court, volume does not really warrant moving ahead with such a unit at this time.

Mr. Mackintosh: The minister talks about volume, and yet in her answer to my question as to the number of domestic violence prosecutions in Court of Queen's Bench, she states that no statistics have been kept. What is the volume? Does she or does she not know what the volume is?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told that a recent research paper has indicated that 95 percent of criminal

cases in Manitoba are heard in the Provincial Court. So when the member asks about the statistics, that is one which we are relying on.

* (2030)

Mr. Mackintosh: In a media release in January of this year, our caucus pressed the government and made representations that the province should move bail hearings regarding family violence to the Family Violence Court. I am wondering if the minister has a response to that suggestion for the more effective and sensitive processing of bail applications?

I will explain that position. It has been my sense that we are seeing cases where an abuser is let go on conditions that have just been broken far too often, particularly conditions that seek to prevent violence. It is my thinking that if the Family Violence Court can hear these bail applications, rather than being heard in the usual course with other kinds of charges, that we will have a more responsive justice system. I am wondering if the minister could comment on that.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, as the member knows, the Criminal Code requires that the bail hearings occur within 24 hours. We are dealing with a compressed amount of time in which to make sure that this and all other cases are heard within the time frame which is required.

I think the member is also assuming that only the judges and only the Crown attorneys in the Domestic Violence Court are trained in that area or have received any additional supports and information. That is just not right. All of our Crown attorneys have received some training in the area of domestic violence, and the judiciary also—that is my understanding.

When we hold the bail hearings not in a specific Family Violence Court, we are still having Crown attorneys and judges deal with them who are also experienced in the area of family violence. The law is the same on release.

Is the member suggesting that people are released now and perhaps would not be released in a different kind of court? I am having trouble understanding

exactly what he is asking. When we have a system, which, I said, requires bail hearings within 24 hours, those hearings are conducted by people who have had training in the area of family violence. Is he suggesting something is happening through this release procedure now which is unlawful or which should not be happening?

Mr. Mackintosh: I think the whole argument and the whole rationale for Family Violence Court is there are to be different, more-specialized Crowns and judges. That is the whole argument. The minister has just turned it around saying, oh, everything is just pretty well the same. That is just not the case.

Yes, I think there would be a different outcome. I do not think we are getting an outcome that is good enough for the women of this province. I think we are seeing people that are being released who are very violent, who have records. I can bring cases to the minister.

I think more importantly, though, we are seeing people who are being rereleased on the conditions that they have just broken and using violence while on bail. Yes, I think there would be a difference, just as I believe the minister's predecessor believed that there would be a difference with the Family Violence Court in disposing of the charges at the trial.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am still having trouble understanding if the member thinks then that the judiciary is releasing now people who should not be released. With his nodding, my understanding is then that his issue is with the judiciary making releases which he believes would not be made in the Family Violence Court.

Our position is that, if we want to have those changes, then we need tougher bail laws. That has been a position that I have taken in the past around several different issues. The first one has been in the area of antistalking. The member has indicated kind of via others that he has been supportive. I have to tell you, Mr. Chair, I have never had a firm statement by the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) or any member of the NDP party on where they stand on tougher bail laws in the area of antistalking.

In looking at changes in the bail laws, I began with something very, very specific. I think it was a very specific issue which I think that the federal government, the Parliament of Canada is pressed to make some changes in now, particularly in favour of looking at the victim. Whether or not we are able to press the federal government to make wider changes than that in the area of domestic assaults, for instance, because that has been the follow-up question all the time, I do not know whether the federal government would do that.

I would be very interested in seeing them make further changes. I am pressing them to do that. I pressed them in March of '94. I pressed again in June of '94. I pressed again in January of '95. I have written letters in the meantime and just continue to ask the federal government to look at consideration for bail, particularly in the area of criminal harassment.

As I said, I have been asked if I would be willing to expand that position to domestic violence. Yes, I have said I am interested. I would be willing to look at it. Right now I need the co-operation of the federal government. I have started with something very specific, and so far I have had no co-operation from the federal government at all. In fact, from the federal Minister of Justice—and the member for St. Johns, I am sure, would be interested to know this, the federal Minister of Justice just said plain no. He said this was just too much work for lawyers, and he was not prepared to make this change. That was horrifying to the women who heard that.

I came back to Manitoba when the federal minister gave me that information, had a meeting with the heads of the women's shelters and other women's groups, because I thought that they should know the position of the federal Minister of Justice and that it was simply too much work to make a change in that area.

I do not support the federal minister. I continue to press for changes. Perhaps this is the way that we can achieve, if we both work together. Maybe this is the indication the member for St. Johns is trying to give me today through the Estimates process. I do not know. Perhaps he will say so very specifically that the changes in the bail laws are the way to go.

In terms of our court system, however, I would like to reassure him that all of our Crowns have had training, been instructed about positions to take. As the member knows, it is the judiciary who determines the release, and they do so according to the laws. If he is supportive along with this government that those laws need to be tougher, I would really be happy to hear from him today, and then we can perhaps move from there.

* (2040)

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, the minister too often uses as a scapegoat either judiciary in Manitoba or the federal minister. I want to get to each of those, because I think many of the problems, not all of them, but many of the challenges that are facing Manitoba women in particular in the legal system are challenges that can be met by this government and dealt with.

The very foundation of the Family Violence Court is a good one, and that rationale should be used to extend the jurisdiction of that court not only outside of Winnipeg but extending it to the Queen's Bench or bringing in bail hearings to the Family Violence Court. As well, there are other initiatives the provincial government can take and particularly getting rid of the backlogs and getting down to a three-month turnaround for those cases in Family Violence Court as was initially the objective of that court.

Now, when it comes to the federal minister, I hate to disappoint the minister by taking away one of her favourite arguments that we have never been supportive of her on the changes to the antistalking law, because she has never asked us. But it has been a useful tool for the minister. The position of this side of the House has been consistent. We have said that it is not enough for this minister to go talking about changes to the Criminal Code only dealing with antistalking. We also want to see similar-type changes dealing with all domestic violence and violence-against-women charges.

She made the argument about the reverse onus. We have generally supported that, although we recognize that there will be a delicate balance required between the Charter of Rights, the right to be presumed innocent

until proven guilty, and the rights of victims to safety. We think though that in particular circumstances, albeit narrow, the reverse onus provision could be upheld where there is a clear indication of ongoing, not just pursuit of or stalking or criminal harassment of, but assault of a woman.

It may be more effective though if the Criminal Code was amended so that the overriding consideration on a bail application was not whether the accused would show up for trial but whether public safety would be threatened if the accused was released, because I think too often the judges are paying too much attention—and this is supported in case law—to the test as to whether an accused will come to trial rather than public safety. So I would support the minister on any such changes. We have all along, and have ever since she began talking on this, but we have said that it is too narrow to restrict it only to the antistalking regime.

Finally, with regard to the judiciary I think that they are largely the subject of the Criminal Code, but also the directives to the Crown can make a difference in the court, and I want to be convinced that the directives to the Crown in this province are very clear and are tough. I will be reviewing the information that the minister has given me today regarding the directives to the Crown attorneys in Manitoba, particularly regarding family violence.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, just a couple of comments before we carry on with this discussion and move on into another.

First of all, the judiciary has to work within the law, so I would just like to make that point again, but the member then says, well, what can this government do? You know you cannot rely on, you cannot always look to somebody else, the federal government or the judiciary or someone where you cannot necessarily act yourself, so what has this government done, what can this government do?

Well, let me remind him, it was this government that set up the Family Violence Court. Now perhaps that small factor has escaped him in our discussion, but it was this government that set up the Family Violence Court.

We have, in fact, set up a model which other provinces across this country are very interested in and come to look at and come to see and look to see if they can make an adaptation of a court of this type. So this government's commitment in the area of Family Violence and how to deal with it in a sensitive way, how to make sure that it receives the important treatment that it requires, has been translated into action by this government.

We do have a Family Violence Court, with specialized Crown attorneys, with a judiciary who is interested and trained, and that has extended to training Crown attorneys across this province. So, whenever there is a question in his mind about how this government deals with the family violence issues, just let him remember that it was this government who set up the court, and that is a big step. It was an important one, and one that this government is very proud and happy to have done because it has said that these issues require special treatment.

In the area of the federal government and his position in support of our government's position for reverse onus in the area of antistalking, he said the reason I had not heard from him was that I had not asked. My answer is that it has not stopped him before.

I wonder if this was really such an important issue to the member for St. Johns, to the people of the NDP party. Why? We did not ever hear from them. What was it, or who was it, that was the gatekeeper that said, nobody can say anything until the Minister of Justice asks, are you supportive?

If in fact he is supportive and his party is supportive, then, boy, it would have been really wonderful to have heard that from him, to have had a definitive statement from the other side in the area of support of reverse onus in the area of antistalking. I am very glad to hear it now. I am sure the people of Manitoba are very happy to hear it now, and I hope that it will be useful to us as we approach the federal government and ask them to make changes.

He says he would start bigger. Well, I have made it clear. The public safety of women is a very important matter for me as minister and for this government.

However, we have begun in an area where we believe that we should be able to cause the federal government to move, and we have not had any movement there.

At this point I will continue to press the federal government on behalf of the people of Manitoba to move into a reverse onus, and I hope that my communication with the federal minister will encourage him to see that this is not necessarily more work for lawyers. In fact I often wonder if he misspoke himself at that meeting and if he really had intended to say something differently? I do not know, but I will continue to press him, and we would look for changes.

This government is very pleased at the support of the NDP party. I am sure the women of Manitoba also are very supportive now that they have come forward and said that they will support this.

The other area that this government has moved in, in the area of protection for women, is the court order prohibition system. The courts prohibition system was implemented by July 1st, 1993, and the system allowed the Winnipeg police, the RCMP, the Brandon police, the DOTC as it was, the Dakota-Ojibway Police service as it is now, the Crown, firearms control and women's advocacy to access the registry on a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week basis.

The system became a priority to provide increased enforcement of stalking violators. So that is another action that this government has taken in an effort to protect the women of Manitoba.

Mr. Mackintosh: Is the government taking any initiatives, whether through the Crowns or through legislation, to require the surrender of firearms and FACs once abusers are charged?

