



Fourth Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**

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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS  
(HANSARD)**

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**VOL. XLII No. 33 - 1:30 p.m., WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24, 1993**

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Fifth Legislature**

**Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>CONSTITUENCY</b>	<b>PARTY</b>
ALCOCK, Reg	Osborne	Liberal
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	NDP
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	Liberal
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	NDP
CHEEMA, Guizar	The Maples	Liberal
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	NDP
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	PC
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
DUCHARME, Gerry, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	Liberal
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	NDP
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	PC
FRIESEN, Jean	Waseley	NDP
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Liberal
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	PC
GRAY, Avis	Crescentwood	Liberal
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	NDP
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Liberal
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	NDP
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	PC
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	NDP
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	PC
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	PC
NEUFELD, Harold	Rosmere	PC
ORCHARD, Donald, Hon.	Pembina	PC
PALLISTER, Brian	Portage la Prairie	PC
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	PC
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	NDP
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
REID, Daryl	Transcona	NDP
REIMER, Jack	Niakwa	PC
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	PC
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ROSE, Bob	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	NDP
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	NDP
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	PC
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	PC
WASYLYCIA-LEIS, Judy	St. Johns	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	NDP
<i>Vacant</i>	Rupertsland	

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, March 24, 1993

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

### PRAYERS

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

**Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Sheila Inman, Sharon Anderson, Gwen Duguid and others, requesting the Family Services minister (Mr. Gilleshammer) consider restoring funding for the friendship centres in Manitoba.

**Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Olga McIvor, Lawrence Campbell, Brian Beauchamp and others requesting the Family Services minister (Mr. Gilleshammer) consider restoring funding for the friendship centres in Manitoba.

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**Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of V. Gregg, L. Friesen, F. Kozak and others requesting the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) to consider holding public hearings on wide-open Sunday shopping throughout Manitoba before March 31, 1993, and requesting the Attorney General (Mr. McCrae) uphold the current law concerning Sunday shopping until public hearings are held and the Legislature approves changes to the law.

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**Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Frederick Harper, Cory Henderson, Elaine Marko and others requesting the Family Services minister (Mr. Gilleshammer) consider restoring funding for the friendship centres in Manitoba.

### READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

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

WHEREAS the United Nations has declared 1993 the International Year of the World's Indigenous People with the theme, "Indigenous People: a new partnership"; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has totally discontinued funding to all friendship centres; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has stated that these cuts mirror the federal cuts; and

WHEREAS the elimination of all funding to friendship centres will result in the loss of many jobs as well as the services and programs provided, such as: assistance to the elderly, the homeless, youth programming, the socially disadvantaged, families in crisis, education, recreation and cultural programming, housing relocation, fine options, counselling, court assistance, advocacy;

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Family Services minister to consider restoring funding for the friendship centres in Manitoba.

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

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

WHEREAS the United Nations has declared 1993 the International Year of the World's Indigenous People with the theme, "Indigenous People: a new partnership"; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has totally discontinued funding to all friendship centres; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has stated that these cuts mirror the federal cuts; and

WHEREAS the elimination of all funding to friendship centres will result in the loss of many jobs as well as the services and programs provided, such as: assistance to the elderly, the homeless, youth

programming, the socially disadvantaged, families in crisis, education, recreation and cultural programming, housing relocation, fine options, counselling, court assistance, advocacy;

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Family Services minister to consider restoring funding for the friendship centres in Manitoba.

### TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister responsible for The Civil Service Superannuation Act):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the 1992 Annual Report of the Manitoba Civil Service Superannuation Board.

### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery, where we have with us this afternoon from the Ralph Brown School, thirty Grade 5 students under the direction of Cora Duffy. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis).

Also this afternoon, we have, from the Inkster Seniors Luncheon Club, 50 seniors under the direction of Mary Deibert. This institution is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak).

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

\* (1335)

### ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

#### Manitoba Foster Family Association Government Relationship

**Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, we have been asking the First Minister for the last week and a half questions about the decisions that have been made by his government, dealing with volunteer groups and organizations and Manitobans dealing with some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

Mr. Speaker, today on the steps of the Legislature, the member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) made some very interesting points about the number of kids who used to be in institutional care. Over a thousand kids were in high-cost institutional care 10 years ago. Under changes that were made

to foster parents and the kind of supports put in for foster parents and children, that number has been reduced to under 200 in terms of acute institutional care, whereas the foster kids have increased by up to about 2,500. Those numbers are consistent with our material in the same area, that having a good foster parents system, with strong supports, is good in terms of the emotional care for those children and is very, very sound economically for the province, which is the ultimate guardian for those children.

Yesterday, the Premier stated that foster parents can be replaced, Mr. Speaker. Now this, we believe, is not the tone to arrive at an agreement with the very vital—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

### Point of Order

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** I know that the member opposite would not want to leave on the record something that is patently untrue. Mr. Speaker, he has stated something that has never been stated by me throughout any of my discussions with respect to the foster parent issue.

I ask him to read Hansard, in which I say: "... there are many, many Manitobans who love and care for children and who will continue to provide that service for the funding that is available."

At no time in my remarks did I say that they could be replaced, and I would ask him not to continue with that falsehood.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable First Minister does not have a point of order. It was a dispute over the facts.

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**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, I would refer the Premier to many, many media statements yesterday and today, and let me—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Doer:** I would ask the Premier why, in his comments about what he said in Hansard, he did not read out: "I regret the attitude that has been taken by the foster parents' association, but we will indeed find foster care . . . ."

He only read the rest of his sentence, Mr. Speaker. The bottom line—and I accept the Premier's words, but what he has said to the foster parents of Manitoba, he has set a tone of

confrontation, of no respect for the foster parents' association and no respect for foster parents.

I would ask the Premier to meet in partnership with the foster parents' association and get a long-term agreement with the foster parents' association rather than having this confrontation and rhetoric between the Premier and the foster parents of Manitoba.

**Mr. Filmon:** Mr. Speaker, one of the first issues that we as government were confronted with in 1988 was the woefully low and inadequate rates that were paid to foster parents in the province of Manitoba, rates that we inherited from the government opposite, the New Democratic government throughout the '80s, that had done absolutely nothing and in fact had foster parent rates at amongst the lowest in the country.

We, in consultation with them over the space of the last five years, have increased not only the rates to foster parents but indeed the special payments that allowed for children who had been previously institutionalized to be cared for because of substantial increase in the special needs rates that were built into those. Even the basic rates were increased so dramatically that today they are, even with the reduction that is being protested, third highest in the country, because we care about the work of foster parents. We care about the contribution they make, and we care about the needs that are there for the children.

I repeat, this is the province of Manitoba, where the cost of living is the eighth in the country, and they are being paid, even after these reductions, the third highest rates for foster care in the country, Mr. Speaker. We believe that given the financial circumstances that we are faced with, we are doing what we can do to ensure that the needs are being met and that the rates are reasonable.

### Foster Families Rate Negotiations

**Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, the Premier did not answer the question. I asked the Premier whether he would lower his rhetoric, lower his confrontation, lower his unilateral action and meet in partnership with the foster parents' association of Manitoba, and try to arrive at a long-term consensus to maintain the supports for foster children, and to maintain a foster parent program that is working to keep kids out of high-cost

institutions and keep kids, on the short run, out of hotels.

Will the Premier agree to meet and negotiate with the foster parents' association, negotiate with those people in a partnership way, Mr. Speaker, rather than the unilateral, confrontational approach that this government is taking with those very vital services for Manitobans?

\* (1340)

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, it is not I who is engaging in rhetoric or confrontation. It is not I who is threatening that foster parents will withdraw services. It is not I who is talking about hotels and other accommodation. It is the Leader of the Opposition who is fomenting that discontent and who is using that exaggerated rhetoric and indeed that confrontational approach. I have never had that approach.

It is I and my government who met before to settle the problems that were left for us by the New Democrats and who entered into an agreement to raise the rates to levels that are now more than comparable, in fact, well above those rates that are paid by most other provinces in Canada. It is under those circumstances that we believe that those rates are sufficient to meet the needs and to meet the need for continuing foster care in this province.

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is: Why will he not meet and have a partnership? Is "partnership" rhetoric? Partnership is vital for foster parents.

We are just asking the Premier to sit down with the foster parents' association and the foster parents of this province to try to have a partnership for our children, because it is absolutely essential that we not have confrontation between the Premier and the foster parents' association, as we see right now in this province. [interjection] Well, the government's own officials are now talking about the need for receiving homes, hotels and other short-term crisis measures rather than having the long-term emotional care which is much more cost-effective for all of us than what we have in place now.

So I would ask the Premier again: Yes or no, will he sit down with the foster parents' association of Manitoba, sit down directly with them? He says they solved the problems in partnership before. That is the best way to go, Mr. Speaker. Will he sit down in partnership with the foster parents'

association, or is he going to continue to ignore the association and have confrontation with the parents and children of this province?

**Mr. Filmon:** Mr. Speaker, I am not ignoring the association. We have a minister responsible for Family Services who is responsible for the liaison and the dialogue with this organization, as he is with any other organization that comes under the responsibility of his ministry. That is the term of minister responsible. He is responsible for those areas.

In addition to that, of course, I will say that if the purpose of the meeting is simply to increase rates at a time when we do not have the resources to do that, Mr. Speaker, that will not—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Filmon:** Mr. Speaker, as I have said before, we are paying rates that are the third highest in Canada. We are paying rates that exceed those of most other provinces. We have not only increased basic rates, but we have provided substantially increased resources for the special requirements of children with special needs. Under those circumstances, we believe that the government has not only been fair and reasonable, but has acted in a better fashion than most other governments in this country.

\* (1345)

### Department of Family Services Reduced Workweek

**Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows):** Mr. Speaker, we have the budget of the Department of Family Services. We see that there is an increase in salaries while at the same time there is a decrease in maintenance of children and external agencies of over \$3 million. I believe this budget is not well thought out. The staff are already overworked. They have very high caseloads, and studies show that they are 200 percent understaffed. Child and Family Services staff, because of a decision and a bill coming in by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), may be forced to take 10 days off like other civil servants.

I would like to ask the Minister of Family Services if he has thought through and if he has a rational plan for deciding how to deliver services to children and families with fewer staff working fewer hours with high caseloads that they are having difficulty

meeting now. What is your plan? How are you going to do it?

**Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services):** Mr. Speaker, last week I met with the board chairs and the executive directors of the Winnipeg Child and Family Services agencies, the central Manitoba agency and the Westman agency to discuss the budget initiatives that we have tabled in the House here and that we are anxious to get into Estimates for further discussion over. The executive directors and presidents have indicated that they will work with us to plan their work schedules, and even though we are all facing difficult times, the feeling was, it was a manageable issue.

### Budget Decisions

**Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows):** Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell the House how and where he plans to save \$3 million on the maintenance of children when there have been changes to child care fees, to nursery school fees, the elimination of funding to the foster parent association, the Indian and Metis friendship centres and MAPO, all of which are providing preventative services, resources in the community, all of which are provided more cheaply, all of which keep children out of care?

How does this minister plan to save money when the alternative is better than taking children into care?

**Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services):** Mr. Speaker, we have indicated, in comments following the announcement that the Finance minister made two weeks ago on some of the budget decisions, that we will work with the communities to maintain the vital services that these organizations perform—and that your Leader has indicated the difficult decisions and difficult choices that all governments have to make. We have made those choices where they will not impact directly on the services provided for children.

**Mr. Martindale:** Mr. Speaker, I am afraid that all of these decisions are going to negatively impact on the lives of children. How does this minister plan to meet the needs of children and cut the budget when the decisions of this government will increase the cost, as children will be staying in care longer because, for example, the courts may be closed on Friday, so children will be staying in care over the weekend? Fewer parents will be—

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

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** I am pleased that the member wants to get into the Budget Debate, and that is precisely why we presented that information here in the House last week. I indicated in my first answer that in meeting with the chairpeople of the Child and Family Services agencies and the executive directors, they felt that they could work with us to resolve some of the issues around salary for the staff who work there and some of our other budget decisions and continue to have a very good workable system here in Manitoba.

### Foster Families Rate Negotiations

**Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier.

I am going to quote from the Premier's own words of August 24, 1988: "We are providing an increase that will give foster parents of Manitoba the second-highest rates for the care of foster children in country. We are giving them the largest increase that has been given to them since the early Eighties. We are doing that because we believe it is important to establish a good relationship. We know that we cannot take care of neglect and the perhaps inadequate support that they got over the past six-and-a-half years, but we are doing our best. To show our good faith, we have indicated that we are prepared to continue to negotiate with them about greater increases for the next Budget year. But for this Budget year, to show our good faith and to show our support for them and our appreciation for what they do, we have put forth an increase of 12.5 percent, which brings them to a level of being the second highest in the country. We think that is a good step in the right direction."

My question to the Premier is: If he thought it was a good step in the right direction in 1988 because it was cost-effective as well as it was quality care, why has he changed his mind?

\* (1350)

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** I have not changed my mind. The fact is that we have raised the rates to the level now where they do meet those needs that were not met before under the New Democrats. Now, Mr. Speaker, we are in a situation where, for a province whose cost of living is eighth highest in

the country, we are providing support that has them at the third highest in the country. That is a reasonable balance; that is a reasonable approach.

In addition to all of the increases that have been made over the past five years, budget after budget, to foster care rates, we have also increased special needs rates as well, and that provides for the kind of support that we believe appropriate today and is a vastly different situation than that which I was speaking about in 1988 on August 24.

### Manitoba Foster Family Association Funding

**Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition):** He was taking pride in the fact that he thought his government was in the upper levels, in the second place he talked about. He is now quite deliberately making them third place, and he says that is good enough.

Interestingly enough, if you listen to the foster parents out there today, their major concern was not about per diems. Their major concern was about their association which provides them with support. Now if the Premier is in a tight financial squeeze, why has he chosen to take away from these foster families the only support they have, which is the Manitoba Foster Family Association?

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Now, Mr. Speaker, we have a different approach being taken by the Leader of the Liberal Party. She is now talking that the priority is not care of the children, it is care of the association.

### Point of Order

**Mrs. Carstairs:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the Premier knows full well that that was not the question I asked him. The question I asked him very clearly was why has he taken away the support of these parents.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Leader of the second opposition party does not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Filmon:** Mr. Speaker, we are and continue to be concerned to ensure that the rates that are paid are sufficient to meet the needs of caring for the children. That is our first priority. That is what I have been speaking about in my answers to previous questions.

I note that in today's Winnipeg Free Press, or perhaps it was yesterday's—no it was today's, Mr. Speaker—it lists the various functions of the foster parents' association. It lists five of them. The first one is advocacy for foster parents coping with false abuse. The second is advocacy for foster parents in conflict with child welfare. The third is lobby group to negotiate with province on reasonable rates. The fourth is lobby group that negotiated the first damage compensation, and fifth is training and education for foster parents.

It has already been said here in this House, by the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer), that the funding for training and education for foster parents—special funding has been earmarked for the Child and Family Services agencies, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that that function is taken care of.

We are not talking about the care and the nurturing of the children. We are talking about advocacy and lobby as a priority over care of the children, in the mind of the Leader of the Liberal Party.

