

Second Session - Fortieth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

Official Report
(Hansard)

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Daryl Reid
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	NDP
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	NDP
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	NDP
BLADY, Sharon	Kirkfield Park	NDP
BRAUN, Erna	Rossmere	NDP
BRIESE, Stuart	Agassiz	PC
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	NDP
CHIEF, Kevin, Hon.	Point Douglas	NDP
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	NDP
CROTHERS, Deanne	St. James	NDP
CULLEN, Cliff	Spruce Woods	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FRIESEN, Cameron	Morden-Winkler	PC
GAUDREAU, Dave	St. Norbert	NDP
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Liberal
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
HOWARD, Jennifer, Hon.	Fort Rouge	NDP
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Richmond	NDP
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	NDP
KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Swan River	NDP
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	Dawson Trail	NDP
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	NDP
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	PC
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor, Hon.	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	NDP
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	PC
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	NDP
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	NDP
PALLISTER, Brian	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Midland	PC
PETTERSEN, Clarence	Flin Flon	NDP
REID, Daryl, Hon.	Transcona	NDP
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Kewatinook	NDP
RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	NDP
ROWAT, Leanne	Riding Mountain	PC
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	St. Paul	PC
SELBY, Erin, Hon.	Southdale	NDP
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	PC
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin	NDP
SWAN, Andrew, Hon.	Minto	NDP
WHITEHEAD, Frank	The Pas	NDP
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WIGHT, Melanie	Burrows	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	Morris	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, July 11, 2013

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Good afternoon, everyone. Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Mr. Speaker: We'll move on to—

PETITIONS

Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Yes, good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

The provincial government promised not to raise taxes in the last election.

Through Bill 20, the provincial government wants to increase the retail sales tax, known as the PST, by one point without the legally required referendum.

An increase to the PST is excessive taxation that will harm Manitoba families.

Bill 20 strips Manitobans of their democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to not raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by A. Barkman, E. Friesen, S. Fehr and many other Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker: In accordance with our rule 132(6), when petitions are read they are deemed to have been received by the House.

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

The provincial government promised not to raise taxes in the last election.

Through Bill 20, the provincial government wants to increase the retail sales tax, known as the PST, by one point without the legally required referendum.

An increase to the PST is excessive taxation and will harm Manitoba families.

Bill 20 strips Manitobans of their democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to not raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

This petition is signed by L. Orchard, E. Giffin, J. Gretsinger and many, many more fine Manitobans.

**Reopen Beausejour's Employment
Manitoba Office**

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

(1) The RM of Brokenhead and the town of Beausejour are growing centres with a combined population of over 8,000.

(2) Employment Manitoba offices provide crucial career counselling, job search and training opportunities for local residents looking to advance their education.

(3) The recent closure of Employment Manitoba's Beausejour office will have negative consequences for the area's population who want to upgrade their skills and employment opportunities.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to reopen Beausejour's Employment Manitoba centre.

This petition is signed by T. Renaud, J. Lloyd, R. Crognali and many, many more fine Beausejourites.

Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

The provincial government promised not to raise taxes in the last election.

Through Bill 20, the provincial government wants to increase the retail sales tax, known as the PST, by one point without the legally required referendum.

An increase to the PST is excessive taxation that will harm Manitoba families.

Bill 20 strips Manitobans of their democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to not raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

This petition is signed by K. Hill, B. Rose, N. Jack and many more Manitobans.

Applied Behaviour Analysis Services

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

School learning services has its first ever waiting list which started with two children. The waiting list is projected to keep growing and to be in excess of 20 children by September 2013. Therefore, these children will go through the biggest transition of their lives without receiving ABA services that has helped other children achieve huge gains.

The provincial government has adopted a policy to eliminate ABA services in schools by grade 5 despite the fact that these children have been

diagnosed with autism which still requires therapy. These children are being denied necessary ABA services that will allow them access to the same educational opportunities as any other Manitoban.

Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or eliminated from eligibility for ABA services if their need still exists.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Education consider making funding available to eliminate the current waiting list for ABA school-age services and fund ABA services for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

And this petition is signed by F. Rempel, L. Lucier, P. Wolf and many more fine Manitobans.

Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

The provincial government promised not to raise taxes in the last election.

Through Bill 20, the provincial government wants to increase the retail sales tax, known as the PST, by one point without the legally required referendum.

An increase to the PST is excessive taxation that will harm Manitoba families.

Bill 20 strips Manitobans of their democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to not raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

And this is signed by L. Whitehead, S. Monchamp, S. Sulz and many others.

Municipal Amalgamations—Reversal

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The provincial government recently announced plans to amalgamate any municipalities with fewer than 1,000 constituents.

The provincial government did not consult with or notify the affected municipalities of this decision prior to the Throne Speech announcement on November 19th, 2012, and has further imposed unrealistic deadlines.

If the provincial government imposes amalgamations, local democratic representation will be drastically limited while not providing any real improvements in cost savings.

Local governments are further concerned that amalgamation will fail to address the serious issues currently facing municipalities, including an absence of reliable infrastructure funding and timely flood compensation.

Municipalities deserve to be treated with respect. Any amalgamations should be voluntary in nature and led by municipalities themselves.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Local Government afford local governments the respect they deserve and reverse his decision to force municipalities with fewer than 1,000 constituents to amalgamate.

This petition is signed by B. Gillis, C. Stevens, R. Leureault and many other fine Manitobans.

Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

The provincial government promised not to raise taxes in the last election.

Through Bill 20, the provincial government wants to increase the retail sales tax, known as the PST, by one point without the legal required referendum.

As an increase to the PST is excessive taxation that will harm Manitoba families.

Bill 20 strips Manitobans of their democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

* (13:40)

To urge the provincial government to not raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

Submitted on behalf of D. Maclean, V. Bennett, L. Brondot and many other fine Manitobans.

Applied Behaviour Analysis Services

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

(3) School learning services has its first ever waiting list which started with two children. The waiting list is projected to keep growing and to be in excess of 20 children by September 2013. Therefore, these children will go through the biggest transition of their lives without receiving ABA services that has helped other children achieve huge gains.

(4) The provincial government has adopted a policy to eliminate ABA services in schools by grade 5 despite the fact that these children have been diagnosed with autism which still requires therapy. These children are being denied necessary ABA services that will allow them access to the same educational opportunities as any other Manitoban.

(5) Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or eliminated from eligibility for ABA services if their need still exists.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Education consider making funding available to eliminate the current waiting list for ABA school-age services and

fund ABA services for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by R. Lavallee, C. Gabriel, H. Hunter and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

(1) The provincial government promised not to raise taxes in the last election.

(2) Through Bill 20, the provincial government wants to increase the retail sales tax, known as the PST, by 1 per cent without legally—the legally required referendum.

(3) An increase in the—to the PST is excessive taxation that will harm Manitoba families.

(4) Bill 20 strips Manitobans of the democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to not raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by L. Hall, K. James, N. Aurarayar and many, many others.

Applied Behaviour Analysis Services

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

The preschool waiting list for ABA services has reached its highest level ever with at least 56 children waiting for services. That number is expected to exceed 70 children by September 2013

despite commitments to reduce the waiting list and provide timely access to services.

The provincial government's policy of eliminating ABA services in schools by grade 5 has caused many children in Manitoba to age out of the window for this very effective ABA treatment because of a lack of access. Many more children are expected to age out because of a lack of available treatment spaces.

Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access in or age out of eligibility for an ABA service.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Family Services and Labour consider making funding available to address the current waiting list for ABA services.

This petition is signed by R. Dauphinais, M. Baker, D. Kawaler and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

The provincial government promised not to raise taxes in the last election.

Through Bill 20, the provincial government wants to increase the retail sales tax, known as the PST, by one point without the legally required referendum.

An increase in the PST is excessive taxation that will harm Manitoba families.

Bill 20 strips Manitobans of their democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to not raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

And this petition is signed by M. Adam, C. Derksen, J. Derksen and thousands of other Manitobans.

Applied Behaviour Analysis Services

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

(3) School learning services has its first ever waiting list which started with two children. The waiting list is projected to keep growing and to be in excess of 20 children by September 2013. Therefore, these children will go through the biggest transition of their lives without receiving ABA services that has helped other children achieve huge gains.

(4) The provincial government has adopted a policy to eliminate ABA services in schools by grade 5 despite the fact that these children have been diagnosed with autism which still requires therapy. These children are being denied necessary ABA services that will allow them access to the same educational opportunities as any other Manitoban.

(5) Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or eliminated from eligibility for ABA services if their need still exists.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Education consider making funding available to eliminate the current waiting list for ABA school-age services and fund ABA services for individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder.

Signed by D. Mulal, K. Cochrane and G. Whital and many other Manitobans.

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention for children with autism.

(3) The preschool waiting list for ABA services has reached its highest level ever with at least 56 children waiting for services. That number is expected to exceed 70 children by September of 2013 despite commitments to reduce the waiting list and provide timely access to services.

(4) The provincial government policy of eliminating ABA services in schools by grade 5 has caused many children in Manitoba to age out of the window for this very effective ABA treatment because of a lack of access. Many more children are expected to age out because of a lack of available treatment spaces.

*(13:50)

(5) Waiting lists and denials of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or age out of eligibility for ABA services.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Family Services and Labour consider making funding available to address the current waiting list for ABA services.

This is signed by G. Stone, R. Kehler, K. Giese and many, many other Manitobans.

Provincial Sales Tax Increase—Referendum

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

(1) The provincial government promised not to raise taxes in the last election.

(2) Through Bill 20, the provincial government wants to increase the retail sales tax, known as the PST, by one point without the legally required referendum.

(3) An increase to the PST is excessive taxation that will harm Manitoba families.

(4) Bill 20 strips Manitobans of their democratic right to determine when major tax increases are necessary.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government not to raise the PST without holding a provincial referendum.

This petition is signed by S. Korotash, A. Rousseau, D. Hrynyk and many more fine Manitobans.

Hydro Capital Development—NFAT Review

Mr. Cameron Friesen (Morden-Winkler): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

(1) Manitoba Hydro was mandated by the provincial government to commence a \$21-billion capital development plan to service uncertain electricity export markets.

(2) In the last five years, competition from alternative energy sources is decreasing the price and demand for Manitoba's hydroelectricity and causing the financial viability of this capital plan to be questioned.

(3) The \$21-billion capital plan requires Manitoba Hydro to increase domestic electricity rates by up to 4 per cent annually for the next 20 years and possibly more if export opportunities fail to materialize.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge that the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro create a complete and transparent needs-for-and-alternatives-to review of Manitoba Hydro's total capital development plan to ensure the financial viability of Manitoba Hydro.

And this petition is signed by J. Wiebe, D. Douglas, J.P. McLeod and many, many others.

Applied Behaviour Analysis Services

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

(1) The provincial government broke a commitment to support families of children with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, including timely diagnosis and access to necessary treatment such as applied behavioural analysis, also known as ABA services.

(2) The provincial government did not follow its own policy statement on autism services which notes the importance of early intervention of children with autism.

(3) The preschool waiting list for ABA services has reached its highest level ever with at least 56 children waiting for services. That number is expected to exceed 70 children by September 2013 despite commitments to reduce the waiting list and provide timely access to services.

(4) The provincial government policy of eliminating ABA services in schools by grade 5 has caused many children in Manitoba to age out of the window for this very effective ABA treatment because of a lack of access. Many more children are expected to age out because of a lack of available treatment spaces.

(5) Waiting lists and denial of treatment are unacceptable. No child should be denied access to or age out of eligibility for ABA services.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Family Services and Labour consider making funding available to address the current waiting list for the ABA services.

And this petition has been signed by V. Martens, J. Toews, S. Froese and many, many more fine Manitobans.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs Fourth Report

Ms. Melanie Wight (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs presents the—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS presents the following as its Fourth Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on July 10, 2013 at 11:00 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- Recommendation for Appointment of the Chief Electoral Officer
- Process for hiring a new Auditor General and a new Ombudsman

Committee Membership

Committee Membership for the July 10, 2013 meeting:

- Ms. BRAUN
- Mr. CULLEN
- Mr. DEWAR
- Mr. EICHLER
- Mr. GOERTZEN
- Hon. Ms. HOWARD
- Hon. Ms. MARCELINO (Logan)
- Mr. MARCELINO (Tyndall Park)
- Mr. PEDERSEN
- Hon. Mr. SWAN
- Ms. WIGHT

Your Committee elected Ms. WIGHT as the Chairperson.

Your Committee elected Mr. MARCELINO (Tyndall Park) as the Vice-Chairperson.

Motions:

Your Committee agreed to the following motions:

- THAT the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs recommend to the Lieutenant Governor in Council that Ms. Shipra Verma be appointed as the Chief Electoral Officer for the Province of Manitoba effective immediately.
- THAT a sub-committee of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs be struck to manage the process of hiring a new Auditor General and a new Ombudsman for the Province of Manitoba, under the terms and conditions as follows:

(a) the subcommittee may only report back to the committee with a recommendation that has received a general level of acceptance by all members;

(b) the subcommittee consist of four government members, two official opposition members and one independent member;

(c) the subcommittee have the authority to call their own meetings, the ability to meet in camera, and be able to undertake duties it deems necessary in order to fulfil its responsibilities in the hiring process;

(d) the subcommittee appoint an expert advisory panel of three members to assist in the hiring process and ultimately provide the subcommittee with a prioritized list of candidates;

(e) the subcommittee establish the terms of reference for the expert advisory panel, and that Legislative Assembly staff may be authorized by the Chair to attend all meetings of the subcommittee and the expert advisory panel.

Ms. Wight: I move, seconded by the honourable member for Tyndall Park (Mr. Marcelino), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: Any further committee reports?

Seeing none, we'll move on to tabling of reports.

Seeing none, ministerial statements.

Seeing none, we'll move on to the—

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: We have a few guests with us this afternoon that I'd like to introduce.

I draw the attention of the honourable members to the public gallery where we have Mackenzie Rowat, daughter of the member for Riding Mountain (Mrs. Rowat), and also Tommy Stefanson, the son of the honourable member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson), who are guests here in the gallery this afternoon.

And also in the public gallery we have with us today the former member for Pembina, the

well-tanned Mr. Peter George Dyck, and so on behalf of honourable members, we welcome you back to the Assembly.

Speaker's Statement

Mr. Speaker: And it's also—something else I'd like to share with the House before we proceed to question period.

You will remember just a short time ago we had a member of our Hansard branch who retired here, Brenda Hudson. We also—I'd like to advise the House that we have another long-serving employee of Hansard who will be retiring from the service with the Assembly on July the 12th, Virginia Struthers, who has been with Hansard since the fall of 1989 and has held a number of positions with Hansard over the years, including shift supervisor and, most recently, the assistant Hansard manager position.

Virginia did not want to have a lot of public acknowledgement about her retirement, but I felt that it was important to let members know about this retirement so that we could express our appreciation to her for all of her hard work and her devotion that she has demonstrated over her years of service to the Assembly. And even though Virginia is not in the gallery with us here this afternoon, I know that she will be hearing the Hansard tapes later. And so I would ask all honourable members in the Assembly to rise and to join with me and share our appreciation and say thanks to Virginia for all that she has done. *[Applause]*

And since Virginia will be listening to these tapes later, I want to wish her well in her retirement and a long and healthy retirement. Best wishes, Virginia.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Now we'll proceed to—

ORAL QUESTIONS

Fiscal Management Manitoba Ranking

Mr. Brian Pallister (Leader of the Official Opposition): Our best wishes to Virginia.

And also, congratulations on the Coppertone tan.

A national—respected national think tank released ratings a few months back on rankings for fiscal management capability, and unfortunately Manitoba ranked bottom of the barrel under this administration, dead last, 10th of 10. And they

observed that we didn't have a revenue problem but rather a spending problem, something we have repeated in this House. It seems that the government is somewhat addicted to spending and they need to get the monkey off their back, and that's difficult for them to do.

The question, then, is how will the NDP improve that ranking in the years to come? Well, the answer is they'll increase spending by a whopping 7 per cent over just the next two years, and that is double the rate of the economic growth projection for our province, which means that you can't shake the monkey off your back by feeding it, Mr. Speaker. And so we urge the government to understand that they need to take steps on the road to recovery and admit they have a spending problem.

Does the Premier understand that his high-spending problem has become a high-tax problem for the people of Manitoba?

*(14:00)

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, our per capita expenditure has been the second lowest in Canada over the last five years. The per capita spending is the fourth lowest in the country.

The—but it is true that we are making investments in infrastructure, flood protection infrastructure, fundamental to the safety and security of Manitobans, also very cost-effective, about—for every dollar invested, about \$35 in avoided costs through serious destruction as we see in, unfortunately, in other parts of North America and around the world.

We will continue to have a balanced approach which does not take \$550 million out of the base and put people at risk, put core services at risk of health and education, but at the same time keeps our cost of living very affordable in Manitoba. And we demonstrate that in every budget, the affordability advantage in Manitoba, and we will keep it affordable. Among the ways we will keep it 'infordable' is our auto insurance, home heating and electricity rates will be the lowest in the country.

Mr. Pallister: And on taxes, the highest, Mr. Speaker. And this is a bottom-of-the-barrel government and ranked low for a reason.

They're also last in terms of debt management by this ranking service. So from 2010 to '13, net debt to GDP increased by 25 per cent. That's enormous, and that means that this Premier is ranked dead last on

debt management, yet he proposes to move up in the rankings by increasing debt by 11 per cent each year for the next two years. And that's not construction, that's not building; that's demolition and it's unsustainable. What this Premier (Mr. Selinger) is doing is digging a giant debt hole.

With all this digging, will he admit that he's not even trying to move up in the rankings, he's digging himself into a deeper hole?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the kind of digging we're doing on this side of the House is foundations for new schools, foundations for new personal care homes, foundations for housing so people have a decent place to live.

And we're laying a foundation through our skills agenda to have 75,000 more young people trained and ready to enter in the labour force, where we know with a growing economy in Manitoba—one of the better growing economies in the country—we are going to need more skilled more workers. So we will have the facilities for them to be trained in. We will have the equipment for them to be trained in, and we will have the instructors and teachers and professors and apprentices and journeypersons available to train those people.

We will grow the economy, keep Manitoba one of the most affordable places to live in the country and do it in such a way that we do not put core services of health and education at risk by \$550 million of indiscriminate cuts all across the board.

Mr. Pallister: Nothing puts core services at greater risk than mismanagement, and that government is mismanaging the economy. A debt hole is hardly a good foundation upon which to build a future of security for Manitobans, and this government ranks 10th out of 10, bottom of the barrel for a reason. It's so low it can't get under—it can't get lower.

And the fact is they've already taken over a highly taxed province. This Premier has taken over the leadership of a highly taxed province, promised not to raise taxes, followed it up with the biggest tax hikes in a quarter of a century, and on the back of it proposes to raise those taxes yet again. Home insurance, gas, hydro, beer and wine, car registration, all of these are real bills for real Manitobans, and they're going up. You name it, this government is increasing taxes on it. And on top of that, they've torn up Manitobans' right to vote on tax increases. They've torn up the taxpayer protection act. So they

have nowhere to go but down in the ranking, yet they have nowhere to go but up because they're at the bottom already.

The bottom may look like up to this Premier, but will he admit that it's very likely that he's just given up on trying to improve his ranking on fiscal management—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The member's time has expired.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, it is true that in 1999, when we were fortunate enough to be elected by the good citizens of Manitoba, that the corporate tax rate was 17 per cent and now it's 12 per cent. It is also true that the small business tax rate was 9 per cent and now it's zero. And it is also true that an average family in Manitoba now pays 24 to 25 hundred dollars less in personal income taxes. And it's also true that the Property Tax Credit, which had been cut from \$325 to \$250, has been increased by us to \$700 for every citizen in Manitoba who's a homeowner.

Manitoba has remained one of the most affordable places to live in the country. The economy has grown among the strongest of all the Canadian provinces over the last five years. And the member is correct, over the last decade as well, it has been a very strong economy. And his approach to cancelling hydro, to cancelling floodways, to reducing—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. First Minister's time has expired.

PST Increase Referendum Request

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): Last Friday evening Kristina Poturica, a small-business owner, told the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers) that, and I quote: Over the last year we have collected over \$36,000 which we have not directly benefited from, and now we are going to add another 1 per cent. Ms. Poturica stated: And if they truly believe that this is the best way for our province to prosper, then they should be able to defend it.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Poturica and Manitobans across the province have challenged the minister to take the PST increase to the people.

Will this Premier hold a public and binding referendum in which all citizens can either approve or disapprove of this increased tax?

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister responsible for Persons with Disabilities): And before I answer the question, I thought we would hear an apology at the top of question period from the Leader of the Opposition. He used a very unfortunate word in the House this morning during the vote, and I want to give him the opportunity to apologize for those comments.

When I heard what I heard and I asked him if he had said that, he did not deny it. He said that I didn't know what he was referring to, which suggests to me that he believes there is a context in which the word that he used is acceptable. There is no context in which that word is acceptable, Mr. Speaker, and I would ask him to apologize to people who live with intellectual disabilities and their families for using that word this morning.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: Official Opposition House Leader, on a point of order.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I think there was some confusion. The minister was seemingly posing a question to the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Pallister). Maybe she's practising for a few years down the road, but the issue really is they should be apologizing for voting against a bill that would have protected children this morning. They should all be ashamed of themselves.

Mr. Speaker: Government House Leader, on the same point of order.

Ms. Howard: I was trying to offer their leader the opportunity to apologize for something that was very unfortunate that he said this morning, that he did not deny saying this morning when I asked him if he had said it. It's my role, I think, as the minister responsible for people with disabilities to challenge that kind of comment when I hear it, and that's why I did it.

On the point of order raised by the government House leader, this morning we had the first opportunity to have discussion of a bill that was introduced about 24 hours ago. We said in our comments that we're interested in the ideas in those bill. We're going to take some time to consider it. We invited the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) to come and speak to us about that bill, and in due course we'll be happy to consider those ideas. But it is going to take a little longer than 20 hours, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the Official Opposition House Leader, I must refer all honourable members to the House of Commons Procedure and Practice, second edition, 2009, page 510, chapter—of chapter 11, and I'll quote it for the House: The Speaker ensures that the replies adhere to the dictates of order and decorum and parliamentary language. The Speaker, however, is not responsible for the quality or the content of the replies to the questions.

So, therefore, I must respectfully rule that there is no point of order because the Speaker has no ability to enforce that.

Mr. Goertzen: I challenge the ruling.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: The ruling of the Chair having been challenged, all those in favour of sustaining the ruling of the Chair will please signify it by saying aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed, signify it by saying nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In the opinion of the Chair, the Ayes have it.

Mr. Goertzen: On division, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: On division.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Now continue with question period.

Mrs. Rowat: As Kristina walked to committee last week, she passed the Nellie McClung monument and she was reminded that these five women fought hard for the women to have the right to vote. What would they say to the Premier (Mr. Selinger) about taking away our right to vote on this increase in PST? Kristina said, and I quote: I believe they would be appalled by this violation of our right to have a say and to vote on something that will impact our lives in so many ways.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier respect the rule of law and call a referendum on the PST increase?

* (14:10)

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour): I want to say, as we've said in this House before, that that decision that we took

to raise the PST by one point was a difficult decision, and it was a decision that we took because we believe that, on balance, when we knew that the demands that were in place for critical infrastructure like roads and bridges, when we knew that we would need the money to match the federal government because we don't want to leave a dime of that money on the table, that the choice was to cut deeply into the services that Manitobans count on like health care and education or take a more balanced approach, although a difficult decision, to raise the tax.

That is the decision that we took, Mr. Speaker. It was a difficult decision. We know it's challenging for many families, but we believe it was a balanced approach.

Mrs. Rowat: Katrina's parents left a war-torn country to come to Canada. She said people immigrate here because our democratic society allows people to live their lives to the fullest and to have choices that they most likely would not have in their homelands.

The most precious of all the rights is the right to vote. Katrina believes that by not following the due process and by deciding to not have a vote by the people, this government is letting them and all existing Canadian citizens of Manitoba down.

Mr. Speaker, does the Premier (Mr. Selinger) believe he is being accountable to how he is using his power and judgment by not calling a referendum on the PST increase?

Ms. Howard: You know, I was at many of those hearings and listening to the presentations, and one of the things that I was impressed with at the presentations, whatever side that Manitobans presented on, was the—not only the preparation that they put into that presentation but also that they wanted to have a real debate. I remember one grad student in particular who presented, and when the official critic tried to draw him into political debate, he was really clear that he was going to have no part of that, that he was there to have his say and he wanted his voice to be heard and respected.

And I—and one of the things I think we also learned is the need for us to be accountable to Manitobans for the money that we use to do the things like provide services, build critical infrastructure that they need. We will be accountable to Manitobans. We've always been accountable to Manitobans, Mr. Speaker, that's the way our—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The minister's time has expired.

Flood Protection Plan (Brandon) Government Timeline

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): You know, in 2011, \$20 million was committed for one-in-300 flood protection for Brandon. Now, the Brandon flood protection plan was presented on June 24th of this year, 2013, with a one-in-100 flood protection for 1st Street. The dikes were supposed to be built by now.

Mr. Speaker, on July 2nd the Premier rose in this House and promised one-in-700 flood protection for Brandon. Did the Premier mislead the House?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister responsible for Emergency Measures): You know, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what the member opposite has got against the City of Brandon, but the current work that's being done in terms of flood protection is being led by the City of Brandon.

We have, by the way, precommitted—we committed to \$5 million in 2012 to make permanent, temporary dikes that were put in place in the 2011 flood. We precommitted \$20 million on a 90 per cent share from the provincial government, and the City of Brandon has come forward with a plan that would protect residences and businesses, starting with the first priority being the 18th Street dike, the second priority being the existing lift station, the third priority being the land drainage, fourth property being the 17th Street dike.

So the member's incorrect. The City of Brandon's working diligently—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The minister's time has expired.

Mr. Helwer: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm just reading the plan that was presented at council, and maybe the minister has a different plan, so could he present it to the House?

In fact, the Premier uses the 14 per cent PST excuse to fund flood protection for Brandon when the money was already committed two years ago. Now we see the promises are being broken just as the NDP government broke their promise and raised the PST.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier tell this House today what level from flood protection will he commit to for Brandon and when will it happen?

Now, what are the odds of me getting a straight answer on this one: one in 100, one in 300, one in 700?

Mr. Ashton: Again, Mr. Speaker, apparently the member opposite has no faith in the City of Brandon and the people of Brandon that have done the work, that have done the due diligence.

I want to say, there's a pattern with members opposite. I know that the last couple of days he's also criticized us for spending too much money in Brandon on infrastructure. I want to admit, Mr. Speaker, no one accused the previous government of spending too much money on Brandon infrastructure, because they didn't spend money on Brandon infrastructure.

And just as we're working to repair the highways and make significant progress, we're in partnership with the City of Brandon, which has brought in a comprehensive plan. We precommitted the money. We will flow it thanks to this budget, but no thanks to the member opposite who voted against all of those infrastructure projects for Brandon.

Mr. Helwer: Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't have odds that high, so obviously no answer there.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the dikes have sat untouched in 20—since 2011, except that the weeds are growing on them while this government dithers away. The money was committed two years ago, not in the PST that they talk about here.

What level of protection would be built and when? How can this Premier (Mr. Selinger) pretend that he needs a PST for this when the money has already been committed, already committed, as the minister said in his answer there? Tax increases, Mr. Speaker, that means that Manitobans will pay much more and get much, much less.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, there are other jurisdictions that follow the same kind of approach that members opposite do. I'd invite him to look at Fargo, which is at this moment still look at building a diversion. Their mayor is committed. They have a 'pi'—now, by the way, they're bringing in a sales tax to pay for it.

He might want to visit our friends and neighbours in Alberta. The city of Calgary has one-in-25-year protection, no sales tax, no flood mitigation.

We, Mr. Speaker, over the last decade, have spent a billion dollars on flood protection, and we are

going to protect Brandon, no thanks to the members opposite, who always vote against every dollar we put there for Brandon.

Keeyask Community Centre Project Update

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): Right, and Fargo respected their citizens and they had a referendum on that one.

In the community newspaper for TCN in the winter of 2007, they reported that a Keeyask Centre was supposed to be for traditional lifestyle, traditional foods, traditional knowledge, Cree language, museum and oral history, land stewardship and healthy food—fish.

I'd like to ask the NDP member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak): Where is the Keeyask Centre?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act): Mr. Speaker, I'm surprised at this amazing coincidence that the taxpayers federation of Manitoba had a press release today and, behold, the member, the Tea Party member for Springfield, stands up and asks a question on the same issue, the issue we spent five hours on, we discussed in the House.

And I, you know, when the member talks about information not being provided, I'm looking at the information that's provided on the web, Mr. Speaker. It's about—it's 30-odd pages outlining the contract, the conditions, the requirements, et cetera, for the TCN centre. The member could look it up on the web. It's been there. He knows it's there, and the information's been provided.

Mr. Schuler: Actually, Mr. Speaker, I've been asking about this for over three months and we have yet to receive one proper answer.

In fact, in the community newspaper for TCN of spring 2011, it states that construction could begin as early as June 2011 and will take about six months to complete.

Now being July 2013, I'd like to ask the NDP member for Kildonan, the minister responsible: Where is the Keeyask Centre?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, the member spent about half an hour discussing this very issue and the specifics with the president of Hydro, and he received those answers. But he's falling into the camp with the taxpayers federation that every time they do a press release, he has to—in fact, their last one was wrong, as is his comment.

Section 3.2 of the agreement, the member should refer to, it's on the web—he knows that—as well as section 8, Mr. Speaker, that outlines both the purpose requirements and the reporting and accounting procedures as they relate to the Keeyask Centre.

Mr. Schuler: Well, Mr. Speaker, in an email from Jack Braun, Ininew Limited Partnership, to Victor Flett, it says: schedule, project could take up to one year to complete, possibly sooner. If start construction June 2012, complete June 2013 at the latest.

*(14:20)

The question is really simple, Mr. Speaker, and I'll say this slowly and simply. We have now three documents that have talked about a completion date, none of which have been met.

The question is simple to the minister, to the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak): Where is the Keeyask Centre?

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, Mr. Speaker, it's being built up in Split Lake, and as the 'ind'— and as the president of Hydro indicated, they thought that they would be constructing it this year.

Just two weeks ago, the member released an audited report that looked after the expenses and outlined that there was some expenses difficulties. The member alleged fraud, et cetera; that was wrong. The member was wrong then; he's wrong now.

The contract's between Keeyask and it's between Hydro. There's accounting procedures in place that are outlined in this 30-odd-page document that the member has read. It's on the web. It's public and the member keeps denying that this information's public.

He's being inaccurate, Mr. Speaker, and he's attacking First Nations, which is something the members opposite love to do every day in this House. They don't want to work with First Nations; they want to go after them.

Winnipeg Beach Maintenance Effects on Tourism

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): We on this side of the House love to showcase this province.

Tourism may be put at risk with the lack of maintenance of the provincial park in beautiful downtown Winnipeg Beach where the grass has grown out of control, cottage a downturn—causing a downturn in tourism.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Tourism: What is the government's plan to restore tourism in the Winnipeg Beach Provincial Park?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship): Yes, Mr. Speaker, we certainly know that there have been some concerns expressed about Winnipeg Beach, and I understand the grass cutting has taken place. I think there was some dispute over one piece of land that actually was federal land. And I'm sure that we'll work that out and make sure that that park continues to be beautiful and an attraction for tourists.

Mr. Eichler: Mr. Speaker, mayor and council in Winnipeg Beach work very hard to keep their community clean, neat and well maintained. This NDP government has not only embarrassed the province but the town of Winnipeg Beach by not cutting the grass in the provincial park, which is shameful.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Tourism again: What is the government plan to restore tourism in downtown Winnipeg Beach?

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, Mr. Speaker, just to reiterate, I understand that there were some concerns. We are making some efforts to restore some areas of our parks to natural areas and reduce our emissions, at the same time address the funding challenges.

But, Mr. Speaker, we also know that it's important to maintain beautiful places in Manitoba. And, in fact, I think until the Spruce Woods Provincial Park announcement, the biggest investment ever in a provincial park in Manitoba was the refurbishment, the redoing of the Winnipeg Beach Provincial Park.

But we will certainly make efforts and follow up on concerns in case the grass hasn't been cut yet.

Mr. Eichler: Mr. Speaker, thousands of people love to go to Winnipeg Beach, as they should. The town has bylaws in place that the citizens have to obey: cut and maintain their grass. They're embarrassed this government has abandoned them.

I ask the member from Gimli: Will he take a stand and stand up for his community of Winnipeg Beach, yes or no?

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, I know what Conservatives do to provincial parks when they have budget challenges. Think of the 230 positions they laid off when they were in office; 71 of them were in parks alone. So I think that if the Conservatives ever

were in office, we wouldn't just see a reduction in grass cutting, we'd see a reduction in lawnmowers. They'd probably just put them back in the garage or sell them.

Lake Manitoba Flood Protection

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): Mr. Speaker, the Premier continues to spin his fairy tale about the dangers of flooding around Lake Manitoba. He says if it was required, we could take measures necessary to protect people around the lake. That statement's totally false. There is no additional outlet out of Lake Manitoba. If a summer flood occurred, there is no measures the Province could take without constructing another channel.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier correct the record today, admit he has no plan to address a summer flood on Lake Manitoba?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the Lake Manitoba is about 813, right now, feet above sea level. It's projected to peak at about 813.1 inches. The existing channel is operating. As the member knows, they—we built the emergency channel in Lake St. Martin so that any additional water that needed to go out through the diversion from Lake Manitoba would not cause additional flooding in Lake St. Martin. The emergency channel was—had equipment positioned on it this spring.