* (2050)

Mrs. Vodrey: Within the province of Manitoba, instructions have gone out to all Crown attorneys on bail hearings on all cases of spousal abuse charges or domestic violence charges that they seek an order for the forfeiture of the FAC and firearms. Now whether

or not the judge agrees to that we do not always know or we cannot guarantee, but that is our position.

The position I also took to the federal minister in changes that I had asked him to make in the area of criminal harassment was that it be required within the Criminal Code that there be a forfeiture of the FAC and firearms on charging. The federal minister has not agreed to go that far.

In the new federal bill, Bill C-68, I understand that he has said that on charging that there may be a case brought before the judge, and a judge will determine if in fact there should be a surrender of the firearms. If the firearms are not surrendered, the judge should give written reasons. Our concern is that that simply does not go far enough. It puts an intermediary step in. It is a movement in the right direction by the federal government, but in fact it simply does not go far enough to require the surrender.

When I spoke before the parliamentary committee of Bill C-68, I made that point to them that Manitoba had requested a much stronger position, and certainly with the instructions to our Crowns that is what we seek.

Mr. Mackintosh: I am certainly disappointed in the response of the federal minister on this issue, but I am wondering why the minister does not introduce legislation to require the surrender of firearms on not just a stalking charge but on an abuse charge.

Again the minister is hearing support for some of her positions on antistalking and, indeed, perhaps all the positions that she took. I said that is not good enough; it is not far enough.

Why talk about stalking? You should be talking about abuse where there was actual violence used. With that, I wonder if the minister could answer that question.

Mrs. Vodrey: The member asked why we do not legislate in that area, but I know he understands that we do not have the ability to legislate in that area. It is incidental to criminal law. We are not able to provide that legislation.

However, I certainly understand the point that he is trying to bring forward today in terms of any cases where there has been violence and that it would be helpful to have the surrender of firearms. I have started, as I explained earlier, in the area of antistalking because it was an area where I believe the federal government may have some interest in starting to make those changes.

Rather than encouraging them holistically or pushing on a broader basis, I chose a very specific point in an effort to begin to get some co-operation. And with his support tonight, who knows? Maybe the federal minister will be more responsive to the people of Manitoba and to the people of Canada because that is, in fact, whom we are speaking for.

This issue has been raised again at the Ministers of Justice conference, at the Ministers responsible for the Status of Women conference, and I think we just have to continue to press our colleagues in other provinces where we may find support for this so that every time there is a ministerial meeting with the federal minister, it is a large group of provinces that are bringing forward these initiatives and are encouraging the federal government to begin to make these changes.

Mr. Mackintosh: I recognize the jurisdictional difficulties of requiring the surrendering of firearms on abusers being charged, but I am wondering if the minister has a legal opinion as to whether there is not some mechanism for pursuing that.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I understand the point the member is making. We believe that really the most effective way would be to deal with those people who can put such a system in place nationally. We will continue to press for it.

I am very happy with his support of our position this evening. Let us see if perhaps he can speak to colleagues in other provinces who may also be sympathetic to his position.

I suppose we will know more after Thursday if there will be other provinces in that group. Certainly, I will continue to press my colleagues also.

Mr. Mackintosh: Perhaps this is a good time just to canvass other firearms issues.

As the minister will recall, approximately over a year ago, our caucus introduced ideas for better dealing with pellet guns in Manitoba. Particularly in Winnipeg there has been an outbreak of pellet gun incidents over the last two, two and a half years. I know the minister shared those concerns. I just know that through an article in one of the local dailies.

We, on this side, undertook extensive research of legislation across Canada, and Legislative Counsel is looking at the issue. Indeed, a bill was put on the notice paper. As well, I understand at that same time the minister indicated to the media that her department was looking at the issue and would research it.

When the federal Justice minister introduced changes to the Criminal Code regarding gun control, he indicated that he was also beginning a process of looking at bringing more air guns or pellet guns into the Criminal Code for regulation. It was my understanding that he would deal with that once the current package had been dealt with, maybe because it was sort of one thing at a time. I do not know. Perhaps he wanted further study on it and felt it was not as important to deal with quickly.

I am wondering if the minister, first of all, could outline what her department found as to the ability of the province to better regulate air guns and if she is aware of what action the federal minister is taking at this time.

* (2100)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, yes, I did say that we were very interested in looking at what we could do as a province in the area of pellet guns. I know that we have certainly done some work on it, but it is the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer) whose Estimates will follow Justice whom I believe can give the member a much more complete plan of what is outlined. I want to be careful not to speak on behalf of another minister in an area where I believe they are looking at concentrating some effort.

In terms of the federal minister, I raised this issue very specifically with the federal minister when I first met with him in a private meeting in February 1994 and let him know we, in Manitoba, were concerned. I was happy to know that he did seem to have some understanding of some incidents that had taken place and seemed as if he was prepared and interested to look at some changes that were within his jurisdiction.

I do not have anything definitive to give the member back from the federal minister at this point. It is certainly an issue that I am prepared to continue raising with him. However, I also look for the member to raise the issue, as I said, with my colleague the Minister of Urban Affairs who will, I believe, indicate to him some of the information that has come forward and some of the action possible for us as a provincial government.

Mr. Mackintosh: I am sensitive to a jurisdictional challenge for province-wide legislation, although by-law legislation in other parts of Canada is still on the books without challenge to my knowledge. It may be that local by-laws are the way to deal with this issue outside of the Criminal Code, but I remain convinced that Criminal Code amendments are the proper way to deal with this. I trust the federal minister will pursue this. I would urge the minister, when she next has an opportunity, to find out from the minister what his plans are, and I myself will undertake to try and determine that from this side.

I read with interest the minister's submission to the federal committee on the federal gun control plans—by the way disappointed that her office refused to provide us with a copy of those remarks which were prepared well in advance of her trip to Ottawa, and our intern was told to just get it from Ottawa. I think that kind of response to the official opposition's request is very unfortunate and I think reflects poorly on her department.

So we made arrangements through—

Point of Order

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, the member has made an allegation about statements made from my office about my presentation in Ottawa, and I am very surprised to

hear them. Perhaps he may be referring to my specific comments before the parliamentary committee, some of which were not scripted, and, in fact, were comments which I made in response to the situation and to information that I had.

If he has something further, I hope that he will tell me—he does not have to tell me right here—but I hope he will take a moment to tell me afterwards what it is that was requested and how it was he did not receive it, because the position I took forward really was a position on behalf of the people of Manitoba. So I am surprised to hear the comments made and if he would like to speak to me about that privately since it may concern some staff, I will be more than happy to look into it.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe): The Chair rules that the honourable minister does not have a point of order at this time. This is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Mackintosh: So we made inquiries through the committee in Ottawa and then obtained the minister's submission to that federal committee. I was surprised that nowhere in the submission was a demand on the federal government to advise what their estimate of the cost to enforce the federal gun registration scheme would be. I do not have the minister's unprepared remarks. I take it that she read out the formal statement which we have and then, as well, she went into other discussions.

I am wondering if the minister would advise whether she has obtained from the federal government that estimate and, if not, whether her department has estimated the enforcement cost.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, the paper the member is referring to was not my speaking notes. That was a brief that I filed, and then I spoke before the committee. In speaking before the committee, I outlined our concern very specifically, cost being one issue. Among the four or five major concerns cost was one. I spoke about the direct cost and then I also wanted to look into the indirect cost to a province in terms of the administration of the system.

When I was in Ottawa, we had already heard two figures by that time, just even in the short time of the hearings. We had heard the \$85 million and then we were up to \$119 million, both figures coming from Ottawa.

We have continually pressed the federal government to provide us with an accurate costing for the implementation of Bill C-68. We have not had, to my knowledge, an accurate costing. We have had some forecasting from the federal government, but I do not believe that it has included for provinces what they presume will be the direct cost for our province and indirect cost. That information has not yet been forthcoming from the federal minister.

Of course, all of our questions are premised on the fact that the bill passes as is. We do not know if in fact there will ever be any amendments to that bill or if in fact the bill may take a different shape, so we have not received that information.

I agree, you know, that is really important information for the people of Manitoba to know, in an accurate way, what the cost of this registration system is and the cost both in terms of the policing costs required, but also those indirect costs, the cost of maintaining a court and Crown attorneys who are available to prosecute. So it does stand to be potentially quite expensive, and as I have said before, an expensive proposition where there has been no demonstrated link yet to show that the registration of firearms will reduce criminal activity or the failure to register will increase criminal activity.

I am not sure if the member is saying that he is supportive of this government continuing to ask that question. I hope so because perhaps that will have further impact on the federal government.

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, in light of the legislative history in Canada, I think it is fairly predictable that this legislation will pass in the form that it is in. I could be wrong, but I certainly urge the minister to get that information.

She raises the issue of the indirect cost of prosecutions and other court costs. I have been

particularly concerned, however, about the enforcement costs; in other words, the time that police will have to spend on enforcing this legislation, which appears to be rejected by those who are most affected, so there could be some real enforcement challenges ahead, but I urge the minister to pin the federal government down.

It is my understanding, and I would like the minister to share with the committee what her understanding is, that while the federal government will pay the registration costs, the costs of the registration system itself, which I think is what she calls the direct costs, the federal government has no intention whatsoever of changing any cost-sharing formulas that may exist right now for the indirect costs; in other words, the enforcement and prosecution costs.

* (2110)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I have said from the very beginning one of the biggest concerns as Minister of Justice is that I believe the system which is being proposed by the federal government will take police officers from the street and from the kinds of work in which we believe is very important for them to do. That is reacting to calls of people within the community, or doing other kinds of community work, and that, in fact, now chunks of their time will be spent attending at people's homes to see if they have registered their firearms.

This was a concern at the very beginning because as Minister of Justice I am very concerned that our police officers are doing the work that will benefit the safety of the people of Manitoba, and to have the federal government reach into our system and simply determine that part of the work of the police, over and above with no consultation to federal Ministers of Justice, that police will now be responsible for the enforcement part of a federally set up registration system has been a great concern from the very beginning. It is the lead-off point that I presented before the parliamentary committee.

The member hopes I will continue to press the federal government for an answer. I have been. What came up at the parliamentary committee is that you can press and press but that does not mean they are going

to necessarily provide us with the answer. I think the people of Manitoba deserve that answer. So it has been my position that we will continue to ask the federal government for information and to continue to express to the federal government a concern that the enforcement side of this may take police officers from doing work that will truly benefit the public safety of the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Mackintosh: Is the community advisory committee still ongoing with reviewing the Pedlar report?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, yes, I understand that this committee is still in existence. It has not been disbanded. I am not sure when that committee last met, that group of individuals who were looking at the Pedlar report. I understand they were very active in lobbying the federal government in the area of stalking and criminal harassment.