**Mrs. Carstairs:** Mr. Speaker, Child and Family Services, according to the Detailed Estimates on Child and Family Support, has been reduced from \$96 million to \$92 million. That is \$4 million less, not more money, less money—more tasks, more functions, less money.

Mr. Speaker, it is very clear to the foster families that they need support. They need to have an organization to which they can turn to support their needs as foster families.

Why is this First Minister, along with his government, taking away that one support they have that provides them with counselling, training, accepts 700 to 1,000 calls per month from foster families seeking assurance and seeking support? Why is he taking that away from them?

**Mr. Fillmon:** Mr. Speaker, we have said before that those supports for counselling and training are going to be available through the Child and Family Services agencies in Manitoba.

\* (1355)

### **Manitoba Foster Family Association Funding**

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson):** Mr. Speaker, last week I did something the Premier has refused to do. I spoke to foster parents in northern Manitoba.

Today I went outside of this Legislature, as did many MLAs, and I talked to some of the foster parents, people, some of whom were foster kids themselves, who are extremely concerned about what this government is doing, former foster kids who are now foster parents. It is hard to express to the Premier the sense of betrayal, Mr. Speaker, the anger of people who found out from the media last week that not only were rates being cut to foster kids, but the association which they have worked so hard to support has had its funding eliminated.

I would like to just ask one question to the Premier, and that is: When will he end the emotional blackmail that is clearly the tactic of this government, Mr. Speaker, stop the cuts to the Manitoba Foster Family Association and sit down and work in partnership with foster families in Manitoba?

**Hon. Gary Fillmon (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, I know that it is all well and good from their position of irresponsibility for members of the New Democratic party who, when they were in government, starved foster families in this province and now, in their hypocritical fashion, try and take on the mantle of being the champion of the foster families.

Mr. Speaker, that kind of lack of credibility is why the opposition party is where it is, because they have no integrity, they have no accountability and they have no credibility to be able to make that kind of statement.

It is this government that increased the rates of foster parents to the point that they are now third highest in the country. It is this government that remains committed to paying rates that are fair and reasonable to the foster families of this province.

**Mr. Ashton:** This talk about integrity, Mr. Speaker, from a government that silences groups that have the nerve to lobby and advocate and express the views of the people they represent, he has no business lecturing us on integrity.

### **Foster Families Rate Reduction**

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson):** I want to ask a very specific question on rates. I want to ask the Premier. He is asking foster parents to take two bucks per diem away from children. I have a list here of the specific breakdown of where the funding goes. It does not go to foster parents; it goes to foster kids.



I would like to ask where the Premier is saying that \$2 should be taken from. Should it be from food, should it be from health and personal care, should it be replacement clothing? Where do the foster parents take that \$2 a day away from the foster kids, that this government is dictating they do?

**Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services):** Mr. Speaker, the funding that is provided in other provinces is far less than is provided for foster parents in Manitoba. I would submit to the honourable member that this money does flow to the foster parent for the use in raising that child and working with that child. We feel that the sum of money that is flowed tax free to the foster parent is sufficient. It is still \$3 a day more than in the province of Saskatchewan, and we feel there are sufficient funds there to look after those children. Of course, where there are special rate funds for handicapped children or children with special problems, that fee has not been touched with this budget announcement.

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Speaker, the minister does not understand. He talks about this being tax free. It is not an income to foster parents.

I ask the same question again, because the foster parents want an answer. Where do they take the \$2-a-day cut from? What do they cut out that they are currently providing to the foster kids. What do they cut? Food, health care, what do they cut?

**Mr. Gillehammer:** Mr. Speaker, those funds flow as a lump sum to the foster parent, and the foster parent will have the discretion to make whatever adjustments are required to provide for that child within that global funding that is provided.

\* (1400)

### Child Care Services Funding

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns):** You will be interested to know, Mr. Speaker, that the Canadian Council on Social Development noted in a recent report that perhaps the greatest impediment to employment outside the home is the lack of affordable, accessible and flexible child care options for low income and moderate income individuals, and that the lack of child care is the No. 1 barrier to self-reliance for sole-support parents receiving social assistance.

So what does this government do, Mr. Speaker? It brings in cutbacks to child care that in fact act as

barriers to obtaining and maintaining employment and barriers to being self-reliant as opposed to being on social assistance.

I want to ask this government: Why would it introduce child care cutbacks and a policy that will actually result in increased unemployment, increased numbers on social assistance and increased poverty?

**Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services):** Mr. Speaker, last fall I had the privilege and pleasure of being at a national daycare conference in Brandon, where a report was presented by the Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association on statistics that they had gathered from all jurisdictions in this country. I think we can be proud in Manitoba of having the second highest hourly wages for people who work in daycares.

We have the lowest turnover rate, and the convention recognizes that Manitoba has legislation and in place daycare homes and institutions within the province that provide the highest quality care in all of the country.

**Ms. Wasylycia-Lels:** We do not expect the government to understand the human impact of its cutbacks, but we would hope it would have some economic rationale for its decisions.

I want to ask the minister then, because we would assume that there was some kind of study done before embarking upon these kind of cutbacks: Will the minister table for the benefit of this House and all Manitobans the impact study done of its cutbacks to daycare showing how many centres might be forced to close, how many students would have to give up education and training programs, how many low income earners would be added to welfare rolls and how many more children will be forced into poverty?

**Mr. Gillehammer:** Mr. Speaker, the impact is that the funding that is reduced in the grant level is replaced in the increased subsidies, and we have asked parents who have subsidized children in care to pay \$1.40 a day for that care. Government provides, in some cases, \$7,000 or \$8,000 for an individual child. Sometimes it is \$12,000 to \$15,000 per family to look after those children who are in care.

We have 10,000 subsidized spaces where the government pays substantial amounts. In this province alone, the amount dedicated to daycare has gone from around \$26 million in 1988 to over

\$50 million this current budget year. Our commitment has been substantial. We have put millions and millions of dollars into daycare, and we still maintain the highest standards of any daycare operation in this country.

**Ms. Wasylcia-Lels:** I am wondering if the minister is aware that the percentage of families in Manitoba who would be poor without the earnings of both earners in the family is 22.6 per cent.

I want to ask him: Is this government intent on cutting daycare to the point where one spouse of every two-earner low income family may be forced out of the paid labour force, which would result in doubling the poverty rate and the number of poor families in Manitoba?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Mr. Speaker, that 100 percent increase in funding that daycare has seen over the last five years has created additional spaces in daycare homes and in daycare centres. It has allowed more and more people to access subsidies in this province. We have over 10,000 children now who are in subsidized spaces in daycare.

I would point out to you that our \$50 million is a tremendous commitment on the part of this government towards daycare, three times what the Province of Saskatchewan spends on daycare.

### **Manitoba Foster Family Association Parental Support**

**Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne):** When you voluntarily take into your home—Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Premier to listen to this—an abused child, you place yourself and your entire family at risk.

The number of people willing to foster has nearly doubled since the Manitoba Foster Family Association came into existence. Part of the problem is, and this is what I think the government is missing, when they talk about advocacy, they are talking about helping parents when their children are accused of sexually abusing the foster child, which does occur from these very vulnerable kids. The agency cannot protect them because the agency is in as the investigator, as the prosecutor of the abuser. So who protects the family, and who protects the parents' kids? That is the question here. You have taken away that protection.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Premier that question: Who protects the parents?

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

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** As someone who has been a foster parent himself, I can tell the member for Osborne, I do not need to be lectured to about what foster parents do for children. In his very political and sanctimonious way, Mr. Speaker, I think he is denigrating the debate on this issue. There continue to be avenues for—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Filmon:** Mr. Speaker, I will let the member ask his next question.

**Mr. Alcock:** Mr. Speaker, the Premier is not the only person who has fostered in this province. The people who do foster in this province are saying: It is not about rates; you can negotiate with us. It is about support; it is about protection; it is about training. We are prepared to put ourselves at risk, but we need support.

I ask the Premier: Who provides that support now that he has cut the association?

**Mr. Filmon:** As I have indicated before, funds have been specifically earmarked with Child and Family Services agencies to be able to provide— [interjection] Mr. Speaker, if the member wants me to answer the question, let him listen instead of interrupting like a bully. [interjection] He finds it funny. Maybe because he is now the big federal candidate for the Liberal Party, he thinks he can get away with anything. The fact of the matter is—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

### **Point of Order**

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I do not think it is particularly relevant to refer to any member in terms of any other aspirations they may have, but it is particularly not appropriate for the Premier to talk about a member being a bully. Let us deal with straightforward questions and answers in Question Period and cut that kind of—

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

\* \* \*

**Mr. Filmon:** Mr. Speaker, as I have said before, there is money provided and specifically earmarked to Child and Family Services agencies for the training functions and the counselling functions with respect to questions. There will continue to be funding provided for liability insurance, for Legal Aid

assistance programs, for damage compensation plans. There will continue to be support provided for the various functions to foster families, and there is in fact a Child Advocate within the Province of Manitoba for issues that have been raised by the member in his question.

**Mr. Alcock:** Mr. Speaker, the Premier missed the point in '88, and he missed it again now. The list he read off, the thing he took exception to in his first question was advocacy. Advocacy, in this instance, means protection. It is not training support.

Who provides that when the agencies are in conflict with the interests of the foster parents?

\* (1410)

**Mr. Fillmon:** I gave him the answer to that question in the last one. [interjection] Yes, I did.

### Flin Flon/Creighton Crisis Centre Meeting Request

**Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon):** Mr. Speaker, it is not only foster parents or friendship centres or daycares that are under attack. The Minister of Family Services announced some two weeks ago now that the crisis centre, the only crisis centre in the province that has had its funding completely withdrawn, will be closing.

My question is to the Minister of Family Services. Will the minister attend with me a public meeting dealing with the crisis that the community of Flin Flon, the women of Flin Flon, abused and potentially abused families in Flin Flon are going to have when this crisis centre closes at the end of this month?

**Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services):** Mr. Speaker, I indicated in questions on this topic last week that we are looking at a delivery system on a regional basis for Family Dispute Services. We have been in touch with, not only staff from within our department of Family Dispute, but also the shelter directors association. We feel that while there will be reduced access in the immediate Flin Flon area—and we have also alerted the Province of Saskatchewan, who were the primary users of that shelter—there are services available. I also indicated to the member that the RCMP have enhanced services there to make the connection with the shelter at The Pas for anyone in need of those services.

**Mr. Storie:** Mr. Speaker, the minister has been told in no uncertain terms that that is nonsense.

**Mr. Speaker,** my question: Will the minister now come and explain to the families who may be in crisis, to the women whose lives may be in jeopardy the rationale for the closing of the Flin Flon/Creighton Crisis Centre? Will he explain to the women in that community how they are going to access services some two hours away?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Mr. Speaker, one of the member's colleagues invited me to go to The Pas today on another issue, and because of cabinet and because of meetings here with the Foster Family Association at noon, I was not able to do that. If I am not able to go, we will have staff attend that.

### Flin Flon/Creighton Crisis Centre Meeting Request

**Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon):** Mr. Speaker, my final question is to the Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

This government has announced a zero tolerance policy when it comes to abuse. This government talks a great deal about the need for protecting families who are victims of violence.

Will the Minister responsible for the Status of Women attend the meeting in Flin Flon to explain to the families and the women who may fear for their lives and the safety of their children how this closure is going to protect women in that community?

**Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister responsible for the Status of Women):** Mr. Speaker, this government has great concern about the safety of women and indeed children throughout the province of Manitoba.

As the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) has indicated, we have had to make some very difficult decisions. The shelter in Flin Flon/Creighton, in fact, that served the majority of women from the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, will be serviced by enhanced services in The Pas, enhanced services by the RCMP.

We have every confidence that we will attempt in every way to ensure that the women in the Flin Flon and immediate area are served through a regional process that has been put in place by the Department of Family Services and the minister.

### Point of Order

**Mr. Storie:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, does the minister know where Flin Flon is? Can the minister explain—

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

\* \* \*

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Mr. Speaker, I believe I probably visited Flin Flon more recently than the member who represents the area.

### **Street Kids and Youth Program Alternative Programs**

**Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson):** Mr. Speaker, this government does not seem to understand that the less support you have for foster families the more at-risk youth you are going to have, the more at-risk youth on the streets. I have been asking questions of this government related to the serious costs and problems of young people who are out of work, out of school and living off the streets.

Today, I have the annual report from the YMCA, which sponsors the Street Kids and Youth project, Mr. Speaker, which shows that in 1991 there were 1,120 young people and in 1992 there were 6,600 young people who used the service of this agency, which this government is going to allow to close.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is: How is this government going to meet the needs of the ever-increasing demand of the ever-increasing number of young people on the streets in Winnipeg?

**Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services):** Mr. Speaker, by continuing to fund the many, many organizations which provide services to street children, whether it is the Family Services agencies, whether it is places like the Children's Home of Winnipeg, Rossbrook House and others.

We are not in a position to take on additional responsibilities that other funders have started and now see fit to reduce that funding. We will continue to fund many of the organizations that we have funded in the past to provide those services.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Mr. Speaker, this government has the legal responsibility—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable member for Radisson has time for one very short question.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Is this government telling the House that its bottom-line budgeting process is more important than its legal responsibility to provide food, shelter and clothing for minors in the province of Manitoba? That is what it is telling us.

**Mr. Speaker:** Time for Oral Questions has expired.

### **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, would you call the motion going into Supply as part of the Interim Supply process.

### **DEBATE ON PROPOSED MOTIONS**

**Mr. Speaker:** On the motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), that this House, at this sitting, will resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty, standing in the name of the honourable Leader of the second opposition party.

**Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak yet once again on the Supply motion, to indicate that our concerns remain exactly the same as they were yesterday and the day before and the day before that and the day before that and the day before that and the day before that, when I have also been on my feet discussing this particular Supply motion.

Our concern is very clear. I found it quite interesting in Question Period where there was some heehawing coming from the opposite side when I asked my questions, and a question in which I took some information from the Detailed Estimates book of the Department of Family Services.

Mr. Speaker, I have made it perfectly clear on a number of occasions that we have had Estimates from three departments and it was one of those departments—[interjection]

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Carstairs:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have made it perfectly clear that it is not because we do not have Estimates of three departments, it is because we do not have the Estimates of the remaining departments. We are not, as a political party, prepared to break with, I would suggest to you, 300 years of tradition and to make decisions based on 18 percent of the information which the government is supposed to provide to us.

We do not have Estimates at this point in time from over 70 percent of the Estimates that we are entitled to—to be absolutely exact, 82 percent. We are being asked to examine the cuts to Family Services, and indeed they are cuts, because while the overall budgetary line of Family Services undergoes a 4.5 percent increase, it is important to

see that there is a decrease in funding to Child and Family Services; there is a decrease in funding to Rehabilitation, Community Living and Day Care. There is a decrease in funding to Registration and Licensing Services.

The only increase to be found in the Family Services budget is in the line which is for social security, for social assistance, for people having to live on welfare because of the depressed economy that we have in the province of Manitoba. That depressed economy has led more and more people to turn to social welfare assistance for their food and their shelter and their clothing, the basic necessities of life.