We want to ensure that anything we do for Lake Manitoba does not make Lake St. Martin worse. We want all communities to be protected, which is why, unlike the member opposite, we committed \$250 million to build a second channel out of Lake Manitoba and to make the emergency channel permanent, and the members opposite voted against that. It's not uncharacteristic that they would do that. The difference is we will build, they will stop it.

Mr. Briese: Mr. Speaker, this channel that he's committed to is 10 years after the flood happened in 2011 to completion.

Mr. Speaker, water flows into Lake Manitoba. They continue to exceed outflow. The new channel will lower Lake St. Martin, but the cork in the bottle for Lake Manitoba is the Fairford outlet. There's no capacity to handle a summer flood on Lake Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier tell the truth? Commit to fast-tracking a new channel out of Lake Manitoba.

Mr. Selinger: I actually appreciate the interest in additional work for flood protection in Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin from the member opposite because the difference is we have committed the resources to do it. The engineering work is being undertaken. We would be happy to advance it as rapidly as possible. All the members have to do, if they want to support it, is support the budget that has the engineering money in it, support the budget that will have the public construction works in it and to support a budget that will put the resources in place to protect the people at Lake Manitoba, Lake St. Martin, the Assiniboine valley in a way that will ensure that they are secure for the future.

The members opposite say they support those things, but they are never willing to put the resources in place to do it. And the last example, when they were in office, 1978, they cancelled the additional channel out of Lake Manitoba.

Mr. Briese: Mr. Speaker, I'd remind the Premier that he's already illegally collecting money to pay for that channel.

Mr. Speaker, Lake Manitoba levels are above operating rates. Inflow exceeds outflow. No additional channel out of Lake Manitoba, a shoreline eroded by the 2011 flood, no increase in capacity on the Assiniboine River east of Portage. The victims of the 2011 flood don't need more broken promises; they need more outlet out of Lake Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, why does the Premier think seven years is an appropriate time frame for the construction of another outlet out of Lake Manitoba?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, we, unlike the members opposite, are prepared to start on it right away, and that's why the engineering resources have been allocated in this budget to get started on an additional channel out of Lake Manitoba as well as make the emergency channel in Lake St. Martin a permanent channel.

Members full well know that this is a commitment that we have made that they do not support. They are not prepared to put the resources in place. They are not prepared—they actually said in the 2011 flood that we were overdoing it, we were overstating the case of the risk in 2011. They downplayed the risk and they did not believe that the real threat was coming.

And this spring, what did they do again? They put people in the diversion channel and put

communities downstream from Portage la Prairie in the area of St. François Xavier and Cartier at risk. That's their approach to flood protection: put people at risk. That's what they do; we won't do it. We will build it, Mr. Speaker.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Children in Care Service Purchase Agreements

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, it's day 15 of this emergency sitting. For three days I've been raising concerns about children for whom the government is a guardian who've not been going to school. It is a big problem that the NDP refused to admit exists.

* (14:30)

Now, the Minister of Family Services recently mentioned that she's now negotiating service purchase agreements with group homes for funding provision. She mentioned B & L Homes as an example.

I ask the Minister of Family Services: What standards and mechanisms are set out in these service purchase agreements to ensure that kids are going to school?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Premier): I appreciate the question. This area—this question about children attending school is an important one, which is why we've put additional resources in place, which is why when we have service purchase agreements that it's understood that children are supposed to do as well as possible in school and get the supports necessary. Those supports include people working in the group home working with the child. They include social workers working with the child. They include alternative program arrangements made with the specific school division in question.

We have put in resources in place through the Education budget to allow people to stay in school until 18 with proper supports, and we will continue to do that. We have Brighter Futures program money which has kept kids in school and helped them succeed. We have a Pathfinder program which is a national program which has over 200 children from at-risk neighbourhoods with tutoring, additional supports after school, opportunity to earn some income during the summers and an ability to get access to education resources 12 months of the year.

Those kinds of supports are making a big difference for young children, including children in care.

Education Plans

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, the question is: Is there a requirement in the service purchase agreement that every child actually has to go to school, and is there a report as to whether they're doing that? Does the government actually know?

One of the reasons, apparently, that children are having trouble going to school is that schools are finding it challenging to accept children from CFS group homes. They're finding it too difficult sometimes to manage with their available resources. Now The Public Schools Act requires that there's a plan and resources for every special-needs child.

Given the apparent resistance to having kids from CFS group homes in some schools, what is this Minister of Education's (Ms. Allan) plan to ensure that all kids in CFS have the appropriate education plans in place and will be attending school this fall?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education placed in her budget over a million dollars for Learning to Age 18 co-ordinators which are available in various school divisions. She also has special resources in her budget to help the school attendance and school completion in specific high schools around the province of Manitoba, and we work very closely with our school divisions and each school division works very closely with the children and the families in their neighbourhoods to ensure children are attending school, to ensure that when they're attending school they get appropriate level of attention.

Members opposite voted against our initiative to reduce class size from—down to 20 for K-to-3 students. That Class Size Initiative has made a big difference in the K-to-3 period. Members opposite voted against it, including the Leader of the Liberal Party.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, it's not rocket science. The question is: Are these kids going to school or not? The answer is they're not. That's the problem. The government is a guardian, but they're not going to school.

So I ask the Premier: Has he got a plan to ensure that all service purchase agreements, all regulations, all planning in relation to group homes actually work to ensure that every school-age child is receiving the

education they deserve so they have a chance to succeed?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, all children under the age of 18 are required under our provincial legislation to be in attendance at school and to remain in school. That applies to any caregiver in the province of Manitoba, whether it's a Child and Family Services agency, whether it's a group home, non-profit organization that we fund, whether it's a family, whether it's a child who's living in other arrangements. All children are required to go to school.

And we've empowered school divisions with additional resources to provide the supports for them to be there. Social workers, people that work in group homes, learning to 18 co-ordinators, resource teachers, classroom teachers, guardians and parents are all have a responsibility to ensure that child is in school until 18 and gets an education appropriate to their needs and their interests.

We put in place the K-to-3 initiative to reduce class sizes. Educational evidence supported that that gets better outcomes for young children.

We have an early childhood development commitment in this budget and a Department of Children and Youth that works with young mothers from a prenatal period in terms of benefits, home visits and additional supports. All of those supports are—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The First Minister's time has expired.

New Science Labs Winnipeg High Schools

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): Since our government was first elected in 1999 we continue to invest heavily in education to provide students with a high quality learning environment despite the fact that Conservatives and Liberals vote against those investments every single time.

Yesterday I had the great pleasure of joining the Minister of Education and staff of Pembina Trails to tour a new science lab at Vincent Massey Collegiate.

Could the minister tell the House about the science lab renovations happening not only at Vincent Massey but at 25 schools across the province?

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Education): It was my pleasure yesterday to be at Vincent Massey

Collegiate to announce our initiative in this province in regards to investing in science labs all across the province, Mr. Speaker. When teachers and students come back this fall, they are going to be in state-of-art facilities, and this is our commitment to our young people to provide them with learning in the 21st century so that they can be in the best facilities of any facilities in the country.

We will continue to invest in public education and we will continue to invest in our young people so that we can prepare them for jobs in the global economy, Mr. Speaker. We invest—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The minister's time has expired.

Pioneer Manor (Ashern) Building Renovations

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): The pioneer lodge in Ashern, Manitoba, received a refresh renovation from Manitoba Housing during the 2012-2013 year. Work was done on the roof ventilation system and the common area, including converting a significant space in the common area to office space for a one-day-a-week Manitoba Housing employee. No consultation was done with the residents other than asking them what colour they wanted it painted after the work was done.

Mr. Speaker, is this how the minister approaches all renovations done by Manitoba Housing?

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Housing and Community Development): I'm proud to stand up and talk that we do renovations in Manitoba Housing complexes. I can tell you, I did some—I might have done some preparation for Estimates, and what I found out is in the 1990s, it was about an average of \$20 million went into maintenance and improvement. What I can tell you, in Budget 2013, \$107 million going into renovations.

So I shall not apologize about improving the quality of housing for all Manitobans across this province. Yes, we're doing renovations in Ashern Pioneer Manor, a total of \$750,000 in the last two years, and we are proud of those renovations, about making—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The minister's time has expired.

Mr. Wishart: The quality of life for the senior residents in the Pioneer Manor in Ashern took quite a hit when the renovation removed all visual access to the community around them by covering over the

windows and part of the common area outside for the office space, even though vacant office space existed down the street in the MIT building.

Mr. Speaker, shouldn't the quality of life and concern for the residents be more important than the convenience of the staff?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: The quality of life for all Manitoban residents is our priority in this government.

We are making these investments in Ashern to make a difference to support them. We are providing quality service. We have developed an office for the community resident manager, who will be on site. He will be able to provide those services that the seniors are asking for.

I had the opportunity in May to go and speak with the seniors and I met with 17 of them, and we talked about a solution. We talked about preparing and ensuring that this office space didn't obscure all of their vision, and what we're doing is we are continuing to work with them and to redevelop the office space.

So we have listened to them. We are making a difference, and we will continue to make these investments across the province.

* (14:40)

Mr. Wishart: Mr. Speaker, the minister was up there and did some consultations. However, what she promised that day is not happening. They are continuing to finish up the renovation as originally planned, and there will be no access to the public area.

Mr. Speaker, the renovations at Pioneer Manor seem to have a few other issues besides the disrespect of the residents. Icing on the roof from changes to the ventilation caused damage to the eavestroughing, soffits and fascia all around the residence and resulted in internal moisture problems that cause leakage in the common area and three of the 26 suites. Mould problems are—in newly installed but now wet insulation are likely.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister commit to a complete review of the project and its impact with the priority concerns of the residents in mind?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: We continue to meet and discuss the issues of the residence—of residents of Pioneer Manor and the tenants across the province of Manitoba. We are working with them to address the

situation. I can tell you, yes, there was ice damming and, yes, we've addressed it.

We will continue to work with them. We are making a difference. We've made an investment of \$750,000. We're proud of that investment, providing good quality, affordable housing for seniors in Ashern and families across this province.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Harvest Moon Society

Ms. Deanne Crothers (St. James): Mr. Speaker, Manitoba is fortunate to have the Harvest Moon Society working to develop sustainable local food systems that promote healthy eating, provide reliable income for farmers and create a connection between the Manitoban consumer and farmer. The Harvest Moon Society uses participatory, grassroots methods to promote environmentally sustainable food and strengthen relationships between urban and rural communities.

The Harvest Moon Local Food Initiative is a network of food-buying clubs in Winnipeg and western Manitoba. City residents can order a variety of meat and produce from local farmers and have them delivered to several buying club drop-off locations in their neighbourhood by the farmers who have grown or raised that food. Farmers follow set production standards to raise healthy animals and plants and protect the environment.

I am proud to have provided a location for a club in St. James behind my office at Portage and Linwood. This June, we had our first pickup where I had a chance to meet two farmers involved in Harvest Moon Local Food. Lisa Clouston and Greg Wood own Spring Creek Farm, where they sustainably and humanely raise grass-fed beef, pastured pork and chickens and more. They are energetic about their commitment to giving everyone who participates in the initiative the ability to definitively answer the question, Who's Your Farmer?, which is the initiative's catchphrase.

The Harvest Moon Society also promotes its vision of a more sustainable food system through its many educational programs. At the Harvest Moon Learning Centre in Clearwater, they hold workshops in water stewardship, sustainable agriculture and alternative energy, and run an annual summer camp to teach children about sustainability. They host student interns and partner with the University of

Manitoba faculty of architecture to hold studios to salvage materials from abandoned buildings. And at the annual Harvest Moon Festival, people from across Manitoba can enjoy the talents of local musicians and artists and connect with local producers.

In an urban centre, it is easy for us to forget where our food comes from and who grows or raises it. I would like to commend the Harvest Moon Society for their work in helping to decrease the distance between farmer and consumer and in promoting a more local, fair and sustainable food system right here in Manitoba. I encourage anyone who is interested in supporting Manitoba producers and having fresh food delivered right to our community to visit their website.

Thank you very much.

Kaelene Forsyth

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): This year, a Manitoba dog and its handler are the best in the world. Kaelene Forsyth and her dog Gypsy won the top prize at the 2013 world dock-stock dog championship at Calgary Stampede.

Kaelene and her family train about a dozen border collies a year, which they use to keep control of their livestock, for use in performances or competition, or to sell. As a kid, Kaelene was very involved with her dogs, and at a very young age, taught them to pull her in a toboggan. This led her father, also an accomplished dog trainer, to purchase some sheep so Kaelene could learn how to compete in the stock dog competitions.

When the dogs reach 8 months of age, the family begins training the dogs for competition, cultivating the animal's natural predatory and gathering instincts. This is normally a four-month process, but the learning process, like with humans, never ends. One of the biggest keys to success is willingness to listen, and the dog must obey and build a relationship with the owner. And as this is a true team effort, teams that have strong relationships often succeed, and Kaelene has built this with all of her animals.

In a stock dog competition, a dog is required to collect three sheep, guide them through an obstacle course and down a chute into a pen. It's a timed event, and so the dog and the handler must act quickly. Kaelene and Gypsy were able to complete the course in 1.17 seconds—or minutes, eclipsing the maximum of four minutes. This defeated 52 entries, winning the top prize of \$10,000.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also proud to say that Kaelene is a former employee in my office, and we're all proud of her today.

I would ask all the members of this House to join me in congratulating Kaelene and Gypsy on winning the world championship this year. I wish them every success in the years to come.

World Trade Centre Winnipeg

Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson): In a world that is becoming continuously more interconnected, our government and private sector understand the need to look at beyond our borders for the new business opportunities.

One great organization that is helping Manitoba businesses develop the skills and relationships needed to be competitive in the global marketplace is the World Trade Centre of Winnipeg. Established in partnership with the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, World Trade Centre Winnipeg has launched—was launched at Centrallia 2012. This marked the transition of Agence nationale et internationale du Manitoba, Manitoba's bilingual trade agency, into the WTC, branding Manitoba as a lucrative partner in trade and investment. Bilingual status provides a unique component to our World Trade Centre, the ability to reach out to Francophone markets and the rest of the world.

WTC Winnipeg is part of a global network with over 300 locations in 96 countries. The organization provides businesses in Manitoba to access the state-of-the-art trade services needed to succeed in the global economy while also facilitating international trade opportunities and encouraging investment in Manitoba.

The government of Manitoba shares a fundamental vision with the WTC to make Winnipeg a centre of influence and create awareness of the Manitoba advantage internationally. With our diversified industries, our made-in-Manitoba expertise is in high demand globally. By working together, we can continue to grow our economy and advance our international partnerships, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in the past decade, Manitoba's profile internationally has risen dramatically. I would like to thank World Trade Centre Winnipeg CEO Mariette Mulaire and the WTC board of directors, as well as Chuck Davidson, Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, Dave Angus, Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, Diane Gray of CentrePort and all the

incredible businesses that—in our province that are working to make Manitoba prosperous.

I would like to thank all those who participated in the trade mission in India earlier this year.

I request, Mr. Speaker, leave to include the names of the WTC director-board of directors into the Hansard.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave to include the names the honourable member has referenced in his member statement? *[Agreed]*

WTC Winnipeg board of directors are: Raymond Lafond, Chairman; André Granger, Westeel; Bernard Clément, Pembcorp Automotive Group; Jean-Pierre Parenty, Parenty Reitmeier Inc., Jean-Marc Ruest, Richardson International Limited; Alexander Malaket, Opus Advisory Services International Inc.; Don Boitson, Magellan Aerospace; Diane Gray, CentrePort Canada Inc.; Charlie Spiring, National Bank Financial Wealth Management; Leo Ledohowski, Canad Inns; Fiona Webster-Mourant, Manrex Ltd.; Albert El Tassi of Peerless Garments LP. Ex-officio members: David Angus, Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce and Carole Freynet-Gagné, ANIM.

Lake Manitoba Flood Victims

Mr. Stuart Briese (Agassiz): In 2011, the people around Lake Manitoba, the First Nations, ranchers, farmers and property owners, were sacrificed for the greater good of the province. They had their homes, businesses, and livelihoods swept away by the rising flood waters of Lake Manitoba. Millions of dollars of property were destroyed. Millions of dollars of income loss were experienced. The Lake Manitoba victims understood those millions in losses were to save billions in other areas of the province. The NDP government went out and admitted that the Lake Manitoba flooding was artificial, man-made and intentional, and promised to fully compensate the flood victims. Those promises were made just prior to a provincial election. They were good promises, and the flood victims believed them.

Fast-forward to post-election and the flood victims began to realize that they'd been promised a pack of lies. The victims assessed their losses, made their claims, and then ran into roadblocks everywhere they turned. Victims were promised full compensation. Those promises were broken. The flood victims were revictimized by this NDP government. Most were compensated at 50 to 60 per cent of the claim amounts.

What did the NDP government do? They inflated the flood cost numbers by including insurance programs such as crop insurance and ag stability. They inflated the numbers by including programs such as livestock mortality that had nothing to do with the flood, and then they blamed the federal government. The provincial NDP made the promise, broke the promise, and then, as usual, blamed someone else.

Today, the Lake Manitoba flood victims are still in jeopardy. Lake Manitoba levels are well above the normal operating levels. The shoreline is eroded and in many places non-existent, and the Portage Diversion remains open, pouring more water into Lake Manitoba.

* (14:50)

The NDP had promised a new outlet on Lake Manitoba, but the record of making and breaking promises is self-evident. That promise has been made not for this year, not for next year, but for seven years from now. The time frame is unacceptable to the Lake Manitoba flood victims. It should be unacceptable to all Manitobans. This is not how we treat each other in Manitoba. The flood victims of 2011 are the heroes of the circumstances they faced; treat them as such.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Bob Town

Hon. Erin Selby (Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy): I rise today to recognize the outstanding contributions of Mr. Bob Town throughout his career as an educator here in Manitoba. Mr. Town began his career in 1973 teaching physical education at Queen Elizabeth School in the Norwood School Division.

He went on to become the physical education supervisor for the division and was later appointed vice-principal of Queen Elizabeth School. He continued his administration duties as vice-principal and later became the principal for Nelson McIntyre. In 2002 he became the principal at J.H. Bruns where he continued until his retirement in June.

As the MLA for Southdale I have had the opportunity many times to visit J.H. Bruns, and I am always pleased to see such a positive environment where students are encouraged to grow and try new things. As a parent, it is comforting to know that our children are being surrounded by such supportive staff and students under the guidance of Mr. Town.

His support for the students goes beyond the classroom. As a highly accomplished athlete, Mr. Town shared his work ethic, knowledge and team spirit with those around him. He was a member of the Canadian Olympic basketball team and later inducted into the Manitoba Sports Hall of Fame. His genuine interest in students was shown by his attendance at many extracurricular activities.

When Mr. Town was asked about the highlight of his teaching career, he said it was working with so many devoted and caring staff members. He was often impressed at the great lengths his staff would go to try and ensure that students were successful.

I think it's fair to say that he is a strong leader who also went above and beyond to make sure that everyone could reach their full potential. He is respected and admired and well-known that his commitment to his students was his top priority.

Mr. Town will be truly missed by staff and students at J.H. Bruns as well as the community at large. But I believe that all staff and students would join me in wishing him all the best in his retirement.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

House Business

Mr. Speaker: Official Opposition House Leader, on House business.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): On House business, Mr. Speaker. In accordance with the rule 31(9), I'd like to announce the private member's resolution that will be considered next Thursday is the resolution on the need for safe, healthy and sustainable housing, brought forward by the honourable member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Wishart).

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that, in accordance with rule 31(9), that the private member's resolution that will be considered next Thursday is the resolution on the need for safe, healthy and sustainable housing, brought forward by the honourable member for Portage la Prairie.

Grievances? Seeing no grievances—

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader): Would you resolve us into Committee of Supply?

And just as a reminder for the House, as previously agreed, we'll sit until 7 tonight with votes between 5 and 7 deferred starting on Monday, no quorum between 5 and 7, and this will mean that we won't sit tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker: As previously agreed, of course, the House in the Committee of Supply will sit until 7 p.m. and that the understanding is that there will be no votes or quorum calls and that any votes that may be required will be held over until Monday.

And that we'll now resolve into the Committee of Supply as listed on today's Order Paper. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will you please take the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

CONSERVATION AND WATER STEWARDSHIP

* (15:00)

Mr. Chairperson (Mohinder Saran): Order. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Conservation and Water Stewardship. As has been previously agreed, questions for the department will proceed in a global manner.

The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): I'd just like to ask a few questions if I could, Mr. Chair, in regards to the provincial parks and some of the natural areas. Mr. Minister, the provincial park management program has management plans every year for each park, and I wonder if the minister can indicate to me how many of those plans are done up every year.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship): Just on the issue of provincial parks, there was a number put on the record yesterday that was in an original estimate, but it'd been adjusted and that was for Upper Fort Garry. I think the—I'd read in the record \$2.5 million, but it's actually 1.6.

In terms of management plans in the park strategy, Building The Parks Province, we committed to preparing management plans for all the parks. It's an effort that has to be completed, and so we began an accelerated program to get this task completed.

Seven parks—that's Whiteshell, Hecla-Grindstone, Grass River, Turtle Mountain, Atikaki, Grand Beach and Duck Mountain—have management plans. They date from 1983 to 2008. Contracts have been issued for consultants to work with staff in preparing plans for 30 small parks in the eastern, central and northwest regions. Plans for the eastern and northwest regions were completed by the winter of 2012. Public consultations on plans for the central region will occur this summer and I expect to be completed by this fall. Management plans for Birds Hill and Spruce Woods were completed in the winter of '12-13. The management plans for Little Limestone and Camp Morton are currently in preparation and the—we expect completion of these later this summer or fall. So by the end of 2013, 49 of the 86 parks will have management plans.

Mr. Maguire: Thank you for that answer, Mr. Minister. The—are there a number of those that will be rotated then? How often do they have to be renewed? Is there a—do you have a five-year plan on that or a 10-year plan on those?

* (15:10)

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, the objective is to put in place management plans that are long term and not short term. However, if there are any matters that arise that suggest that the management plan should be amended, then there's a process that would have to go—be gone through. So, we really see the management plans as being put in place in perpetuity, given the caveat about the need for process when items might arise.

For example, if there's a proposal for some change in a particular park, then it's not a matter of just answering by saying no. The department could proceed to another—to a process that could end up with an amendment to the plan.

Mr. Maguire: Will the other 37—he's indicated that 49 of the 86 will be—have plans by this fall? The other 37, are they ongoing or when will they be? Will there be plans for those or are they of a certain size?

Mr. Mackintosh: One of the reasons for Building The Parks Province park strategy was to set out what efforts had to be undertaken between now and 2020. In other words, it was a signal as to what the priorities were or what had to be done and so we had work plans put together.

So I think the best answer to the question is that, under the strategy, all park plans should be expected by the public to be completed by 2020 at the outside.

Mr. Maguire: Can the minister give me an updated view of the waste-water treatment facilities and lagoons in—that are being constructed in parks today?

Mr. Mackintosh: If the member wishes, we could get a total dollar figure. But, as I recall, the amount to be invested in waste-water upgrades just in the Lake Winnipeg basin was around \$20 million; that was a number I recall from the announcement.

But in terms of both drinking water and lagoons, we had the Grand Beach pump house upgrade completed in '12-13 and then under way now at Moose Lake is the new water treatment plant. There are three water system upgrades at Brereton Lake, William Lake and Rainbow Beach under way. We just completed the Grass River lagoon in Grass River Provincial Park.

And, as well, the four waste-water assessments: Stephenfield, Brereton Lake, Spruce Woods, new West Hawk, Falcon truck-haul facility. West Hawk and 'suprous' are two waste-water upgrades that are now under way.

If there's more information we can provide that to the member.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, can you just give me an example of what the cost would be of rebuilding the West Hawk Lake lagoon that's presently under way?

Mr. Mackintosh: We just have the numbers for the last two fiscal years, but it shows an investment of about 1.7. There may be some additional expenditures there in terms of engineering studies. Yes, this is not cheap. They're hugely expensive.

You know, we look—when we looked at the park strategy in the area of environmental leadership, we thought, it's really important to send a signal, and that's why we focused on that one when we announced the park strategy of the Province showing leadership on the lands that it owns directly and parks specifically when it comes to protecting Lake Winnipeg.

Mr. Maguire: The—what's the projected cost, then, of the whole West Hawk Lake lagoon project, and how much of that has been contracted out so far? These numbers that I believe you just gave me, the 1.7, are for the two previous years?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, that's for the current and the last fiscal year, so we're going to have to get the other years for the member. We can provide that to him.

Mr. Maguire: But is there—can they supply me with an estimated cost of the project?

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, what we have so far is, in '12-13, there was 1.28 allocated, and then in this fiscal, there is 450. So, we're talking about, what, \$1.65 million just for those two fiscal years. But in terms of other fiscal years, we'll have to get that number to the member because I suspect there may be some engineering studies that would have a number attached to it in an earlier fiscal.

Mr. Maguire: I guess what I was still wondering at is just that there—before you start a project like that, there has to be a budget for it, and I just wondered what the budgeted cost of the project was.

Mr. Mackintosh: We can get that to the member on a timely basis, perhaps even today.

Mr. Maguire: These numbers, then, are numbers that are already contracted out that you've supplied me with here? This is work that's been contracted out?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, I'm advised that the \$1.28 million from '12-13 likely has been contracted but the 450 for this year—we'll have to make inquiries to determine the status of letting of any contracts this year.

Mr. Maguire: If you could do that, please, that would be appreciated. And are there other plans for other projects? I know this is an infrastructure, sewer water, but this, in this case, lagoon's been dealing with the sewer side. Are there are plans to do docks and ramps and any projections like that in places like West Hawk or other lakes, other parks in the province?

Mr. Mackintosh: I was wondering if the member wants to just clarify his request. Is he only looking at West Hawk for investments for this year, because I—we can certainly provide that right now?

Mr. Maguire: Yes, if you could supply me with that now, and if there are others, provide me with a list of those later on if there are others in the province. You're doing upgrades—I guess, while I'm on here—is—at lake William, and you mentioned Martin and some of the others. I wondered if there are docks already in there or if there's more programs for docks

and ramps and that sort of thing in some of those locations?

* (15:20)

Mr. Mackintosh: I can advise that it—at West—at Whiteshell there is going to be a refurbishment of boat launches at McDougalls Landing, at Dorothy Lake and Star Lake, and that's this year. But, if the member would like other, and you know, a list of other docks and ramps we could provide that to him. As part of the West Hawk townsite, though, there are other improvements that are very significant, in fact, the major capital investment—historical capital investment, and we could break that down for the member if he wishes.

Mr. Maguire: Part of my next question was the \$100-million announcement that you had for provincial parks, and I know \$20 million of it, or 21, I think, was for Spruce Woods and—as you talked about. And so, if you want to include that as part of my next question where that \$100 million would be spent, if you could break that down to be part of it.

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, that's a very good question, and I think there might be a document available like that. We at least broke down not particularly into projects, but into areas where—of investment of the \$100 million over—between now and 2020. So we could certainly put that together for the member if it's not already readily available. As I recall, something like that when we made the parks strategy announcement there was some interest from the media in terms of how much was for waste water and how much was for other kinds of investment.

But I do recall that about \$20 million went to waste-water upgrades in the Lake Winnipeg basin and about \$21 million went for Spruce Woods. So you can see there's \$41 million out of a hundred million accounted for just with those two numbers. But we can provide a list to the member. As I say, it might not be each individual initiative, and recognizing, too, that maybe it's more useful because I do expect there to be some flexibility exercise by the department and ministers between now and 2020 in terms of rejigging within the \$100 million because issues arise from time to time. I've become very familiar with that. But we could at least have some breakdown as to what is proposed at this point for the allocation of the \$100 million.

So, if that satisfies the member, we can certainly do that.

Mr. Maguire: Yes. I know we're not going to get details of each specific project because some of them will not have been determined perhaps. But, if the minister can provide me with that list to the best of ability of what's available today in the plans, that would be helpful.

The—a couple of quick questions, just to switch back to Pimachiowin Aki for a minute—for a moment, how much has been raised in private donations, I guess, through that whole program on the heritage project? I assume it's all through the Winnipeg Foundation. I think we were talking about two and a half million dollars yesterday that they're holding. Is that what has been raised in the private investments or private donations for the Pimachiowin Aki heritage site?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, I know yesterday we had a question about fundraising efforts, and I can certainly advise that the Province has contributed \$2.5 million, and the annual reports of Pimachiowin Aki would set out the other numbers. So we had undertaken yesterday to get those numbers for the committee and we'll certainly attend to that—if the number are different or there's updated numbers that we can provide in addition to anything in the annual reports.

Mr. Maguire: And the Province was paying for the advertising campaigns in that whole program for Pimachiowin Aki, and I wonder if the minister can tell me or advise me as to how much the Province has spent in the last year in regards to the advertising for Pimachiowin Aki and if they are continuing to that in the next fiscal year as well?

Mr. Mackintosh: The—last year the Province contributed \$66,000 allocated to what is called fund development and campaign. We can just clarify as to whether that is about the nomination or you know, public awareness.

And then in answer to the question that was taken under advisement yesterday, I'm advised that as of May 31, the market value of the fund is \$3 million, and—\$3,060,493.75.

Mr. Maguire: And I appreciate—so the \$66,000 that was used in advertising, that sort of thing, but the department will continue to do that for the coming year, through the advertising?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, I'm advised that there's no allocation projected for this fiscal year for that line.

Mr. Maguire: I wondered if the minister could just provide me with some details around the average rental fees for cottages across the province for 2012—or '13, I guess, '12 or '13, if they have the numbers for—won't have them for this year yet, not likely, but—and the minimum cottage fees paid and the maximum fees. If we could get the minimum and maximum and what the total is?

Mr. Mackintosh: We do have the average of the park district service fee. It's \$280 but we have to make an inquiry to determine the average and the minimum and maximum rent. So we can provide that to the member.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, pardon me, could I just get the total number again?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, we do have with us the average of the park district service fee for cottagers. It's \$280 but the rent—it's 4 per cent of 1981 values but we don't have the annual or maximum and minimum, so we can get that for the member. We should have that at hand.

Mr. Maguire: My colleague from Riding Mountain has a question as well.

* (15:30)

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Riding Mountain): A couple of questions with regard to the Assiniboine valley; one of them is with regard to water level. The level is quite high. Just wanting to know if you have an update on what strategy is going forward with regard to the level; I think it's within a foot of the overflow.

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, particularly it was after the 2011 flood that it was decided that water management in terms of quantity should be vested in MIT under Minister Ashton. And water quality by and large, except for surface drainage, would be with Conservation and Water Stewardship. So that's how the water management has been divided in the province since the last Cabinet shuffle.

Mrs. Rowat: Thank you, I'll then direct my questions to the other department.

With regard to another issue with regard to Asessippi; the campground road is a mess. People that have, you know, 50, 60, \$70,000 units are actually taking a gravel road, a municipal road to get around to another area of the campsite because the road is closed. This is the second or third year that there's been issues with that road.

As you know, they've got a number of high-profile events at, in the Shellmouth Dam area and if we don't get that road fixed we're going to have some serious issues.

Another point to that is is that park fees have gone up. So you're getting people from other provinces coming in and saying for goodness' sakes, you know, you're doubling my park pass fee and you've got a road that couldn't be travelled by a, you know, by an elephant.

So just wanting to know if the minister can provide me something that I can give back to the community in a positive way that will address that—the season's very short.

Mr. Mackintosh: No, and I thank the member for her advocacy on this and so I've got some papers ready to—and we can respond and be accountable.

But, just in terms of the park fees, they did go up \$10 this year but we carefully looked at the other jurisdictions in Canada and we still remain among the lowest and I think we're, you know, so it certainly wasn't a doubling.

And at the same time we've discovered that taxpayers are actually funding about 72 per cent or more of the cost of maintaining our parks, and so what we're looking at is a greater balance between those who use our parks with the taxpayer investment in the parks, recognizing that we have to achieve as well fees that allow Manitobans to continue to be able to afford the great outdoors in our parks.

But we're trying to rebalance it and not go as far as Ontario. I think they've gone to 80 per cent user fees I'm told, but we are trying to get closer to 50-50 at least just for greater taxpayer fairness in Manitoba.

But on the Assinippi Provincial Park main road I'm very sorry to hear about the recent history of the condition of the road. But I, and I understand from a note that I got after a letter or a phone call from the member that apparently there was a—there is a history of landsliding with this road. And the Assiniboine valley wall in the area of the park apparently does have a history of landsliding, I'm told, and each slide event caused varying degrees of damage and disruption.

So in 2005 the note says the park main access road was a site of some sliding, KGS was hired and they did a remediation design in '05 and the works were completed by MIT in '06. So they realigned a

portion of the road and they installed a culvert and installed a longitudinal and traverse French drains.

Then minor repairs were made to a portion of the same section of road in 2011. Then the note says in June of 2012, a year ago, the access road experienced another landslide that caused significant damage to the main park access road between the campground, beach and day use areas and the main boat launch. So the temporary repairs were made to the road to allow one-lane traffic to enter the park.

Permanent repairs weren't undertaken at that time because of the severity of the damage that was unknown. And it was decided that an engineering assessment should be called for.