I can tell the member that they have been very helpful and provided quite a lot of information to us, and certainly we are open to further information if that is to be forthcoming from that committee.

Mr. Mackintosh: What is this minister's view of the CART system that was recommended in Pedlar, and is there any ongoing review of that recommendation?

Mrs. Vodrey: The member, in his questioning, is moving into areas of detail that I think may be best covered when we are dealing with Prosecutions and the Prosecutions staff are here who would be available to bring us totally up to date on the two possible models. I think I heard the member say in his speech he was looking at the Saskatchewan model which very closely resembles the CART model. I am not sure if he spoke further about that.

If the member would be willing to put this question over until prosecutions staff come in I think he may find that more helpful.

Mr. Mackintosh: In the NDP caucus task force hearings on violence we heard repeatedly concerns about the delays in the Family Violence Court. We heard as well about the delays in the court system

dealing with violence against women outside of Winnipeg where, of course, there is no Family Violence Court.

Point of Order

Mrs. Vodrey: On a point of order, Mr. Chair, there is a Family Violence Court operating in the city of Brandon. I have outlined to the member prospective other locations for such a court, although not operating now, and that there is training for Crown attorneys across this province.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe): The Chair rules that the honourable Minister of Justice does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Mackintosh: I say I will reserve judgment as to whether there is a Family Violence Court in Brandon or not. Just because the government calls it such, I do not know if it deserves a title—just like boot camps. We will deal with that further.

The concern about backlogs though was ubiquitous throughout the province. I am wondering if the minister would advise the committee what, in her view, has been done to deal with the backlogs over the past year.

* (2120)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, we have been working with the chief judge, with our Courts division, with our Prosecutions division to make sure that any delay in all of our court areas is reduced to the minimum. In the area of the domestic violence or family violence cases we have been working very hard. Any delay which may have been there has certainly been reduced.

The statistics that I have in front of me for June 1995 say that for domestic violence in-custody cases the time frame is two and a half to three and a half months and that the out-of-custody is approximately four months. Hearing dates, I understand, for those accused who are in custody are available as early as July 4. Now that is less than a month, though there certainly are a large

majority of dates available towards the end of August, which is still less than three months away. The Family Violence unit has access to these early custody dates to help them with their workload. In practical terms there are dates available. The average which I gave to the member, that two and a half to three and a half months in-custody, certainly we are able to show that dates are available before that, and the out-of-custody, approximately four months.

As the member knows, when we set up the Family Violence Court, the goal of the Family Violence Court was to have matters heard between three and four months, so we are within that window. Being within that window is a result of working with all divisions and also with the judiciary to see that these cases are heard in a very timely way.

Mr. Mackintosh: I remind the minister that the objective was three months. I know just from the minister's own numbers here, and her numbers are always taken from the date of the first appearance until the date of the hearing, but out-of-custody cases taking four months on average means that there can be cases that are taking many months longer than that. So that is my concern, for the record.

But my main concern dealing with the Family Violence Court has emanated from, first of all, one case that a member in our caucus was familiar with and, as well, the information set out in Jane Ursel's study of the Family Violence Court, which indicated that in child sexual assault cases, there was a backlog of approximately 18 months, a backlog for cases that should be dealt with the most swiftly because we are dealing with very delicate issues of memory here, of intimidation.

We have often argued that in the youth court, the backlogs should be as short as possible because in the mind of a youth, life has changed 10 times over in the course of 10 months. Time is much longer for a youth than it is for an adult, but when we are looking at children who are victims and who are going to be called on as witnesses, the need for a swift turnaround is even greater. I wonder what the minister is doing about the backlog documented by Jane Ursel of 18 months for child abuse cases?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I wonder if the member would be good enough to give the dates of that study by Jane Ursel because my memory is that that study dealt with a court and court time, court appearances, several years ago. If the member can, for the purposes of this committee, give the dates of the study that he is referring to and where that case example came from in terms of the date, that would be most helpful in responding.

Mr. Mackintosh: As I recall, the study was at least a year and a half, perhaps two years old, for its data at the time of its release. It did not stop the minister from relying on it, by the way, when there was something positive in there, but more instructive as to the backlog of dealing with child abuse cases was the case with which I am familiar that was disposed of last spring, and the backlog there was two years.

Now, if the minister is disputing the backlog for child abuse cases, then I would like her to do that for the record. Whether it is two years, 18 months or one year, I say anything longer than three months for child abuse is too long.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, in the member's own words, he thinks the study is probably at least two years old or more and that was my recollection, that it reflected sometime around '92-93 and perhaps data collected before that. So I would like to bring him up to date because that has been the point of our discussion.

When I gave him the facts of the times available in Domestic Violence Court, I gave him in-custody dates of two and a half to three and a half months out of custody dates for four months. The same resources, these resources of the Family Violence Court, are the resources that are available in child abuse cases. So I am happy to have had the opportunity to bring him up to date in terms of when court dates are available.

It is always difficult when the member brings a single case to this House. Obviously, we have to be very careful in reflecting on any cases, particularly cases which deal with children. It makes it very, very difficult to answer a broad set of allegations that the member brings based on one case. He only brings one case study forward and then he jumps in and says a

whole lot of things are going wrong with the whole Family Violence Court when he knows that I am really unable to speak about a specific case or any reasons why a specific case may have taken the time. There may be a lot of reasons, as the member knows.

I think what is important for our discussion tonight is that the court dates available are within a time frame very close to the time frame that the member has put forward, and we are continuing to work on that. We understand that it is very important where possible—and possible means the co-operation of the lawyers involved also and that means the defence lawyer as well—to see those cases and hear those cases, at least have dates available. Now, if people choose to conduct the case in a different way, then it is very difficult for me to answer that when I know that there is time provided, and it is very difficult to answer a specific case.

I would say to the member that certainly we as a government and I as minister understand very well the importance of having cases heard in a timely fashion. As a person who spent a great deal of my professional life working directly with children, many of these children who had been children who were involved in cases regarding child abuse—in fact, I was among the first professionals in the city of Winnipeg to deal with children who spoke about child abuse and who revealed that this had happened.

I fully understand the point the member is making. He really does not have to continue to harp as if I do not know about it. I am informed about it and have worked directly with those young people.

So I would say to him that rather than relying on a study, an old study of old dates, I am happy to bring him up to date with the dates available and want to assure him that I certainly understand the importance of the hearing of cases within a timely fashion and that we continue to try and make sure that it continues and that we improve wherever possible.

Mr. Mackintosh: What is the minister's view of using videotaped evidence of child sexual abuse victims?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, certainly, any steps which would be helpful in reducing the trauma to children in such cases are important to look at, but we also recognize that we cannot ignore the Charter requirements. So the principle of the reduction of stress is a good one. I am certainly willing to look at suggestions, but, right now, in terms of trying to bring effect to that, it is, as the member knows, a complex legal area, and we are having to move very carefully in that one.

Mr. Mackintosh: At the time we were doing the Estimates last, the double-charging directive, I guess it was called, or the counteraccusation charging directive was issued by the department, I believe there had been some communications, at least, to the City of Winnipeg police at that time about that. I am wondering what the experience has been with that directive and whether double charging has been reduced as a result.

Mrs. Vodrey: As the member knows, this is ultimately a police decision in terms of the charging. What we can do is we can guide, we can urge police services not to make a victim doubly a victim. That is what we have made an effort to do. We do not have any specific statistics, but I can tell the member that this issue has certainly been raised less often since we sent out the information on the counteraccusation.

Mr. Mackintosh: I share that sense that the minister has. I am just hoping for some better information, but I am wondering if this counteraccusation charging directive has been sent to the other police forces in Manitoba.

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, it was sent to all law enforcement agencies.

Mr. Mackintosh: As the minister knows, the zero tolerance—well, let us put it this way, the mandatory charging—

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe): Order, please. Madam Minister of Justice, I do not believe your remarks with regard to your direction to the police forces was recorded on Hansard. Would Madam Minister of Justice wish to readdress the record at this

time with those remarks and see if they would be recorded?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am happy to state again for the record and for Hansard that directive from the then-assistant deputy minister of Prosecutions went to all police services.

Mr. Mackintosh: As the minister knows, there are detailed mandatory charging procedures in place for the City of Winnipeg and the City of Brandon police forces. I am not aware of similar directives or procedures in place for other police forces, including the RCMP. Indeed, when the task force was going around Manitoba, we asked an RCMP constable if he was aware of such a directive in his area, and he said no.

I am wondering if the minister followed up on our enquiries last time and whether she is aware as to whether mandatory charging directives and procedures are in place throughout the province.

Mrs. Vodrey: Certainly, to my knowledge, the directives went to every police service, and I am even including the military police. It is very difficult for me to specifically account for a single presenter to the NDP task force in his response that he did not know about it, but certainly it would be important if the member wants to tell me where that occurred. I could pass that on through the RCMP that some people perhaps do not know about this, and it is important that they do.

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): I would ask leave of the other members if I could make a brief opening remark to these Justice Estimates.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe): Does the honourable member have leave? [agreed]

Mr. Kowalski: I thank the members for that privilege. This is my second set of Justice Estimates that I have had the honour and privilege of taking part in as a member of this Legislative Assembly.

I think, at the last session of Estimates, we might have set a record for the longest Justice Estimates on

record, but it was a very worthwhile experience for myself and, I hope, others. I have learned a lot about the department.

Because of our party's position in this Legislature with three members, we are limited to our resources and our capabilities as far as being able to attend all Estimates hearings and take full part, so unfortunately I will not be able to give the attention and the detail to these Estimates that I would like to give and would be relying on Hansard when I am not present to record and give me an opportunity to peruse what the other members are exploring in these Estimates.

In this past election, the government won the majority of seats, but I think an important part to remember is that 57 percent of the people who voted voted for someone other than a Conservative candidate and voted for something other than the Conservative policies.

* (2140)

We could conjecture as to whether 57 percent of the people did not agree with the Conservative platform on justice, on gun control, on education, on social spending, or we could assume that for different people it will be different things. So just as I represent all the people of The Maples whether they voted for me or supported me, this government represents all of Manitobans, including that 57 percent of the people who did not vote for this government's platforms and policies.