\* (1420)

But there has to be fairness. We have been told by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) that the budget he presents on the 6th of April will be fair. That is what we want to see. We want to see the statistical information which is going to come down with that presentation of the budget or with the presentation of the Main Estimates. He can do either one. In that presentation of that Main Estimates book we will know, indeed, if there has been fairness, if the 45 members of the Premier's staff—11 of which get over \$50,000 a year—if they have seen cuts, if he has laid off one of them? If he laid off one of them, he could find the funding for the Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization.

(Mrs. Louise Dacquay, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair)

If he laid off a few more of them, he could find the funding for the Manitoba Foster Family Association. That is the kind of fairness that we want to make our decisions based upon. We want to examine clearly whether or not there has been an acceptable level of fairness across the Main Estimates of this government.

Even within the three departments that we have, we see tremendous differences in the reduction of the administration and finance lines. We know that in the Department of Agriculture for example, they were able to cut out 10 percent in administration and finance. In Highways, they were able to cut out 6 percent, but in Family Services they were able to cut out less than 5 percent. At the same time, as they could only find 5 percent in administration, they could find 5 percent to cut out of Child and Family Services budgets.

Those are exactly the same budgetary lines that were being addressed by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) today where he says they are going to find all the additional sums of money, presumably, to support the foster families who will no longer have that support from the Manitoba Foster Family Association. Madam Deputy Speaker, it does not make any sense. If, in fact, the Child and Family Services agencies are going to have to pick up all of these new programs, then presumably they are going to need an increase in their budgetary line, but there is not any—

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I wonder if the members who are having conversations at the back of the Chamber would either move to the loge or outside the Chamber. I am experiencing great difficulty in listening to the honourable member of the second opposition party. Thank you.

**Mrs. Carstairs:** Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

So we have an inability as opposition members to make rational and logical decisions as to whether this government, indeed, has been fair or not. The tradition of this House is one which is of long standing.

When I was tracing for the government members over the last few days, as well as the opposition members, the historical significance of Supply, I indicated that the first budget in real terms became a part of the British Constitution in 1689 with the Bill of Rights. At that particular point in time, it was declared very simply that an appropriation line, in this case for the military operations of the Crown, had to be granted for one year and one year only and that granting of that budgetary year for one year only or that budgetary line for one year only, became the basis of the process that is before us now, that once a year the government of the day presents to us two documentations. One is called the budget which shows where they are going to get their revenue from and where they are going to make their expenditures. The second document is the Main Estimates which detail department by department how each government is going to spend that money that has been granted through the budgetary process.

We indicated that we recognize that in past traditions in this House there has been a process whereby the Main Estimates were tabled in the

House at a time different than the budget, but that was only done up until 1983. After 1983, it was very clear that the budget and the Main Estimates would be presented at the same time. But that is only a 10-year tradition, and we were prepared—

[interjection] Madam Deputy Speaker, it appears that the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh) has something she would like to say. Perhaps, she would like to say it on the record.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, on a point of order?

**Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Madam Deputy Speaker, I am just responding to the member's invitation. I am assuming she meant it.

**Mrs. Carstairs:** No, no. The invitation was to say what you are mumbling at your place loud enough so it could go on the record.

**Mrs. McIntosh:** Well, that is what I am saying. I am not rising on a point of order. I am responding to the member's invitation to be given the floor. She is offering to give me the floor—

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. Regrettably, the honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs may rise, or any member may rise, during debate only on a point of order.

### Point of Order

**Mrs. McIntosh:** On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker, the member has put on the record that she is willing to let me have the floor. I am wondering if you could rule whether that is a legitimate offer that is meaning she is willing to give up her time to speak and let the floor come back over here.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

\* \* \*

**Mrs. Carstairs:** Madam Deputy Speaker, we have a process that has been violated, a process which has, to this year in time, been followed and a process which is significant for all of us in terms of our parliamentary and legislative responsibilities.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we have a situation in this province where the government of the day is facing financial problems, financial problems, to

some degree, of their own making, in that they have come in year after year after year with very large deficits, but a circumstance which, to some degree, is not of their making.

No one in my party at least, and I do not believe in the New Democratic Party, has ever blamed the government for the recession which not only impacts on Manitoba but impacts on all Canadians and, to some degree, all of us in the western world. That recession is very real.

There is an unemployment rate which is extraordinarily high in Canada, 11 percent—9 percent in this province, which means that many, many Manitobans are unable to find employment. They have, as a result, lost their ability to pay taxes. They have lost, in some cases, their ability to provide for their families. That has meant two things.

We have seen an escalating rate of the numbers of people who have turned to social assistance. That has caused the government to, this year, have to increase its Income Security and Regional Operations line from some \$379 million to some \$414 million. We have over 50,000 people in the province of Manitoba on social assistance because of the economic climate in this province.

\* (1430)

At the same time, those who are still able to hang on are either collecting unemployment insurance or are living on their own revenues. Those individuals have lost their ability to pay income taxes. They have also lost their ability to purchase goods. So we have seen declines in real terms or at least declines in growth in some cases in lines of the budget like corporate taxes, individual income taxes, sales taxes, because if you do not have any disposable income you cannot pay sales taxes because you cannot afford to purchase goods. If you do not have any earned income you do not pay any income taxes.

The result of that has been to move the burden of those people in such a way that they cannot provide the revenues for this government to spend. So we recognize that the government is in a crunch. The government has to make tough decisions. We find it very difficult that some of the decisions that they are making do not impact on their budget lines whatsoever. The decisions they have made to threaten the autonomy of school divisions do not

impact on the provincial budget. It produces zero dollars for the provincial budget.

It is a decision that in other provinces has been left up to the individual universities. One would think that if one truly believed in autonomy, one would leave that decision up to the universities. The universities of this province have chosen to move along in that particular endeavour.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I have been informed that there is a will on the part of the government to call Interim Supply and to continue to call Interim Supply until such time as it is passed, at which point there will be a further motion to go into Estimates. When that further motion is introduced, let me assure the House that I will again participate in this debate, and I will participate in this debate until the Main Estimates have been passed.

However, Madam Deputy Speaker, in that we can now proceed with Interim Supply and call Interim Supply, I am prepared to step down on this particular motion and allow the Interim Supply motion to be introduced.

**Hon. Jim Ernst (Acting Government House Leader):** I believe the question before the House is a motion to resolve itself into a committee to consider the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

**Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader):** Madam Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme), that Madam Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Finance, seconded by the honourable Minister of Government Services, that Madam Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty. Agreed?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** Agreed and so ordered.

I beg the indulgence of the members of the House that the question before the House—due to the fact that the honourable member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs) has indicated she has finished her debate and the question has not been called, so for the record I need to revert back and call that question now: that the House at this sitting will resolve itself

into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty. Agreed? [agreed]

Now we read the motion by the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), seconded by the honourable Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme), that Madam Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

**Motion agreed to,** and the House resolved itself into a Committee of Supply to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty with the honourable member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) in the Chair.

### SUPPLY—INTERIM SUPPLY COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

**Madam Chairperson (Louise Dacquay):** Order, please. The Committee of Supply will please come to order. We have before us for our consideration a resolution respecting the Interim Supply bill. The resolution reads as follows:

RESOLVED that a sum not exceeding \$1,770,437,375 being 35 percent of the total amount as set out in The Appropriation Act, 1992; Loi de 1992 portant affectation de crédits, be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1994.

**Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows):** I am pleased to finally be able to ask some questions which normally, I suppose, we would have been asking in Estimates, but we have a chance before Estimates. We appreciate this opportunity. I am pleased to see that the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) is here.

### Point of Order

**Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader):** On a point of order, we are in Committee of Supply debating a resolution. We are still in debate.

If the member wants to pose questions to our ministers we will have to move down a few steps to where we are in Committee of the Whole, at which time certainly the member will have full opportunity to present the questions that he wishes.

Madam Chairperson, the way I understand it right now, we are considering a resolution and we are involved in debate.

\* (1440)

**Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne):** Madam Chairperson, just on a point of clarification, the minister is correct in pointing out that we are not debating Estimates or expenditure, but we are debating. At this point, we are in committee to discuss the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty. I think it is reasonable to ask questions of the minister on why he wishes the amount he wishes.

Are you ruling that we cannot ask questions at this time?

**An Honourable Member:** No, we have to get it one step further.

**Mr. Alcock:** No, we are in the committee now, Harry.

**Madam Chairperson:** We are in Committee of Supply to consider the resolution respecting the Interim Supply bill which indeed is debatable.

Is it the will of the committee to adopt the resolution? [agreed]

The resolution is accordingly passed. Committee rise, call in the Speaker.

## IN SESSION

### Committee Report

**Mr. Ben Sveinson (Acting Chairperson of Committees):** Madam Deputy Speaker, I beg to report to the House from Committee of Supply. It has adopted a certain resolution, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that the report of the committee be received.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader):** Madam Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst), that Madam Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a committee to consider of Ways and Means for raising of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

**Motion agreed to,** and the House resolved itself into a committee to consider of the Ways and Means for raising of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty, with the honourable member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) in the Chair.

## SUPPLY—INTERIM SUPPLY

### COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS

**Madam Chairperson (Louise Dacquay):** Will the Committee of Ways and Means please come to order. We have before us for our consideration a resolution respecting the Interim Supply bill.

The resolution reads as follows:

RESOLVED that towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain expenditures for the public service for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1994, the sum of \$1,770,437,375, being 35 percent of the total amount voted as set out in The Appropriation Act, 1992; Loi de 1992 portant affectation de crédits, be granted out of the Consolidated Fund.

Does the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) have any opening comments?

**Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance):** No, I do not.

**Madam Chairperson:** Shall the resolution be passed?

**Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows):** Madam Chairperson, I should start by asking for a clarification, if I could ask questions of the minister at this stage?

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader):** Madam Chairperson, I would suggest perhaps—and we are open in terms of where it would be more appropriate and in terms of more convenient also for ministers, that No. 17, Committee of the Whole stage could be considered. Is that the minister's preference for questions? We are open in terms of which—

### Point of Order

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader):** On a point of order, Madam Chairperson, I understand that we can ask questions on this, can we not? So we are quite prepared to ask questions at this particular line.

I know the member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) was wanting to go ahead with the Department of Family Services because the minister is there, so if this is the line, he is quite—

**An Honourable Member:** He does not seem to want to do it.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** We will ask the questions. [interjection] Yes, this is the time to do it, to the member for Agriculture.



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**Mr. Martindale:** Madam Chairperson, since we have had a clarification, and we have been told we can ask questions at this stage, I will avail myself of that opportunity.

As you know, Madam Chairperson, from Question Period, we have many serious concerns about the budget allocation for the Department of Family Services. To begin with, I would like to follow up on some of my concerns from Question Period today.

It is my belief that if this government is providing less money to Child and Family Services and less money to external agencies, as seems to be the case from page 78 from the Estimates of the Department of Family Services—then I would like to have some specific answers to the questions. I know that this minister has been anxious to engage in this process for some time.

So I would like to know how this minister plans to provide services to families and children when there is approximately \$3.5 million less money for the maintenance of children and external agencies. Does this minister not realize that if, for example, the courts are not sitting on Friday, children who are apprehended on Thursday night may not be into court until Monday, and there is an increased cost in keeping them in care over the weekend? That is just one example, I believe, of how the costs are going to be increased when the amount of money allocated is decreased, the amount of money is less.

So that is my first question. If the minister would first of all confirm that I am right, that there is less money being allocated, and if he does not agree with me, that because the courts are closed on Fridays, that this will not increase the cost because children will be taken into care.

I have many more subsequent questions.

**Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services):** Madam Chairperson, the member, of course, raises a whole host of questions within that question on our budget.

Over the last number of years, as he is well aware, the Department of Family Services has seen tremendous increases in all of its budget lines. If you want to talk about the services to vulnerable Manitobans, that in fact takes in our entire Department of Family Services. I sense the member wants to talk mostly about Child and Family Services issues—okay.

The member is correct. There is a reduction in that budget line. However, it seems to me that his question is sprinkled with speculation about what is closed and what is not closed on certain days of the year.

\* (1450)

The decrease in the funding in the child welfare line is largely funds that will not be flowing to foster parents because of the \$2 reduction a day. If he looks at the detail of that in the Estimates, he will see that covers over \$2 million of the difference that he sees within that budget line.

Another factor there—and I do not have my budget books in front of me. We can get into more detail when we get into the Estimates, and of course, we regret that we have not had the opportunity to do that over the last couple of weeks. I recognize that my honourable friend from Burrows was anxious to start Estimates and ready to start Estimates. This is why we presented the spending Estimates of the department, because we did make our announcements some time ago and wanted to have the opportunity to discuss them.

The \$3-million-plus reduction in that budget line is made up, to a great degree, of the \$2 reduction to foster parents, also some of the funding that will not be flowing to that organization which we have already talked about. As well, there were some reductions to other agencies and organizations that fall under this particular budget line. So we can get into more detail on that.

I did mention earlier in my answer that I have met with the CEOs and the chair people of the three main agencies who look after child welfare in this province to talk about the workforce adjustments that we have to make. One of the things they asked is that they be allowed to have the flexibility to manage that workforce issue by themselves and that government does not mandate, to any great degree, how they will accomplish that.

I am inclined to say to them that we would offer them some flexibility so that they can truly manage their agencies and manage their resources. So those issues that we have talked to them about, about a 4 percent reduction on their Salary line, is something that they feel they can manage within their organizations.

**Mr. Martindale:** Madam Chairperson, the Foster Family Association has said that they would have preferred to negotiate and, in fact, they did have an

agreement that they were waiting for the government to sign and then all of a sudden the rug was pulled out from under them. The emphasis on the rally today was not on the 10 percent cut in the per diem, although that is certainly a very serious concern, and they are saying to us and, I presume, to the government, where should they take the money from? Should they take it from food? Should they take it from clothing? Where should they take it from? So I would like to put that question to the minister.

Secondly, I have had people phone me with concerns very similar to what the member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) raised about the important role that the Foster Family Association plays in being a support to families. For example, a parent said to me that they were accused of abuse and, in talking to the staff at the association, they said that last year there were 65 families or incidents where abuse was alleged. This parent said to me that if it was not for the association, they do not know how they would have survived this ordeal.

I think that is a very important function of the organization and a very legitimate concern because, if the only relationship that people have is with government, then it is one branch of the government investigating and the parents are being paid from possibly another branch of the government, maybe even the same branch of the government, whereas the association is a nongovernment organization at arm's length. It seems to me that it is more appropriate for a nongovernmental organization or an organization at arm's length from government to provide support to families who are accused of abuse. We are very disappointed that they are going to lose that function.

I would like to ask the minister if he really feels that the Child Advocate and his office can really carry out that function or whether that support is really going to be replaced by Child and Family Services agencies and if the minister thinks that is a suitable alternative and a better alternative than what is in place now.

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Madam Chairperson, the member raises the question of the function of the Manitoba Foster Family Association, and I do recognize that there are many functions that the association carried out. We have indicated publicly that there are a number of those functions which we have dedicated money to for legal services, for

insurance and for training, but the member is raising the question of the advocacy work and the personal services that the association provided to its members.

I am sure that the honourable member for Burrows is aware that many organizations become self-sustaining because of the important work they do. In talking to the president of the association earlier today and talking to the executive director, and I have talked to them on many occasions, I am aware that there is a strong bond between some of the foster parents and the association, and I was told that the association will become stronger. I think it will also become more independent of government and can be sustained by the thousands of foster parents who look after children across the province.