So field inspections done by the department in May of this year, and the road and slope degradation assessment report completed by the Parks branch engineer in June of 2013 confirmed that the main campground road should be kept closed to traffic due to vulnerability and further deterioration. And there was concerns about it being a safety and liability issue for the Province that has to be addressed. So, in terms of how it's being addressed, I have a further note from last month that says that \$50,000 in funding has been allocated in this year for testing and monitoring as part of the engineering analysis and the design for the upgrade. And then \$750,000 in funding was identified for '14-15 construction of the road upgrade. So that's the latest that I have in my notes.

We know how important this is. This is a very important park and a wonderful park. And I haven't been there for a while, but I know that in the last year or so there's been significant investments made by the Province, so we want to make sure that people could enjoy them.

Mrs. Rowat: Significant investments—I'm not quite sure if I'd agree with that, but there are things that are required by that park, and one of them is that access road. It's really cutting into the business in the park. You know, there was a time that you didn't charge park fees. You know, so, you know, people are saying, you know, some foresight into determining this as a priority obviously wasn't there, if you weren't creating revenue to maintain parks such as this one and the significant need of an accessible road into that park.

So, when you're saying '14-15, is that this coming spring—this next spring that—so they will have an access road for next summer? I just want

clarification because I believe that there's a number of residents that are quite concerned about the timelines here.

Mr. Mackintosh: The advice from the department is that the road upgrades will begin in the spring of 2014.

Mr. Maguire: Just to finish off a few of the questions that we were working on here before, I just wanted to check on a few more of the cottage owner fees—that sort of thing—and find out which parks are the highest and lowest—just the provincial parks, like, which one has the highest and lowest cottage fees?

* (15:40)

Mr. Mackintosh: Just a quick review of the spreadsheet shows that the lowest cottage service fees are at Happy and Manigotagan lakes and at Max Lake, which the member will be familiar with. And then the highest fees, service fees, appear to be at Falcon Lake townsite and at West Hawk Lake townsite followed closely by Grand Beach. And it may help the member that the spreadsheet is, I'm advised, on the departmental website.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, the—so what would the average fee be then in the Whiteshell?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, we just have to do some number crunching for that and we can get that to the member perhaps even later today. It's just a matter of adding them up and dividing. *[interjection]* We'll make best efforts in any event.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, and so that is—you're just looking to find the average of the fees in the Whiteshell? Okay.

Mr. Mackintosh: The challenge is that the Whiteshell's divided into different park districts, and so it's not easy to find a Whiteshell number for the entirety of the park. We can find average amounts for the different districts in the Whiteshell, so we'll crunch some numbers and see what we come up with for the member.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, thanks. If it's easier, for sure, just do it on the regional basis within the Whiteshell area. If you want to provide me with those, that'd be fine. The number of cottages and those fees if they're broke down that way now, it's—we don't want to reinvent the wheel on it.

The park fees, of course, are being reinstated this year from some of the—in the provincial park system, and I'm wondering if the minister can give me an

indication of what volume of funds they intend to raise or budgeted to raise from that effort, and is it going to specific projects in—within the parks or is it going into general revenue?

Mr. Mackintosh: Just to correct the member, the park entrance fees started not this year but last year, and the amount of additional revenue that is projected at this point is approximately \$1 million, and we can assure every visitor to the parks and the committee that every plug nickel of that can be attributed to park spending because our parks in Manitoba are disproportionately funded by tax dollars to a tune of about 72 or 75 per cent.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, do all parks have people at the gates, then, to collect the fees, or can the minister just update me on how these fees are collected?

Mr. Mackintosh: There are some park gates, I think four or five them across the province that operate as a courtesy or as a service to visitors where they can buy passes on entrance to the park.

But the—what has happened over the years is the park passes are purchased either at the campground office or preferably, by people going to the local store, or to outfitters, or other places. In fact, I just had a staff member say they were at Canadian Tire the other day and got their park pass there. So that's been the evolution of park pass availability.

We want to take it to the next level now. And in the park strategy we signaled that we would like to promote park passes to an even greater extent and have them available year round, and to look at, as well, online purchases. So that—we're not doing that this year, but we certainly will be looking at that over the course of the park strategy.

The—I'm advised that the gates where park passes are still sold, entrance gates are Hecla, Birds Hill, St. Malo and Grand Beach.

But places like Spruce Woods, for example, I think, I don't know if ever they had a—and perhaps the member would know—but that's not a—the main gate is not as current an approach anymore. And so now, enforcement, really, is by our officers and other park personnel. If you don't have a park pass, you can get dinged. Not unlike fishing, you know, you don't—you know.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, thanks. There's only a few parks, then, that are—that have people, if you will, for want of a better term, manning the gates in the province. And I guess the enforcement, then, is an issue. Can

the minister just update me on, in regards to the enforcement of it, the conservation officers are the ones going in doing this sort of thing, or can you inform me of who else can do that as well?

Mr. Mackintosh: So the move over several years has been to consolidate staffing operations at campground offices so everything can be bought at one place. People don't have to go to two places to get their paperwork done if you're camping overnight.

And so—and I should correct the record, it's, indeed, conservation—or natural resource officers and park patrol officers that—the park patrol is the other category. I didn't want to leave on the record a notion that, you know, staff that are there for other purposes may be doing enforcement duties.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, so people coming in from out of province or someone that hasn't gone online or picked it up at a local store, if they get to a park and they're inside the park, they can probably pick them up at stores, and that sort of thing in the park. But what if they're, you know—is there—what is the process, I guess, then, that you go through for fining people if they don't have a park pass and they're in the park? They're ticketed, I assume.

But, you know, have they had time to get to a store or do they have to have one when they enter the park, I guess, is the better idea?

* (15:50)

Mr. Mackintosh: I don't think there's been any change over the last number of years. The park passes are available either at the entry gates where those are in place, at the campground offices, the district offices or all the vendors all across Manitoba. But, if people are coming into the park and then taking advantage of the amenities and they are in the campground or they're, you know, parked at the swimming beach, they're expected to have their parking pass with them; otherwise, they could—they certainly could be at risk of getting ticketed for that.

But they're not going to get ticketed if they're at the campground office getting their park pass. That's not where the enforcement action would be focused. And there's been a long history of enforcing it through that method.

Mr. Maguire: Does the minister have an amount that's raised in fines each year? And I'm assuming they, as well, would go into park operations.

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes. I'm advised—well, first of all, the amount goes into general revenue, but, you can—like I say, the attribution—you have to notionally make it to parks because it's mostly tax dollars that are going into the parks to maintain them. So I just want to make that clear.

And I think, by the way, that the Province has to do a better job to get that message across to park users that, you know, any of those park fees are a small part of the contribution to the maintenance of our parks, and I think that may not be widely known. And when we did our park strategy, I tried to make that point. But I think we have to do better with that, particularly with adjustments to fees over time. So, hopefully, that answers that question.

I've just got a piece of information here. The West Hawk lagoon, the total project cost is just over \$5.5 million.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. A formal vote has been requested in another section of the Committee of Supply. I am therefore recessing this section of the Committee of Supply in order for members to proceed to the Chamber for a formal vote.

The committee recessed at 3:52 p.m.

The committee resumed at 4:22 p.m.

Mr. Chairperson: Order. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Conservation and Water Stewardship. As had been previously agreed, questions for the department will proceed in a global manner.

The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Chair, I was—just give me a moment here. Got a number of areas that I'd like to quickly cover in the next couple of hours, so we haven't got—[interjection]—may not be quite that long.

Just in regards to parks staff—finish that off a little bit—do they—are there any parks staff that are hired just to collect fees—park fees?

Mr. Mackintosh: There's a category of employee called park attendants, and their job description is generally customer service, but that includes not only fee collection but matters in the campgrounds, invoicing, other administrative duties. I understand

that there's been, historically, some concern about ensuring that employees in our parks are busy all the time and that's why the multi-tasking has been the preferred deployment. And, as well, of course, it's always good to have park attendants that do more than one thing for the visitors to parks so that the service can be available, a one stop, one shop.

And I'll just add one other thing. The member asked about retirees. The department advises that the retirees in '11-12 were 52 and in '12-13 were 57, for a total of 109 over the last two years. And I'm advised that the names cannot be shared. Presumably, it's a privacy protection.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, can the minister indicate how many staff members there are that are in the description that he just gave me in regards to the collection of the fees?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, I'm advised we don't have that number here so we can provide that to the member.

Mr. Maguire: With regards to the ban on liquor on the Victoria Day long weekends, that sort of thing, can the minister just give me an update on—I think it applies to both seasonal and occasional campers. Does it? Or is it just to occasional campers?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, for the May long weekend, the liquor ban is for all seasonal, transient—or, as the member says, the occasional, but they call them transient—so seasonal, transient and day users as well. And I'll just advise the member that we recently launched an initiative to have liquor-free days, year-round, at two parks, at Birds Hill and Grand Beach, a couple of days in each park so people have the option.

Mr. Maguire: Are those days published yet, or will they be—*[interjection]* They're online.

Mr. Mackintosh: This is the second year, I understand, of this pilot, and we aren't aware of any enforcement issues at this point. I'm not saying there aren't any but we're just at the table here. We haven't anecdotally heard of any enforcement issues so that tells me that this may be a positive experiment but we'll evaluate it over the next year or two.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, thanks. The Province has upgraded—I think, there was a number of the beaches that we've talked about earlier. They're doing a lot of work at Grand Beach Provincial Park right now to do upgrades on it as well. I believe that they're hauling rock from St. Ambroise provincial park up to

Grand Beach to carry out some of the initiatives they've got, and I'm wondering if the minister can tell me just what kind of cost is involved in this, if this is a normal procedure or if rock couldn't be found a lot closer to Grand Beach than St. Ambroise.

There may be a rationale. While my mike is still on, if there's a rationale for that, just, that's all I'm looking for.

* (16:30)

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, I did see in media accounts that they were talking about trees and rocks from St. Ambroise, but I—as I recall, my announcement was just about the cottonwood trees that were blown down at St. Ambroise. They were huge trees, real loss. It seemed to disproportionately affect the cottonwoods, the flood. Sorry, not blow down. It was flood.

And so in the design of a children's natural playground on the hill where the derelict hotel is, it was thought that there could actually be some cost savings by using some of those big logs from St. Ambroise at Grand Beach for kids to play on, but that would only be one feature of many in a natural playground.

I know at Oak Lake they're also looking at one there and I think there's a lot of real leading-edge thinking around how to design these natural play areas. I think they're pretty cool, and that's why I'd urge the department to consider doing that there.

So—but I don't recall the rocks. Now I think that they probably have rocks as part of that play structure but that's going out for design over the winter so we'll await—there are people that are professional in designing these natural play areas as well so we'll wait to see what ideas they come up with, but that's the part—you know, the cottonwood was the part that we had contributed. So we think that sounds like a good idea and I think it's a good use of that resource. It may not be much of the timber that was destroyed at St. Ambroise but, nonetheless, there's a tie-in there to another park and reminder of the natural wonders in provincial parks.

The other enhancements at Grand Beach, as I recall, add up to about over 6.4—certainly get that. We're just looking for the release online. It was last Thursday but maybe for the sake of brevity, I think that the release will have most of the detail that the member is requesting, and of the several million that was being invested, I think almost half of that was for wastewater upgrades.

Then there was the demolition of the derelict hotel and the old restaurant this fiscal year. Yes, so the total is about \$4 million, and that included a plaza. In other words, an entry from the parking lot to both the beach and the existing boardwalk for greater accessibility, not just for wheelchairs but for strollers and people with other mobility restrictions, and yes, this fall, the derelict beach hotel would be demolished then. And so there's two things that we want to replace the hotel with. One is the actual children's play area, but the other is a waterfront family picnic plaza. We're hearing a lot of calls for greater opportunities for group use of our parks, and we want to accommodate that so we'll have some shade canopies and benches and tables and fire pits right there. It'll be great because you'll be able to see the beach and the water from that vantage point on that—oh, yes. So it does say in our release that there will be boulders reclaimed from flood-ravaged St. Ambroise Park. So my recollection wasn't as accurate as I would like. So, in other words, we'll be getting that from within the system and not having to pay anything from some supplier.

So I think that is an overview of Grand Beach in the years ahead. As I say, the work starts in fall and some of that work will happen between now and 2020. We thought it was important to send a signal about the investment in Grand Beach given the new longer term strategy. But I don't want to leave the impression that this is new—a new awakening of interests in—of the government in Grand Beach, because there have been millions of dollars invested just in the last few years alone with the new washroom and the boardwalk following the destruction of the storm that occurred in late 2010.

And I'll just end by saying it didn't get into the media, but when it—Grand Beach has also been awarded for the second year the Blue Flag recognition by an international organization that is highly sought after. There's only so many in the world, 18 beaches in Canada alone, and that really sends a signal that this is a top quality, international standard offering for the world, and not surprisingly there was 430,000 visits last year and that's up 14 per cent over five years. So the park is increasingly popular.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, I've been there. I've seen the situation with the new washrooms and that sort of thing there. I've witnessed them and everything—pardon me?

An Honourable Member: No Speedos?

Mr. Maguire: No Speedos, no.

An Honourable Member: It's on the record now

Mr. Maguire: Yes. If you want to—you know, want to take the lead on that, I'll follow.

The situation with regards to the rocks, I guess, in regards to the hauling of stones, I just wondered what the cost was of that. You're saying the stones are free, but, I mean, from hauling rocks from St. Ambroise to—I mean, there's got to be custom charges in there for something for the hauling. I know there was rocks hauled from Stonewall, crushed, washed limestone down to Hartney a few years back for the base of the new bridge that they're building there and that sort of thing, and that was 200 miles, I guess. And I just wondered what the cost was, and that's why I was asking about the rationale for—I've got the rationale for why you were looking at moving them, so I just wondered what the cost might be.

Mr. Mackintosh: We'll look into that. The department will get that information and presumably, though, it'll just be—well, it may be challenging to separate out because it would be our own equipment that would be used and our own staff resources, presumably. So—well, we'll try and tease out what the cost would be. The thinking was that it would actually be less than going to, you know, a supplier and having external contractors do the hauling.

Mr. Maguire: Yes. We've had, you know, our fair share of floods, I guess, in the last few years, and I just wondered what kind of long-term assessments might have been done from your Department of Conservation and Water Stewardship in regards to the impacts of environmental damage from those floods. I know there's lots of work being done around the rehabilitation and reconstruction of things, but there must have been some environmental damage done around lakeshores and throughout the province in regards to some of the flooding that's taken place, and I just wondered if you've had any long term or instigated any long-term assessments of some of that damage. Part of what would go along with that is, you know, the programming and the initiatives to, I guess, fix it probably is one area, but just to look at how it could be handled.

* (16:40)

Mr. Mackintosh: One of the most significant environmental damages from the flood is the excess nutrient loading into the waterways, and therefore into Lake Winnipeg eventually. The interesting

statistic that I shared with stakeholders a few weeks ago—I know Dr. Gerrard, in the House, has been asking, well, since you said that we have to reduce nutrient loading by 50—or phosphorus loading by 50 per cent in Lake Winnipeg, how you been doing since that announcement in 2011? Well, you know, there's an unwritten rule, of course, you don't ask the question you don't know the answer to. Well, the answer to that is the phosphorus loading is down by 66 per cent, and people find that very strange. But it's actually—very little of that is due to any preventative or other actions by Manitobans. It's because in 2012 there wasn't a flood as there was in 2011, where there was a huge phosphorus rush to Lake Winnipeg.

So that is a very significant environmental damage from flooding that I don't think Manitobans may be as aware of as we would like them to become. And people like Dr. Robert Sanford then make the link between climate change, flooding and damage to Lake Winnipeg. You can't separate climate change from what's happening in terms of nitrification of our waterways and our great lake.

In terms of other environmental damage that we can talk about, we certainly have done a lot of assessment. I want to just talk about the parks, first of all. We did have the lagoon at Spruce Woods that was affected by the flood, and that was very unfortunate, but the lesson to be learned from that is we got to move the lagoon up, and now we're working through some of the issues with the MLA and there's some neighbours to the park. And there's an issue there that I know the member was a party to a discussion in my office around, that hopefully we can find a good balance in terms of relocation. But, at Spruce Woods, it's also a matter about—it's also a matter of putting in place resilient infrastructure. For example, the new washrooms at Spruce Woods, I understand, are to be resilient to flood. Sounds like they're big cinder blocks or something, but I'm sure they're more—just a bit more fine-tuned than that.

St. Ambroise, I know, there's an interest in rebuilding on higher ground there. We did a calculation and discovered that all of the current infrastructure—or the former infrastructure was all below what was recommended to be the level to guard against the whole thing happening all over again.

But we've relied on engineering reports on our parks, and, as well, of course, outside of our parks we've had fly-overs—we talked about this briefly yesterday—around Lake Manitoba to certain areas

where there are Crown lands, and we've done water sampling—you know, water quality sampling. So those are—I think are some of the impacts of the flood of 2011 and some of the examples of environmental damage and how we can learn from that and rebuild in a smarter way.

Mr. Maguire: Just in regards to cottage lot development, the lot—cottage lot program that the provincial government had going, I wonder if I could just get a general update on the development of the cottage lot program and if there's any, you know, how many were selected? How many are left that weren't sold?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, we just did some in-depth work with the Free Press on the status of that. It was in Saturday, June 29th's edition.

We've got a hundred and forty-two cottage lots that'll become available this summer as part of the lot draw program. We've had 929 lots purchased or leased, out of 1,392 that were originally put up. We have—currently, we have 219 available, in addition, and those were first-come, first-serve.

The other hundred and forty-two are available because they were returned to a draw where, you know, the criteria weren't met—for example, for building on the lot or somebody turned them back in to the Province.

So looks like there's been some good opportunities pursued by Manitobans and there's still opportunities out there and indeed they'll be—that adds up about 384 that, by the end of summer, will be available for Manitobans.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, just a quick question on the Whiteshell Provincial Park, that cottage owners association has been asking for financial plans for that park for a number of years now. I guess they even went to court and won a case there where they needed to have the financial plans provided by the Province.

I'm wondering if any of those have been provided. My understanding was they weren't, as of this spring. Will they be provided, the last five years of financial statements to the Whiteshell cottage owners association for the planning operations of the Whiteshell park?

Mr. Mackintosh: So the Province has been holding open houses across Manitoba in different regions to display the calculations in terms of the—not just the

rents but more particularly the service fees and the proposed rents and fees then on a go-forward basis.

We have had staff working very hard at this one, including those with accounting experience, in making sure that the increases are fair, because that's absolutely critical, that there be transparency in how the fees are arrived at. So that work has been under way and it's all being made public as we speak

I think over the last couple of weeks and over the next couple of weeks going forward, those opening–open houses are taking place. So we're very keen to hear the feedback from park cottagers. We want to make sure we get this right and that it fairly represent the services that they enjoy. And, at the same time, we're—we are proposing to phase in the increase because we've had very loud criticism from many about the current state of affairs when it comes to the fees. Lac du Bonnet, for example, the council there has been very vocal and, you know, they see what happens down the road just over the line from the municipality, and the difference in what people are paying for very similar services and are seeing a loss of some of their tax base into the park area because of that, and so I met with them, and I've spoken to political representation from that, but—from that area, but it's not just in the Lac du Bonnet area; it's elsewhere as well.

* (16:50)

And I've been hearing some very loud criticism from individual cottage owners outside of parks who are complaining about the fact that they pay for their own fees, plus most of somebody else's, they say, in one letter I got. So, we have to attend to this one because the fees have been flat because of some of the challenges that the member talks about. So, over the next, you know, months, we'll be working with the cottagers to make sure that we arrive at the right place.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, I've heard from a few of them, as I know the minister has as well. And in regards to the increase that—what was to be the jump in increase in taxation for this year, and there are other fees in those parks to bring it to a more of a parallel to those outside the parks. And I think that there's a difference in services. That's the—it's been explained to me. I mean, some of them would be quite happy not to have any more services and they'd be left where they are, but it—I—the cottage owners association itself has indicated to me that they realize that there is some increase needed, for sure.

And so, I guess I'm just wondering what was used as criteria to determine, by the department, what these fees should be. And why were they brought up to the level that they are at that quickly? And will there be a paralleling of services provided and—in that area? Of services I mean by inside and outside the parks, or even inside parks, because there's quite a difference in services within some of the different parks.

Mr. Mackintosh: Some of the information that I received from the department is showing that cottagers in municipalities and, indeed, in our national park here in Manitoba are asking why they're paying sometimes up to \$4,000 in annual fees, and cottagers in provincial parks are sometimes paying just a mere fraction of that. And, in fact, the information we received showed that a cottager in the Whiteshell pays about \$2,300 less a year than a cottager just down the lake or down the road in the municipality.

So, when you look back over the last 12 to 10 years, the fees have not moved, and it's at the point now where cottager costs are about \$4.5 million while the Province recovers only 1.7. So, there's no other kind of vacationer that receives that kind of a subsidy from taxpayers in this province. That has to be addressed, and the cottagers themselves certainly recognize that. And they accept the fact that they should be paying the cost of their services. So, there's a meeting of the minds there.

Where we have to ensure fairness is looking at what those actual costs are. Are they rightly attributable? And so, it will be both the maintenance costs and infrastructure costs that will be looked at, and that will depend, of course, on the particular district, because there is a great variance in services and infrastructure investments.

But we're looking, as part of that package, at the park services such as garbage collection and waste water treatment. And we know—we've talked about the investment—the amount of investment necessary. Transfer stations, road construction, and then road maintenance and potable water, for example.

So we want to make sure that cottagers in Manitoba can count on public services to provide the necessary infrastructure and the access to their cottages. It's an important part of the quality of life for Manitobans, and we have to sustain that service over the long term. So that's why we have to move in this direction.

But we've come back with a plan that actually looks at phasing it in over 10 years—a full decade. And so, I think that is a good effort, and we're also looking at other ways to make sure that this is fair. And looking at, you know—at a cap on rent increases, for example, just to make sure that the—that there's fairness there. Actually, the cap on combined rent and park district service fees would apply to cottage properties, and the maximum would be set at \$3,000 for 2013. And then we'll review that annually.

So when you look to it, at the next year of fees, cottagers are paying far, far less than the cost of the services being provided. And we're—hope to move them, then, in the direction of full cost recovery.

Mr. Maguire: Does the minister have financial statements for the Whiteshell Provincial Park?

An Honourable Member: Sorry?

Mr. Maguire: Do you have financial statements for the Whiteshell Provincial Park?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, I'm advised that the financial information is being provided across the province with—as part of the open house process. So that's already started and is ongoing. I think, you know—*[interjection]*—yes, and it will be audited as part of the new program, as well. I know I've heard from park cottagers an interest in ensuring that there's an auditing done.

Oh, I should—we should remind the member, too, that the churches and summer camps and, you know, police and fire bases are going to be exempt from this. And, as well, with businesses, that's the next round that—we'll be starting some work on that already. But there are individual lease agreements there that—so there's a different approach that's necessary.

Mr. Maguire: So are the—is the request for financial statements for the last five years by the Whiteshell cottage owners association being met then? Are they being given the copy of the financial statements from the Whiteshell park for the last five years?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, there won't be any retroactive seeking of fees. It really is on a go-forward basis over the next 10 years. Well, it's five and 10, you know, rent and then service fees. So those are the numbers that are being crunched for the park cottagers for that area, and will be distributed in the near future, I take it. *[interjection]* Yes, as part of the open house process.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, I wasn't asking about the projections for the next five years. I was looking at the financial statements that they've asked for for the last five years.

* (17:00)

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes. The process is a new one on a go-forward basis. It's not a matter of, like, going back and calculating for past services provided, but the services that are provided now and the infrastructure investments that are current that will be forming the basis of the calculation for the fees. So the proposed fees for '13-14 will be based on '12-13 actuals. So, in that sense, there is a going back. And fees paid prior to that were based on 2001 actuals. It has been a 12-year freeze.

Mr. Maguire: Yes. I think that the trust factor there of knowing what they were getting for the type of increase that's being asked for is what was being looked at or looked for by the Whiteshell cottage owners association, and so I'm just wondering if it wouldn't be good public relations to provide them with at least a few of the years of the previous statements. I mean, they're obviously there. You must have them in the department. It shouldn't be rocket science to allow them to have copies of those, and they won a court case saying that they were allowed to have them and they've never received them since '06 and '07, and I'm just wondering why that hasn't been met.

Mr. Mackintosh: It's my understanding there was a court case; there was a challenge, and where it was left was the Province was to devise a new system on a go-forward basis, and so that's what we are coming forward with now. So, in other words, the cottagers will see a very significant discrepancy between the value of the services being provided and their fees when they see the '12-13 numbers. And so the costs as of '12-13 are the numbers that we'll be basing the new system on going forward.

So, as I say, we look forward to the feedback, if they have some, and if there's necessary tweaking to ensure fairness then we're certainly interested in pursuing that, and then hopefully we can get on with a multi-year plan to ensure that those who enjoy the benefit of our parks can contribute to it and we can ensure ongoing sustainability so that public services can continue. I know, for example, when I went to Nopiming this winter the great appreciation of cottagers in that area for the tremendous roads—I mean, the road into Nopiming was first class, and I know that from where I'm from that a road like that

is—in a very remote area, is a tremendous asset to access your cottage. So it's important that we fairly fund that and provide that right balance between the taxpayer and the user of the service.

Mr. Maguire: Yes. I don't doubt that. That wasn't the issue, I think, and it's like they know that they have to pay some more fees. They know that they are going up and they know that the services may improve and that that's why you do those sorts of things. They're just looking at comparisons and wanting to know where it was at.

I just wanted to back up a minute to the park's accessibility and the gates. I received a call from individuals the other day that had bought a pass here over the long weekend to go out to Patricia Beach, in this case, and when they got out there, he and his wife and a two-year-old ended up seeing all these cars parked along the way, and so they parked and they ended up having to go all the way down to the gate, walked about a kilometre, I think, with their family, and then found that they couldn't get in. The park gate was closed. There was nobody there. People were walking around, and then walked on down to the beach, I guess. I guess there was some destruction there that was basically shut down. But buying online didn't tell them that, and I guess he was concerned about the fact that, No. 1, he'd bought for a parking space that wasn't there and couldn't get into it; it was locked up. So nobody could get into the parking lot and I guess that's why everybody had to walk in, and I just wondered if the minister was aware of that and if there'd been something done to rectify that.

Mr. Mackintosh: We understand from the regional staff that the park was hit both by a late fall and an early spring storm that impacted the park and, most notably, the entrance road behind the gate and additional parking lots were inundated with sand that had washed over the beach ridge. As a result, a decision was made to limit access until the area could be cleared. But I'm advised that the work was completed over the last week or so and the gate has been opened.

But I got that email from the individual and I was sorry to see that was the experience. That was the one complaint that we did get on that situation and I'm sorry for that experience. So we've certainly expressed our apologies and done that formally and, indeed, from the deputy himself.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, can the minister—just to switch gears—can the minister indicate to me how many

boil-water orders are still in place around the province?

Mr. Mackintosh: I get these updates from time to time. I think the range is usually between 114 and 118, something like that—total. That's for the public water systems, the semi-public water systems and areas served by privately owned wells. We know that the number has increased since 2003 because of greater surveillance. Now, most of these are very small water systems. And, as well, of course, we've been able to enhance the work of the Office of Drinking Water in the last number of years, so the department has been delivering on enhanced efforts in this regard.

I see here that, actually, since 2000 about 266 advisories have been lifted, so that's good news as well.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, just in regards to flood mitigation and that sort of thing, can you indicate to me if there's been any dollars allocated from your department for '11, '12 or '13 in regards to flood mitigation efforts?

*(17:10)

Mr. Mackintosh: It's my understanding that the bulk of those expenditures would be through MIT or other departments, but our department would only have expenditures related to parks specifically that we canvassed earlier.

Mr. Maguire: I just wondered if there was any dollar value for any bills that was submitted to either Finance or MIT for those floods, from your department.

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, the department advises they would have to look for those claims, and we can advise the member of the quantity.

Mr. Maguire: Thank you, if you could supply me with that, I'd appreciate it at some time. Yes, good.

Did you have any input into the flood reports, and what are the operations of the Shellmouth Dam, the diversion or the flood control structures there? That's all through MIT?

Mr. Mackintosh: Those are under the jurisdiction of MIT.

Mr. Maguire: So are any of the discussions with Minister Cheveldayoff in Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan conservation minister, do they take place through MIT, as well, in regards to drainage issues and that sort of thing? I know drainage, I

believe, is part of the Conservation area, and I wondered if you could just indicate to me how many times you've had contact with Saskatchewan in the last year.

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, I've had several contacts with Minister Cheveldayoff and one of those was in response to correspondence, I think, that the member had sent on about a drawdown on the Moose Mountain Creek area or—I had a discussion around that and there may have been a second one involving Minister Ashton because he—they're the lead on that but, as well, I've had conversations about the Lake Friendly Accord.

And—but further and more specifically to the question around the issue of drainage and drainage on the Saskatchewan side, and I've been assured by Minister Cheveldayoff—who, by the way, is a pleasure to work with—that they are taking the issue of drainage very seriously, that they have advanced some options for a stronger licensing regime. I know they've looked at Manitoba's. They've had discussions with their municipalities, and it's his expectation that they'll be advancing that work to move Saskatchewan to a stronger drainage management regime.

Mr. Maguire: Just a final question on the flood mitigation efforts, Mr. Chair. The—can the minister indicate to me whether MIT and Infrastructure, I guess it would be, who is responsible for doing flood mitigation structures, correct me if I'm wrong, I don't believe this department has the go-ahead in regards to which of those structures would be built. But can the minister indicate to me whether there has been—he's been approached, or his department's been approached, by other departments in regards to Clean Environment Commission hearings for other inter-flood mitigation projects that were outlined in the 2011 flood report?

Mr. Mackintosh: Yes, I'm advised that the channel work that I think the member's referring to would require an Environment Act licence, but there's been no application received.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, that was only one. I know one of the major flood reports in the billion dollars was the Holland Dam was identified in that structure. The Minister of Infrastructure had I and several others of my colleagues briefed just a few days—the Thursday, I believe, before the budget came down this spring, and indicated that it would cost about a half a billion dollars to build the Holland Dam. It would be quite a

big project on the Assiniboine River north of Holland, Manitoba, in that area of the Assiniboine.

And so I just wondered if the minister had been approached by—that wasn't one of the projects I guess that he's—certainly, I understand what he's talking about with the drains in the Fairford River area, around the Fairford River to get water from Lake Manitoba into Lake St. Martin. And he could indicate to me if they have a preference in which one of those it would be.

But the Holland Dam is a rather large one, as well, at \$500 million, I guess, they figured it would cost to build. And I wondered if he'd been approached at all by the department there to do any environmental hearings on that project.

Mr. Mackintosh: I'm advised that by the sound of the magnitude of this kind of initiative that an Environment Act licence would be required and therefore an application would be necessary. The department advises that they're not aware at this table, at least, of any application, but if that's, but if that isn't accurate, we'll advise the member.

Mr. Maguire: And as I narrow these down a little bit, the projects you talked about earlier, the course that phosphate movement in the—into Lake Winnipeg. Can you give me any other, identify any other projects that will be other than, I think yesterday we talked about the north-south water treatment plants of the city in regards to trying to, I guess, bring back to life some of the lake. You know, it being nominated as the worst lake in the world this spring didn't really help the publicity of Manitoba a whole lot in regards to the beauty that we do have in this province and the opportunities here. And we need to do everything we can to save Lake Winnipeg, I guess, if we want to go back to use the acronym in the bill that we passed last year. And I guess I just—or in 2011.

And I wondered what initiatives the minister has got on the go. I know that there's the Netley marsh areas, working on some of the cattail removal and some of those things for biomass, some of those projects through IISD and others. But are there other initiatives that are maybe not public yet or that are—that the minister can inform us about?

Mr. Mackintosh: The best place to start, and I'd want to reiterate, though, what we talked about yesterday with the Lake Friendly Accord, but the—I'll just very briefly say that we know that if we're going to solicit the signatures of the—all the jurisdictions in

the basin, two governments and at the national level, and nine governments in total, including Manitoba, that we have to show leadership by example.

So, first off, we determined that the Lake Friendly Accord should not just be available for international and interjurisdictional signing on, but there should be versions of the accord for Manitobans. And I set out some of the sectors yesterday that would be looked at based on the Lake Friendly campaign and what's called Do What Matters, which is focused on how different sectors and indeed individuals can change their pattern of behaviour to be more lake friendly.

The Lake Winnipeg, the Lake Friendly Stewards Alliance is also a part of showing and demonstrating to all that Manitoba is providing leadership when it comes to reducing phosphorus. I mean, let's remember that about half the phosphorus into Lake Winnipeg comes from within Manitoba and half from outside of Manitoba. So we, through the alliance, expect to be able to have a more focused effort, a more collaborative effort across the many, many stakeholders.

* (17:20)

And I, we've identified I think over—as I recall I think there were about 60 potential stakeholders that were identified for participation in the alliance. Obviously, you can see that there's going to be a challenge in managing that, but we know we can. I mean, the member may be aware of the Red River Basin Commission, and I think they have over 40 participants in that and Lance Yohe encouraged us to proceed. We will—we can manage it.

But I think we're at a turning point in terms of approaches to both phosphorus reduction and better managing water on the land. In terms of phosphorus reduction, the member talked about some of the enhancements to waste-water treatment, and, you know, just starting within the Red River Valley itself, there are very, very significant investments on the way.