I think that a large constituency deserves to be represented, and as a Liberal candidate who was successful in this last election, I represent the almost 25 percent of the electorate who agreed with some part, if not all parts, of the Liberal platform. I bring that, and I feel a heavy duty to bring that into this Legislature and to voice that constituency in this Estimates process.

I do not think there is anyone in this Legislature who does not want a better justice system, who does not want safer streets, who does not want to be able to have their son or daughter or their spouse or their grandparent to be able to go to the corner store at ten o'clock at night without fear, to be able to send their

teenaged child down to Portage Place Mall on a Friday night without fear that they are going to be attacked. We all want the same thing, but we have very different ideas on how that it is to be achieved.

We differ from the government's approach to solving this problem. I hope the government is correct; I hope I am wrong. The results will be shown over the next four years as to their policies and their practices, what effect they have on the crime rate, what effect they have on the number of people who are scared to go out at night. Will it improve? The proof of the pudding is in the tasting.

We can argue in this Chamber as towards philosophies and principles, but in the end we will know the crime rate, which direction it goes in. We know how people feel about safety in their community—and for us to remember that this is the Manitoba Legislature.

Some members of this Legislature may have ambitions to be federal M.P.s and would like to get involved in federal legislation, but I am here as a member of the Manitoba Legislature to argue and criticize the government in the areas that concern the Manitoba Legislature and the department and expenditures of this government.

As a critic my role is to be constructive, but as a government there will be a hesitation—not a hesitation, but government will try to put the best face forward, and as a critic I will try to root out any inefficiencies, any mistakes that this government makes, not to personally hurt any member but for the best interests of Manitobans.

I have to say that my experience working with the staff from the Justice department has always been good. I think we have some of the best staff in the Attorney General's department, in Corrections, in all of Canada who do a fantastic job.

My criticisms I hope will be constructive, and I hope any criticism of any staff member will be seen not as personal but as a way to achieve better results for the fight against crime and for the safety issues that concern Manitobans. Thank you.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, if I may just have a couple of moments to comment on those introductory remarks, it would be helpful.

First of all, let the member understand that this government understands that we act in the interests of all the people of Manitoba, and our role is to make decisions, often very tough decisions. That is what governments have to do, they have to decide. That was a very difficult role for certainly the Liberal Party in the last election because you cannot take both sides. Ultimately, one time you have to come down and make a decision on behalf of the people of Manitoba. That is what this government's record has been. That is what this government will continue to do because that is governing. That is, in fact, doing our job in the Legislature.

I understand that the member may not always agree with the position and the decisions that this government takes. However, Mr. Chair, just let me remind him that decisions have to be taken and they have to be taken with a view to the effect on the people of Manitoba. So governing is one.

Secondly, he raises the issue of public safety, and let me assure him that public safety is the priority for the Department of Justice and for me as minister, because when people ask me what my job is, my job is to deal with the public safety of Manitobans. We understand very well that the issue of public safety affects both the safety of children, which he referenced, and our confidence of our children. He has children. I have children. The member for St. Johns has children. We want our children to be out in the community and feel safe.

We understand that steps have to be taken along the whole continuum of the justice system to deal with that public safety issue. There has to be support on the policing end. There has to be support through the courts and prosecutions. There has to be consequences through corrections. There has to be prevention programs which are put forward. Public safety is not a single act.

There is not a single act which will affect the crime stats on their own, but it is a number of acts. It is a

comprehensive plan which has to come together. It requires not only the government of Manitoba or the Department of Justice to implement that plan, but it requires everyone who is a part of our community in Manitoba. It requires Manitobans in their communities to come forward and take part in crime prevention programs, to participate.

The member knows that in my opening remarks I spoke about the number of ways in which ordinary Manitobans can become involved in the justice system, how they can become involved through assisting police, how they can become involved through youth justice committees, how they can become involved in prevention programs like No Need To Argue, because we need them. In order to deal with public safety, we have to make sure that there are a whole lot of ways for all of the people who believe that public safety is important to participate, because one group cannot do it alone.

The member speaks about his work as a provincial member and has somehow restricted it to only dealing then with issues within provincial jurisdiction. But I think he has made a mistake and perhaps misunderstood, because another part of our role is to represent the point of view of the people of Manitoba to the federal government.

Now he has taken the view in his opening remarks that you do not necessarily push the federal government, because that is what federal M.P.s do and that his role is only here. Well, I believe he is wrong because we must speak up on behalf of the people of Manitoba to the federal government, and that has been clear in this House, not only on policies as they relate to justice, but on behalf of economic policies that relate to the federal budget cuts in health and post-secondary education, that deal with agriculture. We do not just sit here and not have a voice.

Now I understand that the member from the Liberal Party is perhaps a little sensitive in speaking to the federal Liberal government and perhaps does not want to make any waves and so will not be onside with the people of Manitoba, even some of those 57 percent that he considers were in support of he or another party or other parties.

Where those people have a point to make to the federal government, he does not feel that is really his role as a provincial MLA. I think he is wrong. I think where he can find it in himself and in his party, who sit in this Legislature to support positions of this government to the federal government, that they make changes in the interests of public safety which we are speaking about here today, I would look for his support.

* (2150)

I would look for his support in the area of the antistalking changes that deal with the safety of women primarily. If he thinks they are important, then I believe it would be great if he would declare on the record during the course of these Estimates that he supports them, that he supports actions in relation to the Young Offenders Act or wherever he may find it important to stand with the people of Manitoba on behalf of issues of importance to them, to the federal government and make that point. So I will be looking forward to hearing that.

He also mentions it is important in his role to root out ineffectiveness. I understand he speaks for people who have another point of view and they have to be raised here, and it is my role to answer him. However, it would be really helpful to the people of Manitoba if he also spoke in support of the positive.

I have heard this member speak very frequently about the importance of preventative programs, and I agree. I think prevention is a very important part, particularly the area of youth crime. When we unveiled a program called No Need to Argue, which dealt with young people from high schools and junior high schools all across the city of Winnipeg and encouraged them to identify in their communities a problem or a difficulty and then to work with their community members, not alone, not just with a school, but with their community to try and provide a solution to that problem, we would look at providing recognition to those young people.

Yes, there was some reward offered, and we were going to put these solutions together in a bound copy and circulate them around the province of Manitoba so

individual people did not have to try and reinvent the wheel. What did he say? He did not like it. He opposed it. He spoke out forcefully against it. The people of Manitoba were surprised because there was an effort to be positive. There was an effort to deal with prevention. There was an effort to involve the community.

As the member is making his comments during the course of these Estimates, I understand his role to raise issues and certainly I will do my best to provide him with answers, but I do believe the other part of his role may also be where there is something good for the people of Manitoba, completely in sync with what he has declared is important to him. It would be very nice for the people of Manitoba to hear from him.

Mr. Kowalski: Yes, I just wanted to put on the record the fact that I have commented positively on the government's policies when I agree with them. To disagree with the focus of the No Need to Argue campaign does not discount the value of preventative programs in general, that if the one program could have been done better to affect and target the young people who are involved the most in this province in creating the youth crime stats, I do not take that as discounting all preventative programs.

I am not an apologist for the federal Liberal government. Never have been. I see the role of provincial politicians in advocating for Manitoba, but we do have federal M.P.s, yes. We do have Justice minister conferences from across Canada. There are parliamentary committees where we can put forward Manitoba's point of view. I am in communication with federal members of Parliament to put forward my views and the views of the constituency I represent.

I do not abrogate the role of a provincial politician to lobby the federal government in the correct direction, but it should not lose the focus away from the responsibilities of this provincial government. I do see a role as a provincial MLA, but I feel that often more attention is given to lobbying the federal government than taking care of business at home.

I will leave those comments. I know the minister has staff coming in from different departments, so I just

would like to get some direction into some of the areas where I will be asking some questions on.

(Mr. Chairperson in the Chair)

I will be asking some questions in regard to sick leave and absentee rates at the different correctional facilities in comparison from one correctional facility—for example, the Provincial Remand Centre in comparison to the Winnipeg Remand Centre compared to Headingley for this year and previous years to see which way it is trending, as an indication of the morale in those departments.

I will be asking questions in regard to the night court, statistics as to how many young offenders it dealt with, the time lines, any information we could get about the youth night court that was instituted.

The other area that I will asking is in regard to Community and Youth Corrections, as far as training opportunities for volunteers and training sessions for volunteers in Community and Youth Corrections, not only youth justice committee members but other volunteers in regard to the position of volunteer coordinator in Community and Youth Corrections.

Those will be the areas, so I give notice to the minister in case her staff can bring the information when we come to those lines in the Estimates.

Mr. Mackintosh: Shortly before the last election a message was printed with the picture of Gary Filmon on the front, and the document was entitled Law and Order and Public Safety, Manitobans and Gary Filmon Keeping Manitoba Strong. It set out a number of issues, public safety, some of it puffery, and I am wondering who paid for the document. I trust the minister is familiar with the document.

* (2200)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, that piece of information, which is in fact a record of the work which this government has put forward in the area of justice on the law and order agenda, was paid for through caucus mailing, which of course all caucuses are entitled to provide a certain amount.

Mr. Mackintosh: The document talks about how Manitoba has been dealing with drunk drivers and claims that Manitoba has the toughest drunk-driving legislation in the country. The position on this side is that it is not tough enough. The minister knows full well that there is a problem of repeaters, a very serious problem that is affecting the safety of Manitobans.

I am wondering if the minister would share with the committee her plans to make this legislation truly effective.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chairman, I am wondering if the member would mind addressing this question when we get to line 1.(c) when the staffperson who is most involved in this area is here to provide additional information.

Mr. Mackintosh: During the recent provincial campaign the government announced several initiatives, and I wanted to go through some of those. One is that the government intends to make parents financially responsible for the property crimes of their children. Would the minister agree to table with the committee any legal opinion it has as to how that can be done?

Mrs. Vodrey: I think the initiative is really what the member wants to talk about, and so I am happy to tell him that we certainly believe that we are able to accomplish this. My department is working very carefully right now to develop the particular instrument to achieve this, and I look forward to being able to share more with him when the project is complete.

Mr. Mackintosh: Would the minister advise the committee, is she looking at civil or criminal sanctions for parents?