I believe that the executive director said publicly on Friday that the association will become stronger and, I think, stronger and more independent of government as they get the support of their membership to carry on that advocacy function.

The member asks, what will we do to provide service to children and families, and in part answered part of the question. Yes, we do believe that the Child Advocate, who will have his office operational in the coming weeks, can provide part of that answer.

There are other avenues as well. The directorate of Child and Family Services also becomes involved, if necessary, in specific cases. I think the agencies will respond in a professional way to provide not only the training and the recruitment of foster families, but the agencies will be there on an ongoing basis.

The member raises the question of conflict. All of the southern agencies have someone who is responsible for the child and is there to represent the child in terms of that placement, but also has somebody who works with foster parents. You can make the argument that they both are employed by the same agency, but there are other avenues as well.

I would say that the office of the Ombudsman is another place where foster parents may go if there is a dispute and need a dispute settlement mechanism.

There are other avenues. I do believe what the president of the association has said and what the executive director has said, that the association will continue with the support of its membership. In

many ways, that is how associations, whether it is the Manitoba Teachers' Society or other organizations, the MCCA—how they work is through the support of their members, and I do believe that that will take place. [interjection]

The member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) is still smarting because he was not recognized to ask questions, and I realize he has a history—

**An Honourable Member:** You are afraid to answer them. You do not know how to answer them.

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Well, I mean if the member wants to get into a personal debate, I have tried to avoid recounting the member's checkered history as House leader and Finance critic and executive director of Seven Oaks, and foster parent and all these things. I do not want to get into a personal battle with the member for Osborne. I would prefer to stick to the issues. Thank you.

**Mr. Martindale:** Madam Chairperson, on this one small item the minister and I agree, and that is that we both hope that the Foster Family Association will continue.

I would like to ask the minister: How can the services that the association are currently providing be transferred to Child and Family Services, if indeed many of those services are transferred, when there are reductions in funding, not only reductions to Child and Family Support that we have been talking about, but on page 73 of his Estimates, Resolution 9.5 Child and Family Services, there appears to be a reduction from \$105 million to \$100 million? How does the minister plan to have staff take over these functions when there has been a reduction in the budget of \$5 million?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** I have indicated to the member that there has been a reduction in the total Child and Family Services line, indicated that a good portion of that is the \$2 reduction to the foster families and other reductions to various agencies that we fund. Some of those agencies no longer will be getting full funding from the province, and some will be getting 10 percent less. We will get into that detail when we have the budget books in front of us.

\* (1500)

I would say to you that we have dedicated finances and funding within the Department of Family Services to look after those specific things that I have mentioned, the Legal Aid services, the insurance agreement and also the training of foster

families. I can assure you that funding has been earmarked within that budget, and when we get to the line-by-line consideration of the Family Services Estimates I would be happy to point that out to him.

**Mr. Martindale:** Madam Chairperson, in answer to one of my previous questions, the minister said that I was speculating about how the workweek reductions would be worked out and mentioned that he has talked to the chief executive officer and other staff about workforce adjustments. I would like to ask the minister, does this mean that Bill 22, the government bill on The Public Sector Reduced Work Week and Compensation Management Act, will this apply or will it not apply to the staff of the Child and Family Services agencies?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** The principles embodied within the proposed legislation to do the workweek adjustment will apply to the agencies. The agency presidents and the executive directors have asked if they can do some thinking about how they are going to have that apply and wanted us to approach it with some flexibility. They wanted to have some time to think about that and come back in the near future to discuss it.

**Mr. Martindale:** Madam Chairperson, I guess I need to be more specific because my understanding is that civil servants will be required to take 10 days off without pay. Does the 10 days off without pay apply to the Child and Family Services agencies, and if so, will they be the same days that other civil servants take off, or will the flexibility be that they can choose any 10 days they want during the year?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** The principle is to show a reduction in the Salary line of the budgets within those agencies. We do have that expectation of the agencies. We will work with them because they felt that they wanted to provide us with some solutions which worked best for them. When I met with them the previous week to discuss this with them, their initial reaction is that they can live with that, but they would like to have some flexibility and time to think about it. We will be meeting again in the near future to see what they can do to find that savings within the Salary line of their particular agencies and yet provide the service in the best way possible.

**Mr. Martindale:** Madam Chairperson, I would like to move just for a minute to the Foster Family Association and the suggestion that they are going to refuse to take new children into care. Apparently different chapters of this association have been

discussing this and voting on it, and several of them, 100 percent of their members, voted in favour of not accepting new children. My understanding is that this is going to create a very serious problem because unless the existing Child and Family Services agencies can find placements for these children in foster families, they are going to pile up in institutions and in hotels and motels.

This is a very expensive alternative. In fact, I would suggest it is a much more expensive alternative than negotiating in good faith with this organization and keeping at least some of their funding in place so they can provide services.

The figures that we are provided with said that it would cost at least \$220 a day to keep a child in a hotel or motel when you consider the food and the motel fee and the staffing cost for looking after those children in those institutions.

So does the minister anticipate that this is a problem and that this is a better alternative than keeping the funding in place for the Family Foster Association?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** I expect that the foster families will act in a responsible way in providing the home and the guidance and work with the agencies with those children as they have in the past. The member raises the spectre of the use of hotel rooms in place of foster families. I heard the executive director of the Winnipeg agency on television on Friday. At the present time, I believe out of some 2,700 children in care, they had either seven or 11 children who were in hotel.

This is not, obviously, a preferable way of dealing with the situation but one which has historically been used if a family of four is taken into care at midnight or if there are individuals who are taken into care whom they have not a family to match with. Sometimes that is an option that has been used for a number of years.

I say to you, it is not a preferable solution, but it is a decision that the agency sometimes is forced to make depending on the individual circumstances that present themselves when those children come into care.

Again the member is saying that various branches of the MFFA are indicating that they may do this or they may do that. I know from my experience with people who are foster parents at the present time, and many of my colleagues are familiar with foster parents, they will do what is right for the children.

Certainly in some cases they may present a special challenge to the agency that has taken a child into care. The agencies have indicated they will work very diligently to find appropriate settings for these children to be placed in.

Also appreciate that some of the children who are taken into care will require very specialized care that may not be available the day that voluntary placement is made or the day the apprehension is made.

The agency may decide to wait a matter of a day, a week or two weeks before they make what they think is an appropriate placement, because it is better to make that appropriate placement the first time than to place the child in a foster home and then have to change if the skills perhaps are not there or the match is not as desirable as the agency would like it to be.

So these are challenges that the agencies have always faced in taking children into care. Again, I have every confidence that the foster families across Manitoba will respond to the challenge of taking care of these children who come into care.

The recruitment of foster families is an ongoing challenge that agencies face, and they will continue to do that. I know here in the city of Winnipeg, since the restructuring of the agency, that they are prepared to rededicate specific staff to that particular function. Again, with the good work of the agencies and the co-operation of parents, every effort will be made to find those appropriate placements.

**Mr. Martindale:** Madam Chairperson, well, the minister and I certainly agree in that we hope that families will come forward to provide care in family homes, but the message that I am getting from foster families who are calling me is that they are very angry and they are very disappointed and they are saying, we are not going to do this because we are fed up with this government. Now individuals, of course, are going to make their own decisions.

\* (1510)

We hope, in the interests of children, that they will still come forward and volunteer to take children. If they do not, then this province and this government and this minister have a very serious problem, and I believe a very expensive problem, because while 11 in hotels is a very small percentage of 2,700 children, if that grows then the problem and the expense will certainly grow.

Since this minister is eliminating the funding for the Foster Family Association and expecting Child and Family Services agencies to be responsible for education and training and support, I wonder if he could tell the House how cutting support to other external agencies is going to help children and families and keep them out of care. For example, funding to Indian and Metis friendship centres has been eliminated. Funding for the Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization has been eliminated. Funding to child care centres has been cut. Fees have been increased. Day nurseries have had a big increase in fees.

There are many children who are in child care centres, who are in day nurseries, who take part in programs at Indian and Metis friendship centres who otherwise might be at higher risk, who otherwise might be apprehended, who otherwise might be in care, and these programs and services are preventative in nature. I have been told that some friendship centres, for example, have healing circles where people who have been wounded by our system are finding healing, and that is a good thing.

If Indian and Metis friendship centres cannot provide those healing circles any longer and cannot help people to put their lives back together, then they are going to be more fragile. They are going to be the responsibility of formal government systems instead of these external agencies, and it is going to cost this government more money because, for one thing, the staff are unionized. The staff are civil servants or equivalent to civil servants, and these are very expensive systems to operate.

So how does this minister plan to provide those services when I believe more children are going to come into care, when there are fewer preventative services, when there are fewer services at the front end? What is going to happen is that children are going to come into the system at the back end, at the expensive end where children are institutionalized or where they are before the courts. I do not see how the minister can provide these services with fewer dollars in his budget.

So I would like to know what the minister's rationale is for cutting what I believe are valuable and preventative services in place of what I believe may end up being more expensive services.

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Madam Chairperson, the member really has asked a very global question

here about the entire department, bringing in daycare, the social allowances and child welfare. I am going to have to take a few minutes to respond to all of that.

What is so clear is that there is not one area, and I challenged the member's Leader the other day to tell me what area there is that we could save money within the Department of Family Services so that we could have these increases in funding in other areas. I am still waiting for the Leader of the NDP (Mr. Doer) to give us that answer. I can recall challenging the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) on that issue once before, and he said, tax the corporations more, yet his good friends in Ontario reduced the tax on corporations.

I really am reminded of one of my colleagues, who says very clearly and has said often, that there is always a different philosophy of the NDP in opposition as compared to when they were in government. I ask the member for Burrows to think about that, because I know, given his background prior to politics, that he is a very honourable man and that he knows that there are difficult decisions to make out there.

I know that the Premier of Saskatchewan, for instance, and his fellow travellers in Saskatchewan do not take any delight in cutting the hospitals 3 percent in Saskatchewan. They do not take any delight in taking 4 percent of the public school budget in Saskatchewan. They do not take any delight in cutting municipalities back 8 percent in Saskatchewan. [interjection] Well, the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) wants to join in, and maybe we can get around to her later.

They do not take any delight, I am sure, in Saskatchewan in wiping out the entire Environment department. The Department of Environment in Saskatchewan does not exist anymore as a cost-saving measure. The prescription drug plan in Saskatchewan to most citizens of Saskatchewan is gone. [interjection] The member for Wolseley, I would challenge her in the same way to offer some solutions within the Department of Family Services where we can make those savings so that we can redirect that funding to vital services. Her fellow travellers in Choices came in with a lower proposed budget last year in Family Services than we did as government.

If you look at the budget of Family Services over the last five years, we have seen dramatic increases

in all areas of our budget. In the area dealing with foster care, we have seen increases of 50 to 70 percent in the money that flows to foster parents. Let not members opposite—and, again, I know my colleague there who is now the critic is an honourable man and will want to have the correct information on the record because I know that he believes what he says should always be correct and it should be the truth. I admire him for that because he painstakingly finds out the facts before he puts things on the record.

There was an editorial in the Winnipeg Free Press very recently when the Newfoundland budget and the Saskatchewan budget came out the same day. It says: Showing the way. I think it is important that you focus on those words because I think those two governments have shown the way. They have shown that governments must spend less, and in some cases, they must tax less. There is one line in that editorial that I would like to read to him. It says: "No Canadian politician from any party who is actually in office pretends any more that there is any choice but to cut spending, reduce the deficit and get the debt under control."

I know that the editorial is referring to politicians who are in government, but surely the same test must apply to members who are in opposition. There is no choice but to cut spending. There is no choice but to try and reduce the deficit and attack the long-term debt.

In all of the comments that I have heard from across the way from my honourable friend and his fellow travellers over there, it is to spend, spend, spend more. I can tell you that it probably did not give Roy Romanow any delight in having to put the sales tax up to 9 percent, but I mean the options have not changed. Either you let the deficit run wild, or you reduce your spending or you increase your taxes.

**An Honourable Member:** Have you seen what your government has done to the deficit over five years?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** My honourable American friend wants to get into the debate and say that there are options. Well, I can tell you that there are no options. Either we reduce the spending or we let the deficit run wild and target our spending—

**Madam Chairperson:** Order, please.

\* (1520)

### Point of Order

**Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley):** Madam Chairperson, on a point of order, I thought I heard the Minister of Family Services suggest that my colleague the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) was an American. I wonder if the Minister of Family Services is going to attack every member of this House on their origin. Is that the kind of rhetoric that we hear from this particular government?

Go ahead. Let us start with everyone.

**Madam Chairperson:** It is not a point of order, but I would caution that all members ensure that we understand that all members in this House indeed are honourable members and should be referred to as such.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** I would apologize if anyone took offence to that. I referred to my honourable friend because the member was the critic in this department, and over the last number of budgets we did spend a considerable amount of time debating the Estimates of Family Services. I regret if that was misconstrued in any other way.

To get back to discussions on the global picture that my friend from Burrows, the new critic in Family Services, has raised, that we have to target our spending in some particular way within this department. I do agree that we have to provide the funding for those things that are really and truly necessary and find the funds for the vulnerable people that this department serves, whether they be in the area of social allowances or whether they are in daycare or in child welfare. These are all really important areas.

I know in that editorial it talked about showing the way where other governments have now brought in their budgets and have had to reduce spending to very, very vital areas—and I can appreciate the tremendous impact this is going to have in Newfoundland and in Saskatchewan. I think you will see, as other budgets come down, there is a realization on the part of governments that we have to reduce our spending.

I suspect that realization is there in the mind of the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) as well. All of us who read the local papers realize what a difficult, difficult budget process the City of Winnipeg is going through. Well, all governments across this country, whether they be municipal, provincial or the federal

government, have to make some very, very difficult decisions.

I am pleased the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer) indicated that a number of times over the last week, that governments have difficult, difficult choices to make, and as a result we have to spend less in some areas but, at the same time, protect those vital services that we offer.

The member more specifically in his question referenced organizations like the Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization. I certainly appreciate the valuable input that they have had, and I have indicated that there are other organizations that do similar work.

The social allowance coalition of Manitoba, for instance, has offered many suggestions to me at regular meetings that I had with them of changes— [interjection] Well, we have implemented a number of them. We have also met with the WORD organization, and I can tell you, their valuable input as well as interest of course on the part of the minister and the department have led to the creation of a new program for the disabled. These were programs that were not in place before, programs that many other jurisdictions offered, programs that have been put in place by this government over the last couple of years.

So again my point to the member for Burrows is, if we are going to create new programs and if we are going to establish new programs and dedicate money to those specific needs, sometimes we have to make those difficult, difficult decisions that if you reduce some funding on one hand to create programs and increase funding on the other hand, those are the tough choices you make in government. I know that the member for Burrows probably does read the information coming out of other jurisdictions to see what difficult decisions are being made. Things are no different in Manitoba.

We are pleased that over five budgets that we have not had to raise personal taxes. Probably that is the greatest impetus for individuals to have more spending money in their pockets today to encourage the economy and purchase those vital goods and services that they need and to create jobs. The member also referenced the friendship centres, and I have had the opportunity to attend some of them.