And, in fact, just in anticipation of the Building Canada Fund being available next fiscal year from the federal government and matching from the Province, we do anticipate that many of the municipalities along the Red River will be eager to line up and access those funds. But, to facilitate that, we've invested about \$4 million this year just to get them ready by way of the studies that are required to make the case.

In addition to the funding of the city of Winnipeg waste water, we are really having to look in a different way at water on the land, and I'm sure the member and I can have further discussions on this one ahead, but there are a lot of initiatives that are currently in the oven right now. First of all, let's give due credit to conservation districts. I don't think they're celebrated the way they should be. I don't think they're known outside of many of the local communities in the way they should be. And the conservation districts, more than anyone else, know that they have to raise greater awareness about their efforts and what they do. But it is a tremendous model.

They have about 105 water retention initiatives in various forms currently under way. That's a tremendous number. In addition to that, though, we've got to look at how we license drainage in Manitoba in a different way. I've heard over and over again, since the day I came into this portfolio, of the concerns of not just farmers, but municipalities, in terms of how we oversee changes to drainage. And, by the way, I don't even know if we should call it a change to drainage when someone's replacing a culvert with the same-sized culvert. I call them culvert cops, but, you know, we just can't afford to have a deployment of our departmental resources to oversee those kinds of initiatives. We've got to focus on a risk-based analysis on where drainage is making a significant change to the environment or for downstream folks.

So we've been able to put a partnership initiative together with Keystone Agricultural Producers, the conservation districts, Ducks Unlimited, AMM and the Manitoba government to come up with a proposal that we will put out for Manitobans to look at how we can overhaul drainage licensing in Manitoba and to incent people away from draining those seasonal wetlands that are so absolutely critical now.

So that's one thing that's in the oven. The other is a surface-water management strategy, of which that is a part, which really is looking at all the different ways that we can better keep water on the land. We're looking at initiatives with the Institute for Sustainable Development and Dr. Venema with cattails. We're seeing, for example, the investment with Ducks Unlimited at Delta Marsh: \$3.5 million, of which the Province contributed half a million to restore that marsh, which is one of the great kidneys in the Lake Winnipeg basin, just by keeping carp out.

So I understand that it's already showing some signs of success.

We're—ISD is looking, with other partners, at what to do around Netley with the restoration of phosphorus sequestration. We're looking at, with the federal government, wetland restoration through the Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation and delivered through conservation districts. And I really appreciate Minister Toews' participation in that announcement and the decision of funding flowing from the Lake Winnipeg stewardship fund, for which the Province will match. We're also looking right now at ecological goods and services and working with MAFRI and the federal government on the design of a program there that, hopefully, will be launched soon.

So those are some of the initiatives that are under way, and I'll just conclude by this, because everybody seems to be jumpy around here. We also have to articulate what Manitoba is doing. And I don't mean just the Manitoba government, but whether it's Manitoba Pork or KAP or individuals, we put—we're putting together a document that hopefully will be signed off on by the alliance. It's called, Manitoba: a—lake friendly in 50 ways.

But we've identified 50 very substantive things that are happening in Manitoba over the last 10-some years that are making a difference for phosphorus and nitrogen overloading to the lake. So, hopefully that answers the question. There may be others that come from that, and we look forward to any briefing that we might be able to provide to the member on aspects of that.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, with that, Mr. Chairman, we're prepared to do the line-by-line.

Mr. Chairperson: Hearing no further questions, we will now proceed to consideration of the resolutions relevant to this department.

I will now call:

Resolution 12.2: RESOLVED that there be granted Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$66,147,000 for Conservation and Water Stewardship, Regional Services and Parks, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 12.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$23,705,000 for Conservation and Water

Stewardship, Conservation Programs, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 12.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$10,335,000 for Conservation and Water Stewardship, Climate Change and Environmental Protection, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 12.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$21,345,000 for Conservation and Water Stewardship, Water Stewardship, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 12.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$12,753,000 for Conservation and Water Stewardship, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 12.7: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$24,427,000 for Conservation and Water Stewardship, Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

The last item to be considered for the Estimates of this department is item 12.1.(a) the minister's salary, contained in resolution 12.1.

At this point, we request that the minister's staff leave the table for the consideration of this last item.

The floor is open for questions.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, I'd just like to move a motion, THAT the line item 12.1.(a) be reduced to \$1.08.

Mr. Chairperson: It has been moved by the honourable member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire)

THAT line item 21 point—oh, no, sorry—12.1.(a) the minister's salary be reduced to \$1.08.

The motion is in order. Is there any debate of the motion?

Shall the motion pass?

* (17:30)

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Chairperson: All those in favour of—in favour, say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Chairperson: All those opposed, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Chairperson: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

Recorded Vote

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): Yes, recorded vote, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: A formal vote has been requested. As part of the July 10 agreement of the House, all requests for a formal vote are to be deferred until Monday. Accordingly, this motion shall be deferred until Monday and because the motion is deferred the final resolution for the department must also be deferred until the vote on the motion is completed.

Also, as part of the agreement of the House, the committee can now set aside the Estimates for the Department of Conservation and Water Stewardship and proceed to the consideration of the next department, the Department of Healthy Living, Seniors and Consumer Affairs.

HEALTHY LIVING, SENIORS AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Mr. Chairperson (Mohinder Saran): This completes—does the honourable minister have an opening statement?

Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Healthy Living, Seniors and Consumer Affairs): Yes, I do.

I'm pleased to present the 2013-2014 expenditure Estimates for Healthy Living, Seniors and Consumers Affairs. The department is committed to providing supports across a broad spectrum of healthy living, senior services, consumer protection. It's a diverse portfolio. It's important to people on the ground and I have the privilege of working with some very committed and dedicated individuals who do make life better.

We're responsible for a number of healthy living programs and initiatives. Some of them are delaying the onset of chronic disease, some promote injury prevention, some prove—improve the overall health

of Manitobans. I'll talk to you about some of the initiatives. If I was to talk about all of the initiatives, I would say that we'd be here for the entire Estimates process.

Some of the initiatives that we've done this year is on May 1st we were proud to proclaim the legislation that requires cyclists under 18 to wear a bike helmet while riding a bike. We have worked with schools and other organizations to ensure that we have sold or given away almost 90,000—89,000—90,000 children's helmets. Some of those have been given away to people who don't have financial means; some are sold at school at very reduced prices. We also, because motor vehicle collisions are a leading cause of death for children under age—9 years of age, we initiated legislation for the use of booster seats in automobiles; these changes will be proclaimed this summer and that will protect children even more.

We continue to support children's access to healthy food programs by assisting 190 schools to provide school meal programs and snacks. We have a fruit and snack program with 45 other schools and a unique partnership with Peak of the Market and home economists that assisted over 212 student—schools and 104 child-care centres to sell an amazing 900,000 pounds of vegetables and make money for their schools and promote health and wellness.

Healthy Together Now is a chronic-disease prevention program delivered to communities throughout—with support from our department regional health authorities. This important program reached over 330,000 people in 115 communities with fitness, healthy food, falls prevention and tobacco cessation programs.

We have a strong commitment to physical activity. In 2012-13, our in motion program had partners in 173 communities, 628 schools, 498 workplaces and 7 agencies. I'm pleased to indicate the development of this campaign on a workplace, health and wellness campaign is currently under way with a partnership of Manitoba Chambers of Commerce.

In 2004 Manitoba introduced the first province-wide smoking ban. I like the public to say thank you to Denis Rocan who helped support that. I was the minister at the time. We continue to move forward on smoking, and it was interesting because we, this year, moved forward where, again, where we worked with pharmaceutical association and moved forward with banning sales of tobacco in

pharmacies, got moved forward on removal of the vending machines, and we'll continue to move forward on other initiatives including, now, the drug Champix, as part of the drug formulary. We also made it so that it's illegal to smoke in a private vehicle when some of the—one under the age of 16 is present, and we're going to—we were one of the first provinces to ban or make restrictions on advertising promotion of tobacco.

We also do mental health services. We support agencies in mental health, which is organizations such as the Mood Disorders Association, the anxiety association, Manitoba Schizophrenia Society, mental health association Manitoba, as well as support for the phone services like the Manitoba Suicide Line, Manitoba Farm and Rural Support Services.

We're also talking about other supports. We're working in the addiction system. Early next year, Riverport centre is scheduled to open. It'll provide further continue of services, enhancing services, such as a centralized intake screening process, community outreach, 20 new withdrawal management beds, 10 new treatment beds and—for longer treatment, and 38 primary residential treatment beds and transitional housing. It's going to increase our system yet again, and we've managed to virtually double the entire investment in addictions in the last 10 years. We also are working with liquor and lotteries to put 2 per cent of net money into the addiction services which will continue to enhance those services. We are also working on more outreach programs in—and some of the programs receiving an increase, yet, this year, is Two Ten Recovery, addictions recovery system and Esther House.

Other things that we're doing, is we're opening up a new six-bed, non-medical withdrawal program in Thompson to enhance services in the north. We're also opening a new facility that will connect young people and support and address addiction issues. This new facility will be operated by Marymount and staffed 24 hours a day with qualified youth workers, addiction specialists, nursing staff, et cetera. Eight beds are devoted to voluntary and involuntary stabilization, and two beds will be for youth held under The Intoxicated Persons Detention Act.

We also are moving forward on The Caregiver Recognition Act; we have an advisory board that's moving forward. We also are going to continue with the Age-Friendly Manitoba. I'm pleased to say that there's 86 communities about 80 per cent of Manitoba population now live in age-friendly

community. We're world leaders and we're going to continue our focus on this. We have a great Elder Abuse Strategy which is dealing with elder abuse and prevention and responses, including safe suites and consultants in the phone service. We have SafetyAid, crimes prevention, falls prevention, and that has been wonderful for seniors and we're going to continue to enhance the safety and falls prevention program.

Another important part of the department is Consumer Affairs. I'd like to say thank you to the staff. They've done lots of things the new cellphone contract law, which came into effect September 15th. The new consumer protection on motor vehicle work and repairs came into force on July 1st. We're working on enforcing Manitoba's tough payday lending rules to continue to protect people that are financially vulnerable. And we're going to continue to move in that area, and there's legislation put by the House and I encourage the members to pass it and move it along.

Also The New Home Warranty Act. There's also Bill 17, which will protect consumers against false and misleading car advertising sales, and also the whole rental housing market, there's amendments to The Residential Tenancies Act that will ensure a fair system for both tenants and landlords, and improve it—that is also before the House.

I think that we have been very, very ambitious. I'd like to say thank you to the staff. They have been very good and very dedicated. It's been a pleasure to work with us. You can see it's a diverse program department but they're very active.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the minister for those comments.

Does the official opposition critic have any opening comments?

*(17:40)

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods): Mr. Chair, I appreciate the minister's opening comments. I think, in view of the time we have left in Estimates, we will save our questions for concurrence. And, as a result, we're ready to move line by line. *[interjection]* Isn't that good?

An Honourable Member: That sounds reasonable.

Mr. Cullen: Absolutely reasonable. How's that?

Mr. Chairperson: Under Manitoba practice, the debate on the minister's salary is the last item considered for a department in the Committee of

Supply. Accordingly, we shall now defer consideration of line item 34.1.(a) contained in the resolution 34.1.

Resolution 34.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$21,556,000 for Healthy Living, Seniors and Consumer Affairs, Healthy Living and Healthy Aging, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 34.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$12,775,000 for Healthy Living, Seniors and Consumer Affairs, Consumer Affairs, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 34.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$20,278,000 for Healthy Living, Seniors and Consumer Affairs, Addictions Foundation of Manitoba, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 34.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$219,000 for Healthy Living, Seniors and Consumer Affairs, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolved—the last item to be considered for the Estimates of the department is item 34.1.(a) the minister's salary, contained in the resolution 34.1.

The floor is open for questions.

Mr. Cullen: Mr. Chair, I move

THAT line item 34.1.(a) be reduced to \$1.08.

Mr. Chairperson: It has been moved by the honourable member for Spruce Woods (Mr. Cullen)

THAT the item 34.1.(a) be reduced to \$1.08.

The motion is in order. Is there any debate of the motion?

An Honourable Member: No. Question, please.

Mr. Chairperson: Shall the motion pass?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Chairperson: All those in favour, say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Chairperson: All those opposed, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Chairperson: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

Recorded Vote

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Yes, can we call for a recorded vote, Mr. Chair?

Mr. Chairperson: A formal vote has been requested. As part of the agreement of the House on July 10th, all requests for a formal vote are to be deferred until Monday, July 13. Accordingly, this motion shall be deferred until Monday, and because the motion is deferred, the final resolution for the department must also be deferred until the vote on the motion is completed.

Also, as part of the agreement of the House, the committee can now set aside the Estimates for the Department of Healthy Living, Seniors and Consumer Affairs and proceed to the consideration of the next department, the Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism.

Shall we—a brief recess to allow the minister and the critic an opportunity to prepare for the commencement of the next set of Estimates? Minister's ready. Okay. Minister's ready.

CULTURE, HERITAGE AND TOURISM

Mr. Chairperson (Mohinder Saran): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

This section of the Committee of Supply will now consider Estimates of the Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism.

Does the honourable minister have an opening statement?

Hon. Flor Marcelino (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism): Yes, Mr. Chair. I'll just get my—I am pleased to present the 2013-2014 Expenditure Estimates for the Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism. It is a pleasure to lead such a diverse and interesting department that provides support to Manitobans in such important areas as arts, culture, heritage, libraries, archives, public information, tourism and more.

This year, my department will provide over \$19 million to support Manitoba's major arts and cultural institutions, including the Manitoba Museum, the Winnipeg Art Gallery, the concert hall complexes in Winnipeg and Brandon, the Franco-Manitoban Cultural Centre, CCFM, as well as the Manitoba Arts Council.

We are also continuing to support and celebrate Manitoba's rich cultural life with initiatives such as Culture Days 2012, Nuit Blanche, Manito Ahbee Festival, Festival du Voyageur, and the Winnipeg Folk Festival.

In addition, support is provided for the year-round operating and programming needs of over 80 community-based organizations across the province.

In the last fiscal year, our department supported organizations in 174 different communities and also funded close to 170 arts development and arts education projects.

We also provide ongoing support for three major cultural festivals that host more than 500,000 people annually and 10 major arts festivals with an attendance of over 320,000 people.

As well, we fund over 45 annual community festivals and events, including approximately 20 powwows every year.

Manitoba Film and Music is one of our very important major agencies. They allow our local music and screen-based media industries to flourish. Last year, Manitoba's thriving music industry produced 226 new music releases. Manitoba's musicians and industry professionals also received 142 award nominations with 43 of these winning regional, national, and international awards at various music industry award events. the Juno Awards

*(17:50)

Next year, the country's premiere music awards, are returning to Winnipeg after a nine-year absence. I am very pleased that my department is a partner on the 2014 Juno host committee that, together with Manitoba's music industry, secured the 2014 Juno's for Manitoba's capital city.

Manitoba also has a strong and vibrant publishing community. Fourteen book publishers contribute significantly to Manitoba's economy, publishing 100 titles annually across diverse genres,

including history, drama, poetry, literature, speculative fiction, and academic non-fiction.

My department provides archeological consultative services across the province as required. Our successful partnerships with Manitoba Hydro and northern communities are recognized as best practices by many of our provincial-territorial counterparts. We continue to build these relationships through our ongoing archeological survey and salvage work.

We also continue to support the work of the community and regional museums throughout the province. In 2012-2013 my department assisted many communities and heritage organizations to accomplish a wide range of projects, including inventories of special places, notable people and pivotal events, archeological research, exhibitions, collections, management and cairns and plaques.

Heritage building owners are revitalizing and protecting their designated heritage structures, preserving this rich legacy for all Manitobans. My department assists with this by providing support to projects impacting public buildings, churches, and residences, including a diverse range of work involving critical repairs to roofs, stone and brick masonry, windows and foundations.

I am very pleased to confirm that these Estimates maintain our support for a strong network of 59 local and regional public library systems in Manitoba. Public libraries provide an increasingly important role in our communities, connecting individuals and families to information and programs, and contributing to a better quality of life.

We continue to work in partnership with the Winnipeg Public Library on a very popular service that provides downloadable e-books and audio library resources. eLibraries Manitoba has almost doubled its circulation with over 775,000 titles used by library patrons throughout the province. Public libraries across Manitoba are working together to give local users access to their databases and subscription services, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Tourism is an important part of our department's portfolio. Manitoba's tourism industry has continued to set a strong, strong pace of growth. Based on the most recent data from Statistics Canada, inbound tourism revenues hit \$1.45 billion in 2011 and the sector employed over 13,000 Manitobans.

The government's many significant investments in new tourism products such as the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, the Assiniboine Park Journey to Churchill Centre and the expansion of the Winnipeg Convention Centre position us favourably for the future. In addition, new site development and interpretive materials have been introduced through our Watchable Wildlife program.

The Grasslands Birding Trail in the southwest corner of the province has been completed, including a viewing guide and interpretive signs. Additional enhancements to wildlife viewing areas have also occurred at Oak Hammock Marsh, the Narcisse snake dens and Delta Marsh.

We recently launched our 2012-2015 tourism action plan that outlines our government's multi-year approach to realign provincial tourism resources to better position the industry for continued growth. Under the plan, we continue to support the work of regional tourism associations in developing tourism attractions and services throughout the province. We are also working closely with Travel Manitoba and other tourism partners to maximize our collective resources as we further position the tourism industry as a significant economic driver in Manitoba.

In our Provincial Services division, the Archives of Manitoba, including the Hudson's Bay Company Archives and the Legislative Library of Manitoba mounted an exhibit in September 2012 that commemorated the 200th anniversary of the establishment of the Red River settlement. The Legislative Library also provided resources to the Manitoba Library Consortium to bring local history books to life through the digitization of over 200 books.

Mr. Chairperson: Order. Minister time has expired. We thank the minister for those comments.

Does the official opposition critic have any opening comments?

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Yes, I would just like to say thank you to the minister's department and staff for all their hard work that they've put in over the last year. I know that the extended session has probably impacted all of you, as well, in this, again, unexpected session. And I know that probably a lot of you have had to rearrange some of your possible vacations or even some of your evening work. So with that, I appreciate the work that you have done in this—in Culture, Heritage and Tourism and I do recognize that it is a very important—plays a

very important role in the future of our province, and so with that, I thank you.

I'm not going to have any questions right now. We're going to save them for concurrence. So I'd like to proceed to line-by-line, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the critic from the official opposition for those remarks.

Under Manitoba practice, debate on the minister's salary is the last item considered for a department in the Committee of Supply. Accordingly, we shall now defer consideration of line item 14.1.(a) contained in resolution 14.1.

Does the committee wish to proceed through Estimates of this department chronologically or have a global discussion?

Some Honourable Members: Global.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay, global has been agreed. Thank you. It is agreed. Then direct questions for this department will proceed in a global manner with all resolutions to be passed once the question has concluded.

This floor is now open for questions.

Resolution 14.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$46,680,000 for Culture, Heritage and Tourism, Culture, Heritage and Tourism Programs, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

* (18:00)

Resolution 14.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$11,526,000 for Culture, Heritage and Tourism, Information Resources, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 14.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$171,000 for Culture, Heritage and Tourism, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 14.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$110,000 for Culture, Heritage and Tourism, Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

The last item to be considered for the Estimates of the department is item 14.1.(a) the minister's salary, contained in resolution 14.1.

The floor is open for questions.

Mr. Ewasko: Mr. Chair, I'd like to make the motion, THAT line 14.1.(a) be reduced to \$1.08.

Mr. Chairperson: It has been moved by the honourable member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) THAT line item 14.1.(a) be reduced to \$1.08.

The motion is in order.

Is there any debate for—of the motion?

Shall the motion pass?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Voice Vote

Mr. Chairperson: All those in favour, say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Chairperson: All those opposed, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Chairperson: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

Recorded Vote

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Mr. Chair, we call for a recorded vote.

Mr. Chairperson: A formal vote has been requested. As per agreement of the House on July 10th, all requests for a formal vote are to be deferred until Monday, July 13. Accordingly, this motion shall be deferred until Monday, and because the motion is deferred, the final resolution for the department must also be deferred until the vote on the motion is completed.

Also, as per the agreement of the House, the committee can now set aside Estimates for the Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism and proceed to the consideration of the next department, Legislative Assembly.

Shall we briefly recess to prepare for the commencement of the next set of the Estimates? Agreed. *[interjection]*

Also, as per the agreement of the House, the committee can now set aside the Estimates for the Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism and

proceed to the consideration of the next department, Legislative Assembly.

Shall we briefly recess to prepare for the commencement of the next set of the Estimates? *[Agreed]*

The committee recessed at 6:04 p.m.

The committee resumed at 6:05 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Chairperson (Mohinder Saran): Order. This section of Committee of Supply will now consider the Estimates of the Legislative Assembly.

The floor is now open for questions.

So there is no question?

Resolution 1.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$9,176,000 for Legislative Assembly, Other Assembly Expenditures, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 1.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$6,869,000 for Legislative Assembly, Office of the Auditor General, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 1.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,256,000 for Legislative Assembly, Office of the Ombudsman, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 1.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,507,000 for Legislative Assembly, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 1.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,627,000 for Legislative Assembly, Office of the Children's Advocate, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 1.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$60,000 for Legislative Assembly, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

This concludes consideration of the Estimates of this section of the Committee of Supply in meeting in room 254.

I would like to thank the ministers, critics and all honourable members for their hard work and dedicating during this process, and also the office of the Clerk.

Committee rise.

EDUCATION

* (15:00)

Mr. Chairperson (Rob Altemeyer): This section of the Committee of Supply has been dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Education. We are on page 67 of the main Estimates book. As previously agreed, questioning for this department will proceed in a truly global manner.

And the floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): We left off yesterday talking a little bit about project-based learning and the minister was talking about some of the initiatives that were happening in some of the school divisions. And I think she committed—if I remember—to getting, maybe, some feedback on how that was going. I think that that's good.

So to continue on with the theme of different trends—if that's the right word—in education. I'm not giving a quantified value, if it's positive or negative, but adaptive learning is also a significant trend that we were seeing in different parts of North America in terms of computerized—specific computerized learning where students will work through a program at their own pace, in some ways, and the software recognizes the strengths and the weaknesses of the students in a particular area of study and adapts the program to their learning. Is there—is that the sort of thing that's happening within the schools, as well, at this point?

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Education): I'm not aware of that, personally, myself, as Minister of Education, but we'll certainly look into that and get back to the MLA on it.

Mr. Goertzen: I appreciate that. It is—it's a fairly significant thing in some parts of North America, and so if there's any feedback in terms of how it might be applied within the school divisions, that would be great.

Another one of the things that I've seen in different jurisdictions, talking to some of my colleagues in different provinces and states, is more of an individualized track to graduation, allowing students to move through middle school and high school quicker. Now, maybe that is done through the credit system in Manitoba. I know they've done it a lot in states like Idaho, for example; a lot of online classes in the summer, allowing students to have more individualized tracks to graduation, to more quickly move through if they're succeeding. Is that the kind of thing that's happening in Manitoba as well?

Ms. Allan: Yes, well, actually, that's something that we're very interested in here in the province of Manitoba and have been for many years in regards to making the whole issue of credentials that students receive in high school more seamless in regards to moving from the K-to-12 system to the post-secondary system.

In fact, when I was at the Winnipeg Technical College recently, when we made our commitment to provide \$200,000 to Skill Build to provide technical-vocational equipment for some schools across the province of Manitoba, this young woman was speaking there, and she was a young woman who was leaving Winnipeg Technical College with her high school diploma as well as her first-level apprentice in welding. And her mother was there with her, and they were so excited. And so, of course, that's something that we're very interested in.

We also—you know, because of the technical college—the technical programs that we have happening—I know Louis Riel School Division has a technical program. We have a high school. We have lots of vocational programs, where students can connect with those earlier. We have—you know, we are—we have done a lot of work in that area in regarding—in regards to trying to make our high school system more seamless as we move into post-secondary education programming.

Mr. Goertzen: And maybe, you know, just to home in a bit on the question—and maybe I didn't phrase it properly—what ability, and I suppose I ask this maybe as much as a parent as a critic, but what ability does the student who is excelling and achieving very well,

in terms of their academic performance, how much more quickly can they move through the middle school and high school process on an individualized track, whether that's through online learning—I think in Idaho, it starts at grade 7, but it allows students to go through the online system in the summer and graduate earlier and then also go into post-secondary education earlier, as well, if that's what they choose.

Ms. Allan: I'm pleased to let the MLA know that students who want to take any kind of student-initiated courses—that's what they're referred to in—by the professionals in the system—if a student wants to achieve their credits sooner, because they are interested in initiating that learning themselves and they are supported by the school, the professionals in the school system will support them to achieve their credits sooner.

Mr. Goertzen: I thank the minister for that response. Is—any idea or statistics on how many students are achieving their diplomas—high school diplomas earlier than that would normally be the case through that option or ability?

Ms. Allan: No, we don't have those statistics.

Mr. Goertzen: Is that something that's—would be relatively easy to determine? Is it a matter of asking the school divisions? It would be, you know, curious to see, perhaps in comparison to other jurisdictions that have individualized tracks, how well that's being utilized.

Ms. Allan: Well, I think that's something I would like to have an opportunity to chat with my officials about in regards to how much I—you know, what the process would be for getting that information and seeing whether or not we would be prepared to have a look at that.

Mr. Goertzen: To come to the issue of home-schooling, it appears, from recent reports, that the home-schooling numbers have doubled in the last decade or so, and I think the minister was quoted, and I don't have the article in front of me so if she's—if I'm misquoting her, she'll let me know, I'm sure, but I think that the quote was something along the lines of she wasn't entirely sure why that was, that there would need to be some analysis done in terms of why there was such an increase in home-schooling. There was some suggestions within the article from—in the president of the Manitoba Association of Christian Home Schools, that it's often a reflection, it's a reaction of what's happening

within the public school system or maybe the private school system as well.

* (15:10)

But is—has the minister been able to do any further analysis? I'm sure she would have been, you know, interested in and quickly tried to delve into that.

Ms. Allan: Well, we have had some—we have someone in our department who is the person who works directly with all of the home schools in regards to what is being taught in those home schools and whether or not they're meeting the curriculum. And conversations with the home-school people, quite often we have—you will—we will—we have determined is, it's really up to parental choice.

It has a lot to do as well with our demographics and our newcomers who come from other countries. And sometimes they will make a decision that they would prefer to home-school their children, just because, you know, they—that—they have a comfort level with that in regards to arriving here from Canada and arriving in a new culture, and they make that decision.

And it really is—there isn't one thing that we have discovered is driving, you know, the increase in homeschools. It's basically up to parental choice. And, of course, we always, you know, look to this as our responsibility to provide resources to those parents. And we—when I have had an opportunity to meet and chat with people that have set up their own home schools, they're always very, very impressed with the department and the support—and the—that they receive from our—the departmental officials.

Mr. Goertzen: And certainly I value the right of parents to home-school. I'm sure the minister does as well. It is an important right, I think, to be protected.

Having said that, often if you—one were to use, sort of, the consumer model, you know, we might assume the consumers are voting with their feet in that the doubling of the number of people home-schooling could partially be to demographics, and I accept that. But I also think that there's could be other reasons, whether it's, you know, concern about drugs in schools, for example. I know the minister indicated yesterday they don't really track that within the department.

But is there a willingness or is there any anticipation that the minister might more proactively survey those who are home-schooling, just in terms

of their decisions, anonymously, and the reasons why they've chosen to home-school?

Ms. Allan: We don't believe that the increase in home-schooling is—we're not concerned about that. We have many parents who home-school their children who provide wonderful learning environments for their young students. And we certainly don't have any evidence, as the MLA might be suggesting, that this is because there are drugs in our schools.

We believe that, as the MLA has said, that this is—it is important to allow parents to have the right to home-school their children. It's an important connection for many. I think in the story they did interview a woman who said that it was important to her that she keep her children close at home. And that's a decision that's—that some make, and—some parents make.

And I have—we have—my husband and I have very good friends, actually, who have home-schooled their children. And they are remarkable parents, and they've paid the price for it. Maryann works part-time, and she works part-time on the evenings and weekends so that she can be at home and home-school her children. And they're fabulous—fabulous children. And they had—did make a decision a few years ago to not home-school their kids anymore and send them off to high school, because they thought that the socialization of high school was important.

So, at some point, you know, parents make the decision about whether or not they want to—at what level and what grades they want to keep their—they want to be the primary educator of their children. And we are there to support them, in regards to making sure that, you know, they are meeting curriculum. Because, of course, we want to make sure that we provide that support to them so that they can provide that quality learning experience.

Mr. Goertzen: And certainly I do know many people who home-school, and I would agree they provide a tremendous learning environment for the students they're home-schooling.

I think, though, that I do hear a lot of other—and it's anecdotal, because there doesn't seem to be any other evidence that exists. But I do hear a lot of people who home-school for concerns about what's going on in the public school system, and there are a variety of different things that they raise and I just thought it might be interesting information.

But, I guess, to sum up, the minister has no data. She has anecdotal stories; I have anecdotal stories. But she has no data in terms of why there's an increase in home-schooling and she's not intending to gather any either. Is that correct?

Ms. Allan: Well, I actually do recall now a piece of information that is very pertinent to this story. The reason that the home-schools—the enrolment report showed an increase in the number of students that had registered was because we provided them an opportunity to register earlier compared to in the past. So the data collection that we received—actually, we received better data collection because we got—we wanted to ensure that we had accurate data in regards to those parents that were home-schooling their children. And so we put the registration form online, and what happened was we saw a bump in the numbers because we were getting better registration because the registration form was put online.

Mr. Goertzen: So, that'd've meant that the minister—or the office, the department, didn't have accurate data previously in terms of how many kids are being home-schooled, or was it a timing issue?

Ms. Allan: It was a timing issue.

An Honourable Member: So have you—

Mr. Chairperson: Honourable member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen).

Mr. Goertzen: Sorry, Mr. Chairperson. So have you been able to, then, to compare apples to apples? Is there a way to unravel the timing issues to see what the true increase has been year over year?

Ms. Allan: There is—we have been able to compare apples to apples since we put the new on-form online and have had parents register sooner and quicker. And there is a small increase, but it—certainly nothing major. And we have two home-schooling officers that work with parents and talk to all of the parents directly who are home-schooling their children.

And it—sometimes what happens, even sometimes what—one of the reasons for them to home-school their children is they aren't—they're not, as parents, as comfortable with the provincial curriculum as they could be because they are newcomers. And so sometimes that's why they make that decision to home-school them at home, because it provides them with that support and direct link to the department and the direct link to the home-school

officers that work with all of the home-school parents. So we're not hearing anything that we're concerned about. And, of course, some of the parents, as well, that come from different countries—as I know the member's very aware of—and they may prefer a religious-based curriculum. And if they prefer a religious-based curriculum we want to provide that opportunity for them.

Mr. Goertzen: In the past, the Manitoba Teachers' Society has passed a resolution on the ability to opt out of certain portions of the curriculum. And I know that the minister, I think, last year, indicated she was going to be meeting with MTS to look at that and the motion was about not allowing the opt out. Has there been any further developments on the minister's discussion on that issue?

Ms. Allan: No, I've never had that discussion with Manitoba Teachers' Society.

Mr. Goertzen: So she indicated she was willing to have the discussion, but either she didn't initiate the discussion or the teachers' society didn't initiate the discussion or it hasn't been a priority?

* (15:20)

Ms. Allan: No discussion has been initiated by either party.

Mr. Goertzen: Well, I know that there'll be some people who will be happy to hear that, and I'll probably include myself in that category at this stage. But we're always staying tuned to see what might happen in the future.

I had some questions regarding the Manitoba School Improvement Program that I know is funded in part by the Department of Education. And just noticed it through the public accounts and—because always interested in financial statements and that; reminds me of different days. Going through their financial statements, the Department of Education provides \$271,000 to the program. There's funding from labour and immigration, Advanced Education. I think in total the funding is about \$750,000, about three quarters of a million dollars, and it looks like 75 or 80 per cent of it comes from the provincial government. I'm just curious in terms of what the program is and what the program does.

Does it give out grants, or what exactly is the program about that the department's funding?

Ms. Allan: The Manitoba School Improvement Program is an organization that provides professional development training. It works on the basis of

providing training to school divisions. It looks at some of the latest educational best practices. It also looks at some of the latest pedagogy, and it's always working with school divisions in regards to providing opportunities for teachers and for administrators, as well. Could be, as well, opportunities for superintendents, and they partner with all of the education partners and work with them in regards to professional development opportunities. And they kind of put the money together, and it's an opportunity for them to work with school divisions.

Mr. Goertzen: And I guess I'm not—still not quite clear. So there are—it's a separate agency. It's not a department of government although it's primarily funded by the provincial government, and there are—I suppose, are consultants then, I guess, in the—in this Manitoba School Improvement Program, and they go out to the school divisions and they consult on what?

Ms. Allan: They are an NGO, non-profit, yes, and they also—one of their main mandates in regards to providing professional training is social justice.

Mr. Goertzen: Okay, so when I look at the expenses of the organization, there's 750–\$740,000 of expenses matches fairly closely to their revenue. And \$641,000 is for sustainability and administration. Is—that's basically salaries and administration? Is that what the \$641,000 is?

Ms. Allan: They have consultants on staff and they also have an executive director on a 50 per cent basis. They are an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organization that promotes education equity and social justice by collaborating with public secondary schools to build their capacity to improve student learning and engagement. It is governed by a board of directors. It is comprised of nine members with representation from various organizations and school divisions.