Mrs. Vodrey: I can tell the member that we are presently looking at civil sanctions. However, we have been lobbying the federal government to look at including parental responsibility in the Young Offenders Act, and we are asking federal government to look at criminal.

Mr. Mackintosh: I am wondering if there is not now a civil cause of action though against parents in certain

circumstances, and I am wondering how the government intends to change that.

Mrs. Vodrey: It is our view that it is presently somewhat unclear as to whether or not there is a cause of action against parents, so that is one of the areas that we are looking at developing now.

I am not able to share anything further with him because, as I have said, we made it clear that it is our intention to do this, and I will be able to tell him more about exactly how when I am ready to unveil the whole plan.

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, surely the ability to make parents financially responsible for the wrongs of their children depends on whether it is cost beneficial to go ahead with a civil claim or not. I am wondering how the government intends to change the cost benefit of proceeding in a civil claim against parents.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chairman, the issues that the member is raising are issues that we are looking at, and we are looking at more. In the cost-benefit area we have to look at enforcement. So the member has raised some of the issues which we in fact are exploring to bring together a full package to deal with what we spoke about during the election, and that is, we want to make sure that there is some parental responsibility put back into the system.

When I first spoke about changes to the Young Offenders Act on behalf of our government and our government's position, I made it clear then that we would be asking the federal government to put parental responsibility back into the Young Offenders Act. But the question that followed was, what if they will not do it? Will you do it? At that time I made it clear that, yes, we would be looking at ways that provincially we could bring parental responsibility back into the system if the federal government refused to do it.

Now, in the changes that they have suggested that they are going to make to the Young Offenders Act, parental responsibility is not among the changes. So, it does fall to us provincially then to say that we believe that parents must have some responsibility. As I have spoken about this before, the issue is one of parental

responsibility, but the big issue here is to assist the victim, because it is the victim who has always been the one who has been left behind and left out.

So the purpose of the legislation is not to punish parents, but it is in fact to bring an element of parental responsibility back and to assist the victim and to put the victim back into the equation, because we believe that the victim's position has really been somewhat reduced. We have kind of forgotten about the victim, and our government's view is that is wrong, that the victim has to come back into the equation. This is one way in which we plan to do that.

Mr. Mackintosh: The minister is reading my speeches from last Estimates again about the role of the victim and how we have to get the victim back in. We are all for victim involvement in the system and for restitution.

I am just wondering, based on the minister's advice that she is looking at some civil law change, how is it that provisions can be made for payments based on the parent's ability to pay, which is set out in the election agenda. How is that possible? Either you have a civil cause of action or you do not have a civil cause of action. Or does the minister intend on having a civil cause of action and restrict the judgment based on ability to pay, and then there has to be evidence adduced as to ability to pay?

I mean, I fail to understand what this election promise means, and I—from listening to the minister, it sounds like the government does not know what it is going to do either. Would the minister say just how ability to pay is going to be used in any system, how it is going to be implemented and would she also advise what the timetable is for its implementation?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, first of all, I am very happy that the member is pleased to support us in the area of supporting victims. I am glad to hear that, and we will be looking forward to his support as we bring forward our initiatives that deal with victims. I hope that, in terms of wondering how this government arrived at parental responsibility, the introduction of the role of the victim has been helpful to him.

* (2210)

He says that he is not really sure where this government is going and where this government plans to go. So, in a broad statement, let me tell him again that we would like to reintroduce parental responsibility into the area of acts that young people take, where young people in fact leave victims behind. We would like to consider victims. We understand that there are cases where parents have done everything possible to try and restrain their child or try and stop their child from entering into this criminal activity or antisocial behaviour, and that would be considered when we bring forward our plan. We understand that. We understand that parents need support in setting limits.

So what I can tell him today is, again, the very general response that I have been given is that we are looking at the issues that he has raised and others, because this was our commitment, not only in the election, this was our commitment that we made. We first asked for changes in the area of the Young Offenders Act. When that whole package is prepared, I will be more than happy to provide him with the details, but at the moment we are investigating a whole range of options and ways in which we can make this actually work.

When it is complete, I will be more than happy to share that with the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh). In fact, I will look forward to the support of his party because he has underscored, again tonight, his interest in helping victims. That really will be the goal, just to put the victim back into the equation. So I will look forward to the support of the NDP party when this plan is brought forward.

Mr. Mackintosh: Is there a provincial crime prevention council?

Mrs. Vodrey: The detailed discussion of this might best take place under 2.(d), and it was part of what was discussed in the nine-point plan. It is not operating yet because the process of developing it was to serve as a resource to the Youth Justice Committees across the province and others who could use its support. These Justice Committees were very concerned that we would somehow just put something in place and somehow make that have some authority over Youth Justice

Committees, and that was never the plan. The plan was to provide, through a provincial council, a group of experts who would have knowledge of research and practice methods and so on which would be of assistance.

The steps that have been taken so far are the person who agreed to accept the chair at the time of the announcement, the chairpersonship, has travelled through Manitoba, with our Community Corrections as support, and has met with Youth Justice Committees across the province and has worked out with the Youth Justice Committees what it is that they are particularly interested in and what would be of help to them. That information has now come back to government.

There have been some recommendations of names of people who might serve on that committee. I believe that there are perhaps others, as well, who have expressed an interest in working in this area and have always been helpful, without saying who they are, because, at this point, we do not have a commitment with them. But now the process is to secure a commitment from individuals who are willing to operate within a mandate that really was developed as a process of consultation.

The member may have considered this to have been somewhat time consuming. Yes, it has taken some time for all the visits to occur, for all the information to be developed for groups to give some thought to what, in fact, a provincial Crime Prevention Council might do and how it might assist them. We wanted to set up a practical vehicle. We wanted to set up something that would really be helpful, and that is the process that we have been following.

Mr. Mackintosh: I guess it should be no surprise, but I continue to be surprised by things I read from this government. In the election document it says, the provincial Crime Prevention Council will continue to seek the advice of experts on the development of community crime prevention initiatives. I had never heard of that before. The minister has just confirmed tonight that there is no provincial Crime Prevention Council, yet during the election, no hesitation to say that it was continuing to do its work. Does the minister have any comments on that?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chairman, yes, I do have some comments because there certainly was a chair of that. The person was named and accepted the position at the time of the release of the nine-point plan, and that person, acting, did in fact continue to do the work of the provincial council. The work at that time was making sure there were visits to all of our youth justice committees, and, in fact, that a wide mandate for the use of, as the member said, other experts, so that we could look at how other experts might be used, was in fact the work of that individual and that is exactly how it happened.

If the member has some difficulty in that, he might like to talk about it. Perhaps in his view he would have just put people in place and then looked to see if that worked. We chose a method where we named the chair of that Crime Prevention Council and the chair then made visits around the province. I am sure the member knows, I am sure they visited any of the youth justice committees in his area, and the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski). That is how we have been working, Mr. Chair, and if the member has a difficulty with that, he might like to talk about it.

Mr. Mackintosh: During the election the government announced that it was going to find ways to reduce wasteful litigation. Would the minister advise the committee what action is being taken to pursue that objective?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, at the moment I have asked our Courts Division to develop a plan with some options and then, with that in mind, we will be approaching those people who would be participants on such a review, and use this as a starting place to develop both the mandate and the membership. So it is certainly our intention to move on this matter and we will certainly look forward to the results as well.

Mr. Mackintosh: Does the minister contemplate bringing in the legislation for vehicle confiscation to penalize johns in this session?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, as the member knows, we came back into this session within about three and a half weeks of our election to government for a third time, and the legislation, I understand, is to be have had

second reading within the next week and a half at this point.

So I can say to him that we are in the process of developing that plan and that legislation, but I believe that on behalf of our government, I will look forward to tabling our plan for the next legislative session, which I am not sure when that will be called. That is up to the Premier (Mr. Filmon). In our current session, which I understand will take place this spring and into the fall it will be unlikely, due to the dates that have been set out, that it will be introduced in this session.

* (2220)

Mr. Mackintosh: In her opening remarks, the minister described the youth gang phone line as successful. I am just wondering on what basis the minister says that.

Mrs. Vodrey: I am wondering if the member would mind putting that question over into 2.(e), so that the staff who may have the information would be available for that discussion.

Mr. Mackintosh: It is my understanding that the government promised that Autopac deductibles would be made available for antitheft devices from MPIC. Is the minister knowledgeable on that plan?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chairman, I would ask that the member raise that question with the Minister responsible for MPIC when that minister's Estimates come up for review.

Mr. Mackintosh: It was also said during the election that by using funds from the sale of confiscated criminal property the Victim Assistance Program would be expanded by \$250,000. Would the minister tell the committee the basis on which that estimate was founded?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, that is one which, if we could consider it, 2.(e), that would provide the most information.

Mr. Mackintosh: During the election campaign, we discovered that the chief of police for Winnipeg Police Services, for one, had been invited by the government

to attend an announcement on additional funding for policing. Would the minister tell the committee whether the chief of police was contacted by a member of her department to invite him to that press conference?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, to my memory and of course this took place several weeks ago, several months ago now, I believe that the invitation was extended by a phone call from myself to the chief's office, though I was not able to speak to the chief directly and did not about this. It was up to the chief whether or not he wished to attend. As the member knows, very often it is a practice to invite those people who are affected by decisions to be present when that is announced.

As the Premier made clear on that day, this was funding which is available in the current budget which was passed by this government and the funding was available and it was the plan of this government to proceed with the 40 new police officers or the \$2 million targeted grant, special grant, to the Winnipeg Police Services.

Mr. Mackintosh: I think it is unfortunate that the government, and this minister in particular, has compromised the position of the chief of police in this city. The chief of police is not a politician and must be there to serve all Manitobans, but during the election campaign a call to be made by this minister or, as a press announcement had indicated, a member of the minister's staff, was indeed a wrong decision and one that has to be censured.

During an election campaign the government is a caretaker, and the announcement was clearly one intended for political purposes. The minister can make no argument otherwise. If there is any amount in the budget, well, no one knew about it, and we will get to that. That is irrelevant. What has happened here is that the chief of police has been tainted by this, and to be put in the position of saying no to a government was very difficult for him, for any individual, in that circumstance.

Mrs. Vodrey: Just to reply, it looks like the member is moving on and I would like an opportunity just to comment on that.