I regret that I was not able to go with the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) today because of other commitments to the Foster Family Association and

to cabinet, but members from this side of the House have had the opportunity to attend those centres. We have looked at a summary of their annual reports, and the funding that we are withdrawing from that particular area amounts to a little less than 13 percent of their global budget. Just as businesses and industry and other organizations and government have to make those downsizing adjustments, those friendship centres will have to make those same commitments to change some of the things they do, and they have elected and appointed boards in some cases. They will look at the priorities that they themselves establish and determine how they in fact are going to spend their money.

The member also referenced child care. I have said before, and I do not think members opposite can challenge that, that no budget line within the Department of Family Services, in fact probably no budget line within government has seen such a dramatic increase in funding as the daycare line. I maybe could go into a little more detail on the convention that I attended in Brandon last fall with the Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association and the Canadian Child Day Care Federation. The issues that they raised there are very important issues for them and are national issues. They talked about raises, they talked about respect, and they talked about their organizations.

Again, one of the ways we judge the amount of spending that we do across government is interprovincial comparisons. I think it is important that we, from time to time, look at the amount of funding that we have and the amount of spending we do vis-à-vis other provinces.

The province of Saskatchewan, for instance, very similar in size and very similar in population, spends about one-third of the amount of dollars we do in the whole area of daycare. I suspect there is going to be a very, very small increase in their daycare budget line this year and, similarly, there will be one in ours.

Manitoba compares very favourably. If you look at the hourly wage across all positions, we are higher than the national average. I think there is only one province in Canada that has a higher hourly wage average than Manitoba does. If you look at the teacher-director, again, we are in excess of \$3,000 higher than the national average. If you look at the administrative director on an hourly basis, the hourly base wage is \$2 higher than the national

average. If you look at the annual wage for administrative directors, it is almost \$5,000 higher. I think it is important we look at how we do in each of these areas compared to other provinces.

I have met frequently with the staff and board members from the MCCA and the home-based child care, and they recognize that we have made tremendous strides in this area in recent years. They recognize, and we recognize, that they have still some unfulfilled aspirations that we will work on in coming years.

The other point I would make there is looking at the turnover rate as it relates to the staffing in daycares, both family daycares and daycare centres across the country. The national average is four points higher than Manitoba in terms of turnover rate. So while there are still issues that I know as an organization, as a union, that they want to address, we have made great strides in the last five years. The 100 percent increase in the funding to that budget line is an example of that.

I think perhaps, Madam Chairperson, that I will stop there and we can get into some more of this when we get into the line-by-line Estimates.

**Mr. Martindale:** Madam Chairperson, the minister said his answer was going to be global and it was so global he was all over the map, and he did not answer the question.

I could summarize the question quite succinctly for him. I was not talking about spending more money. I was not advocating that the minister spend more money. What I did question was how does this minister plan to reduce the budget in a couple of items, in Maintenance of Children and External Agencies and to Child and Family Services agencies, and provide service for children when what he has also reduced is funding to organizations like friendship centres and increasing fees to daycares, which is going to discourage people, and capping the number of spaces, actually reducing the number of spaces by 400, when the results of these policies are going to be more children taken into care and increased expenses?

Can the minister answer that very specific question? How does he plan to reduce the budget when the effects of these budget changes are going to be more children going into more expensive care and an increase in cost?

**Mr. Gillehammer:** The fact of the matter is, globally, we are not reducing the budget. We have seen year after year the largest increases across government within Family Services. There are some changes restructuring in government this year where some parts of the Department of Family Services will be found in other Estimates, but I think you will see overall there will be an increase in the global budget dedicated to Family Services.

I did not get around to talking about the healing circles that the member raised before, but this is an area, of course, that is of interest to him and to myself. I think there has been some interesting work done there even in recent weeks and months, and there are a number of initiatives that he may want to ask the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) about because of the funding arrangements through the Department of Justice.

But I have indicated to the member that there is going to be some reduction in the Child and Family Services budget line because of the changes we have announced to the amounts that the foster parents are going to get. There is a decrease in the amount that a number of the agencies are going to get because of workforce management. Also, grants to some of the advocacy groups and some of the agencies are going to have their budget reduced.

But the challenge of providing the service that the Child and Family Services agencies provide, we have made that challenge to the presidents and the executive directors. I have indicated that they feel that they can live with those decisions and provide the tremendous services that they do to the children who come into care.

I might also take the opportunity to talk about some of the reforms that we have also brought into the system, one being the Child Advocate that I know the member has always been very supportive of, and that advocate has now been hired. The Advocate's office will be up and running.

We have also accepted the work of Professor Reid and his partner with the high risk indicators. This is a tremendously interesting innovation that has come into child welfare as a tool for social workers to use. There is interest not only in other jurisdictions in Canada but also in some of the American jurisdictions. That work was first funded by the Department of Family Services.



It has been field-tested because of the Department of Family Services, and now it is being implemented not only in Manitoba but in other jurisdictions and is seen as one of the more positive things that has happened to the art and the science of social work across Canada and the United States. So we have been pleased with that.

We have also spent millions of dollars on our new information system, and I would invite the member perhaps to avail himself to look at a field test of that particular system.

Recently I was at the Central Manitoba Child and Family Services agency where they were demonstrating the many innovative approaches they can take to child welfare through this information system.

I have said before, perhaps not when the member was in the House, but I would say that one of the biggest shocks almost three years ago when I became minister was to see the lack of technology and the lack of automation in child welfare that existed. The fact that there were files lost and not completed appropriately certainly affected the ability of social work professionals and agencies to do their work.

We now have well on its way to practical use a system that is going to provide instant information, perhaps not only at the office level but in the car, so that social workers can instantly call up very specific and needed information on a particular family and a particular child and allow them to do that social work in a much more effective and better way.

I can tell you that agency directors and staff are excited about the new technology that is going to save them countless hours and have that immediate recall of information that is going to be able to allow them to dedicate more personal time to the child and to the family and to the resolution of problems. So while there is some reduction of spending going directly to foster parents, there has been an increase in spending to bring these other reforms into place.

**Mr. Martindale:** Madam Chairperson, I am pleased to see that the minister is interested in healing circles. It is certainly something that I am interested in as well. While it may be in the area of responsibility of the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), I would hope that the Minister of Family Services and the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) are all co-operating to see that the

recommendations of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry are implemented and that more and more use is made of healing circles.

Several months ago I had occasion to be at a conference that included people from the Hollow Water community. They were talking about the system of support to families that they have in place there and apparently are doing an excellent job, and we hope that can be replicated in other areas. My understanding is that at Hollow Water they are responsible for the children on their reserve and that all the children are staying in the community. If they leave the community they are only going to aboriginal foster homes.

I am pleased to see that there seems to be support from the provincial government for this community and for their method of being responsible for their own community. I hope this can be replicated in every community in Manitoba, every aboriginal community.

The minister made reference to the Child Advocate and suggested that I support the idea of a Child Advocate. Well, our support, of course, is conditional. We support the idea of a Child Advocate but only one who reports to the Legislature, as the Ombudsman does, rather than a Child Advocate who only reports to the minister. Of course, we are on record on that quite extensively, so I do not think I need to belabour the fact.

I would like to move on to some of the other parts of his budget, although I suppose some of them may be on the same page that we have been talking about. The elimination of funding to the Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization certainly concerns me, as it does many, many poor people in Manitoba and many of my colleagues in this caucus who represent inner-city constituencies who probably provide the majority of constituents who make use of the Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization.

I am wondering what the rationale was of this minister. I know the staff were very disappointed and shocked. I was the one who phoned them and told them that their funding had been cut, because they do not own a fax machine, so they did not get the letter I guess from the deputy minister that other external agencies got on the same day, no doubt they got it later in the mail. But they had no warning that this cut was coming.

We disagree with the press release that went out saying that the organizations that were cut were

advocacy organizations and that this government was going to continue to protect their three departments that they think are the most important, I believe Health, Education, and Family Services.

We think that they have abandoned that goal of protecting those three departments and now the cuts are coming in those departments as well. We have some of the proof here in the cuts to External Agencies and the increase in daycare fees, et cetera. Now the knife has been thrust into this minister's department and we see the results of bleeding people and organizations all over the place. Many of the 56 organizations are organizations that cannot find funding from other sources.

I would like to ask the minister: Who does he think should provide the resources that are now being provided by the Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization, and why indeed did he eliminate all of their funding from his department to that fine organization?

\* (1540)

**Mr. Gillshammer:** Madam Chairperson, in our discussions this afternoon I have challenged the member to give me some ideas where we could save some funding, to redirect it within our department, and I am still waiting for even one suggestion whereby we can reduce funding somewhere to increase funding elsewhere. I respect that perhaps the member needs more time to think about that, and we will have an opportunity, I am sure, in the Estimates process, where he gets a chance to bring those initiatives forward and to give that advice.

I am pleased that the member has visited some of the native communities where healing circles are being used. I too have had an opportunity to visit some of the northern reserves at an invitation of Chief Jerry Fontaine, who was then chief responsible for child welfare. There is no question that there are great strides being made in trying to resolve problems on reserves. I applaud the native community for that. For sure the best solutions are solutions they find within their own community.

The Child Advocate, again, the member references. I was pleased to have the support of all members of the House for this legislation and am pleased that we will soon be able to have the office open and running later this spring.

Specifically, the member is asking about the Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization and their advocacy function on behalf of social allowance recipients in Manitoba and Winnipeg particularly. I did have an opportunity, as my friend in the Liberal Party knows, to visit there just a few weeks ago to discuss with the executive director and the staff of the Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization some of the concerns that they had.

I would challenge the member when he says they had no warning. That is incorrect. We sent a cautionary letter to them in the fall indicating that there may be some funding adjustments. I also met with them personally at their offices some three, four weeks ago and said to them in very direct terms that our budget this year was just an extremely, extremely difficult one and that there were initiatives that we had funded in the past that we simply were not going to be able to proceed with this year. I could not give them any more direct information at that time, but they certainly were aware of the difficult financial situation the province is in.

Again, I say to you, the changes that we discussed earlier that Premier Romanow has brought in with reductions to hospitals and schools and municipal corporations, universities, is not something that the government of Saskatchewan wanted to do. There is a recognition there in government that these are difficult times. I am a little concerned that my honourable friend is not listening, but I know he will be able to read this later on.

I have indicated that there are a number of other organizations who provide input to social allowance recipients. I have met with the social allowance coalition of Manitoba on a regular basis. I can tell you that they do much the same work as MAPO provides in terms of representing individual clients and finding, in some cases, appropriate circumstances for them. I have also indicated that the WORD organization represents social allowance recipients who are disabled and have done some good work in bringing information before the ministry.

There are functions that the Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization provided in terms of their used clothing shop over there that is also provided by other organizations. I would suggest that maybe the church is one organization in the city of Winnipeg and in other areas of Manitoba that historically has provided some of these services. I know, given the

honourable member's former vocation and I know he is not far from it at the present time, he would see a real role for the church here in providing some of the services that the member is advocating for.

So in these difficult economic times—and I know the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) has acknowledged the difficult choices we have to make—and with these difficult choices, there are some advocacy groups that we are going to have to ask to do with less, and I am sure there are other organizations and other groups within the community that will pick up some of the shortfall in terms of the service that was provided.

**Mr. Martindale:** Madam Chairperson, the minister has suggested that churches should pick up the slack from organizations that his government has cut the funding to. I would say that, in the past, churches have provided many different kinds of services to the community which have then been taken over by government. This minister is suggesting that we reverse that, that services provided by the government be sent back to be provided by churches. That is happening in the area of free food from Winnipeg Harvest food bank. In fact, something like 75 to 80 churches and social agencies are distributing food from Winnipeg Harvest.

But I have a problem with that in spite of the fact that I am a United Church minister. I believe that what we are talking about here is a difference between individual charity and society's responsibility, collectively, to provide for the weakest members of our society.

You know, there are good things about churches providing social services and charity and children's programs and the many, many things that churches have always and continue to provide. It is good to see volunteers caring about other people in the community. It is good to see people sharing. It is good to see waste food being redistributed through Winnipeg Harvest, but there are many, many disadvantages and many, many problems with meeting people's basic needs through charitable means and through churches.

If we just take food banks as an example, I am still very familiar with how churches are distributing food and the kind of food that comes to them from Winnipeg Harvest, because I continue to drop in from time to time to the North End Community Ministry where I worked for 10 years. They invite

me from time to time to be a part of their sharing circle before they hand out the food, but they also inform me as to how inadequate this method is of feeding hungry people.

For example, the Sunday after Grey Cup Sunday last year, they had the usual bread and doughnuts to hand out. They had limes to hand out and they had cakes saying, Go, Blue Bombers, Go. That was the kind of food that was being provided to hungry people the week after Grey Cup Sunday in Winnipeg. I think that is a disgrace; I think it is inadequate. I think it is not a good way of meeting people's basic needs. In fact, one of the problems is that it is not nutritious. At this time of year, what the food banks are getting is primarily stale or dated bread and doughnuts. Those are the two elements that make up the bulk of the donations to Winnipeg Harvest.

Canned goods are in very short supply. Canned goods are in short supply all year round at Winnipeg Harvest, and so, nutritionally, people are not getting good food. What they are getting is food that is high in starch, high in carbohydrates and high in sugar. This is not a good way to feed people. They make appeals for the things that they really need like baby food, but they never get enough baby food donated for what the demand is.

\* (1550)

I believe that what we have, or what we had in society was a way of redistributing wealth so that people's basic needs were met through the income tax system, through social assistance programs which benefit from wealth redistribution in our society. In fact, the Canada Assistance Plan says that Canadians' basic needs for food, shelter and clothing shall be met. That is the program which, as the minister well knows, provides 50 percent of the funding for provincial social assistance in every province.

So I believe that governments have a moral responsibility and a legal responsibility to provide for our citizens in a way that also not only meets their needs, but meets their needs in ways that respect people's dignity and respect people's pride. There is no dignity and there is no pride when people have to line up at food bank outlets.

I know that where I worked they started off with 30 bags of potatoes a week and 15 people, and very, very quickly went to 75 to 150 people a week and

line-ups and handing out numbers and giving people numbers.

I would invite—I have invited the minister before, but we need to make an appointment to go across the street to All Saints parish or to go to the North End Community Ministry and to be there when the food is handed out and to see this system, which I believe is an inadequate and an inferior system to providing decent incomes to people through the social allowances system.

Now the minister was challenging me and some of his colleagues on the front bench were challenging me to suggest ways that this government could save money. I think that is a reasonable question and challenge to me.

I have said, and I will say again, that I believe that when this minister makes cuts to child care centres and day nurseries, when there are fewer resources in terms of intervention and respite and keeping families together and monitoring kids, instead of taking them into care, it is cheaper to provide community resources and prevention than it is to have children in care, which is very costly. I believe the result of these cuts will be more children coming into care. If funding is available for the open end of the system, then there will be fewer children coming in at the closed end of the system. That is where this government has a choice in whether they spend the money in prevention and resources in the community or whether they spend more money because more children are coming into care. That is my suggestion for where this government can save money.