They have an executive director, a program administrator, a receptionist. They have Peaceful Village team leaders and a number of consultants that are hired on a needs basis. And it is funded as well by the United Way and the Rogers Youth Fund. And, of course, I've talked about some of the issues that they work with. Mostly it's in regards to social justice issues.

Mr. Goertzen: Okay, so I noticed in their financial statements, so they provided school grants of \$44,000 and then they had costs of salaries for \$641,000. So they're not really in the grants. They

don't really give a lot of grants. They have staff and then those staff go out there and they do the sort of things the minister's describing?

Ms. Allan: That's correct.

Mr. Goertzen: The issue of amalgamation of school divisions and administration costs, just briefly: I know that the minister's government has tried to trumpet the value of amalgamation for municipalities—forced amalgamation, in that case—also of the regional health authorities and, also in that case, forced amalgamation. Certainly on the forced amalgamation of municipalities, we have concerns in terms of the process and elected officials there. Is the minister or government planning any sort of amalgamation, forced or otherwise, on school divisions?

Ms. Allan: At this time, you know, I have said very clearly, in—for—as my—under my tenure as minister, that we would be, of course, interested in amalgamations if some school divisions came forward to us and wanted to find a marriage partner, that would be great. I am not, at this time, looking at any forced amalgamations in regards to school divisions.

Mr. Goertzen: And the minister could understand, you know, why that might not give, you know, comfort, I suppose, in terms of what the direction of the government is. And I think that the—there's a question if it's a philosophical difference—if the government is looking at amalgamating school divisions—or, sorry, amalgamating municipalities because they think it'll be saving money, what would be the distinction, then, with school divisions by not doing that?

Ms. Allan: Well, of course, one of the reasons that we believe that municipalities should amalgamate is because they—there hasn't been an amalgamation of municipalities since I—since something like 1931. We have some municipalities in the province of Manitoba that are under a thousand people. They are having—some municipalities are having a very, very difficult time—in regards to doing audits so that they can take advantage of federal money. So we believe, as a government, that it's time for them, you know, to, quite frankly, amalgamate. It's—they have at their convention—at AMM, for many years, they have had a resolution on the books at—saying they should amalgamate. But this is all up to political will.

And, you know, you are talking to someone who, when she was a school trustee and she saw the

underfunding of the Tory government in the 1990s, and I was a member, a school trustee, in the Norwood School Division, I closed my daughter's school and we amalgamated Norwood into St. Boniface.

And then, of course, under the amalgamations that were already done by our government, when we reduced school divisions, you know, it was a very difficult—it's very difficult.

At this particular time, we believe we've already done a full-scale set of amalgamations with school divisions, and that was around 10 years ago. We've done that and our priority right now in Education is education reform. And we really believe that we want to continue to work with our stakeholders here in school divisions all across this province.

You know, we've already done one round of amalgamations. We've gone from 54 to 37. We, you know, amalgamated a third of the school divisions here in the province. We've done that, so—and it was a forced amalgamation, so to, you know—so, it's no—you know, it's—we're not going to do another one at this particular time.

And we believe, as a government, that the Association of Manitoba Municipalities need to have a look at what's in the best interests of their communities and do those amalgamations in those smaller regions.

*(15:30)

Mr. Goertzen: Does the minister have any updates on the most recent average attendance for all the schools in the province?

Ms. Allan: I'm sorry I didn't hear. Did you say Aboriginal attendance?

Mr. Goertzen: Average.

Ms. Allan: We don't have it with us, but we can provide that to you, for sure.

Mr. Goertzen: I thank the department for that undertaking. Are school divisions required to submit monthly reports on the attendance? I know they have to report if there is variation beyond, I think, 90 per cent, but is there specific reporting requirements to the minister's office by the school divisions on attendance?

Ms. Allan: Yes, we require attendance monthly. And, of course, this is an opportunity for me to talk about the good work that my department is doing with the Manitoba Association of Parent Councils.

The Manitoba Association of Parent Councils and our department got together within the last year and—excuse me—got together and we worked with the Manitoba Association of Parent Councils in regards to putting together an attendance initiative.

And a few months ago I had the wonderful opportunity to attend the first ever monthly attendance—that initiative forum, and it was absolutely fabulous. And this is all about providing opportunities for parent councils and schools to work together to increase attendance in schools, because, unfortunately, for some parents, getting their kids to school, particularly at an early age, is difficult.

And it can—and there are many barriers. It can be employment barriers, some parents working different hours; it can be child-care issues, single parents; it can be—there are a lot of barriers for some parents getting their kids to school. And we're very pleased that we were able to do this work with the Manitoba Association of Parent Councils and—at this day-long forum.

In regards to the attendance initiative, there were school divisions and schools that were there that were showing their project work that they had done in their individual schools around the importance of getting your youngest children to school every day, because if they're not in school, they're not learning.

So we are going to be continuing to work with them to increase attendance in our schools, and who better to work with on this initiative in consultation with our education partners than, of course, parents across the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Goertzen: Does the minister have any information on how many individual school divisions or schools fell below the 90 per cent threshold in the last school year?

Ms. Allan: Yes, we can get that for you. We don't have it here with us, but we will certainly get it to you.

Mr. Goertzen: Just walk me through the process. I'm not trying to spy on my young son or anything, but are parents notified every—at every absence from—absence of a school student?

Ms. Allan: If—there is a standard process throughout most school divisions and schools. If there is a situation where there is an unexcused absence and the student is away from the school and they haven't received information prior to that person not being at school, they will—a phone call from the office to the

home will be made to the parents to determine whether or not that child is sick or away, or what's happening. And most often it's a situation where the parents have just forgotten to call and the child is sick or gone on a trip and they've—a medical appointment or whatever, and that is the process.

Mr. Goertzen: Does the minister have any indication, any statistics, on how many students under 18 in the province are not enrolled in school?

Ms. Allan: No, that's—I mean, that's very difficult to determine. It's very difficult to determine where those students are because they may not even be in the province. They may have—we've had this discussion. We had this discussion when we made the decision, for the first time since 1961 to change the mandatory age for going to school and—from 16 to 18.

And we had this discussion about how we would determine that and it was very clear that it would be very difficult because there is no way of knowing if they have—those students have left the province or moved to another school division, or moved on to employment, or—so—it, you know, we've had that discussion as a department in regards to how to make that determination. And, quite frankly, it's very difficult to try to figure out where people are when you have no mechanism to figure that out.

Mr. Goertzen: So, then, a mechanism doesn't exist to measure how successful the initiative is to legislate that individuals who are 18 and under have to be in school. There's no real way to track how well that's doing as an initiative, is there?

Ms. Allan: Well, it's easier to track when the student is enrolled. When the student is enrolled in school, that's—you know, we can figure that out. And, of course, now that, you know, we have made this change, right, in having our students in school, and we can keep track of them and we can encourage them to stay in school and engage them in school.

And we made a decision to provide funding and resources to school divisions for learning-to-age-18 co-ordinators. So once they're in the school we can try to, kind of, work with them since we put that program in place.

Obviously, we can follow up and maybe, you know, and make phone calls to the parents. But we're following up. You know, if somebody's enrolled in the school and they're not—and they stop showing up, we can collect their MET numbers and we can try to find them if they've moved to another school. But,

you know, it's very difficult if they've left the province or gone somewhere else.

So we're going to continue to work on this file because it is complicated in regards to finding students and trying to follow them and access where they're going if they're leaving school. But the funding that we have provided to school divisions since we changed the age from 16 to 18, in some situations they are hiring co-ordinators to keep track of students and to try to work with students in regards to keeping them in school.

This Student Success Initiative pilot that we have implemented in three school divisions has been very successful. It's a success initiative around teacher mentors.

And we know that young people are at risk of getting disengaged in the public education system around the age of 16, so if we provide mentorships—mentors for them and try to continue to figure out what really works for them, we can continue to try to keep as many kids in school as possible.

Mr. Goertzen: I think we'll end up continuing on this discussion in concurrence. But it just seems to me that there's always a significant difference between the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics report on school-aged children and the enrollment numbers. And some of that—and I know there is variations on why that can be different.

But it just seems like the minister doesn't really have any idea of what compliance there is on the students over 18—or under 18. They're discrepancies within the numbers from the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics and the enrollment numbers.

And it seems like another honour system where we sort of hope kids are going to be around. Not that the initiative is a bad initiative, but there just doesn't seem to be any way to enforce or to monitor what the minister and others might believe is a good initiative.

*(15:40)

Ms. Allan: Well, I've been informed by our officials in my department that we track annually from schools the MET numbers. Every student has a MET number, and we track annually the MET numbers of students who have moved and for when their cumulative files have not been transferred elsewhere. So we can figure that out in regards to if the files aren't transferred and we can connect it to the MET numbers.

We also plan to work with the Department of Health, because if we can start cross-referencing some of those MET numbers with the Department of Health, we could do a better job in regards to trying to find out where young people are going and try to get better data in regards to that.

We can also look on EIS and we can try to see if they have gone elsewhere, and that would be another opportunity for us to try to get better data in regards to where those students are going.

Mr. Goertzen: Have all of the recommendations from the 2009 Probe Research report entitled School Attendance in Manitoba—have they all been implemented?

Ms. Allan: Yes, actually. We have an inter-departmental working group. We have a—sorry, I'm getting confused—we have an interdepartmental working group, and every one of the recommendations have either been fulfilled or we're working on and continuing to work on them. One of those—one of the attendance pieces came out of that report, and so that's one of the pieces that we're continuing to work on.

The other piece of a—for us that's important is the, obviously, students on First Nation schools. Quite often, I mean, well, we have many partnerships with First Nation schools. And one of the biggest—some of the biggest or most frequent partnerships happened in the Frontier School Division.

And so we're continuing to work with First Nation schools and we can track students who move back and forth between First Nation schools and public schools. And that will provide us with an opportunity to improve our efforts in regards to where those students are going and help us, as well, determine whether or not they're completing high school.

Mr. Goertzen: I'm going to ask the minister in concurrence, when we reach that point, whenever that might be—it might be closer to December, the way things are going—but whenever the—it happens, we'll all be here; it'll be a merry Christmas for all of us.

But we—when we get into concurrence, I'll ask the minister for more specifics about the recommendations and how many have been implemented, so I'm just giving her a heads-up on that.

And I'll—I want to ask questions about the graduation rates; as well, the policy on school closure moratorium; English as a second language, level 2 and level 3—you can pick it up on Hansard tomorrow if you want; the new report cards; bullying and reporting of bullying to divisions or to the minister's office; and a few other questions I'm sure she'll be ready to answer.

So I'm just giving you a heads-up that that's where I'll be going in concurrence, because I know you'll want to be prepared with all of those answers when we get there at Christmastime. But, for now, I think we're ready to go with the appropriations, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Chairperson: Seeing no further questions, we'll proceed with resolutions, starting with resolution 16.2

Resolution 16.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$27,258,000 for Education, School Programs, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 16.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$10,023,000 for Education, Bureau de l'éducation française, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 16.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$325,440,000 for Education, Education and School Tax Credits, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 16.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,264,092,000 for Education, Support to Schools, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 16.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$52,942,000 for Education, Capital Funding, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 16.7: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding

\$162,000 for Education, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

The last item to be considered for the Estimates of the Department is item 1.(a) the minister's salary contained in resolution 16.1. At this point we'll request that the minister's staff leave the table for consideration of this last item and thank them all very much for their participation in this process.

All right, the floor's open for questions.

Mr. Goertzen: Not to be predictable, but I have a motion for the committee.

I move

THAT line item 16.1(a) the minister's salary be reduced to \$1.08.

Mr. Chairperson: That does, indeed, sound familiar. The motion is in order. Is there—all right. Okay.

It has been moved by the honourable member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen)

THAT line item 16.1.(a) the minister's salary be reduced to \$1.08.

The motion is in order. Is there any debate on the motion?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Chairperson: Question's been called. Committee ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Mr. Chairperson: All right. Very simply, shall the motion pass?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

Voice Vote

Mr. Chairperson: All those in favour of the motion, please say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Chairperson: All those opposed to the motion, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Chairperson: In my opinion, the Nays have that one.

Recorded Vote

Mr. Goertzen: Recorded vote, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Chairperson: A formal vote has been requested. We will now—seconded by the honourable member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko). There's two members. And a formal vote's been requested. We will now recess and proceed to the Chamber for the formal vote.

The committee recessed at 3:49 p.m.

The committee resumed at 4:22 p.m.

Mr. Chairperson: Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the last item, resolution 16.1, of the Estimates for the Department of Education.

And are there any questions? Seeing none, we'll now put the question.

Resolution 16.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,869,000 for Education, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

[interjection] I'm left-handed. I always—
[interjection] I'm a lefty, in pretty much all things.

This concludes the Estimates for Education. The next department to be considered in this section is the Estimates for Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade.

Does the committee wish to have a very brief recess for the appropriate critics and ministers to arrive?

An Honourable Member: No, we can tallyho. I think—

Mr. Chairperson: Five minutes, if 'ness'—up to five minutes?

Okay, we are in recess for up to five minutes.

The committee recessed at 4:23 p.m.

The committee resumed at 4:25 p.m.

**ENTREPRENEURSHIP,
TRAINING AND TRADE**

Mr. Chairperson (Rob Altemeyer): Will the Committee of Supply please come to some semblance of order.

This section of the Committee of Supply will be considering the Estimates of the Department of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade.

Does the honourable minister have an opening statement?

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade): Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair, just a few brief comments.

When you look at the Estimates book that talks about the mission of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade, there are four key points that I'd like to just briefly talk about a few of the things that we've been doing; fostering trade investment in entrepreneurship and partnership with the stakeholders to maximize opportunities for prosperity of all Manitobans. Of course, we've been developing our trade plan around the notion of the BRIC nations, as mentioned in our Throne Speech some time ago. And we continue to support local organizations as they look to enhance their markets including, as mentioned in a very fine member's statement today, the support for the World Trade Centre and as well as the Centrallia event that was hosted here.

On supporting the development of a skilled and sustainable workforce, we'd be very pleased to be part of the Premier's Economic Advisory Council's discussion around how we are going to address the 75,000 jobs that we expect to add to our province in the next seven and half years.

Of course, the department of apprenticeship, or pardon me the Entrepreneurship branch within my department will play a key role in making that happen. And I've been very pleased to have made a number of announcements on how we intend to support that initiative.

And, of course, it speaks to the next point on supporting training and employment opportunities to allow citizens to achieve fuller participation in society and greater self-sufficiency and independence.

Part of that PEAC summit talked about the fact that one of the pillars that we need to look at in support of workforce are those who have

traditionally had barriers to employment and how we support those individuals in finding meaningful employments. We've got a new approach that will provide training, not for the sake of training but training for the purpose of full-term, long-term, sustainable employment.

And, finally, providing financial and other support to citizens who need help making their basic needs so that they may achieve fuller participation in society. Of course, those that continue not to be able to participate in the workforce are those who need our supports, in terms of rental subsidies and assistance and in terms of appropriate supports through the employment income assistance program.

So I'm very proud to be a part of—or to be the minister responsible for this department; I have excellent staff who are doing a tremendous work as we go through a transition, bringing the EIA portfolio to this particular ministry. And I'm very much looking forward to answering the questions from the members opposite.

I do, unfortunately, not have a pen. So I'll go on record as saying I need a pen. Thank you very much, that was very quick and I'm ready to go, with those few comments, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the honourable minister for those opening remarks.

Does the official opposition critic have an opening statement to make?

An Honourable Member: No, Mr. Chairman, I don't.

Mr. Chairperson: All right. Then we will proceed with a few guidelines here, which you may have heard before but, for the record, under Manitoba practice debate on the minister's salary is traditionally—*[interjection]*—is traditionally the last item considered for a department in the Committee of Supply. Accordingly, we shall defer consideration of line item 1.(a) and proceed with consideration of the remaining items referenced in resolution 1.

At this time, we invite the minister's hard-working and very energetic and keen staff to come or—if there any staff from the official opposition, to come join us at the head table. And—or—and once they are all seated and settled, perhaps we'll ask the minister to introduce them to the committee. *[interjection]*

Honourable Minister.

Mr. Bjornson: Oh, I'm sorry. Sorry. Mr. Chair, I'm very pleased to introduce Hugh Eliasson, my deputy minister. So is Craig Halwachs, ADM for Corporate Services, and Peter Moreira, director of Finance, as well as others in the wings who will be here as needed; Jan Forster and Paul Holden.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much, Mr. Minister.

Does the committee wish to proceed through these Estimates in a chronological manner or have a global discussion?

* (16:30)

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): I would prefer to proceed in a global session, please.

Mr. Chairperson: Global discussion's been suggested. Honourable Minister, is that acceptable?

Mr. Bjornson: Certainly.

Mr. Chairperson: Therefore, this section of the Committee of Supply, considering the Department of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade, shall proceed in a global manner. The floor is open for questions.

Mr. Graydon: Mr. Chair, I would like to ask the minister if he has a list of his political staff, including the names and positions and whether they're full-time.

Mr. Bjornson: Certainly. I have Christopher Sanderson, who is my special assistant in 333; my constituency staff: Cindy Alexander is my SA—oh, pardon me, executive assistant, and Krista Narfason is my constituency assistant. I believe that is it for political staff.

Mr. Graydon: Could I get a specific list of all of the staff in the minister's and deputy minister's office?

Mr. Bjornson: I happen to have that in my hand, Mr. Chair. I could pass it over to the member or I could read it into the record, if he's so inclined.

Mr. Graydon: You can read it into the record. That'll be fine.

Mr. Bjornson: Thank you. As mentioned, I have my special assistant, Christopher Sanderson; executive assistant, Cindy Alexander; secretary, Lisa Rowe; administrative secretary, Alison DePauw; and administrative secretary, Cindy Field.

In the deputy minister's office, of course, deputy minister, Hugh Eliasson; secretary to the deputy minister, Gail Lemoine; and administrative secretary, Shannon Gerbrandt.

Mr. Graydon: Could the minister tell me the number of staff currently employed in his department?

Mr. Bjornson: Yes. As per page 13 of the Estimates, 452.8 staff in the department.

Mr. Graydon: Could you—could the minister name—give me the names of the staff that have been hired in 2011, 2012?

Mr. Bjornson: I'm sorry. I do not have the names of all the staff that were hired in this past year.

Mr. Graydon: I beg your pardon; I didn't hear the answer.

Mr. Bjornson: I don't have a list available of the names of the staff that have been hired in this past year.

Mr. Graydon: Is that list available at some point?

Mr. Bjornson: Yes. We can get that for the member. It is a fairly extensive list. I do know that we had 59 total direct appointments in the calendar year, so it is a fairly extensive list.

Mr. Graydon: Can the minister explain if this was additional staff or was this a turnover, attrition? How did this take place?

Mr. Bjornson: Turnover.

Mr. Graydon: Well, I guess it's pretty obvious, then, that he's a tough guy to work for.

Can we—at the same time that we get the names of these individuals, could you tell me whether they were hired through competition or by appointment?

Mr. Bjornson: That I actually can tell the member. We had 21 open competitions, three closed competitions, 15 internal competitions, for a total of 39 competitions.

Direct appointments, we had acting status of 25—acting status to regular for two; lateral transfer of nine; term to regular, nine; temporary appointments of 10; former employee return, one; other direct appointments, three.

Mr. Graydon: Just so that I'm clear on the internal positions, those are just transfers? Is that what the minister said?

Mr. Bjornson: They are competitions that are open to employees within the department.

Mr. Graydon: So, then, if that competition and that person is—moves up in the chain and there's someone else hired to fill that position, I would assume. Is that an appointment or is that also open competition or is that another one of the internal competitions?

Mr. Bjornson: There's actually three different routes for that position to be filled, whether it's internal competition, open competition or direct appointment.

Mr. Graydon: Did he—did the minister, knowing that there's going to be a pretty tough year as far as income was, did he leave any of the positions open?

Mr. Bjornson: We have maintained a—approximately 10 per cent vacancy rate throughout the year.

Mr. Graydon: Is that a normal practice, 10 per cent, or is that a moving target?

Mr. Bjornson: Well, it can be a bit of a moving target because, as the member knows, when—if people should retire that have a certain skill set and several years of experience in government, it's not always easy to replace individuals who might be hired to fill those positions. But we have, for the most part, maintained the vacancy rate at approximately 10 per cent over the course of the year.

Mr. Graydon: Using that criteria of retirement and, of course, a lot of these individuals have been in the department for a number of years, as the minister has pointed out, they do have skill sets that are probably geared to that particular position, but at the same time they would not be one of a kind in that department. So, then, is it normal practice just to have your internal competition with the expectation of moving up the individual that's just below that?

Mr. Bjornson: I think when you consider the fact that there are over 450 full-time employees within the department that you would have a variety of positions that—depending on personal choices to retire or to go into the public sector or whatever the case might be, whatever the reason might be for individuals for leaving the department—the member can appreciate that there's a number of different skill sets, many of which would be appropriate to have had the experience within the department to consider moving up in the department in some positions which can be fulfilled by looking outside of the department and bringing new talent into the

department. So you can't really put it into one particular method of addressing any needs around people's choices to retire or, as otherwise stated, go to the private sector or leave for other reasons. You can't really put it into any one specific category as to how individuals—or how these positions would be filled.

* (16:40)

There are certain skill sets that really speak favourably to the probability of individuals who have been in the department for a number of years to move forward, as one can expect, with having that corporate knowledge. So there's really no one-size-fits-all to how positions might be filled.

Mr. Graydon: With the department being the size that it is, and I appreciate that you have quite a large staff with 450, then I would assume that you have directors in different departments. Do they make the decisions, then, on hiring or do you, Mr. Minister, make the decisions or does your deputy minister, or how is that decision made? How do you come to that conclusion that this individual is well suited, or there's no one in the department and perhaps, then, that you're going to outsource from whether that's the private enterprise or from another department? How do—who makes that final decision or who makes the initial decision and then who makes the final decision for this type of a selection, because it's certainly a big chore, I'm sure, with 450 and especially if it happens to be one of your directors? So perhaps you could explain that whole process to me.

Mr. Bjornson: The request to fill a vacant position is something that I will sign off on and actually make the request as to initiate the process. There is a professional human resource group that will follow the guidelines as outlined by Civil Service Commission to interview the candidates that has the final decision on the individuals that are hired to fill those positions. So it starts by my request for the purpose of filling the position. It goes through a process that is vetted through a human resource group and, as I said, that's consistent with the guidelines in the Civil Service Commission.

Mr. Graydon: This particular resource group that you're talking about, is that just within your department or is that from other departments as well in other portfolios?

Mr. Bjornson: It's conducted through—under the auspices Civil Service Commission and there're

groups, groups of individuals, of HR professionals who actually are responsible for different groups of government departments where you have perhaps similar skill sets that would be required within those departments.

Mr. Graydon: So, then, what you're saying is that they can—they will entertain and source from other departments to fill a position?

Mr. Bjornson: At times that has been the case, yes.

Mr. Graydon: Have you had any positions that have been reclassified?

Mr. Bjornson: The short answer is, yes, we have had positions that have been reclassified.

Mr. Matt Wiebe, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Mr. Graydon: Would you care to give me the long answer?

Mr. Bjornson: I believe the number I counted here was 34 positions that have been reclassified.

Mr. Graydon: I'm not going to ask you to read those off, but I'd certainly ask you to table that, that I would have a copy of that and it would be put into Hansard.

Mr. Bjornson: Here you are. I have a copy for you.

Mr. Graydon: When we talk about a 10 per cent vacancy rate, and I'm always concerned that these vacancy rates stayed pretty much stagnant, but at the same time they may be from different departments or different areas. They could be affecting, in my mind, services that we would be seeing or wanting to see that would be beneficial to the public. So perhaps you can give me a listing of the vacancy rates. It would give me a better picture of the services that are maybe not being given or provided.

Mr. Bjornson: Well, as I mentioned when first asked about the vacancy rates, I did suggest to the member that it was kind of a moving target and it moves for a number of reasons. Sometimes when we bring in different programs or initiatives, requirements for supports for those programs or initiatives might dictate what positions are held vacant for longer periods of time. That is to say, that when we do have new initiatives or areas that we recognize the need to be more appropriately resourced, we tend to address front-line services first and foremost, and an example from my colleague is perhaps the notion of keeping a policy analyst vacant if we see that we need more front-line workers, as an example.

So it's—I don't know if a list would be possible, given the fact that it's—it is very much a moving target that is responsive to government priorities and recognition of areas that need to be more appropriately resourced.

Mr. Graydon: Having said that, then, Mr. Minister, can you tell me if there's been any impacts on the department as the result of vacancy rates?

Mr. Bjornson: As I said in my previous answer, our first priority is invariably to make sure that the front-line services are maintained. So, as such, we haven't had negative experiences to that end. Our priorities to, as I said, make sure that those direct contact, front-line services are the ones that take priority as far as vacancies are concerned.

Mr. Graydon: So, when we talk about the vacancies and the moving targets—and the front-line services, of course, are important, but at the same time, when we bring in new initiatives there is a certain amount of training that goes into these new initiatives. Your policy—I'm sure the policy changes from the date of inception until it's delivered or as it's being delivered. And you made comment that, you know, the policy analyst would be withdrawn just to have front-line service. How long would that type of a vacancy rate of a policy analyst be then, because I think they're an integral of any new initiative.

Mr. Bjornson: Well, certainly, as do I, I feel that it's important to have that policy analyst in place. I was just using one example of, hypothetically speaking, of where—and I don't mean to devalue the work that they do; I was just using one example of where that might be the case where more emphasis would be on the front line than a position of that nature. But, certainly, we do value the work that they do. But, again, I was trying to give you an example because the question was about—was trying to—pardon me—the question was very specific in a very—that was very difficult to give a specific answer. I was just giving you an example.

*(16:50)

Mr. Graydon: When you do start a new initiative, how many staff do you employ to see that—or to find out the results of that new initiative to see that it is working the way it was supposed to work? How many staff would you employ to do that?

Mr. Bjornson: Well, thank you, Mr. Chair. Essentially, it is the existing staff that are charged with the responsibilities of implementing the initiatives. Many of the initiatives that we've

implemented of late have involved a lot of the stakeholder groups in consultation and advice. I've—certainly when I look at what we've been doing with respect to employment income assistance and some of the changes that we are proposing to support individuals who have had barriers to employment. We met with a number of the stakeholders who are a part of the facilitation and enabling of individuals who have multiple barriers to employment. There's about 130 agencies that we work with to that end. So, when we have new initiatives, we've been consulting with those stakeholder groups and individuals, and we have been asking them for their feedback that the initiatives are producing the results that we hope that they will produce.

Mr. Graydon: So this would be—and I don't want this to sound like a derogatory term—but it would be much the same as a self-evaluation because you've been involved in the program, you've designed the program, and you believe that it is working the way you designed it, and human nature does have a little bit of a quirk that they sometimes don't like to admit that it isn't working the same way. Is there an oversight? Would that be by a director of that initiative or what is—just how is that, Mr. Minister? How is that done?

Mr. Bjornson: Well, I guess you can look at many of the initiatives through a number of different lenses, and we do look through those initiatives through those lenses. Whether they happen to be the director responsible, he or she, responsible for the initiative, it's—performance management is an integral part of what they do in terms of assessing the impacts of the initiatives that we bring forward. We also have Treasury Board analysts who assess programs on cost and impact, and, of course the Auditor General is, as you know, a lens that puts a lot of government initiatives through a very rigorous assessment.

And, again, for me, it's very important that we have feedback from the stakeholders in the community, and we do get their feedback and ask for their feedback with respect to initiatives that we brought forward with the merger of employment income assistance into my department. So there are a number of lenses both within government and beyond government in terms of whether or not the initiatives are delivering the desired results.

Mr. Graydon: Mr. Minister, just for my benefit, can you tell me what the chain of command is? It starts at your desk, of course, and goes back through different

heads of departments and directors, and I just don't know that whole system. So, perhaps you could give me the—a list of the chain of commands, and it may well be in one of them—you can tell me what page it's on actually.

Mr. Bjornson: I would refer the honourable member to page 5. It shows the organization chart on page 5.

Mr. Graydon: Thank you for that. You brought up a point that there were checks and balances within the system and also outside of the system, and you mentioned the Auditor General. Does the Auditor General use oversight on your department without invitation or how does that—what initiates the Auditor General to be looking into your department?

Mr. Bjornson: Mr. Chair, as the member knows, the Office of the Auditor General is an independent office and makes her own determinations as to what areas of government she will explore. And my understanding is that auditors general from across the country discuss different areas that they have reviewed within their own—within neighbouring jurisdictions from coast to coast to coast to look for level of risk, and the auditor will make—auditor's office will make that determination of what value for money is to be assessed within the department.

Mr. Graydon: I thank the minister for that.

Maybe we'll just move on a bit into—I see that the salaries under the Administration and Finance on page 12 have increased.

Can you tell me what the reason for that is?

Mr. Bjornson: This is—as per other departments, it's a general salary increase for government.

Mr. Graydon: I believe that the member for—wherever he's from, that lonesome guy out in the bush—no, that's not fair. I believe Mr. Gerrard would like to ask a couple of questions.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I'd like to start—one of the issues that we're dealing with today is the increase in the PST and where that money is going. And so I'd like to ask the minister whether there are any expenses under his department, where those expenses would be infrastructure dollars and could be potentially eligible for the use of the revenue generated by increasing the PST from 7 per cent to 8 per cent.

Mr. Bjornson: I believe the member would have heard from the Minister responsible for Infrastructure and Transportation that it is funding

the infrastructure priorities of government, and that would not fall under the purview of this department.

Mr. Gerrard: I just wanted to check that there were no dollars hidden somewhere that would actually be going toward infrastructure in the department that would qualify, so I appreciate that information. And that's my question, and I'll pass it back to the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon).

Mr. Graydon: There's a net loss in employees in the department under the Business Service section on page 12. What is the reason for that?

* (17:00)

Mr. Bjornson: Yes, that would reflect the initiative that we had undertaken to provide a more streamlined service delivery model for entrepreneurs in Manitoba.

There was the Companies Office, which was a special operating agency which now falls under the auspices of ETT, but there's the former Small Business Development centre—I believe was what we had called that particular branch of the department—which has now come together with the Companies Office and is now called Entrepreneurship Manitoba, the idea being that if an individual was to set up a business here in Manitoba that they would have a one-stop shop where they could come to Entrepreneurship Manitoba, and they would find all the resources that would be necessary to assist them in understanding the benefits of setting up business in Manitoba.

And quite a basket of tools that are available to them, whether it's consultants, advisors going through a list of all the—or confirming the permits and requirements that they might have generated a list for themselves on BizPaL, so if they came into Winnipeg to set up a business and they came in from Ontario, they could have gone on BizPaL's site, come out with a list of all the permits and requirements, met with somebody at Entrepreneurship Manitoba to go through that list, and ensure that they have everything that they need and an understanding of all that they need for the purpose of setting up a business here in Manitoba.

We thought it was prudent to have a one-stop shop rather than have individuals going to a few different physical locations. In fact we've even invited other levels of government, including the City of Winnipeg, to consider collocating with us so that they can more streamline the delivery of those services.

We feel it's important to have that single window. We've talked about having single window as a portal online, and people certainly do need to have face-to-face visits with consultants and advisers within the Entrepreneurship Manitoba and have the physical building where they can come and meet with individuals who can guide them through the process of establishing a business here in Manitoba.

So that was the initiative. We're very excited about how that will streamline the services, very excited about how it'll make life easier, reduce red tape and provide better services to the individual looking to set up a business here in Manitoba.

That's not to say that things weren't very good under the previous arrangement, that we just feel this is a much better arrangement having them collocated, as previously separate entities, under one roof to deliver those services.

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): I'm looking on page 21 of the Estimates book. This is the executive support. And I'm seeing we haven't changed numbers and FTEs but the salaries have gone up about 4.6 per cent, and is that something the minister would suggest is average for the increases in his department?

Mr. Bjornson: The increases which the member speaks about are a result of general salary increases and the fact that individuals have moved through steps in classification, which comes with salary increases as well.

Mr. Helwer: And, when we look at the pension liability, there's a substantial increase there, and would the minister lead us through the reasons for that?

Mr. Bjornson: Yes, the increase is the result of an increase in both employer and employee contributions to the pension plan.

As the member would know, when we assess pensions as actuaries might assess a pension and suggest that changes have to be made. I know I went through that process when I was Education Minister and we talked about the need to make adjustments that would be appropriate to ensure the sustainability and the viability of the plan. So these contributions are consistent with that desired result, and it's a combination of employer and employee contributions.

Mr. Helwer: What is the—what was the percentage increase in the employee contribution?

Mr. Bjornson: At this point, 1 per cent has—there's been a 1 per cent increase to date. The agreement is a 2 per cent increase, phased in over three years.

Mr. Helwer: And what is the increased contribution from the employer?

Mr. Bjornson: It's a matching contribution.

Mr. Helwer: Well, then, where does the 26 per cent increase come from?

Mr. Bjornson: Yes, I understand that the money was reallocated from within to meet the requirements to keep the pension on track and viable. And that's why you see the increase.

Mr. Helwer: The money was reallocated from within what?

Mr. Bjornson: From within our own department finances.

Mr. Helwer: Mr. Chair, I'm still a little mystified at this part where this money came from. I—you know, I understand the increases from both the staff and the government, and you've got salary increases as well, so they're able to contribute more. But that seems to be a substantial increase in that line item there on that particular page, and I'm looking for a little more definition of why it is so high.