Mr. Chair, as the member knows the dollar amount has been allotted in the budget through the budget of now the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) was asked this question also and said publicly that the information was given in a timely way and that the election was called after the budget was passed. However, this was an intention contained within our budget.

As I said to the member earlier, it is very often the case that individuals are invited to announcements where they are directly affected by them. In this case, there was a direct effect on the City of Winnipeg Police Services. However, as the member knows, the invitation was simply extended through the chief's office, and if he was unable to attend that certainly is not a problem. Perhaps, you know, that may happen on other occasions as well where he is simply not able to attend. It has happened in the past where invitations have been extended and he has not been able to attend.

* (2230)

The member has somehow tried to deflect the importance of the initiative for the public safety of the people of the city of Winnipeg. He has tried to remove that and somehow create some kind of an event, and, Mr. Chair, he is quite wrong, and I believe that the people of the city of Winnipeg understand that he is quite wrong and that the importance of this announcement is not really who was there or who was available to make a comment, that the importance was really that, in fact, there was an announcement by this government of an intention, contained in our budget, to provide a grant to the City of Winnipeg to provide for 40 new additional police officers.

That, Mr. Chair, is really the importance of the announcement. The importance of the announcement is the public safety of Manitobans that, we believe, will be enhanced further by more police officers on the street, more police officers available to answer calls, more police offices that are available and seen by citizens which often will act as a deterrent to criminal activity.

The importance is the effect that it will have on the people of the city of Winnipeg, and the member is

making some attempts to try and move the light onto something else, and I am not really sure why. However, I would like to bring him back to the importance of the announcement and the meaning of the announcement to the people of the city of Winnipeg.

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, the minister knows exactly why I raise this issue and why I raised it during the election campaign. The damage has been done. The government has used a highly impartial office for its own advantage. It has compromised the position of chief of police and has done no good for anyone as a result.

As to the merits of the decision or the announcement, we in this party were amused at the timing, certainly, of that announcement, and the minister knows our views on that, and I ask the minister, after pronouncements in the Estimates book and pronouncements orally by her last time in Estimates that the government was committed to more community-based policing in Manitoba, why the government refuses to use the power of its funding to ensure that there is a successful community-based police program in the city of Winnipeg.

Mrs. Vodrey: Just to go back to the member's comments, I just would like to, for the record, make it very clear that there was no wrongdoing to have the chief of police attend where there were resources announced for the department of which he is chief, quite unlike the appearance of the chief of police and the Attorney General of the former NDP government who appeared together when charged were being laid.

Mr. Chair, if the member wants to look at any example of wrongdoing, that is an example and that received censure. The member should look to his own party when they were in government, a very serious error of judgment made at that time, and not try in any way to indicate that this announcement of resources, which is of benefit to the people of Winnipeg and the City of Winnipeg Police Service, in any way falls into that category.

Now that he is actually speaking about the grant, however, let me say that this government has expressed

our view that it is important that we would like to see the money used for resources which would assist in dealing with youth crime and with auto theft and with auto vandalism, but as in community policing or in the direction of policing very specifically, we do understand that it is the chief of police who has to make those decisions, because it is the chief who has to ultimately answer to the people of the city of Winnipeg for how those police officers are deployed from within his overall plan.

So, though we are supportive of officers being in the community, we are supportive of officers being visible and we are supportive of officers being available and working in certain areas, I would still argue that it really is the chief who will make the ultimate decisions.

We have every reason to believe that he is interested and he wants to be co-operative and that he has a view that we believe is going to be very helpful to the people of the City of Winnipeg. However, we also accept his authority in the deployment of resources in this area.

Mr. Mackintosh: I wonder how the minister can say that when, on the other hand during the election, the government promised that police surveillance would be focused on gang leaders now. That is surely not deference to the chief of police.

Mrs. Vodrey: Certainly we work co-operatively with the City of Winnipeg police and have been doing so in terms of dealing with youth crime and violence, and that is exactly what that initiative is dealing with in terms of surveillance of gang leaders in the area of youth crime and violence. So there certainly is co-operation and consultation in that particular initiative which was announced.

Mr. Mackintosh: During the election, the government also announced that a Crown attorney would be dedicated to prosecuting auto thefts and major property crimes.

Would the minister tell the committee why having one Crown attorney doing that work is better than the current situation?

Mrs. Vodrey: I think I understood the member's question. The announcement referred to a Crown dedicated, in this case, to the co-ordination of cases dealing with auto theft and auto vandalism. This has certainly been a serious concern raised by the people of Manitoba and by the people of the city of Winnipeg. So we certainly intend to fulfill that promise in that way.

Mr. Mackintosh: My question to the minister is, what improvement will this be over the current situation? Why is it that one Crown attorney dedicated to auto thefts and major property crimes is an improvement?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, in this area the improvement we believe will be where we have one Crown dedicated to the co-ordination of cases in auto theft and auto vandalism, we then have an ability to make sure that all the Crowns get the right information on case law, that there is an understanding throughout the province of a consistent approach. It is not unusual to take steps to act in this way where we really want to make sure, and we want to highlight certain issues, so that is where we believe the improvement will come.

Mr. Mackintosh: Has a Crown attorney now been dedicated to auto thefts and major property crimes?

Mrs. Vodrey: No, the dedication of a co-ordinator has not yet occurred, but it is in the process.

Mr. Mackintosh: It is my recollection that the election promise talked about one Crown attorney prosecuting those charges, but I will await further announcements from the minister.

Going back to the throne speech from December, the government announced that it would be looking into the placing of names of convicted pedophiles on the Child Abuse Registry. I am wondering if the government has taken any initiatives there.

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) and I have been working very carefully and very closely to bring this commitment into effect. The Minister of Family Services, as the member knows, has a large part in this, and his question in terms of where that department is in terms

of making the changes required to have this occur would really be best placed to that particular minister.

I would like to assure him that this has been an issue that we have been looking at and have been working together and there have been a number of meetings which have occurred, including ministers, by the way. This has not just been left to our officials to work on but ministers have been present at this meeting because we would like to see it occur.

Mr. Mackintosh: Is it the minister's position that there are now wilderness correctional camps in Manitoba?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, we have one camp that we would call a wilderness camp. It is operating out of the facility at Milner Ridge but it is a separate section dedicated to youth.

Mr. Mackintosh: Other than being located in the wilderness, are there any features of this camp that liken it to the wilderness camp model that I think should be familiar to the minister?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am more than happy to give a great deal of detail on this particular issue when we get to the youth corrections section. However, just to start in thinking, yes it does involve young people working within the community in terms of the wilderness area. They are youth who are currently in open custody.

I will be happy, when we get to that line, to talk to the member about any questions that he might have in relation to the operation of that particular wilderness camp which this province has developed in fulfillment of promises that we made to the people of Manitoba and have concluded that promise. The line is 4.(c).

Mr. Mackintosh: The minister talked about the No Need to Argue initiative in her opening remarks. As I recall, she said there had been 30 submissions from schools to date. Is that right?

Mrs. Vodrey: That is correct.

Mr. Mackintosh: Could the minister share with the committee the nature of the 30 submissions? If she

cannot itemize each one can she at least give an overview of the types of projects that were submitted?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chairman, I can give two examples at this time, and then we may want to discuss it further when we get to the line.

One example is 50 students and staff at David Livingstone School developing a presentation on gangs and racism to present to parents, students and police; in Nordale, coming together to develop community-based programs—that was the second example, by the way. The first one was the presentation on gangs and racism. The second one was parents, students and police in Nordale coming together to develop community-based programs. A third example is students at Sturgeon Creek identifying key problems in their school and neighbourhood and designing their own special No Need To Argue program.

So those are three examples, actually, of initiatives that are being developed. They are being developed in different parts of the city. I am pleased that it is a co-operative effort between students and staff and involves also police and other community members who are looking at the issue of trying to provide some solutions to the youth crime and violence, something really very specific.

* (2250)

You know, I think very often it is easy for us to say that something should happen, but it is sometimes very difficult to actually get our minds around what is a problem that we believe we can actually make a difference and attempt to provide solutions to. That is what the No Need To Argue program does, in that it actually creates a focus for certain groups of people who have found an issue or a problem that they are prepared to work on and that they are prepared to put some time and effort into developing a solution to.

I am happy when I look at just even the three examples that I brought forward so far, that these programs are ones which are co-operative. It is always very difficult for a single group to feel that they have the responsibility.

Then I can also say, it is always easy for others to criticize. When one group actually comes up with a solution, identifies a problem and comes up with a solution, if others have only been observers in the process, then they are the ones who will just jump all over it and can very easily take issue with the solutions recommended and can somehow say that that is not the way to do it—much like opposition who ends up saying that it is just simply not the way to do it, that is wrong.

But, you know, we have to start somewhere, Mr. Chairperson. We have to start with the identification, and we have to have a group of individuals who are prepared to put their minds to that and actually make a start. I am very happy to see that this has happened, because sometimes people really get frustrated when they are criticized all the time, especially community people, people who are volunteers, and so they do not want to step forward and step into an arena that will put them at risk.

I am pleased that the No Need To Argue program has in fact been a spark or a reason for some communities to come together, identify a problem, risk stating a solution even though there may be some people—perhaps even in this House those who disagreed with the No Need To Argue program who will be critical of them. I hope that the member will not be. I hope in fact he will be reinforcing and supportive for the motivation and the actual work which has been done in the No Need To Argue program.

Mr. Mackintosh: It is our view that this kind of a program is generally positive, although a very, very small part of the solution. I can say that in my community her department is helping in one regard, and that is the establishment of a St. Johns Youth Justice Committee. I thank the minister and her staff, excellent staff, that came out to the meeting. We are working away, in fact, just the other night we concluded our draft constitution.

Another problem in our community, if the minister wants to hear about community problems, we have the North Y that is closing at the end of the month. We have asked the minister and this House to commit to helping to fund ongoing programs at that facility, without response. If the minister is truly interested in

community responses I hope that she will look at problems that are raised in this House and community solutions that are brought forward.

We have people in north Winnipeg, hundreds of them, who are trying to keep that facility alive. What it is is crime prevention in the broader picture. The problem that is facing this government is its lack of acknowledgement of the connection between social and economic conditions, recreational and social services with the crime rate.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chairman, as I believe I said at the time to the member, this program is one which is operated by our Community Corrections, and the money is certainly available. The decision of the North Y and their board is one they will have to take with the circumstances known to them. However, our money to support this program remains firm.