I would like to move on now to the area of student social allowance. We have a legal problem here. If students are not in school and they apply for city welfare, they cannot be going to school, because when you are on municipal welfare in Manitoba you are deemed employable and you must be available for work and you must be looking for work. You cannot do that when you are going to school. Where are these students going to go? Are they going to apply for provincial social assistance? If so, will they get it? Will they be able to stay in school? Will the amounts be the same as before or will they be less or will they be more? Will the amounts be adequate so that students who formerly were on the student social allowance program will indeed be able to stay in school?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Madam Chairperson, I will get to the student social allowances after I address some of the other issues that the member raised in his preamble.

I am very pleased to hear the member say there is a recognition that the community has a role to play, that government cannot be everything and do everything for individual citizens. I heartily agree that there is a role for the community, whether it is through the church or through other service groups.

I would say to him that I have been across the street to the ministry. I have been to Winnipeg Harvest, and I have been there when they have been open and providing the services that they provide. The member indicates that the government sort of took over the role of the church. I believe in some cases that is true. There was a certain philosophy in government in Manitoba at one time that government should regulate everything and be all things to all people. Government simply cannot do that.

The member talks about his desire to redistribute wealth. I would like to read him a quote from Premier Romanow in January. I think my honourable friend can relate to this. It relates to what I said earlier. I hope the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) will take the time to listen. He said: For a New Democrat who is used to being in government when the economy is expanding and who is used to redistributing wealth, to be changed to creating wealth and to taking back concessions given to people in better times is so darn difficult.

That is the challenge that is facing all governments. All governments are faced with the prospect of doing less and of being less involved in so many things. Premier Romanow has recognized—and as you read the details of his budget, he has not only recognized it, but he has acted upon it within that budget.

We too are in the same position that we find ourselves with the need to have to do less in terms of providing all of these services and all of these programs for people. This is where I think it is important to empower the communities. If the churches, in fact, that the member represents feel that government has in some way elbowed them out of the way so that government is going to provide for all of these needs, then we have to send that message not only to the community but to community groups and to churches to encourage

them to become active in ways that they worked with the community in the past. I would be happy if the member would take that message back to the people he serves, and we will certainly do the same thing.

The member talks about meeting the basic needs, and that is what our social allowance system does. It is the safety net to meet the basic needs of people. In every province there are social allowance programs which meet those basic needs, and Manitoba's is no different than any other province in providing that funding. We probably have the seventh or eighth highest cost of living in the country, and our rates reflect that. Our rates are in the proper perspective to what other provinces do. We do provide that funding to meet the basic needs for individual citizens who are unemployed.

I think what the member is talking about in terms of providing additional resources is a guaranteed annual income. I know the member has some interest in that, and I also know that he realizes while the federal government has made some changes in providing additional funding to families and to children, the whole thrust of a guaranteed annual income really has to come from the federal level. I can tell you that the whole concept of transferring funds, tax dollars and tax credits to individual citizens is a very complex and complicated one not only in Manitoba but right across the country.

Minister Bouchard has shown some interest in bringing forward some ideas on a guaranteed annual income, and I would hope later on in the spring or summer months that the white paper that they have talked about will be brought forward either in this mandate or in their next one, and we can get on with the discussion that has to take place between the federal government and the provincial governments as it respects the guaranteed annual income. There are so many transfer payments that are in place now that flow to individual citizens, whether they be on social allowance or off social allowance, and there are so many complicated ways of putting that spending in the hands of people, a guaranteed annual income could certainly simplify that. As minister, I would be interested in hearing more detail on that from the federal government.

Finally, the member has raised the question of the student social allowances. I have indicated that we have at the present time a little over 1,000, around 1,100 students who access the student social allowances. As has been indicated in recent

weeks, we are the only province in Canada that has had a program such as this where we spend over \$4 million on student social allowances. As Premier Romanow has said in his comments and has demonstrated in his budget, there are things we simply cannot do anymore. I would indicate to the member that this was one area that we felt was unique to Manitoba, that the fiscal environment, as it is, made it impossible for us to sustain that program.

\* (1600)

So the question is, what will these individuals do? Well, I think the answer is, there are many answers to that. Some of those students will be completing their training and going on into the workforce. I have indicated some of them who are 18 and 19 years of age may in fact be able to return home because they have had an option of not being at home and probably better circumstances for them.

I reflect on a couple of young people who had their picture in the Winnipeg Free Press earlier this week and indicated that at age 18 they suddenly discovered that they did need more education, and that is not an unusual circumstance. Many of the individuals who access this program are 18 and 19 years of age and recognize at this time that—I forget the exact wording of that article in the paper, but it reflected on spending the last three years of watching television all day and doing other things at night and now they want to pursue that education. For some of them, the option will be to go home.

Now there are many, many different circumstances there. Some will go directly into the workforce. Some will find other means to continue their education, and we still have in the province that two-tier safety net that individuals can access if they are unable to find work and unable to sustain themselves in school. I am sure that some of them will turn to the Department of Education for some of the funding sources there to continue in school.

**Mr. Martindale:** Madam Chairperson, this minister would like to debate the budget of Saskatchewan. While I could debate the budget of Saskatchewan, this is Manitoba and you are the government of Manitoba, and you are responsible for the fiscal policies of this province, and you are accountable to the taxpayers of Manitoba for the fiscal policies of your government, and that is what is under discussion today, and that is what we are talking about, not some other province.

I am going to just ask a few more questions. We had requested the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey)—and I am sure he is nearby. Perhaps, we will have him as the next minister if he is available. [interjection] He had a meeting. Okay. I will continue with my questioning in the meantime.

I am interested in the fact that this minister raised the subject of the guaranteed adequate income. You will notice that I call it guaranteed adequate income and that the minister referred to it as a guaranteed annual income. I prefer the expression guaranteed adequate income, because one of the concerns that we have in the New Democratic Party is that if a Conservative federal government or even a federal Liberal government brings in a guaranteed income scheme that the rates that people receive need to be adequate.

While we are on record as a political party, both federally and provincially, supporting a guaranteed adequate income, one of the conditions would be that the levels be adequate to meet people's needs. We are also concerned that the federal Conservative government might want to bring in a guaranteed annual income, as they would call it, in order to subsidize low-wage jobs, that they would use this program to top up low-wage jobs for employers. We would find this unacceptable. We believe that people's income needs should be basically provided through paying employment.

Madam Chairperson, I am going to yield the floor to my colleague from Flin Flon, so he can ask some questions of the same minister.

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** I think the member has sadly missed the point about the reference to other jurisdictions. I was making the point that there is a recognition by governments everywhere that spending has to be reduced, that deficits have to be brought under control. I was giving some examples from the Newfoundland budget and the Saskatchewan budget that when you are in government you realize that the reality is; you have to do those things.

I also made reference to some comments that Premier Romanow made which reflect that this is not the time when you are going to be able to do a lot of work in terms of redistributing wealth but that you have to control your spending. The recognition that he gave and a recognition that the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) offered a couple of times

earlier in this session is that these are very difficult decisions.

On the issue of the guaranteed annual income, the member says that it should be adequate. I mean, that is the point of debate.

Is there agreement from the member that rates are adequate in all other provinces, but they are not adequate in Manitoba? Our rates compare favourably given the standard of living and the cost of living in Manitoba. Our rates are in some areas about the sixth or seventh highest in the country and, relative to those rates, the Manitoba rates are at the appropriate level, but the guaranteed annual income is a direction that we would be interested in exploring as well and, as I have indicated, the federal government will have to take the lead in this area.

**Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon):** My questions, I think, would begin by directing to the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Downey).

Madam Chairperson, the government has over the last number of years been discussing with the local government district of Lynn Lake its budgetary crisis, which comes about as a result of the closure of the LynnGold Mine at Lynn Lake.

The government provided interim grants from the Mining Reserve Fund to the community of Lynn Lake for a couple of years. Despite the fact that the community of Lynn Lake indicated to the government that that two-year interim support was not going to be adequate, the government has, to date at least, not responded to what is a crisis for that community.

Sometime in late 1992, the government indicated to Lynn Lake, to the mayor and council that what was required from Lynn Lake was a five-year budget, a plan that would identify what revenue was going to come into Lynn Lake and what their expenditures might look like and how they might reduce those expenditures.

The community was given approximately a month to put this five-year plan together. The community undertook to hire a consultant to assist them in preparing this five-year strategic plan, again at some cost to the community, and the plan was put together.

In a letter dated January 27, 1993, the mayor of the community, Mayor Dulwich, wrote to the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), indicating that the five-year strategic plan had been

prepared, and that the community was going to face a deficit in the 1992 fiscal year of approximately \$115,869.48.

Madam Chairperson, my first question is to the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Downey), and that is, will the Minister of Energy and Mines do as the community of Lynn Lake requested and recommend that that deficit be supported through the Mining Reserve Fund?

\* (1610)

**Hon. James Downey (Minister of Energy and Mines):** The more appropriate minister who could probably answer the question would be the minister responsible for the jurisdiction for which he is asking, which is the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), and he probably will want to respond.

I can tell the member that we have discussed this issue with a group of deputy ministers who are responsible for the different jurisdictions, and it is being worked on. As to what stage it is at, I will let the Minister of Rural Development speak to it, as it relates to this particular issue.

The member asked, am I supportive of it? Until we have the work that is done by the deputy ministers presented to us and recommendations, then I am not prepared to comment. As I said, the Minister of Rural Development may have something further to add that may be helpful.

I can tell the member, we fully appreciate the difficulties that the community is facing. There is no question about that. They have not got the revenues. They have seen a loss of their base for their community. So there is no question that there is consideration taking place at this particular time but no final decision to my knowledge, unless the Minister of Rural Development has further information that he can add.

**Mr. Storie:** I recognize that the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) has a role to play in this. However, the funds are being requested from the Mining Reserve Fund which, at least initially, is the responsibility of the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Downey) to direct, ultimately, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), who releases the funds, not the Minister of Rural Development.

Madam Chairperson, the question that was asked is, will the minister be recommending that the millions of dollars that are available in the fund, some \$16 million or \$17 million, we are led to believe, is available in the Mining Reserve Fund,

accumulated directly from mining tax revenue. Will the minister consider releasing approximately \$117 million, which is only a very small portion of the interest on the fund which came from mining taxes. Will he be recommending that those funds be released so the community will not face tax increases of unacceptable proportions in Lynn Lake in the 1993 year?

**Mr. Downey:** Madam Chairperson, the member knows very well that those kind of decisions are made collectively as it relates to government. The position which I will be taking will be taken after full discussion and consultation has taken place with the department, when it has taken place with the Department of Rural Development.

Again, and I can only say it at this point, we are certainly sympathetic to the situation that we are faced with, although one has to be conscious of the fact that there are demands on governments from every angle. This is a little different because the mining fund, in fact, is in place. Again, as I indicated, that is part of the considerations that are being taken at this particular time.

Am I supportive of this? I want additional information as to what the alternatives may be before that final decision would come from me as minister responsible.

**Mr. Storie:** Madam Chairperson, you will forgive the mayor and the councillors in the LGD of Lynn Lake if they grow more frustrated by the minute. They were asked for this on very short notice by the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) and the minister responsible. They were asked for this, and worked very hard to prepare this plan. The government was in possession, and the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) cannot deny any responsibility here. He was carbon-copied on the letter to the Minister of Rural Development. He received a copy of the five-year strategic plan.

The question is, given that this letter is dated January 27 and the fiscal year obviously and the tax level for the 1993 year have to be set by the LGD, how late is the government going to wait? March 31 is fast approaching, and the government has already had two months to look at this. Can either of the ministers tell me why it is taking so long to get a straightforward answer, to access funds available to northern mining communities that have suffered traumatic times?

**Hon. Len Derkach (Minister of Rural Development):** Madam Chairperson, first of all, may I say that I met with the community of Lynn Lake in the fall of the year of 1992 and at that time the community was concerned and frustrated because of the situation that has occurred in Lynn Lake. Not of their own making, but indeed it is one of those circumstances that occur in a one-industry town from time to time.

Madam Chairperson, there was a request from the town to release funds from the Mining Reserve Fund in order to assist them with the operations of the town, but at that time it was agreed to mutually by their town council and by staff in my department, and I was at that meeting, that a more practical approach might be one where we could do a strategic plan, or the community could do a strategic plan, to determine what that community's strengths might be or are, and how that community might focus on the strengths that it has in order to reorganize itself for the future. They understood very clearly that the answers to the problems are not merely throwing dollars at the situation without any kind of long-term plan.

Madam Chairperson, the community itself agreed that this was an important step, and they would proceed with that action. They did proceed with that action. Indeed, the time frame that they had proceeded with was short because of the fact that we were in the fall of the year and we were looking at a new fiscal year a few months down the road.

Madam Chairperson, the strategic plan has been received by the department. The department has indeed looked at it. Deputies from several departments are now looking at how they can work with the community and look at different options.

Now, Madam Chairperson, those options have not come forward at this time because I think there is still some work that needs to be completed. When that work is done, then we will be in a better position to make some decisions as to how Lynn Lake can proceed to get on with its life, and indeed to downsize to a size where it can manage its affairs.

Madam Chairperson, I went through that community, and I was shocked at the state of houses there, because of the vandalism that has occurred in the houses that have been abandoned. The community centre was closed because of the fact that there is not the population base there to

indeed utilize those facilities and to take advantage of supporting those facilities.

So they do have some very significant problems that have to be dealt with, and they understand that those problems cannot be solved overnight. It is not just simply a case of throwing loads and loads and loads of money at the problem hoping that it will somehow somehow go away.

We have been in touch with the mayor of Lynn Lake. He has worked very, very co-operatively with our department and with departments in government, Madam Chairperson, and I am confident that down the road we will indeed embark on a plan that is going to be very positive, or as positive as it can be given the circumstances that the community is facing at the present time.

**Mr. Storie:** Well, Madam Chairperson, I appreciate the minister's concern about the community of Lynn Lake. Unfortunately, the minister had all of 1992, I suppose, to attempt to address it. The minister requested this five-year strategic plan. The community had already put together its own plan, a short-term plan. The fact is that the minister has now had the five-year strategic plan which identifies ways the community is going to reduce services over the five-year period. In the meantime, the community is faced with a deficit from 1992 which they have requested the government support.

Madam Chairperson, the fact of the matter is, this is not the kind of issue that the members were pleading earlier today about government financing. The financing is in place for this support. The government is sitting on a fund that is capitalized. The interest from the fund could be used to immediately relieve—the government has a chance to relieve the community of this burden right now, because if they do not, the taxpayers and the property owners in Lynn Lake are going to be the ones that are left in jeopardy.

The member talked about how difficult the financial and economic circumstances are in Lynn Lake. Why is this government compounding those difficulties by obfuscating the issue? The funds are available. The interest on the funds would more than adequately cover the request that is before the government.

Madam Chairperson, a simple question: When can the LGD of Lynn Lake, the mayor and council, expect a response from the government with



respect to its proposal that the government itself requested and was delivered on January 27?

\* (1620)

**Mr. Derkach:** Madam Chairperson, I think I answered that question previously when I said that when staff along with the community have been able to put together some final recommendations and bring them forward to myself and the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Downey), at that point in time we will be in a better position to make some decisions with regard to the short-term and the long-term difficulties that are being faced by the community.

Madam Chairperson, I have to say that we are very sympathetic to the needs and the situation that the community of Lynn Lake finds itself in. As I said, for that very reason, I was concerned about the state of things in Lynn Lake and I made a personal visit to the community to assure myself that things in that community were in the state that they were reported to be in.