* (17:10)

Mr. Bjornson: Mr. Chair, and this number could be a bit of a moving target year over year because of changes in the labour force within the department. The mix of salaries might change. Instead of salary dollars going up, adjustments are made to the pension dollars going up. The department had a target for general salary increase rates that we had to meet, and these numbers are adjusted to reflect the pension contribution within an area of adjusted—within an area of adjustment based on the number of people that might retire or might be hired in at different levels of salary. I'm not sure if that explains it very well, but I will try my best with your supplementary question.

Mr. Helwer: Well, we're talking about nine people in this department, nine FTEs is how I read that number if that's correct. So were there retirements that had an impact on that?

Mr. Bjornson: The member is referring to page 21, I understand, and if you look at the numbers on page 21, the calculation reflects the increase in salaries, but it also takes into account allowance for staff turnovers and it also tries to reflect pension

liabilities in that calculation of—that you see before you. And, just for the member's information, if you refer to page 28 you will see that in the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics the pension liability actually has gone down. So these numbers tend to move with people as they choose to, as I say, go to different areas of government, go on to the public sector or whatever choices are made by individuals working within the department. So, just to point that out to the member, you see a change in the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics in that particular pension liability that is going the opposite way. So it's all part of trying to square the circle, if you will, on salary increases and pension benefits that reflect the pension liabilities within the department.

Mr. Helwer: So then going back to the question of these nine people, were there new people that came in that skewed that number to that extent? Were there any changeover there? I'm just—I'm a little lost on why this is going up that much if there was no changeover.

Mr. Bjornson: There were not new people that were part—that are covered within the numbers on page 21, but their pensions—pardon me, their salaries did increase, as did their pension contributions. And that's why you see that reflected in that increase in the pension liability.

Mr. Helwer: That is similar to the answer we've had before, and I do see that their salaries went up and, yes, they are able to contribute a few more dollars because their salaries did go up, but not to the extent that that pension liability went up.

Mr. Bjornson: And that number reflects the pension liability and that number reflects the government's responsibility to ensure that they are committed to that pension liability. That's where that money is going is to the pension liability.

Mr. Helwer: In going back to one of minister's previous answers, he seemed to imply that with certain staff, instead of giving them a larger salary increase, they increased their pension, and is that something that is allowed under the civil service process?

Mr. Bjornson: No. That is not the case. There are two factors that contribute to the changes in the salaries. Of course, there's the general salary increase that's part of the collective bargaining agreement with the government employees' union, and the second part of that is the classification where incrementally the salaries can increase based on five

performance classification increments. So this is a combination thereof, where you see some of the changes in the salary.

Mr. Helwer: I'm still mystified at the large increase in the pension liability there and I don't think the minister's been able to make it any clearer for me. Is there an unfunded liability that their—the government is looking to fund here, or why is there that large increase?

Mr. Bjornson: The pension falls under the Department of Finance. It's not something that's specific to departments. It's something that is—it is a global pension plan. So, to be that specific with respect to this department, it would be very difficult to answer those questions. But, again, I do want to point out that where you do see some increases there are other sections within this book that indicate that there are actually decreases in the liability. So it is not something that is department specific. It is more global in nature and falls under the office of the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Helwer: Okay. We'll—I'll move on to something a little different then. On page 37 we see the changes that the minister alluded to in some of his early answers. The Small Business Development has been moved to a special operating agency, Entrepreneurship Manitoba, and can the minister give me the reasoning for that move?

Mr. Bjornson: Well, as I stated in my earlier comments, Mr. Chair, the intent was to provide more streamlined services for businesses. We've been providing a number of different services for business through the single window in cyberspace. If you go online and—there's a number of single-window access venues, if you will, BizPaL, et cetera, et cetera, that we decided to physically collocate offices that had been separate entities where you would have to go to the Companies Office for one item and then go to Manitoba Small Business Development for another. Now you can get all the services under one roof. It's a much more efficient way of providing services for individuals that are hoping to establish businesses in Manitoba.

Mr. Helwer: Can the minister describe to me what the audit trail will be for this new operating agency?

* (17:20)

Mr. Bjornson: The special operating agencies will produce their own audited financial statements which are under the auspices of the Auditor General. And I think another good example of how we are

streamlining services for businesses, not just what we're seeing with Entrepreneurship Manitoba, but we have, of course, have the Business Gateway in Brandon, which the member should be familiar with. It's the same notion of the one-stop shop where individuals looking to establish a company or set up a small business, whatever the case might be, in Brandon can go to the Business Gateway and meet with staff there to discuss their needs and to discuss what programs are available to support those entrepreneurs. And I think—it's one that I've visited on many occasions and certainly seen tremendous success stories in Brandon with the work that they do there. So that's a good example for the member, which I'm sure the member's very familiar with.

Mr. Graydon: And in consideration of the time for the other committees, yet, that have to present yet today or other Estimates that have to present, I would suggest that that's all the questions we'll have for today.

The Acting Chairperson (Matt Wiebe): Is the committee ready to proceed to resolutions? *[Agreed]*

Resolution 10.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$9,561,000 for Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade, Business Services, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 10.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$559,808,000 for Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade, Workforce Development and Income Support, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 10.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,559,000 for Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade, International Relations and Trade, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 10.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,443,000 for the—for Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

The last item to be considered for Estimates of the department is item 1.(a) the minister's salary, contained in resolution 10.1. At this point, we request the minister's staff leave the table for consideration of this last item.

The floor is open for questions.

Mr. Graydon: I'll make a motion

THAT we reduce the minister's salary to \$1.08.

The Acting Chairperson (Matt Wiebe): It has been moved by the honourable 'manner'—member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) that 'lide' item 10.1.(a) the minister's salary be reduced to \$1.08.

The motion is in order. Are there—is there any debate of the motion?

An Honourable Member: Question.

The Acting Chairperson (Matt Wiebe): Shall the motion pass?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Voice Vote

The Acting Chairperson (Matt Wiebe): All those in favour, say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

The Acting Chairperson (Matt Wiebe): All those opposed, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

The Acting Chairperson (Matt Wiebe): In my opinion, the Nays have it.

Recorded Vote

Mr. Helwer: Request a voice vote, Mr. Chair. *[interjection]* Recorded vote, please.

The Acting Chairperson (Matt Wiebe): Seconded by the member for Emerson.

As per the agreement of the—a formal vote has been requested. As per the agreement of the House on July 10th, all requests for a formal vote are to be deferred until Monday, July 13th; accordingly, this motion shall be deferred until Monday. And, because the motion is deferred, the final resolution for the department must also be deferred until the vote on the motion is completed.

Also, as per the agreement of the House, the committee can now set aside the Estimates for the Department of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade and proceed to consideration of the next department, the Department of Immigration and Multiculturalism.

Shall we proceed—sorry, shall we recess to allow the minister—briefly recess, to allow the minister and critic the opportunity to prepare for the commencement of the next set of Estimates? *[Agreed]*

The committee recessed at 5:25 p.m.

The committee resumed at 5:27 p.m.

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURALISM

The Acting Chairperson (Matt Wiebe): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

This section of the Committee of Supply will be considering the Estimates of the Department of Immigration and Multiculturalism. Does the honourable minister have an opening statement?

Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism): Yes, I do.

The Acting Chairperson (Matt Wiebe): Honourable Minister, please proceed when ready.

Ms. Melnick: Okay, thank you. Yes, I would like to take a few moments to highlight some of the achievements of the Department of Immigration and Multiculturalism that have occurred over the last year and also to speak to some important changes that have occurred in the area of settlement delivery as well as some of the challenges that we continue to face.

Manitoba has a long, proud history of welcoming newcomers from around the world. Since 1999, over 125,000 new people have settled in Manitoba, making—excuse me—a significant contribution to economic development and population growth. And over 25,000 have settled in rural Manitoba, contributing to the economic development of over 130 communities.

Annual immigration levels to Manitoba have increased from 3,725 arrivals in 1999 to 13,312 in 2012; among the highest levels ever recorded. Our

share of immigration to Canada has increased from less than 2 per cent in the 1990s to 5.2 per cent in 2012.

Immigration is also playing a key role in helping the Province meet its commitment to add 70,000 more skilled workers to the labour force by 2020.

Our newest immigrants come from over 200 countries from—come from almost 200 countries and, in 2012, the top-sourced countries were the Philippines, India and China.

Our very successful Provincial Nominee Program remains the main driver of Manitoba's immigration growth. Over the last decade, over 80,000 newcomers have arrived through our PNP and, in 2012, 72 per cent of all of our newcomers arrived through the program.

Our government recognizes the importance of seasonal agricultural workers to our economy, and I was pleased to announce that our government will extend health coverage to workers who arrive through the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program.

In April 2013, I was also pleased to introduce design improvements that strengthen and streamline our PNP and ensure that the program is well positioned for future immigration success. The changes also make it simpler and easier to understand and provide clear communications about program requirements.

I'm also pleased to have the MPNP for business be transferred from the Department of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade to the Department of Immigration and Multiculturalism. I look forward to the synergies of having MPNP and MPNP-B be under the same department.

**(17:30)*

An issue that remains of utmost concern is the federal government's cap on our program. The cap, which has now been in place since 2010, along with the smaller size of newcomer families arriving to Manitoba, are the main reasons for a decrease in newcomer arrivals in 2012. If the cap is not lifted, it will continue to have an effect on economic and population growth and to limit our ability to meet our labour market needs. Manitoba continues to advocate for the removal of the federal cap as well as to explore opportunities to take better advantage of federal programs that can assist Manitoba in meeting its immigration needs.

Manitoba also continues to share a commitment to protect refugees and respond to humanitarian pressures for resettlement. In 2012, Manitoba welcomed the largest number of refugees per capita in the country. The Manitoba economy is growing. It needs skilled newcomers to help fill vacant positions that are created as the economy expands and baby boomers retire.

The department continues to assist employers who register under The Worker Recruitment and Protection Act, otherwise known as WRAPA, to recruit immigrant workers already in Canada as well as to recruit temporary foreign workers through established international partnership agreements where local workers cannot be found. The WRAPA process is designed to protect temporary foreign workers from unscrupulous recruiters, illegal recruitment fees and abusive work places.

One of the most important changes that occurred over the last year was the federal government's unilateral decision to take over the administration of our extremely successful settlement EAL and integration programs. Although we remain opposed to the federal government's decision, we have worked co-operatively with CIC in order to minimize disruption to newcomers and to ensure that newcomers continue to receive a high standard of settlement service as they did under the provincial administration.

Manitoba has always had a central role in the development and support of immigration services in the province, and we will continue to do so in the future. As part of this role, Manitoba will continue to fund and administer Manitoba Start, monitor the transition closely, advocate on behalf of clients and service providers and work to ensure that services are not negatively affected.

In 2013-14, Manitoba will also continue to administer English at Work programs, regional settlement and EAL programing, as well as professional and curriculum development activities. In 2010, Manitoba launched Manitoba Start, a very successful initiative that provides single-window, early arrival immigrant intake, referral, employment readiness and job-matching services. Now, at its new storefront location at the restored historic avenue building on Portage Avenue, Manitoba Start currently provides services to over 7,000 newcomers each year. The newest service offered by Manitoba Start is the job-matching service that connects job-ready newcomers to employers' hiring needs.

Through a searchable database, employers are able to choose from a pool of job-ready, skilled workers that are well prepared through pre-arrival services and employment services at Manitoba Start, and that meet employer-specific job requirements. Manitoba Start has worked with roughly 385 employers and has matched workers in a variety of industries such as construction, business, transportation and services.

Manitoba Start has achieved an 85 per cent placement rate for immigrants through its job matching and employment services. Through Manitoba Start and other initiatives, our goal is to continue to increase labour market success for newcomers, and the results continue to be impressive. Manitoba's immigrants have the second lowest unemployment rate in Canada in 2012, and third highest employment rate—85 per cent of provincial nominees were working after three months, 89 per cent have permanent jobs and 76 were homeowners after 3 to 5 years. Our retention rate is also very strong at about 85 per cent.

The Province has also taken progressive and effective measures to help internationally educated incomers—pardon me—internationally educated immigrants work in their field sooner. We have funded qualifications recognition projects for internationally educated engineers, agrologists, nurses, doctors and others. These programs have significantly reduced the time it takes for newcomers to have their credentials recognized.

Manitoba also enacted The Fair Registration Practices in Regulated Professions Act, to build on the Province's policy and programming efforts in this area. The act, which appointed Manitoba's first Fairness Commissioner, has helped to ensure that regulated professions and individuals applying are governed by registration practices that are transparent, objective, impartial and fair.

In 2012, a new micro loans program, called Recognition Counts!, was also launched. The program is helping internationally skilled immigrants put their education and experience to better use by offering loans to help them meet Canada's re-accreditation and training requirements.

As we continue to welcome a large number of immigrants each year, the need to preserve community's culture as well as finding better ways to learn about other groups' customs become all the more paramount. Ensuring that Manitoba's communities learn more about each other through constructive and educational dialogue creates a

positive and a more welcoming province for all Manitobans.

Manitoba's multiculturalism act recognizes the diversity of Manitobans, regarding culture, religion and racial background as a fundamental characteristic of Manitoba society, which benefits all Manitobans, economically, socially and culturally. We continue to fulfill the obligations of the multiculturalism act and undertook several initiatives that foster pride in our diversity and promote equality and opportunity and part-equality of opportunity and partnerships among communities. We provided funding through the Ethnocultural Community Support Program to support heritage and cross-cultural programming by communities.

Finally, I would like to recognize the incredibly dedicated and professional staff of the department who, with all the changes to settlement, have had a very busy year. I would like to thank them for their commitment and the passion that they bring to their workplace each and every day. Thank you.

The Acting Chairperson (Matt Wiebe): We thank the minister for those comments.

Does the official opposition critic, the honourable member for River East, have any opening comments?

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Yes, Mr. Chair, and I thank the minister for her opening statement. And, although I know we're running very short of time, I'd just like to put a few comments on the record.

And, yes, the Provincial Nominee Program in the province of Manitoba is an extremely successful one, and I'm pleased and proud to have been the first minister responsible for beginning negotiations on the Provincial Nominee Program in the early '90s.

And, counter to what the government always says about the dark days of the '90s, Premier Gary Filmon, at the time, had a vision for Manitoba, and that was an understanding that we needed immigration to increase the population in our province and that we should, as a Province, have some control over the immigrants that come to Manitoba through a Provincial Nominee Program. And so he, at the time, changed the department that I had responsibility for from Culture, Heritage and Recreation to Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, and one of the mandates that was given to me at that time was to begin negotiations with the federal government around a Provincial Nominee Program.

And it took several years, and I wasn't the minister at the time that the agreement was signed, but we did begin those negotiations and were successful, and we were the first province across the country and for that, I'm very proud. And I—so would at some point, would like to hear the government today acknowledge some of that early work that went on that has allowed this government to continue and to expand the program and see the number of immigrants increase on a yearly basis, and that's been so very important to our province.

And so I am hoping and expecting that that trend will continue and I do know the government has made some, you know, some positive steps in that direction. And we always—there's not everything we disagree on, but—and, you know—and I like to give credit where credit is due, and so some positive things have happened.

* (17:40)

We, also, at the time—and I was the minister responsible for bringing in the first multiculturalism act across the country, too, to recognize the diversity of our province and the waves of immigration that have built our province to what it is today. And, you know, we continue and we see a Department of Immigration and Multiculturalism now that reflects a lot of what has happened over the last couple of decades in Manitoba.

So, with those few comments, I will have some questions to ask but I'll just leave it at that right now and we can get into a little further detail in a few minutes.

The Acting Chairperson (Matt Wiebe): I thank the member for her comments.

Under Manitoba practice, debate on the minister's salary is traditionally the last item considered for a department in the Committee of Supply. Accordingly, we shall defer the consideration of line item 1.(a) and proceed with consideration of the remaining items referenced in resolution one.

At this time we invite the minister's staff and staff from the official opposition to join us at the table along with the side wall and once they're seated we will ask the minister to introduce her staff in attendance.

Ms. Melnick: I'd like to introduce my staff, Hugh Eliasson, deputy minister; Ben Rempel, assistant deputy minister of Immigration and

Multiculturalism; Rick Zebinski, director of Business Immigration and Investment; Melissa Ballantyne, director of Finance and Admin; and Peter Moreira, director of Finance and Accountability.

The Acting Chairperson (Matt Wiebe): Does the committee wish to proceed through these Estimates in a chronological manner or have a global discussion?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Global, if possible.

The Acting Chairperson (Matt Wiebe): Is that agreed? *[Agreed]*

The floor is now open for questions and we are on page 119 of the main Estimates book.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I guess, if I could—I know the deputy minister, but I'm not sure—I can't put a name and a face to the other people around the table so if the minister wouldn't mind just going—introducing her staff again or if they could just wave at me so I know who's who, I'd really appreciate that.

Ms. Melnick: Well, the deputy is well known to many of us and well appreciated for his many years of dedication here in the province of Manitoba. Ben Rempel, assistant deputy minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism; Rick Zebinski, director of Business Immigration and Investment; Melissa Ballantyne, director of Finance and Administration; Peter Moreira, director of Finance and Accountability.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you very much, and I want to thank and welcome the staff. And I did sense that I knew who Melissa was when she was introduced too. But anyway thank you for that.

Could the minister indicate—I know that since Estimates last year the Business Immigration and Investment branch has been moved from ET and T to Immigration and Multiculturalism—can the minister try to help me understand why that has happened?

Ms. Melnick: Well, we felt that there was a natural matching sort of mirror of people coming in through the Provincial Nominee Program for—not so much for business start-up but for coming to Manitoba for the opportunities that they have here. A lot of these folks are in, of course, professional services and then we had the PNP-B those, of course, are folks who are interested in investment and starting up businesses. So we felt that there was a natural blend there.

Mrs. Mitchelson: And does the Department of ET and T provide any support service, then, to immigration as a result of this transfer?

Ms. Melnick: We do have a Business Settlement Office that is part of the new Entrepreneurship Manitoba that's physically located in the Paris Building.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Where is the minister's department located, and is the business immigration function of the department a part of the same office space as the rest of her department, or is there more than one office?

Ms. Melnick: So, we have a couple of locations, some of which the member has asked about and some of the others that I'm going to bring on. We have the Entrepreneurship Manitoba in the Paris Building. We have the Provincial Nominee Program at 213 Notre Dame, so around the corner from each other. We have the PNP-B located at 259 Portage, which is also in that cluster, and the Manitoba Start is located in the Avenue Building. And then just two blocks south would be the Canada-Manitoba Business Service Centre on the second floor of the Cargill Building.

So these are different areas of ET and T and Immigration and Multiculturalism that have always worked together, and so they're not collocated but they're located certainly in very close proximity to each other.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you. So, all the offices that the minister mentioned are part of Immigration and Multiculturalism, or are some of the offices at ET and T? And are all the staff that were moved to the minister's department with the Business Immigration program located in Immigration and Multiculturalism offices, or ET and T offices?

Ms. Melnick: The PNP staff and Multiculturalism Secretariat is in 213 Notre Dame; the PNP-B at 259 Portage is also Immigration and Multiculturalism; and Manitoba Start in the Avenue Building is also Immigration and Multiculturalism. The Entrepreneurship Manitoba, located in the Paris Building, is ET and T; and the CMBS is also ET and T, again located on the second floor of the Cargill Building.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thanks very much. In the interests of time, I'm wondering if the minister could provide me with—she's already—we've already got on the record the locations, but could she provide for me the

staff and the names of the staff that currently reside in the different offices?

Mr. Dave Gaudreau, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Ms. Melnick: I don't have it at my fingertips, but we will provide it—yes.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you. And just—I believe that staff from the Business Immigration and Investment branch are here to provide answers to questions. I was just looking back to the annual report of 2011-2012, and we have the annual report for Business Immigration and Investment that came from ET and T, indicates that there were 16 FTEs at the time, and I believe that there are only 12 transferred over in this year's Estimate book. What happened to the other four staff?

* (17:50)

Ms. Melnick: The four that the member's asking about are in the settlement services office of Entrepreneurship Manitoba in the Paris Building.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Also, there's a discrepancy somehow between the Estimates for 2011-2012 and the actuals in the annual report for Other Expenditures from the Business, Immigration and Investment branch, and I need some sort of an explanation. It appears that in every—many subsequent years, the other expenditures have been \$69,000 and the expenditures in some of the annual reports previous to 2011-12 were \$69,000. And we see, in 2011-2012, expenditures of \$292,000. I wonder if the minister could give me a breakdown of what those other expenditures were.

Ms. Melnick: Could the member show us—direct us verbally where she's looking? We're trying to—

The Acting Chairperson (Dave Gaudreau): The honourable member for River East.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I have the 2011-2012 annual report, okay, and I do have a copy of it here if that does help. And it does say in the annual report that the estimate for other expenditures was \$292,000. But, in reality, when you look at the Estimates book for 2011-2012, the other expenditures were \$69,000. So I don't know why it would have been changed in the annual report and, again, this year—it seems year after year after year the other expenditures have been stable at \$69,000 in all of the Estimates books—but the actual expenditure was considerably more, and I would like a breakdown of what those other expenditures were.

Ms. Melnick: Yes, again, we'll have a look at what it is that you're referring to and we'll get back to you with a reconciliation, and we'll—you know, maybe if we could have a look at the book that you have—doesn't have to be right now, maybe after we're chatting—just to make sure we're talking about the same points that you're referring to, okay?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, I would appreciate that. And, if there was some extraordinary expenditure in other expenditures—that does happen, I know, from time to time—but I would like to know the exact breakdown of exactly where that money was spent.

And I know that—as we're running out of time, and I don't think we have that much more time left in our Estimates process—I don't have any further questions right now, but I do want to give the minister some notice that I will be asking several questions in the concurrence process that will be coming up in the Legislature. I wanted to get that little bit of detail on today, and there will be some other detailed questions. I know that sometimes it's not as easy to ask those questions with staff not there, but I'll endeavour to do my best to at least put them on the record in concurrence and maybe get some answers and responses back as a result.

So, with that, no more questions. If we can move to line—

The Acting Chairperson (Dave Gaudreau): Are we—is the committee ready to proceed with the resolutions?

An Honourable Member: Pardon?

The Acting Chairperson (Dave Gaudreau): Is committee ready to proceed with the resolutions?

An Honourable Member: Yes, line by line, please.

The Acting Chairperson (Dave Gaudreau): Okay, so, resolution 11.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$16,473,000 for Immigration and Multiculturalism, Immigration and Multiculturalism, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

The last item to be considered for Estimates on the department is item 1.(a) the minister's salary, contained in resolution 11.1.

At this point, we request the minister's staff leave the table for the considerations of this last item. The floor will be open for questions as soon as they leave.

The floor is now open for questions.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I move

THAT line item 11.1.(a) be reduced—that the minister's salary be reduced to \$1.08.

The Acting Chairperson (Dave Gaudreau): It's been moved by the honourable member for River East

THAT line item 11.1.(a) the minister's salary be reduced to \$1.08.

The motion is in order. Is there any debate on the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Acting Chairperson (Dave Gaudreau): Shall the motion pass?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

The Acting Chairperson (Dave Gaudreau): All those in favour, please say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

The Acting Chairperson (Dave Gaudreau): All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

The Acting Chairperson (Dave Gaudreau): In my opinion, the Nays have it.

There's a—

Recorded Vote

Mrs. Mitchelson: I'd like to call for a recorded vote.

The Acting Chairperson (Dave Gaudreau): And the second member to support it is the member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer).

A formal vote has been requested. It is after 5 p.m. As per the agreement of the House on July 10th, all formal votes—all formal requests for vote will be deferred until Monday, July 13th. Accordingly, this motion shall be deferred until Monday, and because the motion is deferred, the final resolution for the department must also be deferred until the vote on the motion is completed.

Also, as per the agreement of House, the committee can now set aside the Estimates for the Department of Immigration and Multiculturalism and proceed with the consideration of the next

department, the Department of Children and Youth Opportunities.

Shall we briefly recess to allow the minister and critic the opportunity for—to prepare for the commencement of the next set of Estimates? *[Agreed]*

The committee recessed at 5:57 p.m.

The committee resumed at 5:58 p.m.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

The Acting Chairperson (Dave Gaudreau): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will be considering the Estimates of the Department of Children and Youth Opportunities.

Does the honourable minister have an opening statement?

Hon. Kevin Chief (Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities): On behalf of the Department of Children and Youth Opportunities and on behalf of the 10 ministers of the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet and their partner departments in the Healthy Child Manitoba strategy, I'm pleased to present to this committee, for its consideration, the 2013-2014 Expenditure Estimates for Children and Youth Opportunities.

It is a privilege to lead a department dedicated to our young people, from the prenatal period through to age 29, and to chair the only Cabinet committee in Canada legislated to lead a whole of government strategy for children and youth both focused strongly on prevention.

I am incredibly proud to be working with so many people in the public service and in every community, to help give children a good start and a sense of belonging in the early years; help them build skills and mastery for school, work, family and life; help keep them out of crime and other difficulties; and help enable them to contribute, give back to their communities and become a future man—and become the future of Manitoba.

Over the past year and a half, since the new department was created, I have travelled across our province listening to and speaking with Manitobans about their priorities for our children and youth. We have worked hard to bring together our partners and resources under the new department, to build and

strengthen community networks across Manitoba for early childhood development, for after-school initiatives, for mentoring and for career exploration and preparations.

Since we were last together at the Estimates table, I had the opportunity to travel the province talking to Manitobans about their thoughts and ideas for crime prevention. What I heard was overwhelmingly, is that Manitobans believe in prevention. They'd rather spend a little now and improve the quality of a child's life than spend a lot more later trying to recover what that child and the community have lost.

* (18:00)

The input of Manitoba citizens was the driving force behind the development of our five-point strategy to keep kids safe. Our commitment to that concept and the five pillars would evidence—evidenced in the decisions we have made in this year's budget. While we have reduced our overall budget by 2 per cent, we have also been innovative and thoughtful in realigning and consolidating expenditures to support those that have the greatest likelihood of success and which reflect the priorities of Manitobans.

For Healthy Child, we have increased funding for the Families First program by \$634,000. And just wanted to be able to say a quick story. I'm a resident of Point Douglas in Winnipeg's North End, and the Families First home visitor actually came to my house when my son, Hayden, was first born.

And I got to tell you how incredibly impressed I was of the professionalism of the Families First home visitors and nurses that do that. And I can tell you that some of the questions they had asked my wife were not only very challenging questions, because they're trying to collect information and data so that we can target our supports and resources to families that need it the most, but she did it with complete sensitivity.

And one of the other things I want to be able to say about them is that I had an incredible amount of questions as a new father, and I was able to sit there, my wife and I, and ask a whole pile of questions. And, you know, not only did she provide all those questions, but when she left I just felt an increased self-esteem as a new parent.

So I just want to commend the work of the Families First home visitors and just say that first-hand experience tells me that they're making a

huge difference in the lives of many parents and people who actually need that the most.

And strengthen other parent-child family support and early years programs in the community by a hundred thousand dollars—as examples, \$40,000 for our community schools in communities such as Flin Flon and Grand Rapids; \$40,000 for—what—Wolseley Family Place for outreach services. We have strengthened the Communities That Care initiative by \$70,000 for participating communities in Elmwood, Sagkeeng First Nation, Shamattawa First Nation and Swan River.

And we have also partnered with the government of Canada who are investing a hundred and fifteen thousand of federal funds into Manitoba for new FASD research that will help our province and potentially the rest of the country to improve our ability to measure the prevalence of FASD and, in turn, improve FASD prevention and intervention.

For Manitoba for youth, we have redirected and concentrated funding for the critical after-school period. I was very proud to stand with the Premier and True North Foundation as we announced the After School Manitoba initiatives, which begin to roll out this spring.

In addition to After School Manitoba, we are establishing an after-school network that will recognize, bring together and share the strengths of hundreds of organizations that are serving children and youth. In addition to after-school programming, we have strengthened career and employment initiatives and opportunities for Manitoba youth, through both mentoring and employment programs.

We are well aware that we are in tough fiscal times. The Department of Children and Youth Opportunities was challenged, as were others, in the need to contain spending. Staff in the department have worked very hard with our many community partners to preserve front-line services while also finding efficiencies for with they all—for which they deserve our thanks.

I'd also like to thank the member from La Verendrye for his own dedication to young people, before and after being elected to the Legislature, as a school trustee, as a baseball and hockey coach to his community and, of course, as a father of four. We both know how important it is to be role models for young people and help them imagine and make a better future for themselves and a better world for all of us.

Last spring in April in 2012, I was proud to sit together with him as well as the member from Lac du Bonnet at a community forum in north Eastman on early childhood development to better support parents, babies and toddlers.

I know this reflects our shared belief in communities building better lives for their children right from that start. I know we believe in the central importance of families and supporting their skills and strengths. I know each of us and every member of the Legislature has looked into the eyes of a young person and seen their potential, even amidst hardship. I know that we all want the best possible opportunities and outcomes for every child and youth in Manitoba.

I look forward to this committee's review of the 2013-14 Estimates of Expenditure for Children and Youth Opportunities, and I look forward to the discussion with committee members.

Thank you.

The Acting Chairperson (Dave Gaudreau): We thank the minister for those comments.

Does the official opposition critic, the honourable member for La Verendrye, have any opening comments?

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): I know we're getting short of time, so I won't take much. But I'd like to thank the minister for all his hard work and energy he's put in to this ministership in the last year. Him and I've—have a lot of the same views; we both feel that children are a very important part of our lives and of our communities. I believe that governments should strive to create a society where children and youth have the opportunities that allow them to achieve their potential.

It has often been said that one can measure how advanced a society is by how well it needs—meets the needs of its weakest and most frail members. However, despite our best efforts, there are children living in Manitoba whose health and welfare remains much poorer than others, and I'm looking forward to working together with the minister in the next year to try to solve some of these problems. That's all I have for words.

The Acting Chairperson (Dave Gaudreau): Under Manitoba practice, debate on the minister's salary is traditionally the last item considered for the department in Committee of Supply. Accordingly, we shall defer consideration of line item 1.(a) and

proceed with consideration of the remaining items referenced in resolution 1.

At this time we invite the minister's staff and staff from the official opposition to join us at the table or along the side wall, and once they are seated, we will ask the minister to introduce the staff in attendance.

Mr. Chief: So we have our staff join us here so I'll take a moment to introduce them. Of course, to my left we have Jan Sanderson, the Deputy Minister of the Department of Children and Youth Opportunities and secretary to the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet; Rob Santos, executive director of Science and Policy and the associate secretary to the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet. We have Helen Hasiuk, director of Finance and Administration, and Dave Paton, executive director of Administration and Finance.

Mr. Matt Wiebe, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

The Acting Chairperson (Matt Wiebe): Does the committee wish to proceed through these Estimates in a chronological order or have a global discussion?

Mr. Smook: Global, please.

The Acting Chairperson (Matt Wiebe): Is that agreed? *[Agreed]*

The floor is now open for questions and we're on page 48 of the main Estimates book.

Mr. Smook: Yes. I'd like to thank the minister in advance for all the answers he's going to give me. Unfortunately, today we don't have a lot of time so I'm just going to ask a few questions.

First of all, I want to thank the minister's staff who is here today because we probably won't have time afterwards to thank them, but I'd like to start by thanking the minister's staff.

And my focus on—any the questions that I'll ask today are going to be on the Green Team. I had asked questions in the question period, and it's my understanding, like when I was looking on the Internet, it was showing that there were no new applications being accepted and to me that would mean it would be like a cut in the Green Team. The minister responded to me by saying that there were no cuts. Could he sort of expand on that, please.

Mr. Chief: Thank you for the question, and I do want to say, as we know, the Green Team is once again, a very popular, effective program. It's a provincial program. It's all throughout the province,

and one of the things that we have continuously done, and particularly now with the Department of Children and Youth Opportunities, we've been able to take the time to look at how our investments are making the biggest difference. And the Green Team, because of the popularity of it, there have been many people, many organizations, you know, continuing to apply and apply for expanding the resources that they have, and so one of the things that we wanted to do was to make sure that not only did we sustain the Green Team program because of that effectiveness, so we maintained all of the funding that had been there the year before. We actually increased some of the funding.

But what we didn't want to do—we wanted to be careful doing is trying to expand it organizationally or expand it simply because, as you know, the fiscal times that we're in and because it's such a popular program. So what we did is we maintained the programs that we had currently had out there. We maintained all of those partnerships which are, you know, close to 500 organizations—you know, keeps 15,000 young people busy every summer.

* (18:10)

But we wanted to be realistic with the community out there that we're not in a place right now fiscally that we can, you know, continue to fund exponentially a whole bunch of new partnerships. So we did the responsible thing and we maintained the investments. We're continuing to look at the Green Team program to see how we can actually continue to improve it, and part of that will be to—expanding it in a responsible way and that's what we're doing now.

Mr. Smook: Mr. Minister, were there any applicants or recipients of the Green Team that had their funding cut?

Mr. Chief: Yes, for the Green Team program, all of the applicants that we had the year before, the—we maintained all the funding that were there the year before. So the employers that had received funding, the level of funding remained the same as the previous year.

Mr. Smook: The total funding dollars would've remained the same from last year to this year?

Mr. Chief: Yes, actually, the Green Team program actually got an increase from the year before, so there was actually an increase in the funding provided to the Green Team program in the previous year.