If we are not able to operate that program at the North Y then we will look to operate it in another facility, because our commitment is to involve these young people in some positive activities which in fact offer all kinds of skills, not only the skill of the particular sport but also other kinds of skills that go with the give and take of that kind of activity.

I would not want the member to leave an impression on the record that somehow this government is withdrawing support or that we have not understood the importance. We certainly have. If the North Y is unable to sustain itself or to be sustained then certainly our program will look to continue to exist and we may in fact require another location.

I am glad the member has found the staff in the Department of Justice very supportive in the setting up of this youth justice committee. I certainly am going to pass that on, because I know that they work in the community at all kinds of hours and all kinds of days of the week in order to encourage the community to become involved. Youth justice committees are one way that a community can become involved and feel that in fact they are making a difference.

The member speaks about a link between poverty and crime. I just would—

An Honourable Member: I did not just say poverty. I did not use the word "poverty."

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable minister, to conclude.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, the member has stated that he did not say "poverty." I see. He has many other times. I do not know what has caused him to sort of change his language or the meaning. I believe that he used the word "socioeconomic condition," I think that is what he said. If he did not mean poverty, then maybe he is going to have to clarify, because that has certainly been what he has been saying before. He has taken a position that simply blamed all people who in his mind live in poverty for criminal activity. That is what he has done. He has pointed a finger—

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Mackintosh: A point of order, Mr. Chair. It must be getting late because the minister is talking rubbish. I never said any such thing, and if she wants to make such aspersions on me and on my comment, I ask her to withdraw them because they are silly.

I grew up in poverty. Perhaps the minister does not know that. I am not going to cast aspersions on people who have had the misfortune of low income. That is nonsense. There happens to be a higher risk of people in low-income groups to criminal activity. That is well known to the minister, I am sure. That does not mean everyone in poverty will lead a life of crime.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable member does not have a point of order, but I would caution him on the use of the language. It could cause a little bit of problem with the decorum.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable minister, to continue.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am pleased to hear that the member now says what he has said a hundred times

before is rubbish. He says it is now. He says it is rubbish that poverty and crime go together. That is I think what he said this time. However, he has obviously made the statement that there is a positive connection enough times because now, not only did I believe I heard him say it, others have written about what he has said.

So maybe in the course of these Estimates, he will clarify what he means about the connection or what the role is, because certainly those of us who have heard him, both this time and other times—including members of the media—have assumed that is exactly what he meant.

However, let me just conclude my comments with the fact that we certainly understand that this kind of recreational program may be very beneficial for young people, and I hope I have clarified for him the position of Community Corrections on the very specific program that he raised.

Mr. Mackintosh: Now I get where the minister gets her themes. It is was from a recent Sun editorial. If the minister wants to rely on that for her theoretical foundations and her approaches to what I say, then she is more than welcome to do that. I welcome that.

The government has announced that the winner of the No Need to Argue initiative would receive a dance and \$2,000, I believe. Is the government also committed to implementing the first place proposal even if it costs?

* (2300)

Mrs. Vodrey: I think the member should know that this government is interested in all of the recommendations which come forward through the No Need to Argue program. We certainly will be looking at all of them. For groups that are participating in the No Need to Argue program they are looking at getting their programs off the ground within their own communities, and that is really part of the project itself.

So I just want to make it clear that we are interested in all of the recommendations which come through, and we will be looking at all of them carefully.

Mr. Chairperson: Is it the will of the committee to take a five-minute break and leave the clock running? [agreed]

The committee recessed at 11:01.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 11:09.

Mr. Mackintosh: Is there any government budget for the No Need to Argue program, other than, say, the \$2,000 award?

* (2310)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chairman, any funds required are contained within the general Prosecutions budget. There is not a separate line that deals with No Need to Argue. There have been quite a few donations, as well, as the member knows. I think he has the original news release, that we have had corporate support from a number of different areas, both from record companies; Motown records; from the Winnipeg Free Press; from Q-94 and from MTN.

We have been very happy with that, plus we have had co-operation from a number of other areas. Certainly the City of Winnipeg police has been a major supporter and co-operating, as well, as the community police in particular. As well, we have had support from the violence co-ordinator from the City of Winnipeg. So there has been a number of donations. It has really been a co-operative effort, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Mackintosh: I would ask the minister if she would share the description of the 30 submissions made to her office so that we can review them and see what people in the community, particularly in the schools, are looking at for solutions and whether she wants to provide that before or after the winner is chosen? I have no preference.

Mrs. Vodrey: Certainly the member can see the submissions after the winner is chosen. As I have said, our commitment to the people of Manitoba is that we

will put these submissions and ideas together. We will bind them and we will make sure that people throughout Manitoba who are interested and who might like to look at some of these solutions and programs could perhaps then start them up in their own community.

Mr. Mackintosh: When I was speaking of the North Y facility closing—and I hope the minister would go back and look at my questions in Question Period on this issue—I was not asking that the minister merely continue the Night Hoops program.

I would encourage her department to expand that program to other communities in Manitoba but to also see the North Y facility and the programs that can be offered out of that place as a crime prevention mechanism. In other words, it is our approach, and I know the government does not share that.

I know from comments, the minister endorses the view of the world of Naomi Lakritz, that income gap is irrelevant to crime or social and economic conditions are somehow unrelated to crime. I would like to hear the minister expound on that one because that is an amazing position for a minister to take. I can understand a journalist taking that to be provocative.

I urge the minister to look at the North Y as one of many facilities which can prevent crime, can provide youth, for example, with somewhere to go, something to do.

Mrs. Vodrey: It is my understanding that the North Y has a board of directors which makes decisions regarding that facility. It is not the first time that the member has suggested that government, in some way, overrule boards of directors in terms of their decision making though they have the overall plan.

So my answer to him is that we fund a program which takes place at the North Y. He has asked questions of other members of this House regarding a commitment to the North Y in particular, and as Minister of Justice what I can say is I agree that there must be places available where these programs can continue. But whether or not as a government we are able to force a facility or an independent board of

directors to overrule its decision, I do not know that that is possible.

What I have tried to reassure him is that we certainly—if the north end Y ultimately finds that it must close its doors—will look to continue the programming, because we are in support of providing this kind of program for young people. That is why we are doing it, but it is very difficult, for him to ask will we step in and try and overrule an independent board of directors.

I understand it is not the first time that he has asked us to do that. He has asked us to step into the City of Winnipeg and specifically direct and so on. It is not possible always to do that, but it is possible to support programming in various areas, and that is exactly what we are doing.

Mr. Mackintosh: The minister is just so loose with her rhetoric here. I never suggested, first of all, that the province specifically direct the City of Winnipeg—and I think she is referring to community-based policing. I urged the minister—and it was our program during the election—that the minister use the province's money as a carrot to spur community-based policing, use the tool and the lever of provincial funding.

Second of all, with regard to the North Y, we are not asking the government to overrule anything. The North Y closes on June 30. The community is aggressively seeking partners to maintain that facility. It needs help, and that is where this government can come in, if it would be a partner with the community, if it would listen to the community.

The minister talks about listening to the community and uses the No Need to Argue example very often. We are saying the voices from the community are speaking loud and clear. It is time for the government to put its commitment where its mouth is.

* (2320)

I just had one comment, just to get this off my chest. The No Need to Argue name says that arguing is negative. I think that experiences in this Legislature and experiences other places prove that arguing can be a very positive thing.

The problem in society, the problem increasingly among some youth, is violence. There is no need to use violence. That is the issue. You can argue. You solve your disputes by discussing, by debating, but do not use violence. I do not want that comment to detract, however, from this program as being one small part of what I would like to see as a crime prevention initiative by this government.

Mrs. Vodrey: I am pleased that the member has been able, at last, to offer some support to the No Need To Argue program.

Just to enlighten him, I would like to point out to him where the name No Need To Argue came from. The other major sponsor, one of the biggest draws of this program, is an international musical group called the Cranberries, and the Cranberries' CD title is called No Need To Argue. This particular rock group is one which has a nonviolence message. They are an Irish group. They have seen violence on a regular basis. Violence is a way of life, and it is their message, through their music, to say to young people, in particular, or those who listen to their music, that violence is not the way to solve your problems, and so they came up with the title for their CD called No Need To Argue.

The Cranberries were really interested when told about, or when they knew that Winnipeg, Manitoba, in Canada, was really working very hard at trying to find some positive ways to engage young people in nonviolent, preventative activity, and our concern about criminal activity of young people, and they agreed. This is just an amazing thing for an international rock group. They agreed that the name and the picture from their CD could be used very specifically for our program called No Need To Argue in the city of Winnipeg.

It really was an amazing gesture on their part, because they speak a language that youth understands, that they would then pass this message on, and allow us, in our city, to use it. Not only did they do that and agreed that all our posters are printed No Need To Argue with pictures of the singers and with our Street Peace logo on the top, because it was the Street Peace program that inspired a lot of their interest.

They also filmed public service announcements where they spoke to students in Winnipeg, young people in Winnipeg, via public service announcements, using their term No Need To Argue to encourage young people to find ways other than violence.

So, I know the member is raising something from an adult point of view, and I appreciate that he, as he said, had to get it off his chest, but I do think it is very important to look at the incredible breadth of co-operation that we have had with this program.

I have to say, the Cranberries, to many people in this Chamber, may not be the most familiar group in the world, but I take them back to groups when we were young people, groups like the Beatles, who had that group shown an interest—and I see members smiling, but this is true.

Had that group shown an interest in a project that we were doing in the city of Winnipeg and produced public service announcements that said to youth in the city of Winnipeg, here is a message for you young people, there is no need to argue or whatever it was, we would have really felt that we had gained some attention for the work that we were doing.

That is exactly what has happened in this No Need to Argue program. That is why Motown records is a sponsor. That is why there are public service announcements from the Cranberries. That is why we have some of the sponsorship.

I would just like to take another moment to speak about the sponsors. I look at those media groups who have agreed to sponsor. I look at Q-94, which is one of our sponsors, and when they came along as a sponsor, their view was, you know, we are parents too, and we have children. One of the sponsoring radio announcers, a young person, was involved in the peer counselling program at his school.