Indeed, as I said, I was shocked when I was given a tour of that community. Yes, we have great sympathy for the situation that community finds itself in, and as soon as they are in a position to come to us with recommendations, then we will be in a position to make some decisions about how we can move towards perhaps a new structure, a different structure, an improved structure for that entire community.

**Mr. Storie:** Madam Chairperson, I am going to forward the remarks of the minister, in fact, of both ministers to the community of Lynn Lake, verbatim. This is the same government—who, while expressing such grave concern about the circumstances in Lynn Lake, the lack of employment opportunity, the difficulty that emotionally and psychologically, socially this community is facing—has now cut funding to their friendship centre. The only friendship centre in Lynn Lake has been eliminated. The only real community-based service that is available to those residents has also been cut.

Madam Chairperson, if that does not make a mockery of the feigned sympathy from members of the government, I do not know what does. I also want to ask the minister how he can suggest that his department has been so concerned and so active that they are working with the community to resolve outstanding issues. I defy the minister to tell me

what the outstanding issues are. I defy the minister to tell me because he does not know.

Not only does he not know what the outstanding issues are—[interjection] Well, the minister is going to have a chance and list the outstanding issues from this strategic report that the department has because the community of Lynn Lake sent the proposal, the strategic plan to the government, along with the proposal requesting funding. They received from the minister a letter of acknowledgment. That is the sum total of response from the Department of Rural Development to date is a letter of acknowledgment.

What happened after that? Well, there were a number of calls to ministers' offices which were not returned. Now the department had agreed to—

### Point of Order

**Mr. Derkach:** Madam Chair, if the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) has specific information with regard to when phone calls were made to either of the two ministers' offices which were not returned, I would ask him to put that on the record and to table that evidence because any phone call received in my office has been returned.

**Madam Chairperson:** Order, please. The honourable Minister of Rural Development does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Storie:** The only word from the Department of Rural Development to the community of Lynn Lake has been a letter of acknowledgment for the January 27 letter they received. Someone told us. Clear. That is the statement. Phone calls have been made. There has been no response.

**An Honourable Member:** To whom?

**Mr. Storie:** To the Department of Rural Development. On top of that, the community was promised that Rural Development would have a staff person in Lynn Lake on Thursday of this week. That has now been postponed. Well, of course, the minister has not heard of it. The minister probably has not heard of the proposal. The point is that the community needs a response. There is no logical or practical or humanitarian reason why the government could not respond positively to this request.

The ministers have both stood up and said how beleaguered the community is. They understand

the tax base is dwindling. They face a deficit of \$117,000 that is going to have to be borne by the remaining taxpayers, as few as they are, unless the government provides some assistance. The funds are available. Multimillion dollars are available for supporting these kinds of communities. This requires no addition to the deficit of the Province of Manitoba, no reduction to any departmental Estimates line.

The minister says, he hears what I am saying. It would not be difficult for the minister to stand up and say, I will take some leadership on this, either the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Downey) or the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) stand up and say, I will take some leadership.

This is not an unreasonable request. It will be done. Will either of the ministers show some intestinal fortitude, some integrity and deal with this community honestly? Will the member for Arthur (Mr. Downey), who I believe at least on some occasions does show some leadership, stand up today and say, this will be done? Please.

**Mr. Derkach:** Madam Chairperson, I can tell the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) that, yes, there is going to be some action taken with regard to the situation in Flin Flon. [interjection]

Madam Chairperson, if the member wants to ask a question he will have his opportunity. We have listened to the member for Flin Flon go on and on for 10 minutes and not ask a question, so I would appreciate it if he would open his ears and close his mouth and then maybe he can get some information about what is going to happen in Lynn Lake.

I can tell the member for Flin Flon that I met with staff just two days ago specifically on the situation in Lynn Lake and, indeed, we have put an action plan forward where staff from my department will be meeting with the community of Lynn Lake.

**Mr. Storie:** You said you knew the specifics. Tell me what is wrong with the strategic plan?

**Mr. Derkach:** The member for Flin Flon says, what is wrong with the action strategic plan?

Well, Madam Chairperson, I can tell you, I have reviewed that strategic plan, and there are some very good ideas and very good things in the strategic plan, but there is still some work required to finalize that strategic plan and to put the finishing touches to it so that indeed the community can then proceed in a very positive fashion.

Madam Chairperson, we will take positive action in that regard.

**Mr. Storie:** Well, Madam Chairperson, we have just been dealt a wonderful hand by the Minister of Rural Development. I said unequivocally that the minister did not know what he was talking about, and I told him that he knew of no problems with the five-year strategic plan. It is very clear what the community plans. It is very clear what they are proposing, very clear what they require from the government in terms of interim assistance.

Madam Chairperson, the question for the minister is: Is he going to respond before it is too late? Is he going to respond before the LGD of Lynn Lake has to go to its own taxpayers to bear this burden which they should not have to bear?

**Mr. Derkach:** Madam Chairperson, I guess the member was not listening, but I indicated to him very clearly that action is being taken presently.

**Mr. Storie:** Madam Chairperson, can the minister tell this committee why then the meeting that was scheduled for Lynn Lake Thursday has been postponed? When is the LGD going to get the information they need from the government?

**Mr. Derkach:** Madam Chairperson, I do not know for what reason the meeting that he refers to was cancelled. That was a meeting with department staff but, Madam Chairperson, I can find out for what reason that meeting was cancelled and report back to the member, but I do not know the details of why that meeting may have been cancelled. There may be a very legitimate reason but I do not know that at this time.

**Mr. Storie:** Madam Chairperson, of course, time is running out for the LGD of Lynn Lake. They have to finalize their 1993 budget. Will the minister commit to addressing the proposal and the request for support of some \$117,000 to relieve that community of its 1992 deficit immediately? Will the minister undertake to do that?

\* (1630)

**Mr. Derkach:** Madam Chairperson, I will commit to undertaking a thorough review of the strategic plan and ensuring that action is taken on whatever issues within that strategic plan can be taken. At this point in time that is the only commitment that I can give the member for Flin Flon.

**Mr. Storie:** Madam Chairperson, to the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Downey), will the Minister of

Energy and Mines be recommending that the 1990 deficit of the LGD of Lynn Lake be covered out of the Mining Reserve Fund? Will the minister be recommending that assuming that the review which is not going on but the minister suggests is going on is finally completed?

**Mr. Downey:** Madam Chairperson, my earlier answer to that question stands.

**Ms. Friesen:** Madam Chairperson, my question is to the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey).

I am wanting to ask some questions about the instructions of the minister to the universities about differential fees for students, and I noticed in the House on Friday that there seemed to be some difference in the kind of response that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) had given to a question that the member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) raised and the direction that I understood the minister had given.

The minister seemed to be saying in her press release and I understand in her letters to the university that the government was requiring, was directing the universities to introduce a differential fee.

As I understood the Premier's response on Friday, he suggested, and I do not have the words in front of me, that he was simply recommending to universities that this would happen.

I wonder, could the minister perhaps clear up some of this discrepancy for us? What is the situation that the government is requiring of the universities at the moment?

**Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training):** The question that the member raises is one in which she is looking at two different documents and wanting some clarification. The government has established a policy of saying that there can be now differential fees charged for visa students. We did not have that previously.

In the letter that went to the universities, it is stated to the universities that the government of Manitoba has also announced a 75 percent tuition surcharge to visa students attending Manitoba universities.

However, the paragraph which speaks about the 5 percent cap on student tuition is a separate paragraph to the paragraph speaking about surcharge for visa students. The 5 percent cap direction was accompanied also with a penalty. Where universities exceed the 5 percent cap on

tuition, then universities have been told that money would be deducted from their grant.

However, the direction and the policy established regarding the visa students was not tied to that penalty. That allows universities, therefore, to then make their own decisions regarding how they will apply, whom they will apply that surcharge to.

**Ms. Friesen:** Madam Chairperson, has that difference been made clear to each of the universities, and does the minister have letters or responses on that? How has it been conveyed to the universities?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Madam Chairperson, yes, the information has been conveyed to the universities. First of all, it was conveyed on the day of the announcement, and there was an understanding on the day of the announcement. In addition, there was a verbal discussion by the Universities Grants Commission to the universities to clarify that there was an understanding, and the information that we received back from those calls was, yes, the universities did understand how they would be applying this.

**Ms. Friesen:** Madam Chairperson, let me just follow this up, to be absolutely clear. If I am to understand what the minister is saying now, it is that the universities are under no direction, under no compunction, there will be no penalty if they do not apply differential fees to international students.

**Mrs. Vodrey:** That is correct. The penalty was not tied to the differential fee. The penalty was tied to the 5 percent cap for students. However what we have done by our policy statement is bring Manitoba into line with other provinces across Canada who do have and who have set a rate for what the premium or the surcharge would be for visa students. Other provinces across Canada have a much higher premium than we have set in Manitoba. In Quebec, my understanding is, it is almost five times the fee charged to nonvisa students. Manitoba is about the third level, and this now brings, by statement of government, our province into line with other provinces. However, universities will decide how they wish to apply this surcharge to visa students, whom they wish to apply it to, and if they wish to do anything specific with the revenue that this would generate in relation to assisting visa students or whatever universities decide.

**Ms. Friesen:** Madam Chairperson, again, I did not understand what the minister is saying by bringing

us into line as the third province, the third level, with the application of a differential fee. If the minister is not applying a differential fee, then what is it that she is saying brings us into line as the third province in this area? I do not understand the balance of the two.

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Madam Chairperson, Manitoba has by policy said that our level will be 1.75 percent. That is what our province has determined to be the level to be applied. Other provinces have said that by direction in their province it is higher. The term third, I believe, refers to the fact that our surcharge is the third lowest.

**Ms. Frlesen:** Again, Madam Chairperson, I am sorry to belabour this issue, but I really do not understand what the minister is saying. If she is saying that the universities have complete free choice of whether to introduce a surcharge or not, then why is she saying that there is an abstract number of a surcharge that if it was introduced—I assume that is what she is saying—would then bring us into line as third? Either the people have the choice to do it or not to do it, or the government is directing them towards doing a 75 percent increase. The minister seems to be balancing these in both her answers, and I truly do not understand what she is saying here.

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Madam Chairperson, the member is asking if the universities have the autonomy to apply this. Yes, the universities do have the autonomy to apply this surcharge to visa students. We announced what the level would be. If universities wish to apply a level less than 1.75 or the .75 surcharge on visa students, they will make that decision. We as a province have set a level by policy, which we believe within our province would be the most appropriate.

**Ms. Frlesen:** So what the government then is advising the universities is that there is the potential for the universities now to introduce a differential fee, and that it should not be more than a maximum of 75 percent additional on top of Canadian student fees. Is that it?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Madam Chairperson, that is the amount of money that we, by policy, have said that we would state would be the amount of money that universities would levy, a 75 percent surcharge.

**Ms. Frlesen:** In suggesting this as a policy to universities, did the government, through the Universities Grants Committee, or through any other

of its informal contacts with the universities meeting with the ministers, did they investigate what the implications of such an additional fee would be for universities in Manitoba? Did they, for example, look at what the possibilities were of one university introducing it in Manitoba and two not introducing it? What is the government policy on this? Should it be all three? Should it be one? Is the government intending to institute a competitive fee pricing policy between Manitoba universities? What are the implications of that for university policy generally?

\* (1640)

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Madam Chairperson, as the member knows, some universities in other provinces do have varying levels of application for a surcharge for visa students. The university presidents within Manitoba have a formal group in which they meet as university presidents to discuss the issues, to discuss potentially the implication of this surcharge, but the universities and the presidents of the universities with their boards of governors will have the opportunity to have a full discussion about how they will be implementing this, if they will be implementing it, who will then be a part of their implementation process.

But there is a mechanism currently that is available to universities, and I believe that the people, the presidents in particular, may want to use that mechanism for themselves.

**Ms. Frlesen:** Could the minister then suggest how she would use the Universities Grants Commission? I think there is an impression in people's minds that both in this case, the issue of differential fees, and in the issue of the cap on university fees, the government has by-passed the Universities Grants Commission, and this may, in effect, be pre-empting the position that the Roblin report might take in the future, perhaps as early as this summer. I think people are concerned about what is the role of that commission, where does it sit in review of pricing policies essentially for universities, and how does the minister view the Roblin commission report if already she is taking actions which are by-passing that?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Madam Chairperson, well, the Universities Grants Commission has a very important function and it does, as the member knows, relate to our universities and does have a constant contact with our universities. It is the Universities Grants Commission which determines

the amount of money that each university will get. Government determines the amount of money available for university funding. The Universities Grants Commission then looks at the budget of each of the universities which is submitted to the Universities Grants Commission and determines how then that the amount of money that government has allotted to universities will then be given out to the actual universities themselves.

The Universities Grants Commission, I will remind the member, had its chairperson and its vice-chairperson with me on the day of the announcement, also at a meeting that I held with the presidents of the universities and the vice-presidents of finance, the chairs of the board and the chairs of the finance committees of the university. Our relationship as government is that we believe that, yes, it does have an important function in Manitoba. However, the Roblin commission will have the responsibility of reviewing universities in this province, and we expect the Roblin commission will make recommendations on a number of matters.

My honourable friend has seen the mandate of the Roblin commission. It will be looking at the role and the mandate of universities. It will also be looking at the relationship of the universities to the community. It will be looking at universities' administrative function in relation to government and to the community. As I have said, it will look to the function of the universities. So the Roblin commission may bring forward recommendations in relation to the structure and into how our universities will operate. We look forward to those recommendations. At that point, when we see what the recommendations are, then government will look to see if changes are to be made.

**Ms. Frlesen:** I am sure that the minister knows there are special concerns about the position of graduate students in the University of Manitoba under these—and, indeed, in the small graduate programs elsewhere—changes that the minister has recommended to the universities.

I wonder what consultation she put in place before she essentially issued a blanket recommendation dealing with all students. Graduate students who come here from overseas, as she knows, are unable to earn money. Many of them are in the middle of their programs and are being faced with some very difficult choices to use page 1 of the government's recent answer book.

I wondered what the minister had done to confer with these students to understand what their situation was, and perhaps to look at some of the practices that have happened elsewhere in other provinces, which have, from time to time, introduced increased fees for such students. What kind of planning has gone on in the department on this?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Well, this was a government decision, as I should remind the member, not specifically and only a departmental decision. This was a government decision. We as a government and members of a government have constant contact with Manitobans and have had discussions with Manitobans on many issues including university education. We were aware through those discussions and also through research of the Department of Education that other provinces do have a policy of a surcharge for visa students. So we were able to see what was happening across Canada and also speak to Manitobans.

The member has, I think, asked another question, and maybe she could ask the question again, and then I can provide her with a full answer.

**Ms. Frlesen:** I think the minister was on the right track. What we were looking for was some indication of planning in the department, some indication of contacts with universities and some indication that there was a recognition of the special case, special needs of graduate students and the role that they play at the universities. I was wondering if the minister has undertaken research which looked at how other provinces had dealt specifically with graduate students.

**Mrs. Vodrey:** I thank the member for giving some additional detail of the information that was being required. In terms of planning with the universities, we do have representation, regular meetings with administration of the universities and also with the student representatives of the universities. The students bring forward concerns of all students within each of the four universities in Manitoba.