Mr. Smook: Well, Mr. Minister, I see that we are running out of time for Estimates. And, because we're just about out of time, I would suggest we move in to proceed to resolutions, and I will be able to ask a lot of questions during concurrence.

The Acting Chairperson (Matt Wiebe): Is it agreed that we proceed to resolutions? *[Agreed]*

Resolution 20.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$30,957,000 for Children and Youth Opportunities, Healthy Child Manitoba Office, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 20.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$15,951,000 for Children and Youth Opportunities, Youth Opportunities, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

The last item to be considered for Estimates of the department is item 1.(a) the minister's salary, contained in resolution 20.1.

At this point, we request that the minister's staff leave the table for the consideration of the last item, and thank you for your work.

The floor is open for question. Seeing none—oh, I'm sorry.

Mr. Smook: I make a motion

THAT line item 20.1.(a) be—the minister's salary be reduced to \$1.08.

The Acting Chairperson (Matt Wiebe): It has been moved by the honourable member for La Verendrye (Mr. Smook)

THAT item—line item 20.1.(a) the minister's salary be reduced to \$1.08.

The motion is in order.

Is there any debate of the motion?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): It's more of a point obviously. The member, I think, is a fine fellow individually, and I appreciated his visit to Steinbach. I wasn't able to join him, but he provided a nice keepsake for my son, a dream catcher, which he's put up in his room and looks at it every day, and got to make sure the dog doesn't grab it because he thinks it's a toy. But my son—it's very much

appreciated. It's a very nice token, and I want to thank the minister of youth and opportunity for providing that for my son.

I know there will be more questions in concurrence, but he knows and he understands the game he's playing in and he's a Cabinet minister and he has equal responsibility with all of his colleagues for not voicing opposition to the PST increase. So, despite the attributes that might be held with the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Chief), he still will take the same responsibility and bear the same consequences as all the other members of the House.

But I do want to put on the record that I did appreciate him taking time for my son, and the dream catcher that he provided was a very nice gesture for him to do.

The Acting Chairperson (Matt Wiebe): Shall the motion pass?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

An Honourable Member: No.

The Acting Chairperson (Matt Wiebe): I hear a no.

Voice Vote

The Acting Chairperson (Matt Wiebe): All those in favour, say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

The Acting Chairperson (Matt Wiebe): All those opposed, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

The Acting Chairperson (Matt Wiebe): In my opinion, the Nays have it.

Recorded Vote

Mr. Smook: I would like to request a recorded vote.

The Acting Chairperson (Matt Wiebe): Is there a second member who supports the request for a recorded vote?

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): You got it.

The Acting Chairperson (Matt Wiebe): A formal vote has been requested.

As per the agreement of the House on July 10th, all requests for a formal vote are to be deferred until Monday, July 13th. Accordingly, this motion shall be deferred until Monday, and because the motion is deferred, the final resolution for the department must

also be deferred until the vote on the motion is completed.

This concludes consideration of the Committee of Supply for this section for today.

Committee rise.

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

* (15:00)

Mr. Chairperson (Tom Nevakshonoff): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Housing and Community Development.

Would the ministerial and opposition staff please enter the Chamber.

The committee had previously agreed to a global discussion. The floor is open for questions. I understand the minister has some information to put on the record, so I recognize the honourable Minister of Housing and Community Development.

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Housing and Community Development): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson.

The member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Wishart) had asked about the community forces and the trade centrals. What I can tell you today is that the number of community forces actively employed ranges between 200 and 240 individuals working either in Winnipeg and Brandon and involved in trade activities. Their work looks—is similar to construction and make-ready, demolition, patch and paint, carpentry, general and finish, flooring, tiling and cleaning. They're cabinet makers, cabinet installers, energy retrofits, attics, basements, insulation, water, lighting retrofits, exterior insulations and retrofits. They're also involved in the Bug n Scrub program, landscaping and snow removal, general maintenance, parking lot maintenance, line painting, fence repair, eavestrough, downspouts, splashpad repairs, repair, replace brick, stone and cement pavers. There's also site supervision and administration, waste removal, mural painting, just in start-up—they get the canvas ready.

The names of the buildings that have been renovated by community forces are Gilbert Park townhouses, Lord Selkirk Park townhouses, 170 Hendon apartments, Winnipeg McDermot

townhouses, Ross Pacific townhouses, staff–Stafford duplex single family, Westaway Bay duplex and single family in Brandon, 555 Ellice, units scattered in Gilbert Park, 6 Lonsdale, 28 Harvlong, 1735 King Edward, 856, 858 Alverstone, 301, 302 to 26 in Inkster Garden.

On Fife Street, there were also units scattered in Lord Selkirk Park, 136 Stephens, units scattered in Winnipeg south, 13 and 25 Blackmore, units at 130 Tuxedo, 601 Osborne apartments, and they also will be involved in the St. Anne's townhouse project starting this fall.

We also have currently our trade central is just for information completes around 25 make-readies per month in Winnipeg with an expectation of tripling that in fall of 2013.

So there's a very good example of the type of work that these men and women are doing on our behalf as well as changing their lives. We're improving the quality of housing for Manitobans.

There is also a conversation that we started off Estimates about: the difference between the Estimate book in 2012 and the actuals of the adjusting vote by the time we printed in 2013. I've gone back, and I have more information, and I need to tell the member that this happens in every department, that there are changes that happen—some of it related to staffing; some of it related to movement in different programs.

So I will—that there was a reduction of \$88,000 in administration. That was due to an underexpenditure, primarily due to one position in Support Services that was not—that remained vacant throughout the year. There also was a—debt-servicing costs were lower, so our—it was lowered by 4.7 and part of that was because of our construction scheduling and delays in our capital projects.

There were an increase of \$1.2 million for grants in lieu of taxes paid by the MHRC to municipalities. That was also a difference. There was—we received \$1.9 million direct manage rental revenue, was lower than originally estimated due to vacancies required because of our capital improvement work.

There was a reduction of \$1.1 million of operating subsidy for private, non-profit groups. That was lower than estimated due to expiry of funding commitments for the three groups. There was a reduction of \$876,000. That was for the non-profits

and co-operatives program resulting from lower than anticipated operating subsidies required for the private, non-profit due to higher than projected rental revenues and reduced operating subsidies were required for our urban native portfolio.

A reduction of \$1.2 million for the rent supplement program expenditures resulting from lower than expected benefits under the pre-'86, post-'85 programs where agreements were not renewed by private landlords. As well as—I think we talked about this yesterday, the reduction in the portable housing benefit program that was \$285, and that is partly because of the program wasn't fully subscribed, and it's the inflow and outflow of individuals in that program and the 64 individuals that are waiting to find housing in the private market.

So I think that addressed most of the concerns that were mentioned by the member for Portage la Prairie. So I'm ready for questions now.

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): I thank the minister for that information. I have certainly looked at other Estimates books and there is always some variation. It just seemed to be a very large amount in this particular case. And a lot of it, in fact, was explained by the addition, the two staff positions that, as the minister had referenced earlier, were transfers in and one hiring on recommendation of the Auditor General. I would like to know a little bit more about that recommendation in terms of who was hired on the recommendation of the Auditor General, and to fill what position.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: This is with the Agencies, Boards and Commissions that was previously with the Department of Family Services and Labour. The Auditor General did a very extensive review of that program and came up with, I think, approximately 20 recommendations of what we needed to do, and one those recommendations was that the workload was too heavy and that they needed some assistance.

So there have been a few people—one person was hired and they've moved on to another position and the—I'm not sure of the person's name that's in that position right now. I can get that for you if you like. But, really, it is just to support the accepting of the applications for people interested on volunteering their time for agencies, boards and commissions as well as helping with making sure that the notifications are getting out and that they're coordinating these efforts with the departments. This is—a lot of work goes into making sure that people are represented.

Mr. Wishart: I thank the minister for that answer, and I also wanted to check what committees, other committees of Cabinet, the minister serves on?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: I am the Vice-Chair of Treasury Board. I sit on Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet. I also sit on Aboriginal Issues Committee of Cabinet. I also—I chair—co-chair the ALL Aboard strategy. I think that's it.

Mr. Wishart: Well, other than the Treasury Board, which I know meets frequently, could you give me some idea as to how often those other committees meet?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: The ALL Aboard committee of Cabinet meets four times a year, and that is a very unique committee. It is made up of a number of different departments, but what makes it even more unique is that we have community members that serve with us. It's the first time in our government that we have at the table Cabinet ministers and community members sharing a common vision and moving forward. So on this committee is my co-chair, the Minister of Family Services and Labour (Ms. Howard); the Minister of Finance (Mr. Struthers); the Minister of Education (Ms. Allan); the Minister of Healthy Living (Mr. Rondeau); the Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade (Mr. Bjornson); the Minister of Immigration and Multiculturalism (Ms. Melnick); the Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy (Ms. Selby); the Minister of Children and Youth Opportunities (Mr. Chief); the Minister of Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (Mr. Kostyshyn); the MLA for Wolseley; the MLA for Burrows; Charles Loewen, who is the co-chair of Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Council and also a very prominent business owner in this province; Louise Simbandumwe, who works at SEED Winnipeg; Dr. Brian Postl, who is the co-chair of the Premier's advisory council on education; and Jennie Wastesicoot, who also sits on the Premier's advisory council on education. So that meets four times a year.

Aboriginal Issues Committee of Cabinet, it varies. It's usually within every four to six weeks. Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet follows pretty well every six to eight weeks.

Mr. Wishart: Thank the minister for answering those questions. In terms of staff in your office, are there any staff that—whose role is fairly political in nature and who might they be?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Well, I have a special assistant whose name is Adrien Sala, who works closely with the department. As well, in the constituency, I have an executive assistant whose name is Ellen Pile and a constituency assistant whose name is Natasha Opazo-Ceicko.

Mr. Wishart: I thank the minister for those questions. I want to move on and talk a little bit about Manitoba Housing Renewal, in particular, the number of units which seem to have gone up a little bit this year during the early construction at Manitoba Housing. And could you just kind of fill me in on what the changes would be and were there any units that were lost from the market during that period as well?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: I'd really like to thank the member for acknowledging the hard work that we've done and that the number of units has been increasing. We have a 1,500-unit commitment that was made five years ago and will be retired in 2014. We are well set to meet that target. We have, I think, it's 1,273 units completed, and we'll get the rest completed and committed by March of 2014. In Budget 2013, we had 500 social housing units that were committed as well as 500 affordable housing units.

What I can tell you, because as I spoke earlier in question period with the member and referenced our commitment to maintenance and improvement, which we call M and I, which is well over \$107 million this year, there is a rotation that happens to some of our units when we are doing our deep refreshes across the province. For tenant safety, we are working very closely with tenants and relocating them, redeveloping these units. So there is a vacancy rate in which we hold, and in that vacancy rate—or after that project is completed, the tenant that was initially in the unit has first right of refusal. We go to them first and say, would you be—do you want to come back to this brand new refreshed unit? And people can make those choices.

* (15:10)

And just to assure the critic, we ensure that, when we are relocating families, that we're keeping them in the community in which they're comfortable with and doing all attempts to keep their children in the same schools.

So, yes, there are some vacancies which are held. There are some vacancies in rural Manitoba because there is low interest in renting those units. We have some units, as well, that, because of time

passing, that they need some—either to be—they need some refreshing to happen—I'm buying time for you people—yes, you're doing very well. We're refreshing these units and I can also take this opportunity to have a conversation that what we've done is we've put some of these—the units in rural Manitoba for sale. And this is a special program; it's a Homeownership Program. These are units that are now vacant. They will—the first offer will be to low-income individuals in that community, and after that it could go to the private market.

There had—it's been slow, the uptake on this, but we are continuing to work with real estate agents as well as municipalities and local MLAs to try and make sure that these units can become part of our—a home ownership program. We have a regular turnover of apartments for about 250 vacancies per month, so that's quite a few, that's people moving out and folks moving in. There were, as of February 2013, there were 540 units vacant and available for rent. We also have 1,485 not for rent due to major renovations or no local demand. So those would be a combination of units which we are holding for our deep refreshes as well as units that are in other markets where people are not renting at this time.

It is our goal to get our stock improved and available for tenants as soon as possible. That's why we're working really hard to do—our turnover is much quicker than what we have in the past, and our priority is good quality, affordable housing for Manitobans.

Mr. Wishart: I thank the minister for answering the question. She touched on a couple of points that I wish to follow up on. You made reference to the Rural Homeownership Program, which certainly is fairly new, and we've had a number of, actually, calls regarding that, and some of which I referred to the minister's office to help with the issues. And it does appear from what I have seen is that the uptake has been very slow. You mentioned that. Could you put some numbers around the success of that program? And I think it's fair to put the timeline on how long it's been out there, it hasn't been out that long.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: I'm going to have to get back to the member with specific units in which we sold. I can tell you that what happened with the Rural Homeownership Program is that it was a total of \$800,000 that we received in sales. So this program is happening across the province, and I can provide you with some of the specific information if you'd like. It's—what we're doing is we're selling access to

new or rehabilitated affordable, single detached homes, and tenure of owner-occupation to low and moderate income households.

There is a Tenant Homeownership Stream. Applicants will be considered eligible if they meet the following criteria: listed on the current tenancy agreement; have lived in the rental unit they propose to purchase for a minimum of two consecutive years; a gross annual household income below the program income limit; able to purchase the house directly or qualify for a mortgage through a recognized lending institution; and must have made rental payments to Manitoba Housing for at least six consecutive months

Assistance is in the form of 10 per cent forgivable down payment contribution by Manitoba Housing that's forgivable on a pro-rata basis over five years. It must be repaid should the applicant sell the home, rent out the unit or otherwise breach the terms of the forgivable loan agreement. A repayable second mortgage of 15 per cent of the purchase price is also provided. This second mortgage is interest-free and repayable upon sale. A non-repayable cash grant shall be provided to qualified applicants to cover soft costs such as legal fees, second mortgage registration, home inspection and utility hookup cost. This is a straight grant that homeowners can utilize as they fit, to maximum of \$1,500—as they see fit. All households who purchase a property through this program will receive a home ownership instruction manual which will include information on basic home repairs, mold prevention, household budgeting and other home ownership responsibilities.

Mr. Wishart: I thank the minister for that information. I know that was available on the website. But what I would like is some success rates, perhaps, by region—and you can take that under advisement, if you like, so that we know whether this program is beginning to show some results.

Moving on from that, I'd like to ask a few questions around the maintenance for the housing stock owned by Manitoba Housing. It is very difficult, of course, to separate the maintenance from the renovation process because, certainly, some of those dollars cover the same thing, but I wondered if you do track any form of maintenance cost per unit, per year, in any form.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: I have some more specific information from the member's previous question. I—you know, we're all about developing new programs

and providing Manitobans with new options of home ownership, if that's what they want. But we also are very aware of, we need to provide a continuum of housing options. And the program is only one year old. I can—you can trust that we will be closely monitoring the success of it, and you'll tell me.

Since summer of 2011—so it's—the program is two years old—approximately 23 properties have been sold as of March 2013, and it was actually \$938,000 that we—that was made. And we are continuing to do that, so we take our responsibility very seriously when we're providing options. And I think that that is another commitment that we have to rural Manitoba, of providing good-quality homes for individuals and allowing them to put their roots in the smaller communities and, you know, supporting the local businesses and the schools and the other services that are available.

Now, the member had asked specific questions about maintenance. As I said earlier, \$107 million is being spent. That list that I provided I could read out again about the renovations that we've made. There's a number of programs that we have committed to across the province. There is light maintenance that happens every day on specific units, and not sure if that's what the member wants, the complete list of those maintenance projects or the larger renovations that we're doing, but I'm sure I'll have the list in two seconds.

All right. So we've been able to come up with the direct-managed and sponsored-managed repairs and maintenance budget. The direct managed, that would be the ones that we manage ourselves, and we have 14,000 units—it's \$28 million. Our sponsored management is \$6 million and non-profit is \$4 million.

Again, I have to say to the member that these are smaller maintenance things that happen every day across the province in our buildings. We have much larger projects where we're doing our refreshes and deep refreshes and making changes to people's exterior as well as their interior properties.

*(15:20)

Mr. Wishart: I thank the minister for that, and I recognize there's a difference between maintenance and the renovation refresh proposals, that are a separate project and often seem to involve some training, which, certainly, increases their costs to some degree. But we are trying to track just what the maintenance costs are, and related to that, and

leaving out the renovation properties, what kind of vacancy rate—and you made some reference to how many are vacant now—that between one individual or family moving out, and the next one moving in, what kind of period is sort of an average to be expected there?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: It's depending on what kind of state that the unit is, is when the family moves out. It can be anywhere from 30 days to 90 days of—depending on the repairs that we have to make.

I need to put on the record that I can respect that the member is wanting to see a division between maintenance and our renovations, but, trust me, if we were not making over a hundred million dollars' worth of investments in renovations, our maintenance costs would be much, much higher and continue to climb. And this—these renovations that we are making across the province 'usiling' local hiring practices are making a difference for everyone. Not only are we doing training, while we're doing that, renovations, but we also are providing good quality housing and maintaining the housing stock.

The member knows that the housing stock, until recently, is well—is 30 to 40 years old and we need to continue to make those investments to maintain it.

Mr. Wishart: Thank the minister. I'm certainly aware that condition of the housing stock left a lot to be desired, and I appreciate that renovations are in process. We're just trying to separate some of the unit costs a little bit so that we have a bit of a perspective, because it's difficult to separate as it appears in the Estimates book.

The 30-to-90-day vacancy period, we can't narrow that any further? There's no average for the ones that you manage across the province?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: As I suggested to the member earlier, that there's almost 250 vacancies happen every month. So this is a very large corporation that's operating. We have been working diligently to bring down those turnover rates and using our own community forces and in-house maintenance staff are going to make that difference.

I can—it depends on what the quality of the unit is, when we get in there. We need to make sure when one family moves out, when the—by the time the new family moves in, that it is in a safe condition for them and that all of the issues have been addressed. I would be assured that the member would want to have families living in safe, affordable housing.

He made a comment about he's very familiar with the condition of the housing. I'm not sure if he's familiar with why the housing is the condition that it is, because in the '90s, there was no maintenance that was being provided, there were no renovations that were happening, and in 1999, we had to take it and run with it, and to make a difference across the province. There was a huge hole that was happening. Not only was there no maintenance being built or being maintained, there also were no housing units being built.

So I am so proud of our government, about what we're doing, as far as maintenance and improvements to the sites as well as the new builds that we're doing.

Mr. Wishart: If the minister, I guess, wants to talk about before then, 1990 and since, maybe we should talk about the bedbug problem, because that's only arisen in the last 10 years. And, if the minister could indicate what the current policy is, and what amount of staff or whether contracts are being given to help control bedbug problems in Manitoba Housing units, either owned or operated—we are certainly aware that that is one of the most frequent causes of complaints, so if you could give me a bit of an idea what your policy is and how you're implementing that.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Before we focus on bedbugs in Manitoba Housing, let's talk about bedbugs in general. Bedbugs are everywhere. We don't like to think about it, but they are. They're on buses. They're in libraries. They're in fancy hotels. They're in the private sector, apartment blocks too. Again, we are addressing this issue, and I will tell the minister how we—or the member how we're doing this.

What we've done is we have the creation of the integrated pest-management group which there are—how many individuals in that—we have a number of individuals that are employed in the pest management group and that are working with our tenants, and what we're doing is we're providing mattress covers; we're providing information sessions. We're getting in there with the state-of-the-art treatment. We have the bedbug dog has come in and has done some tracking for us. We are also in doing heat treatments for some of our deep refreshes once we're doing them. We have an ongoing rotation with our bedbug remediation and making a difference.

So we have the pest hotline that we are also managing as well. I can tell—if the member likes numbers, I'll let him know that Manitoba Housing has seen a decline of more than 30 per cent over the

past two years in the number of units with known bedbug activity. So we did not bury our head in the sand. We took on that, the challenge of bedbugs, as many individuals have across the province, and we are addressing it. And I was correct in saying that there are 20 staff that are employed in the pest management group, and we also—we're working with an interdepartmental committee that's addressing bedbugs beyond Manitoba Housing, and we're collecting data on that information.

We're also inspecting and training and providing consulting services to direct and sponsor-managed properties—also to child-care centres and women's shelters. We're scheduling and monitoring the services. As I said earlier, we're doing the canine inspections. It really has to happen in a co-operation with tenant responsibility and our responsibilities as landlords and sharing information.

I will not deny that it is a lot of work when our team goes in and says, we're here to spray for bedbugs. People are asked to put all of their belongings in Rubbermaid containers and get everything off the floor and move the couches and furniture away from the walls. And when that happens, for some individuals, it is because of mental health or physical health or age or multiple children. It is a huge task. So we were very, very fortunate when we developed an initiative through the provincial bedbug strategy called the Bug N Scrub. And these are personnel that will come in and share information and provide that additional support about preparing the unit for a treatment. So we are very familiar with the issues of bedbugs. I'd like to, again, just reinforce that the bedbug issue is one of national concern and want the member to know that we are very, very aware of what we're doing.

Right now, there's a news flash and I hope that this—as I say these words that I'm not proven wrong. Recently, we were able to declare units free of known bedbug activity in the northern region, so that's an accomplishment that our team should celebrate. It doesn't mean that we are going to relax and not continue to monitor those suites, because we will. That's all it does is it takes one couch coming into a home and then we have that issue again. So we're really excited about the work that we're doing, but we will continue to be diligent with the issue of bedbugs.

Mr. Wishart: I thank the minister for that answer. Your Integrated Pest Management Group, if I got the name right, of 20 individuals, they do apply

pesticides, is my understanding. Are any of them licensed applicators?

*(15:30)

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Yes, the people that are applying the specific treatment, whether it's heat treatment or the other initiatives that they're doing, they're highly trained and qualified and will ensure the safety of all the tenants as well as the employees of Manitoba Housing.

Mr. Wishart: I appreciate that they're—thank you to the Chairman and the minister—I appreciate that they're highly qualified, but I asked if they were licensed.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: I'm waiting for that information and I will let you know.

Mr. Wishart: Thank you, and I appreciate an answer to that one that's put on the record, as pesticide application has become quite an issue in the province, and most of the rest of the applicators, especially in residences or around large populations do require licensing, I would be frankly surprised if you were not licensed applicators.

I did ask earlier on if you used any contractors as well, and I don't believe I got an answer to that.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: As we're still building up our own capacity as a corporation in maintaining our units, they are still private contractors that we do have out, but it has declined in the last two years quite drastically.

Mr. Wishart: Well, and I appreciate the answer to that, so if you can update it, I know that my colleague from River Heights wanted to ask a few questions and had a time issue, so I'll turn the floor over to him briefly.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Thank you. Let me start by asking in terms of the Estimates, the expenditures that are listed for this year. Which of those expenditures are eligible for using the dollars for infrastructure spending which are coming from the increase in the PST from 7 per cent to 8 per cent?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: The commitment from our government is that the 1 per cent PST increase will go to support infrastructure development across the province and we've been talking a lot about the flood protection as well as schools and hospitals and road development. But also in that there is record amount

of capital that is being spent on housing as well as through our Community Places grant, it comes through the Building Manitoba Fund and that also will be a fund that will be receiving from the PST. Also, our maintenance and improvement on our units—*[interjection]* Yes, the new delivery will be eligible for it as well.

Mr. Gerrard: I'm just interested in which particular projects in the Building Manitoba Fund would be dealing with housing, or is that not really related to the Department of Housing, its other expenditures?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: The Building Manitoba Fund that we access is through the—for the Community Places Program, and what that is is it provides capital money for recreation, programs for daycares, across the province.

Mr. Gerrard: I notice that there's a little over \$5 million which goes to grant assistance for communities, which is separate from the Community Places Program. Does some of that go for infrastructure or not?

An Honourable Member: Can you ask him to repeat the question.

Mr. Chairperson: Honourable minister—member from River Heights to repeat the question, please.

Mr. Gerrard: In the Estimates under Community Assistance, there's a line for grant assistance to communities and it's a—this Estimates book, it's the line right above the Community Places Program, and it includes a line item for \$5,000,172 in 2013-2014.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: That line reflects our commitment to the United Way, and just to put on the record that we are the only province that provides operating funding to a United Way in Canada, as well as the additional money is for the Manitoba Community Services Council, MCSC.

Mr. Gerrard: Again, in this Estimates book, there is an item here for Housing, of \$70,925,000 for the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation, the Portable Housing Benefit. Most of this appears to go to grants and subsidy benefits for low- and moderate-income renters and so on. Is—does some of that actually go for infrastructure repair maintenance or new infrastructure?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Yes, it does. It goes towards maintenance and delivery.

Mr. Gerrard: So, you know, of the amount, of that \$70 million—\$67,322,000 goes to the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation. How much of that would go to, you know, infrastructure, maintenance or construction?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: So, in the corporation, we get a transfer from the federal government, as well as we have a rental revenue, but there always is a shortfall. So the province treasury provides us with the \$70 million for operating and that operating can go towards repairs and maintenance, through daily operations within our corporation, ensuring that we're providing good quality housing.

Mr. Gerrard: So I take it there's not a specific number that one can provide, is it?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: So this is the repair and maintenance portion—would be coming out of the \$70 million. So I think I put on the record earlier that we had \$28 million for our direct, \$6 million for our sponsored and \$4 million for our non-profit partners.

Mr. Gerrard: Now, on—in the budget papers, in this book, on page 17, there's a list of capital investment of \$1.8 billion and in that list, there's \$333 million for housing, but that's clearly a lot bigger than this figure here. I'm just wondering where the rest of that \$333 million comes from.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: The number that the member refers to, the \$333 million, that's our Loan Act authority. And we use that to do our new housing delivery as all of our capital, our deep refreshes as well.

* (15:40)

Mr. Gerrard: Okay. Thank you. Does the—is there a budget for the Loan Act authority or not?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: The—what you would see in our budget documents here today are just the principal and interest related to the Loan Act authority.

Mr. Gerrard: Okay. Thank you. Now, I've got a question about Meadows West and Fraipoint [*phonetic*]. I understand that the lands there have been sold, but I'd like to know, you know, which lands were sold, who they were sold to and how much they were sold for.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: We can get that specific information. We'll just have to be careful because of confidentiality, what we can disclose. But it will take a few minutes, so if the member has another question, we can work on that and we'll gather that information for him and respond immediately.

Mr. Gerrard: Thank you. I understand that the minister has been talking with people at the University of Winnipeg with regard to some public housing that they're interested in putting up adjacent to the university. And I'm just wondering what the status of those discussions are.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: As the member can realize that any housing project takes a lot of co-ordination and negotiation and it takes—I've found since the—since I've had the privilege of being the Minister of Housing and Community Development, that usually from the first moment a person decides they're going to build a housing unit, it can take anywhere up to four to five years to get it completed. This project has—we have been in conversations, nothing has been finalized yet, so there's nothing to announce. It is in partnership with Advanced Education and Literacy, as well as the University of Winnipeg, but negotiations continue.

Mr. Gerrard: The minister has a commitment, which, I believe, is to provide 1,500 units of affordable housing, and I believe that the commitment is that that would be provided, I believe, by the end of the 2014 year. As I add it up at the moment, there's approximately 542 units completed as of the end of last year. There's a number of about 219 still under construction, which would suggest that there's about 761 either under construction or built, but there's still quite a number of units yet to be built to meet the 1,500 target.

Can the minister provide some assurance that the 1,500 target is going to be met by the end of 2014?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: The election commitment that was made was that there would be 1,500 units that would be committed, so there will be 1,500 units that will be committed by the end of March of 2014. As I mentioned in my earlier answer that any housing project takes a lot of co-ordination and co-operation and patience, and it's—sometimes projects happen quicker than what you assume and sometimes they take a little bit longer. So that's why we chose to make the commitment as far as that there'd be a commitment of 1,500 units. And we have to also speak about the 1,500 rent-geared-to-income units that we're also providing that are making a difference in ensuring that people have access to affordable housing.

So I have the answer to your previous question, if I may? The Fraipont land, the sale was closed on May 14 of 2013, and the title is in the process of being transferred. Because of that, we're not able to

disclose at this time who the successful person was that—or company that won this RFP, and I will be able to tell you in two seconds whether I can let you know how much we received for it.

And Meadows West, it was in—we received our approval in 2011 to dispose of 120 acres. It was a land parcel in northwest Winnipeg. We had a request for bids and process was included, and we also have a buyback option for three acres to construct multi-family rental housing for seniors. And this—so the—that's all I have on that one—oh, here it is, that we had Terrascape. Terrascape Developments was the successful winning bid for Meadows West.

Mr. Gerrard: Did I hear the minister right, to say \$4 million, or what was the cost?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Sorry, Mr. Chairperson, Meadows West was sold for just a little bit over \$9 million.

Mr. Gerrard: I thank the minister. Now, back to the 1,500. How many of those 1,500 units have not yet been started?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: If we can have a few minutes, we need to do a bit of math. Just total that—but if you have another question, let's go.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairperson, I just wanted to put on the record that all of our technicians that use the spray technique are licensed.

Mr. Wishart: I thank the minister for that answer. Mentioned earlier in your discussions that you were now responsible for funding for emergency shelters. Could you tell me approximately what that was and who the recipients of them would be?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: In Winnipeg we are working Main Street Project, Salvation Army, Siloam Mission, for a total of 175 emergency beds, 258 transitional beds and 65 cold weather beds for a total of 498. We also work with The Pas shelter for 26 emergency beds; Thompson shelter, 26 emergency beds, for a provincial total of 553 beds. We also have a partnership with some of the women's shelters across the province, too.

Mr. Wishart: I appreciate the answer from the minister. What is the total funding available to those 553 that are available across the province?

* (15:50)

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Just may—if I may answer the member for River Heights' question, please. There are six projects that are committed but not started yet, as of May 31st, '13.

Just for clarification, that there are two ways that shelters are funded in this province: through Manitoba Housing and Community Development, they are given a grant, and the total amount of the grant is \$1.7 million; but there's also per diem rates, which also come through Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade.

Mr. Wishart: Yes, and thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank the minister for that answer. Just to follow up from my colleague from River Heights, you said six projects. How many spots would be—how many beds would that amount to?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: We don't have the total number of units at this time, but we will seek to get it.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable member for Wolseley.

Report

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Chairperson of the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in room 255): Mr. Chairperson, in the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in room 255, considering the Estimates of the Department of Education, the honourable member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) moved the following motion:

THAT line item 16.1.(a) the minister's salary be reduced to \$1.08.

Mr. Chairperson, this vote was defeated on a voice vote. Subsequently, two members requested that a counted vote be taken on this matter.

Mr. Chairperson: A recorded vote has been requested. Call in the members.

All sections in Chamber for recorded vote.

Recorded Vote

Mr. Chairperson: Order. In the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in room 255, considering the Estimates of the Department of Education, the honourable member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) moved the following motion:

THAT line item 16.1.(a) the minister's salary be reduced to \$1.08.

This motion was defeated on a voice vote, and, subsequently, two members requested a formal vote on this matter.

The question before the committee, then, is the motion for the honourable member for Steinbach.

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 18, Nays 31.

Mr. Chairperson: The motion is accordingly defeated.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: The sections of the Committee of Supply will now continue with the consideration of the departmental Estimates.

Order. This section of the Committee of Supply will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Housing and Community Development. Would the ministerial and opposition staff please enter the Chamber.

* (16:20)

The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Wishart: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and get back to a few things here. I wanted to touch briefly on the area of Community Development. Having taken the time to visit with most of the community development corporations in the city here, and a few of the rural ones, certainly, very impressed with the work that they've been doing. But I see that their budget is reduced generally across the board, with some specific exemptions. Just wondered if there had been a change in responsibilities that accounts for the change in funding.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Just to put on the record, the member had asked about what was the total number of units in those six projects that haven't been started yet but committed, is 240 units.

I'm glad to hear that the member has gone out and has met with the staff and board members of the Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation. They're doing amazing work across this province around crime prevention, community engagement, youth opportunities and housing initiatives. We are funding them at record amounts as far as operating. We were able to sign—they are all part of the non-profit organization strategy and signed multi-year agreements with us, which will provide them with some sustainability as far as staffing and those supports which are extremely important.

The NRF Fund, which we have across the province, just for the record, we have Central Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation, Chalmers, Daniel McIntyre, St. Matthews, the North End, Spence, West Broadway, and, then, outside of Winnipeg we are also involved with Brandon,

Dauphin, Flin Flon, Portage la Prairie, Selkirk, The Pas and Thompson. And the total commitment for '12-13 was approximately \$1.2 million.

I don't need to tell the member about the fiscal uncertainty that we're living in right now, and we had to make some tough decisions rather than impacting the operating money for the NRFs. We—for the neighbourhood renewal corporations, the NRCs, we chose to reduce the NRF funding by \$300,000. That wasn't taken lightly, but that will continue to allow them to run the number of projects which they have been, very successfully. Last year, with the \$1.2 million, it was 53 projects in which they were initiated. So we're going to continue to work with them and to provide them with the operating supports that they need.

I would like to put on the record the total dollar value, but that will have to wait for a few minutes and I'm sure I'll have that very quickly.

We also have—part of our neighbourhood renewal strategy, we have five communities where we have LIFT, and that stands for Localized Improvement Fund for Tomorrow. And we're—really, it's a three-year project where we're working with communities that were on the fringe of having marginalized—they had issues as far as low income as well as the number of rental accommodations and other socio-economic indicators, and what we've done is we've provided each of them with a \$90,000 annual LIFT grant, and—oh, I'd like to correct myself. It's for four years, and that LIFT grant is used to operate a variety of different community programs that are about community mobilization, community engagement and addressing some of those issues of housing, safety and socialization.