So there are programs in place, but this was a way for a group which does have influence with young people to make a point and for other adults, important figures in children's lives, to come on board, as well, in understanding. I understand that the No Need to Argue

CD is still No. 1 one on the charts throughout North America and the United Kingdom.

So that is just for the record, Mr. Chair, should anyone be looking at Hansard and wonder how, in fact, this program got its name. I wanted to make sure that this was available for the record because there are other cities in other provinces across this country who are looking at Manitoba with real envy, and had we not been able to put this program together, I can tell you that British Columbia was waiting in the wings to have an opportunity to do that.

So I am very pleased at the level of co-operation that we have had within the city of Winnipeg, and I really look forward to seeing the programs that the young people bring forward.

Mr. Mackintosh: The comments by the minister have to be really put in the context of what this government is doing to our community, and while this program has some positive aspects, depending on how the government deals with the submissions, whether it is prepared to implement not just the first prize, but a number of the submissions if they are good and if they result in a more peaceful community, but this government, this is the same government that cut funding to the friendship centre in Winnipeg, resulting in what I understand was the dismissal of eight youth workers in now what is called the war zone, the same government that cut funding to foster parents.

This is the government that is overseeing the highest poverty rate in Canada, one of the highest rates of children in care per capita in Canada. I can go on and on. The minister has got to impress, not just on herself but on her cabinet colleagues, that crime rates and violence is a factor of social and economic conditions which in no small way are determined by this government.

I wanted to go on now to some of the other items in the budget. We can pass 1.(b).

Mr. Chairperson: Item 1.(b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$401,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$81,300—pass.

1.(c) Policy, Planning and Special Projects (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$309,900. Shall the item pass?

Mr. Mackintosh: Just 1.(b).

Mr. Chairperson: Just 1.(b) you are passing?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes.

Mr. Chairperson: We are on 1.(c) Policy, Planning and Special Projects.

* (2330)

Mr. Mackintosh: I had just asked the question earlier of the minister as to what initiatives the government had in the works, was planning or what the government rejected to deal with repeat drunk drivers.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chairman, I would like to just take a moment to introduce Mr. Greg Yost who is the executive director of Policy and Planning who has now returned to the table.

He chairs a committee which is composed of Health, the Addictions Foundation, MPIC, Highways and police, and this representative committee is looking at ways to deal with repeat offenders or recidivism for drinking and driving. I am told that they are in the process of drafting a series of recommendations. I have not seen those recommendations yet. I expect to see them within the next few months, and certainly I will be looking at them carefully, because this government has taken a very strong stand on drinking and driving, and certainly we want to look at all other options that we can that will reduce people from being repeat offenders.

Mr. Mackintosh: Would the minister tell the committee what her position is on reducing the blood alcohol level from .08 to, say, .05 as recommended by CAID?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chairman, this is one of the issues that the committee chaired by the executive director of Policy and Planning is looking at. The ministers who would be responsible have had a meeting in which this

issue was raised by CAID. I think we all recognize that the federal government controls the code and that really it can only be done by the federal government, the lowering of the blood alcohol level back to .05.

However, this committee that I have just spoken about, chaired by the executive director of Policy and Planning in which Health and the Addictions Foundation, MPIC and Highways and police are participating on, are also looking at this particular issue. I have not received a recommendation from them yet, but I will be looking forward to receiving that.

Mr. Mackintosh: I am wondering if the minister can now comment on how the seizure and impoundment registry is working and whether there have been major glitches discovered in that process.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chairman, I am told that this seizure and impoundment registry system is in fact working quite well, but there are some areas which still require attention. That is another area this committee is working on.

I will just give the member an example of one of the issues which needs to be worked on. Where someone has a first offence, the seizure is for 30 days. The second offence, the seizure is for 60 days. As the member said, we do have some repeaters, the people who repeat, and perhaps are seized for a third time. So, we need to look at an overall strategy of how to deal with repeaters, or recidivists, and we also have to look at then how that will affect things such as the seizure and impoundment registry system and what we are going to do with people who in fact exceed the second time. So there are a number of areas in the system that we believe are working well. There still are some areas that will require continued looking at. That is exactly what we are doing now.

Mr. Mackintosh: Could the minister advise what the role of her department is in trying to secure a 911 system throughout Manitoba?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, as the member knows, the lead minister on this area is the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Findlay). He is the minister

who has really been looking at the overall strategy. We have committed to the RCMP telecommunications system and sometimes there is some confusion between our commitment to that system and what that means. Is that a commitment to the overall rural 911?

The rural 911 is the responsibility of the Minister of Highways and Transportation. I believe he has given some answers in relation to that in the Legislature, and certainly I am sure would elaborate in the course of his Estimates. For us our role, is somewhat unrelated though perhaps maybe useful, is our commitment to the RCMP telecommunications.

Mr. Mackintosh: Does the minister want to talk about that RCMP telecommunications system now or do we do that under Policing?

Mrs. Vodrey: It probably would be best discussed under Policing when the appropriate staff, who have been working with it, are available.

* (2340)

Mr. Laurendeau: 1.(c) Policy, Planning and Special Projects (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$309,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$153,600—pass.

1.(d) Financial and Administrative Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$971,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$234,200—pass.

1.(e) Human Resource Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$681,900.

Mr. Mackintosh: A few months ago I was asked by a reporter to comment on a situation involving alleged sexual harassment by a Crown attorney and a Legal Aid lawyer. I did not, of course, comment on the merits of the allegation because I knew nothing of the individuals or the allegation except what was described to me.

What I did comment on and what I found disturbing, was the length of time it took for the department to deal with the complaint that was made by the Legal Aid lawyer to the department and specifically to the minister.

As I recall, it took months. If memory serves me right, I believe it was eight months it took for a response, not the initial response but the response which ended up in consequences for the Crown attorney.

I ask the minister how she can justify that lack of response, particularly given the mandate of her department in advancing the objectives of the zero tolerance policy. I want to know what mechanisms are in place in the department to deal with allegations of sexual harassment made against any employee in the department.

Mrs. Vodrey: I agree that the time frame, and I cannot confirm the time frame that the member has mentioned tonight, and I do not have the information before me to be able to confirm that time frame, but if he is raising an issue of this taking a long time, my understanding is that yes, it did take a fairly long time. I am concerned about that. I think it did take really a significant amount of time, but the member knows—I think he knows anyway, because I have talked about this before—that there was an investigation into this matter. The investigation was done by the civil service and the human resources area of our department and that the action was there was an attempt to mediate this.

So it took a certain amount of time, due to the process that was followed, but I would say that, though I cannot give an amount of time, my sense is that yes, this seemed to take quite a long time until there was really an end result achieved. So I will take that point he has raised and say to him that I share that concern, and we are certainly doing what we can to not have such a lengthy time.

He asks what happens under other circumstances or, in general, what we do, and it follows very much the same kind of a process in that others are involved other than the Department of Justice. There is an investigation. The investigation takes place with the human resources part of the Department of Justice, but that human resources area does act to investigate. Also, the civil service does an investigation, and then following that investigation, there is an action determined. That action is determined, by and large, by the civil service, whether or not there will be mediation

or whether or not there may be some consequences which are required and which the civil service will recommend.

So that is what happens in general. I believe that is also what happened in the particular case which the member has spoken about, and I have agreed that the time frame is of a concern.

Mr. Mackintosh: I trust that the minister will take action and improve the systems in her office and in the department to expedite any such allegations. I wonder what the Management Development for Women is on page 26 of the Supplementary Information book?

Mrs. Vodrey: This is a government-wide program and our department is very happy to participate. It is a program which provides opportunity for women who have a particular interest in moving ahead in government.

What happens in the program is that there is opportunity by training through the Civil Service Commission, and also placement, and our department is happy to participate in the program.

* (2350)

Mr. Mackintosh: Could the minister tell the committee how many women are currently enrolled in the program?

Mrs. Vodrey: I presume the member means the number of women who are within the Department of Justice and who are taking part in this program, otherwise he would have to ask the Minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission (Mr. Toews) in terms of what is happening across all of government. For the Department of Justice, I will take the question under advisement and get back to the member.

We can, at the moment, think of some women who have participated in the program and are currently in management positions, but we would like to get the accurate facts for him in terms of the number of women participating through the Department of Justice at the moment. So I will undertake to do that.

Mr. Mackintosh: Can the minister tell the committee how women in the department become familiar with this program offering?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, as I said, this is a program of the Civil Service Commission. To my knowledge, the Civil Service Commission is the one who advertises or circulates information about this program. The member may want to ask that minister more details.

For our part, we are certainly available when this information has been received and women are interested in participating. We will gladly provide them further information that we have and look and see how we can assist them in terms of taking part in this program, but I would remind him again it is a program operated through the civil service. We are a co-operating department and are glad to be that.

Mr. Mackintosh: Does the government have any way of measuring whether the department's Affirmative Action program has met its objectives?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chairman, the statistics from the Department of Justice are collected yearly. Those statistics are passed on to the Civil Service Commission, and the Civil Service Commission is responsible for collecting statistics from all across government.

We collect statistics in terms of numbers of employees, male employees, female, native employees, disabled and visible minority, and we have had some concentration in the area of native employees and Affirmative Action particularly in response to recognition of the needs of aboriginal people in the justice system.

Mr. Mackintosh: Would the minister share with the committee the full statistics for the last, I do not know, say, the last for years? I just needed a number of years so that we can see what trends are developing.

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, I will be pleased to provide the statistics to the member, and there is additional detail, if that would be helpful to him. Rather than read the statistics of each area into the record this evening, I will be pleased simply to provide it to the member, and he

can have a look at it, and actually visually look at it as opposed to just having to hear it, if that is agreeable to him?

Mr. Mackintosh: I look forward to getting the information. I also wonder if the minister could provide the objectives that have been established for the department's Affirmative Action program?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, we can provide him with what has been set as targets and show our process of working towards meeting those.

Mr. Mackintosh: Pass.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 1.(e) Human Resource Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$681,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$135,700—pass.

1.(f) Computer Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$762,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$414,500—pass.

We will now move on to Resolution 4, 2. Public Prosecutions (a) Public Prosecutions (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$5,722,000.

The hour being 12 midnight, committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Marcel Laurendeau): The hour being after 10 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow (Tuesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, June 19, 1995

CONTENTS

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

Committee of Supply

Culture, Heritage and Citizenship	1991
Highways and Transportation	2009
Northern Affairs	2032
Justice	2075