Mr. Wishart: Well, thank the minister for that answer. Just following up a little bit, the process by which they—when they're giving grants out on household improvements, they have, of course, limited funds.

They do a very thorough review, usually with their board, to 'priorize' which are their highest priorities, and then that list is also sent in and the department reviews the list even further. Is that not a duplication of duties? I know they seem very frustrated sometimes that some projects that they thought were priorities get shuffled down the list.

Do you have a different set of priorities or an established set of priorities?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: We respect the community part of the neighbourhood renewal corporations and work very closely with them, and there are grants that, yes, they have to come through our process, but we have a responsibility to manage public funding and public money. So we are doing a review right now, as we speak. We actually have a Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation advisory committee which has been started, and, through that advisory committee, we will be looking at what are the processes that we have in place and what are the processes that—where do we need to go to further our co-operation but still have accountability.

There's a number of checks and balances that happen in the neighbourhoods. Community comes together and the board makes a decision and they provide us with proposals. Those proposals go to an interdepartmental committee, which reviews them and does an analysis on them and provides us with information. And then, after that, their project managers are also working with them very diligently throughout that process and then it comes to an MLA and a minister committee for the final decision.

I am extremely proud of the work that we have accomplished. It's been 10-plus years that they've been operating, and we can strongly say that we've seen some improvement as far as housing conditions, safety, and, in some specific areas, food security has also become an interest and a direction for them.

Mr. Wishart: Yes, sorry—did you say the final approval process was a minister-MLA committee? Is that what you said?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: That—yes, that, through our legislation, we have a committee that comes together and does the final review.

*(16:30)

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): I have a question about Parkview Manor in Carman, and I will excuse myself for, first of all, for my mother lives in there, so I have vested interest in this seniors apartments in Carman. The last year, the roof, windows, doors were done in the past year, and it's—they actually have security on the doors now, so it's much better. However, the suites have been emptied in the expectation of doing a full renovation—a full and complete renovation of the manor. They're down to less than one-third occupancy in there now, which affects the congregate meals, but we understand that that's part of the process. You have to get it down in order to build and renovate. But our understanding is

that the tenders have not been issued for the renovations. Is that correct?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Thank you very much, and I appreciate your acknowledgement about the good work that we have been doing to ensure that your mother has a good quality place to live. Parkview Manor was one of those units or buildings that we had there was a low vacancy rate, but we felt that it was a building that was in need, and also, after deep refresh, that we may be able to have some more people want to become tenants there. So that's—you're right, that's the process that we're going on there as far as a deep refresh. We're wanting to ensure that we're having good, close tenant communication, so I trust that there's been some dialogue between the tenants as well as the staff that are managing that building.

As far as the specifics around a timeline, I'll get that to you as soon as I can.

Mr. Pedersen: Just for the record, I was acknowledging the good work of my mother, not the good work of the minister. So there is tenders—you will supply me with a timeline, then, for when the tenders will actually be issued? Am I correct?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: That's correct, and I would like to suggest that it is the good work of the folks that are employed at Manitoba Housing that deliver the service and the contractors that will continue to do the work. And, hopefully, we are so fortunate that in some of our areas that local contractors are winning the bids and able to do some local hiring as well. So I'm extremely proud of the \$107 million that we are investing and making a difference across the province.

Mr. Wishart: Thank you very much, and I think—I thought he was talking about the good work his mother did on raising him. But my question to the minister, then, is talking about earlier, we were talking about the training programs—I think it was BUILD—and I just wanted to go back to that. I wondered who provides the supervision for this project. Is that when their work—when the untrained workers are working on some of these projects, is it professionals or is it staff, or who are we—who provides the supervision?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: You can be trusted that they are being supervised by qualified journeymen as well as being provided training on site. We are ensuring that we are getting the best quality of product from these men and women that are working with us, but as well

as they are developing some positive training and employment skills.

Mr. Wishart: I thank that minister for that. So the supervisors are on the site at least the majority of the time? Because I have had calls from individuals saying that there was crews and they're working on this, and nobody seemed to be in charge and nothing seemed to be getting done. And if you have qualified journeymen on site, I'm certain that that would not be the occasion. So how do I rationalize these two—are they on site almost all the time?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: I have the utmost respect for the individuals in which we're employing as community forces in the work that they're doing. If the member has some specific concerns that he'd like to share with me, I welcome him to provide them to me, and I will follow up.

We have really hard targets about turnarounds and turnovers while we're doing our deep refreshes. The crews have so many units that they have to do in a week and we're always waiting for the next trade to come in behind us, so—and we're always monitoring it with our Gantt chart. So there is ongoing quality control that is happening and we our doing our best to provide good quality training as well as affordable housing across the province.

Mr. Wishart: I thank the minister for that answer. I'd like to go back to the question I asked today in question period, and we were talking about the Pioneer Manor in Ashern. And I know the minister is very familiar with what has gone on up there, and I have been up there as well and, certainly, talked to a number of individuals including many of the municipal officials in that area. And I'm very concerned that the net results of this project—I know they had the best of intentions with the refresh, but the net result has been putting the building at risk and the individuals in the building at risk, from a health point of view and, certainly, a quality of life point of view.

I wonder if the minister would care to explain or fill in the plans to deal with any issues that are outstanding out there, which would include the wet insulation which no doubt is there, and the damage to the soffit, fascia and eavestroughing which is still there. And, if this were to repeat itself next winter, there were actually six weeks when ice and snow had blocked their fire escapes from each of the suites, and I don't consider that an acceptable option.

So how are we going to deal with that in the future?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Thank you very much. I appreciate the advocacy that the member has been doing for the constituents and the tenants of Pioneer Manor. This issue that he speaks about, the air exchange, as far as my information is that has been repaired, and that's why the delay has happened in the lounge redevelopment.

When we go in and we provide a deep—or refresh within a building, we're always—the tenants' safety is our No. 1. We'll continue to have that as our priority, and to assure that that happens, whether we're doing construction or whether it's daily living, I had the privilege of meeting with tenants and then we had great conversations about the building that's been happening. I understand because of the suites being primarily bachelor suites that the lounge is an integral part of that community, so we are working hard to get that construction completed as soon as possible. That's the meeting place. That's where they have their meals. That's as well where they play cards. They love to play cards in Ashern. Many conversations about that, and, in the interim, what we were able to do is to sort of adapt a suite to provide them with that meeting place. It's not the area in which they are used to and accustomed to, but we also believe that it is important that we continue to provide that redevelopment for them so they can enjoy their housing unit for many years to come.

As I met with the tenants we talked about the new office that was attached to the building, and it was difficult conversations at times. And as we went through that process, I presented all tenants with an option. I would say, well, I know the majority of tenants accepted the option, and that's the option that we're going forward with. We're going to be reducing the size of the office space that will provide tenants with a view to the street. I want to make sure that all members of this House know that this lounge is—there are windows on the back side of the lounge into a beautiful green space that happens. But we also understand the recreation and the social opportunity that was presented by having windows on the front of the street. That's why we're—we are reducing the office space, and we've made a commitment that on a rainy day and there's a parade happening and if people want to go into the office, they're more than welcome to do that. We'll ensure that that happens.

What we spoke about earlier this afternoon was what's taking so long. I felt that it was really important that we concluded the work in the lounge so we could get business back as usual and have that important area open to them, and then, secondly, work on the adaption of that office space. So I'm hoping as we move forward that we'll be able to continue to provide good quality, affordable housing for the Ashern tenants for many, many years to come.

Mr. Wishart: I thank the minister. I know she's concerned about the residents and their quality of life and I understand that an agreement was reached to provide them additional space that would allow them to look out onto the town and be part of the community that they're actually living in.

* (16:40)

The other side is you have a very lovely little area but it has no view of the community whatsoever. It's very rural, very park-like, but the latest information indicates that cupboards and finishing has been put on the office wall that would have to be removed. So we still seem to be building the area, the office space as it was originally planned and not going back to providing them with additional space, as the minister has indicated, and I'm sure that that's not what her intent was. And I wonder how we can get this dealt with so that the promises that were made to the folks at Ashern—sorry, Pioneer Manor, are actually kept.

So how can we move forward on this, and secondary to that, did you actually have someone come in and inspect the insulation then?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: As I said earlier, we've made substantial investments into Pioneer Manor, and we are committed to making those changes to that office space and that will probably start early August that those changes will be implemented.

And I'll have to get back to the member regarding who came in and looked at the air exchange. I would trust that we had professionals do it. We are a professional organization and we know—we get the experts in when we have to make those decisions for us to ensure tenant safety. That's our priority.

Mr. Wishart: Well, Mr. Chairman, and thank the minister for that. I do hope that it was done professionally. The work that was done, frankly—and the snow removal on the area around the park-like area on the other side—was—left a lot to be desired.

When—anytime when emergency doors are blocked for that long period of time with ice and snow—and clearly there was a problem in the ventilation system, because the roof, for the first time in its existence—26 years—the first time that they had an icing problem on the roof, both on the inside and the outside of the roof. So, clearly, something had changed and something in the design process has created an additional stress factor there, and it is a building that certainly was getting old and certainly improved a great deal from the refresh. However, we want that building to survive and be sustainable in the community, and we need to be sure that those are dealt with.

Minister has indicated that it'll be August before the work is done, yet work is still going on. So why are these two things not compatible?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: I'm not a construction expert, but I'd just like to put on the record that part of the work that we did with these units for the \$750,000 was to improve the insulation, and once you prove the—improve the insulation you have to adapt the air exchange, and that's what we found happened. So that's what we're working on. I think that work has been completed, but I will confirm that for the member.

As I said earlier, we're committed to making that change to the office space, and what we are proposing and we are working with local contractors in the Ashern area, as soon as they are done the lounge construction, then we'll have people to start working on the reconstruction of the office space.

Mr. Wishart: Well, I certainly appreciate that—the thank the minister—I certainly appreciate your comments. So what it looks like, then, is that the completion of the finish in the lounge including spaces that will have to be deconstructed later on must be finished before we can take them down. Is that the current status there?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: So, as I was saying, that what is happening is we are finishing the lounge construction which is flooring, ceilings, redoing the kitchen, because they have a meal program there which many people appreciate and we want to make sure that they have a good quality kitchen to prepare those meals in. When that has been concluded, we will begin working on the office space and changing that.

Mr. Wishart: Well, just to be clear for the minister, they're putting cabinets on the wall she's got to take down. So that's why the question keeps coming back.

Are we finishing one set of construction and then we're going to deconstruct to do the follow-up project?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: We have made a strong commitment that we are going to go in and change that office space. And so, if that means that we have to take down cupboards, that we means we have to take down cupboards. What the purpose was, was to have more frontal windows for the tenants; that's the commitment we've made. We've also made a commitment that in that space, if that's what they'd like, we will make sure that we have some comfortable chairs for them to sit and watch the children go home from school.

Mr. Wishart: Well, Mr. Chairman, and thank the minister for that. And I'll move on from that, though, certainly be watching what the net result is on the Pioneer Manor in Ashern.

But moving on to Moosehorn lodge, I'm told that the waste-water treatment, which is a newly installed septic field at that site, has failed to function and that at least every other day a septic truck has to come to that location to deal with what has accumulated in the tank. The field doesn't seem to be functioning and, in fact, from what I was told, has never functioned, even after its installation.

Is there some problem there that the minister's aware of, or staff's aware of, and can it be dealt with?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: I'll take that under advisement and provide that information at a later date.

Just for the member, if he could pass on regarding the question—regard—Parkview Manor in Carman, the Carman tender will be issued on July 29th and we anticipate it will be awarded in early October.

Mr. Wishart: Mr. Chairman, and thank the minister for that, and I'll be sure to pass that information on the Parkview Manor on to my colleague.

I wanted to touch briefly on the—some of the units in the northeast region of Portage la Prairie where we have a number of evacuees—have had for a number of years—a number of evacuees from Waterhen that have moved into that area and there's been—there were promises made many years ago, none of us seem to be really sure what they were because few of them were, if any, were put in writing. And they, many, there are a number of residents living in Manitoba Housing units and it

hasn't been resolved for, I think it's about 12 years now that they've been there.

Just wondered if—and the minister and I have had discussion about this earlier, just wondered if the minister could provide an update as to what's going on in that situation?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Well, the member is right. I think my memory recalls that has been probably happening for 14 years, that these—this community has been living in Zelana—Zelana in Portage la Prairie.

If he has any—if he can provide us with any assistance with his federal cousins, getting them to the table and having this conversation, we would really appreciate that.

Right now, for us, as a corporation, there are many arrears that have happened in that building, as well as damages that need to be collected and we have not been successful.

So, right now, I think the best information I can give you is we're—right now this is being reviewed by the courts and we're hoping for a decision in the very near future. But this has been an extremely long process and I can commit to keeping you updated as we proceed.

Mr. Wishart: Well, Mr. Chairman, and thank the minister. I know that this has been a very difficult process. Are there still some discussions going on between your department and the federal government regarding this, or is it now fully in the legal process?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: I think approximately three years ago I had sent a letter to the federal government, asking for their involvement, and they made it very clear that they don't see that there's a role for them at this time and it was over to us.

And so we have had conversations with the tenants, we have put on the table offers for the tenants; they have not accepted any of these offers and have chosen to go through the process of RTB, RTC and now the courts.

Mr. Wishart: I thank the minister for the update on that. Progress from that seems to very slow, that's for sure.

Moving on from there, I would like to talk a little bit about co-operative housing and co-operative development. I noted that you had a slight reduction in support in that area this last year.

* (16:50)

Has the minister—do we feel we're making any progress in terms of getting more people interested in housing co-ops here in Manitoba? They've been so successful in some other provinces, and yet we've never had a great deal of success here. Could you give me an indication of what kind of uptake and if there's any new initiatives in this regard? I know it was specifically mentioned, actually, in the Throne Speech from nearly a year ago now.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Many jurisdictions look to Manitoba as a leader in co-op development and specifically around housing co-ops. We have some numbers, and I can provide them to the member in a few minutes, about how many housing co-ops we have presently that we work with.

We're always working hard to promote co-operative housing. We have many partners, Manitoba Cooperative Association. We have teaching modules. We have very dedicated staff in the branch who go out and work with our Housing delivery staff and promote housing co-ops.

I can say that yesterday—I'm sure you read the news release about the Westman seniors housing co-op, which proudly opened up, and that was yet another one of our successful housing co-ops. Last year, Brooklands housing co-op—seniors housing co-op—opened up as well.

We're in negotiations currently with existing co-operatives that would like to see expansion on their lands. And those are proceeding well. I think, you know, we have a lot more work to do, and there's an interest in co-op development and we really have an education to do, I find, in Manitoba. I know that for rural Manitobans, we're very familiar with co-ops, but sometimes they're not considering housing co-ops. So it's about sharing that information.

I know that we have been in negotiations, I think it's with Russell, Manitoba, have come in and met with me and have talked about their idea of a life lease. I've asked for them to consider the option of a co-op because they have more rights, I believe, as a co-op. And Virden also opened up a life lease. So, we have to do some education and we're prepared to do that.

And just for the record, that we have 31 housing co-ops that we work with directly in Manitoba across the province.

Mr. Wishart: I'd like to thank the minister for that answer. I know she had a visit from the Stewart

family, a couple in Portage la Prairie, and they have some mobility challenges and communication challenges, but they have quite—some quite creative ideas and certainly have done a great deal of research in the area of housing, particularly for their problem.

And I'd like to thank her, actually, for taking her time to meet with those people.

It would, I suspect, have been time well spent because they've certainly been very creative in their ideas. They're certainly excited about the possibilities of some co-op structures and the sort of common-area approach to co-operatives that provides when a certain level of care is required, that that would be perhaps a more economical and sustainable way to do that.

So I'm just wondering if the minister would care to share any thoughts in regards to that type of structure, and I don't think we actually have one like that anywhere in Manitoba that I've been able to determine. But has she seen or is aware of any of those types of co-operative structures?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Yes, we had a phenomenal meeting with the Stewart family, very progressive in their thinking and their commitment to providing a different style of housing for people in Portage la Prairie. They see it for their own purpose but also wanting to extend it to many other families and individuals.

I can't remember, can't recall right now at this moment—there was a model that Shelley referred to that was here in Winnipeg that she was most interested in. So what we've committed to do with Shelley is, she is working on gathering a collective of individuals together that are interested in housing co-op. And then Housing delivery staff will meet with them and look at what's the potential and what's the long-term plan.

I have to warn the member that a housing project like that will take co-operation from all levels of government, as well as the community, but I was most inspired by the meeting with the Stewart family and look forward as we go down this road. I was very frank with Shelley and said if we were able to have this a reality in five years, that would be a good goal. And that's kind of what we're working on right now, but there's been no commitment from any level of government, and this government included, around funding the project.

But we can go through the process with them side by side and look at what are the different

options that are out there and look at what would it cost and talk to the municipality of Portage la Prairie and—about land that may be available. So it's very exciting, and again, on that fact, I will certainly keep you in the loop about how we're proceeding.

Mr. Wishart: I thank the minister. I've certainly been in touch with Shelley a number of times, and she does inspire you to try and do your best because she's certainly accomplished a great deal in her life.

And we have had some discussions with some property that might be available in the city so that we can look at options, and I would certainly commit to working with the minister and her staff to see if we can't actually move forward on this, because I think it would be a new and unique model that would work perhaps very well for those faced with the challenges that she certainly exhibits. So I appreciate you spending time on that.

In the time I have left, I just wanted to touch on a couple of other things. Historically, there's been some security issues in Manitoba Housing. Just wanted an update on how many staff you have on security, providing security in Manitoba Housing, and how many contractors you might have that are also providing security?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Just to put on the record, I had talked about the core operating money for neighbourhood development corporations is \$1.9 million, and secondly, the comments about Moosehorn. We have gotten some information from our folks, and they are not aware of any issue, but I've asked for them to look at it immediately, and we'll get back to you on that.

Now, security: We have spent a lot of money and effort in building our regional security offices and making sure that we're able to provide support for our tenants and the community organizations in which they—in which they're housed.

What we have been doing is also training our staff on security, having security training for tenants, doing some crime prevention, really looking at—I don't remember the technical word for it, but crime prevention through environmental design and looking at lighting, also looking at swipe keys.

We have cameras in some of our suites where there is high incidence of crime. We have 35 employees now that are working as security guards within the province and providing those supports.

What I most like about what we've been able to accomplish is, yes, there's a level of enforcement that's happening, but also there's a level of social development. We're engaging community on Citizens on Patrol and working very closely together.

And I do know—oh, there's 38 staff, excuse me—and I do know that we also have some contracts that we have out, but I cannot at this time tell you how many that we have. I can get back to you on that. I'll take it under consideration.

Mr. Wishart: Thank the minister for that answer. I certainly encourage her to work with the community development corporations because I know a number of them are also doing this sort of thing out in the community in terms of environmental management to minimize the safety and security risk, with some level of success.

I did want to ask one more question, and it's more of an opinion than a question, I suspect, from the minister. We both watched with some interest some of the models that have been run with HOUSINGFirst. Here in Manitoba, of course, we have the Bell Hotel and the Red Road. I just wondered how the minister feels these projects have been working out, and is this a model that she intends to pursue in the future?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: I think HOUSINGFirst is a—has been proven across the country. Internationally, it's been proven. There's a good model in Portland. I am very pleased to see the success that we're having with the Bell Hotel. It's one example of HOUSINGFirst.

We know that by providing a roof over someone's head and some stability, that if they are dealing with issues of addictions or health issues or mental health issues, once we have that roof over their head and we're able to provide them with the necessary supports, that that's going to make a difference for their journey to recovery.

*(17:00)

So we are right now working on a comprehensive evaluation of the Bell Hotel. It's a really important part of that continuum of housing that we have where there are many success stories with the Bell Hotel. There has been a reduction of emergency uses as well as involvement of the Winnipeg police services. But stay tuned; I think it's a model that we need to embrace and we need to use across the province.

Mr. Wishart: Well, I certainly thank the minister for that answer and, just as a final question, I guess, you do intend to pursue it. Do you have actually any timeline or plan to pursue it?

Ms. Irvin-Ross: Right now what we need to do is we need to evaluate the re-evaluation of the Bell Hotel. As well, as we have At Home/Chez Soi, which was around \$25 million that the federal government invested here in the province to work with us and develop a model specifically for Aboriginal people. And it comes out loud and clear in that research that a HOUSINGFirst model is what we need, HOUSINGFirst with supports, and that's the key for it.

So, as far as a timeline, I can't provide the member with that. I can tell him that we are working on this continuum of housing all the way from housing with supports all the way to independent housing, and that's our goal.

Mr. Wishart: Mr. Chairman, and with that I think we're ready to go to the appropriation vote.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay. Seeing no further questions, call resolution 30.2.

Resolution 30.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$70,925,000 for Housing and Community Development, Housing, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 30.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$9,712,000 for Housing and Community Development, Community Development, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 30.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$147,000 for Housing and Community Development, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

The last item to be considered for the Estimates of the department is item 30.1.(a), the minister's salary, contained in resolution 30.1. At this point, we request that the minister's staff leave the table for the consideration of this item, and the floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Wishart: I move

THAT line item 30.1.(a) be reduced to \$1.08.

Mr. Chairperson: It has been moved by the honourable member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Wishart)

THAT line item 30.1.(a) be reduced to \$1.08.

The motion is in order.

Is there any debate on the motion?

Seeing none, shall the motion pass?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Voice Vote

Mr. Chairperson: All those in favour, say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Chairperson: All those opposed, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Chairperson: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

Recorded Vote

Mr. Wishart: Call for a recorded vote.

Mr. Chairperson: Recorded vote has been requested. Call in—oh, wait a second.

A formal vote has been requested. As per the agreement of the House yesterday, all requests for a formal vote are to be deferred until Monday. Accordingly, this motion shall be deferred until Monday, and because the motion is deferred, the final resolution for the department must also be deferred until the vote on the motion is completed.

Also, as per the agreement of the House, the committee can now set aside the Estimates for the Department of Housing and Community Development and proceed to the consideration of the next department, the Department of Innovation, Energy and Mines.

Shall we briefly recess to allow the minister and the critic the opportunity to prepare for the commencement of the next set of Estimates? Is that agreed?

An Honourable Member: We're ready to go.

Mr. Chairperson: Seems that won't be necessary.

INNOVATION, ENERGY AND MINES

Mr. Chairperson (Tom Nevakshonoff): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will now consider the Estimates of the Department of Innovation, Energy and Mines.

Does the honourable minister have an opening statement?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Innovation, Energy and Mines): No, Mr. Chairperson, I think—in the spirit of getting right down to business, I think we'll forgo the opening statement.

Mr. Chairperson: I thank the honourable minister.

Does the official opposition critic have any opening comments?

Mr. Ron Schuler (St. Paul): Fortunately or unfortunately—I'm not too sure which way the minister is going to find this—I believe that we've almost run out the 100 hours for Estimates for this particular session, and therefore what I would suggest is that we would go right into line by line.

And we would probably—as an opposition, certainly as a critic, would be looking at asking questions in concurrence. I know the minister knows his department well enough, he doesn't really need all his staff, so we will defer so that other departments will have an opportunity to ask questions.

So, if we could do a line-by-line, I will have one item that I will want to discuss, but we can go right into the line-by-line.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay, is it the will of the committee to recess or take a short break for a few moments until we get organized? Or shall we just proceed directly with line-by-line consideration? Line by line? *[Agreed]*

Okay, accordingly, we shall now defer consideration of line item 18.1.(a) contained in resolution 18.1, which is debate on the minister's salary.

Proceed with resolution 18.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,879,000 for Innovation, Energy and Mines, Energy Division, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

* (17:10)

Resolution 18.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not 'exceeding'—not exceeding \$23,217,000 for Innovation, Energy and Mines, Science, Innovation and Business Development, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 18.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$40,524,000 for Innovation, Energy and Mines, Business Transformation and Technology, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 18.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$9,435,000 for Innovation, Energy and Mines, Mineral Resources, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 18.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$9,316,000 for Innovation, Energy and Mines, Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 18.7: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$10,000,000 for Innovation, Energy and Mines, Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

The last item to be considered for the Estimates of the department is 18.1.(a) the minister's salary, contained in resolution 18.1. The floor is open for questions.

Mr. Schuler: I just want to be very clear on the record. One of the difficulties we would have had doing Estimates today is I have not received the Estimates books yet. They have not been tabled. I was wondering if we could—*[interjection]* Evidently, they were tabled and I did not know they were tabled, so I will endeavour to find them between the minister and I. The Clerk is saying they might even be in my desk. I will have a look. Obviously, there's a lot of paper in my desk.

And then also to line item 18.1.(a), I'd like to move that it be reduced to \$1.08. *[interjection]*

I move

THAT line item 18.1.(a) be reduced to \$1.08.

Mr. Chairperson: It has been moved by the honourable member for St. Paul (Mr. Schuler)

THAT line item 18.1.(a) be reduced to \$1.08.

The motion is in order. Is there any debate on the motion? Seeing none, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Chairperson: Shall the motion pass?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Voice Vote

Mr. Chairperson: All those in favour, say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Chairperson: All those opposed, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Chairperson: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

Recorded Vote

Mr. Schuler: I'd like to call for a recorded vote.

Mr. Chairperson: A formal vote has been requested. As per the agreement of the House yesterday, all formal—all requests for a formal vote are to be deferred until Monday. Accordingly, this motion shall be deferred until Monday, and because the motion is deferred, the final resolution for the department must also be deferred until the vote on the motion is completed.

Also, as per the agreement of the House, the committee can now set aside the Estimates for the department of housing and community—oh, sorry—the Department of Innovation, Energy and Mines, and proceed to the consideration of the next department, the department responsible for Sport.

Shall we briefly recess to allow the minister and the critic the opportunity to prepare for the commencement of the next set of Estimates. Is that agreeable? *[Agreed]*

We will recess briefly.

The committee recessed at 5:15 p.m.

The committee resumed at 5:20 p.m.

SPORT

Mr. Chairperson (Tom Nevakshonoff): Order. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will now consider the Estimates of the Department responsible for Sport.

Does the honourable minister have an opening statement?

Hon. Eric Robinson (Minister responsible for Sport): Mr. Chairman, it's my privilege indeed to introduce the 2013-2014 Estimates for Sport and the Sport Secretariat.

This past year has been an exciting year for Manitoba amateur sports and the community, our many talented athletes and the thousands of Manitobans who choose to make sport an important part of their daily lives.

We estimate that over 300,000 Manitobans are involved in some way with the amateur sports community and there are participants of all ages enjoying dozens of different sports; many as competitors, some as coaches, managers, administrators, parents, volunteers and local businesses. These are just a few of the sectors that touch on so many people throughout the entire province.

The department's agency, Sport Manitoba, continues to play a key role in promoting and developing and supporting Manitoba sports delivery system here in the province of Manitoba. And I know members will remember that there are many Sport Manitoba accomplishments to list and we have very limited time today. But there are some interesting new programs that highlight the impact that Sport Manitoba and its Sport for Life concepts are having to help promote a healthier population.

Through the ever-expanding outreach for the Sport for Life Centre and the Sport Medicine Centre on the second floor at 145 Pacific Avenue, this past winter Sport Manitoba launched a new partnership with the Salvation Army and its drug rehab program. And as part of the drug treatment program, the Salvation Army clients are now coming over to the Sport for Life Centre to participate on a regular basis for physical activity programs to experience the benefits of exercise and also to learn more about nutritional habits.

This year, as well, Sport Manitoba introduced the physical education program to the students of the Aboriginal Community Campus program.

And, in keeping with the Canada Games, this past year the department that I have responsibility for and Sport Manitoba were involved in the bidding process to help select a host city for the 2017 Canada Summer Games. As was announced on April 26th of this past spring, Winnipeg has been selected as the host city for the 2017 Summer Games.

And through the regular rotation that exists between all of the provinces and the territories, I thought that our province was extremely fortunate to be identified as the host province for 2017 because these games represent the unique hosting opportunity for our province. These games will mark the 50th anniversary of the Canada Games movement and 2017 will also be Canada's 150th anniversary since Confederation.

Over the past year the province, the department and Sport Manitoba played a role in the bid process, which had initially included a bid proposal from the City of Brandon. And despite the dedication of the good folks in Brandon and the enthusiastic support from the City of Brandon, Brandon's bid could not, unfortunately, meet the required hosting standards for the 2017 games. It was a disappointment and that was shared by all of us, indeed, but the province of Manitoba remained committed to bringing the 2017 games to Manitoba.

So in January of this year, a new group called the Winnipeg team committee which was co-chaired by Hubert Mesman and Mariette Mulaire stepped forward and began the work of assembling a new bid proposal to host the 2017 games in Winnipeg in a process that normally takes nine to 12 months. The Winnipeg bid committee assembled a winning bid in only three short months and the 2017 Summer Games represents a tremendous opportunity for the people of Manitoba.

So we anticipate that over 4,600 athletes, coaches and officials will assemble for two incredible weeks to compete in 20 different sports at that time. We also estimate that over 20,000 out-of-province visitors will come to Manitoba to take in the games in the event that'll generate in excess, according to the people that do this kind of work, \$130 million in economic activity.

So for these two weeks Manitoba and Winnipeg will be the centre of a national celebration of youth,

sport, culture and nationhood. So, indeed, we're very, very happy about that possibility.

As well, this past year Manitoba athletes once again competed on the world stage at the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Manitoba had seven athletes competing in the Olympic games and five athletes in the Paralympic Games.

There were some notable achievements such as Janine Hanson's Olympic silver medal in rowing and Desiree Scott's thrilling Olympic bronze medal with Canada's women's soccer team.

And our Paralympians also enjoyed tremendous success with a gold medal for Joey Johnson in wheelchair basketball and a silver medal for Jared Funk in wheelchair rugby. And I had the opportunity of meeting these athletes in the past year and, indeed, I'm grateful for their representation of our province in such a positive way at the Olympic and Paralympic Games that were held in England.

Manitoba also sent a number of coaches, officials and mission staff to the London Games. One of the most powerful highlights of the participation at the London Games was our witnessing of the final Olympic performance by one of Manitoba's most accomplished heroes and that, of course, is Clara Hughes. While Clara's last race did not add another Olympic medal to her impressive collection, her highly respectable fifth-place finish, indeed, was something that brought joy to, I think, all of us as Manitobans.

And, indeed, her induction into the Manitoba Sports Hall of Fame on the 3rd of November as the only athlete in Olympic history to have won multiple medals at both the winter and summer games is a fitting tribute for this wonderful athlete and great Manitoban. And I've been following Clara, and her and her husband are currently on a bike ride through the Rocky Mountains. I believe that they're in the—they were, at least, the other day—in when I was following them—in the Mount Robson area. So they're, at the current time, embarking upon a new challenge.

On November 5th, 2012, I had the good fortune of meeting many of the fine, young Manitobans at a luncheon that we had here at the Legislature to acknowledge and honour the Olympic and Paralympic participants.

And, also, Swan Valley hosted the 2012 Power Smart games, and while the weather didn't co-operate, prompting a state of emergency for Swan

River because of flooding, the organizers and volunteers did a great job, a tremendous job of overcoming these challenges in the hard work, dedication and hospitality of the people of the Swan Valley region shone through. And in the end, the athletes thoroughly enjoyed the competitors and the games experience.

On February of this year, I had the pleasure of being in Morden, along with the member for Morden-Winkler (Mr. Friesen), to announce the 2014 Power Smart Manitoba Winter Games that— which will be held there. And I was joined by the Member of Parliament for the region, Candace Bergen, and we were indeed happy to be in her company, as well, and, of course, as I said, the MLA for Morden-Winkler.

It was a great announcement, and the communities of Morden-Winkler should be proud of the work that they've put together in securing the bid to host the 2014 Power Smart Manitoba games.

So, in closing, I'm pleased that these Estimates provide for sustained funding levels to support Manitoba and its broad provincial mandate and our continued support towards Manitoba's amateur sports community.

Mr. Chairperson: I thank the minister for his remarks.

Does the official opposition critic have any opening remarks?

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): At this point in time, I—more than an opening statement, I just wanted to say that we're prepared to proceed to line by line in this portfolio. We know, in the Estimates process, we're getting near the end of the hundred hours, and I know that the minister and I will be able to, as well as my other colleagues, will have that opportunity in concurrence to be able to ask some questions there of the minister.

So, at this point in time, we're prepared to move to line by line.

* (17:30)

Mr. Chairperson: Okay, if there's any staff outside the Chamber, they're accordingly excused. We have just the one resolution here.

Resolution 28.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$11,770,000 for Sport, Sport, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2014.

Resolution agreed to.

Order, please. This completes the Estimates for Sport.

This also concludes our consideration of the Estimates in this section of the Committee of Supply. I would like to thank the ministers, critics and all honourable members for their hard work and dedication during this process.

Committee rise. [*interjection*] Correction. This committee does not rise. It recesses until 7 p.m. or earlier if everybody else also rises. We are in recess.

The committee recessed at 5:31 p.m.

The committee resumed at 6:19 p.m.

Mr. Chairperson: Order. What is the will of the committee?

Some Honourable Members: Rise.

Mr. Chairperson: The hour being 6:19, committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Tom Nevakshonoff): It's not quite 7 o'clock. Does anybody have any suggestions in that regard?

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): I move that the House now—the clock being seen as 7 o'clock.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it 7 o'clock? [*Agreed*]

The hour being 7 p.m. this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday. Have a good weekend, everybody.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, July 11, 2013

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