Those students do bring forward the concerns of students in general and then specific concerns of undergraduate students and graduate students. I have had discussions with the student representatives of the four universities in Manitoba to speak about some of the concerns and also special requirements at each level of study.

In addition, yes, we have had an opportunity to look at other provinces as well, and we have had a

chance to look at how they have applied the visa surcharge and the variations that those universities have applied the surcharge.

Sometimes when a government has made a policy decision they have issued it and said, it should apply to only a certain area or it should apply to only students starting at a certain time, and those statements are somewhat more limiting and provide a very specific direction to universities.

In our case our statement was a policy statement, and universities will determine how they will apply that decision.

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson):** Madam Chairperson, I have a question on another topic.

I must indicate that I am concerned about the move that has been made in terms of the application of differential fees to foreign students, and I believe the height of naiveté shown by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology (Mr. Stefanson) in this House in suggesting that there will not be any impact on the number of students enrolled is incredible.

I would say that whatever rationale the government has for applying differential fees it certainly has to recognize that visa students are going to look at a number of factors in terms of enrolling next year and, if they are faced with a major increase in tuition fees, it is very likely that a number of them will not re-enter the university system in Manitoba. That has already been documented.

There are already people saying they will not come back, and I think it is particularly unfair that the government is not even phasing in the process. That is one of the concerns expressed by a number of visa students. It would seem to be more logical if they are going to proceed with this, Madam Chairperson, to phase it in, although I think it is a mistake in policy.

I would note for the record that even the Sterling Lyon government, even Sterling Lyon considered bringing in differential fees and backed down because of the concern that was expressed from the university community about the impact it will have particularly on graduate programs and the real concern of the impact it is going to have on future contacts with other countries at a time when we have a growing globalization. We hear that term used a lot.

\* (1650)

I am concerned that we will lose visa students, and I am concerned that the rationale that is being used does not reflect the fact that many of the costs at universities are fixed costs. The marginal cost of an additional student is far lower than the average fixed cost. So it does not necessarily even make economic sense.

My specific concern is more local, and I just want to ask the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) in regard to the current situation of the BUNTEP centre in Thompson. I have written to the minister a number of times, and I realize that the minister is saying that it is out of her hands, but I want to point to the most recent development, Madam Chairperson.

The BUNTEP centre in Thompson has been in place for approximately 10 years. It was in space in the Polaris building with other access programs. When KCC took over the space under the reorganization brought on by this government, BUNTEP had to move out of its space into current rented space, which is costing it \$19,000 in the AFM building in Thompson.

The problem is that the BUNTEP program does not have the \$19,000 for the space. My understanding is that KCC does have space available in the Polaris buildings, given some of the further reductions that have taken place in the activities of KCC. The problem once again in this case is, even though space is available and, in this case, rent is not a problem, capital becomes a problem.

Madam Chairperson, this is the situation with the BUNTEP centre. There are many other educational programs in Thompson that each have their own particular locations. The social work program, for example, has a separate location quite apart from the others. One of the concerns that is being expressed repeatedly in the North—and it has been very clear in the Northern Economic Development Commission's document which is being, I believe, finalized and will be introduced in this House by the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey)—people are saying it is time for a northern university or polytechnic and not for a new institution per se, but for bringing together these various programs and sharing that cost. Instead of having one in one location and one in another and then having the BUNTEP with no particular location, there would be a pooling of resources, both administrative and in terms of rents.

I am wondering, first of all, if the minister can indicate whether there is any possibility of some sort of capital funding being available to BUNTEP or to KCC to renovate the space that I understand as being available, and second of all, perhaps more importantly, whether there is any consideration being given right now to bringing together many of the programs and getting the kind of co-ordination that I believe will result in better access to education in the North and cost savings for government.

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Madam Chairperson, I just have a couple of comments to make to the member. First of all, in his discussion about differential fees, I would remind him that by placing a cap on student tuition we have provided a degree of certainty on student tuition which has not been there before. The surcharge then is applied on top of that cap, but that cap, as I said, does provide a degree of certainty and students have now a very good idea of exactly what that amount would be. That has not happened in the past.

Students, in terms of tuition fees, have faced a great deal of uncertainty. This year, particularly, recognizing the difficult economic circumstances of Manitobans across this province, we have attempted to provide that degree of certainty and to assist. It does assist the visa students if the universities, as they determine how they will apply the differential fee for visa students, will decide if it will apply to certain groups of students studying at various levels or if there will be a phase in, but they also have the certainty of the 5 percent cap on tuition.

Madam Chairperson, the honourable member has written me a letter on the BUNTEP program. I know he has an interest in that area, and I know that he has asked a question about the issue of space. As he knows, too, our community colleges are moving to governance. They are moving to governance April 1, and so some of these decisions—it may be important to remember that there will be a new relationship between government and our community colleges coming up in the very near future, and in fact it may be much more accessible. We are expecting, as we move to governance, that it will be much easier for communities to discuss directly with community colleges and also their boards what the needs are of their own communities.

The member has also expressed an interest on a northern university, or in his most recent letter he

talked about a polytechnic, and he has asked about a consideration of that particular project. He does know that the Roblin commission is looking at university education in Manitoba, and we know that the Roblin commission has received briefs about university education and how that university education might be best delivered within the province of Manitoba.

So we will be looking forward to the Roblin commission's report, which then might provide some further direction and also might provide some further need that has been brought forward through their public hearings on how that issue might be addressed more specifically.

**Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington):** I would like to ask the Minister of Family Services a question.

Since the cutbacks to the 56 organizations were announced a week or so ago, we have asked in this House a number of questions about the rationalization, the reason behind the complete withdrawal of government funds for the Flin Flon/Creighton Crisis Centre serving the women and children and families of the Flin Flon area. We asked the minister if he had a rationale for this, if he had a plan, if he had an internal study that was done, what specific, clearly identified criteria were used to lead to the decision to totally unfund a crisis shelter in the Flin Flon area.

The minister's response, Madam Chairperson, has been that the Norman region has approximately the same type of resources as other regions of the province do and therefore, by implication, there is no loss of service to the women and children and families in the Flin Flon area.

I would like to ask the Minister of Family Services if he can give me the square kilometrage of the Norman region and how many families or how many individuals there are in that region that is now being serviced by one fewer crisis centre.

**Mr. Gillieshammer:** Madam Chairperson, I do not have that information here with me today to give the member the square kilometrage of that particular region or the numbers of families in it. I can get that information for her.

The issue was brought up by her colleague from Flin Flon last week. I indicated that in the review of our department we made certain decisions and that we reviewed the Family Dispute area as part of that overall Estimates review prior to making budget decisions. I would like to state for her information

and for her colleague's information that at no time did I indicate that we had done some formal review of that particular shelter. What I did indicate is we reviewed the services provided by the entire Family Dispute Services division of our department and in looking at Family Dispute Services on a regional basis felt that the Norman region could be served by the shelter in The Pas with the other services that are available in that area.

I would point out, we had indicated that recently the Victims Assistance Fund had provided the RCMP with funding to develop a victims' assistance program, and the detachment in the town of Flin Flon received funding for a half-time co-ordinator. While program responsibility is at the local level—

\* (1700)

**Madam Chairperson:** Order, please. The hour being 5 p.m. and time for private members' hour, committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

### IN SESSION

**Mr. Speaker:** The hour being 5 p.m., it is time for private members' hour.

### Committee Report

**Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairperson of Committees):** Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Ways and Means has been considering a resolution regarding Interim Supply, reports progress and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey), that the report of the committee be received.

**Motion agreed to.**

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

#### PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

##### Res. 12—Rural Day Care

**Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), that

WHEREAS recent changes to the daycare system have eroded what has been considered a model child care system in North America; and

WHEREAS 50 percent of rural residents must travel more than 15 kilometres to reach suitable child care services; and

WHEREAS the distance factor is highly significant because the additional travelling time extends the length of the working day; and

WHEREAS 39 percent of rural residents depend on annual family incomes of less than \$25,000 and find the costs associated with child care beyond their means; and

WHEREAS many rural occupations are of a seasonal nature, meaning that the need for child care services fluctuates throughout the year; and

WHEREAS there is a serious lack of less formal, more flexible, more accessible arrangements for child care services in rural areas; and

WHEREAS the lack of adequate child care services often means that parents are unable to work away from home, losing an opportunity to bring in needed family income; and

WHEREAS this creates extra hardship for both parents and children; and

WHEREAS an average of two Manitoba children die every year in farm related accidents and 20 to 30 require hospitalization; and

WHEREAS the Women's Institute has recommended the immediate development of a special policy for rural child care, including a close examination of ways in which subsidies and allowances are allocated to child care services, ways to address the isolation of many rural families and ways to address the shortage of child care spaces in rural areas; and

WHEREAS the Lakeview Children's Centre in Langruth is piloting a child care model which is sensitive to farm families' needs for quality, licensed, flexible and extended hour care.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Family Services to recognize the value of the Lakeview pilot project, which provides a licensed, accountable child care program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly urge the minister to seriously consider expanding and fully funding the number of licensed spaces at the Lakeview Children's Centre.

**Motion presented.**

**Ms. Barrett:** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to rise and speak today on this resolution on rural child care. This resolution is fairly lengthy in its WHEREASes and, I think, speaks very fully and



completely to many of the important issues that are faced by rural families in today's Manitoba.

I would like to speak specifically about some of the elements of the resolution, in particular, to begin, Mr. Speaker, the fact that what was once the model child care program for all of North America has by this provincial government's actions over the last two years been seriously eroded. As a matter of fact, the child care deliverers and users of service in the entire province of Manitoba are rightly concerned that the child care system has been irreversibly damaged by the actions of this government and, most particularly, the actions of the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer). That speaks to the entire child care system in the entire province of Manitoba.

This resolution deals specifically with the delivery of child care services in the rural areas of the province of Manitoba, areas that I and my caucus colleagues have visited on many occasions in the past years and have heard from child care providers and from farm families throughout the province about the need for flexible, affordable, high-quality child care, the same type of child care principles that are in the child care act, the same principles that are being eroded throughout the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, there are specific and special needs that face rural Manitobans when it comes to child care, and these are outlined in the resolution; for instance, the whole issue of distance. The Minister of Family Services has apparently not been cognizant of the enormous difficulties faced by rural families in the province of Manitoba when it comes to child care issues. The whole issue of distance is an incredibly important one in dealing with child care. There are virtually no child care facilities outside the larger communities in rural Manitoba that allow for the kind of flexible care that rural farm families and rural small town families need.

There have been some major structural changes in the life of rural Manitoba over the past years, Mr. Speaker, and these changes again had a very negative impact on rural Manitoba. The population of rural Manitoba is decreasing as people move to the cities. They move first to the regional centres, and then many of them come later into the city of Winnipeg and its surrounding network of suburbs largely because our agricultural base is being eroded, because there are no jobs in the rural areas, because the economic infrastructure that once

provided for a very high quality of life in rural Manitoba has been eroded over the years.

The government needs to reflect in its programming and in its service delivery through child care this new reality. It needs to understand that child care is not just an issue that has implications for children or for mothers or parents. Child care is a major economic component of a healthy farm rural economy, and it is not being addressed by this government.

The farm family today is a far different family than it was just a decade or two ago, Mr. Speaker, largely due to these economic changes. The farm families today have very little choice when it comes to who works on the farm, who works off the farm. Two-income farm families are far more the norm than the exception today. The need for child care that recognizes the specific needs of rural Manitobans has never been more apparent, and has never been more apparent by the lack of those services being provided to rural Manitobans.

The Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) and other ministers in this government have spoken many times about the need for families to have choices, and I agree. This resolution agrees that farm families, just as families who live in larger communities and in the city of Winnipeg, need to have, and have the right to have, choice in how their families are serviced by child care.

It is no longer acceptable by our society to have children going with their parents onto the farm machinery and into the fields as it used to be. We now know the hazards and the dangers of children being too closely connected to not only the farm machinery but also the chemicals that are used to an enormous degree in our modern farming methods.

Mr. Speaker, farming is virtually the only occupation in the northern countries, in the developed countries where children still are found at the workplace. It is the only profession where that still happens.

\* (1710)

It is potentially one of the most dangerous professions in our country as well. As the statistics relate, there are two children in Manitoba who die every year from farm accidents and 20 to 30 who are hospitalized. There is absolutely no reason for those statistics.

What we need in order to be able to eliminate those tragic statistics from our farm families is an accessible, quality, flexible method of child care.

The Lakeview Children's Centre in Langruth is a pilot project that has provided exactly those services for the people of Manitoba. It has, in its three years as a pilot project, provided accessible, quality, flexible child care for the people in that area of the province of Manitoba.

This resolution is asking the Minister responsible for Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer), and responsible for child care in the province of Manitoba, to recognize the value of what the Lakeview Children's Centre has provided in the way of a pilot project, to recognize the value of the services that Lakeview Children's Centre has provided to the people of rural Manitoba, to fully fund that children's centre so that it can continue to provide those services and to expand the concept into the rest of rural Manitoba of child care such as is provided by Lakeview Children's Centre.

Mr. Speaker, we know that there is a pilot project that is underway that is much more informal in scope than the Lakeview Children's Centre. This resolution and our policies as expounded in this House over the years recognize the need for a range of child care service provisions, and nowhere is that range and that choice more essential than in the rural parts of our province.

We are not for a moment suggesting that the only form of child care in the rural areas of Manitoba should be the kind of model that is provided by Lakeview Children's Centre. We recognize that there is a range of daycares and child care provisions and services that need to be provided. However, we are saying that this Lakeview Children's Centre has, over the past three years, provided an outstanding example of one form of child care that rural Manitobans have the right to expect from their provincial government.

This Lakeview Children's Centre is cost-efficient. It is effective. It allows rural families to remain in rural Manitoba. Without resources in rural Manitoba such as Lakeview Children's Centre and other child care centres and services, rural Manitoba will continue to be depopulated. Families in rural Manitoba will continue to have fewer and fewer choices. Children will continue to be subject to potential injury and even death, and the quality of life for the 40 percent of Manitobans who still live

outside the ring of influence of the city of Winnipeg will be immeasurably reduced.

What this resolution asks the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) and his government to do is to recognize what they have begun to recognize in their support in a pilot project manner, the Lakeview Children's Centre. We are asking them to continue to support the Lakeview Children's Centre. We ask them to implement other kinds of child daycare services in rural areas of Manitoba.

We ask this not just for the children of Manitoba, although even if we were asking it only for the children, that would be sufficient unto itself, but we are asking this in a broader context to reflect the needs of the economy of rural Manitoba, to reflect the needs of the families in rural Manitoba as well as the needs of the children of rural Manitoba.

As I stated earlier, Mr. Speaker, the hazards in not providing adequate child care in rural Manitoba are great indeed. We do not understand why the government is not showing a deeper commitment to the child care needs of the people of rural Manitoba.

Many of the members on the government side are from rural Manitoba. They, far more than myself, have first-hand experience about rural life. It is strange, therefore, that this government, which in its composition reflects the range of rural Manitoba with the exception of the Parklands area, does not seem to understand or is not willing to provide a basic service that will enhance the quality of life of rural Manitobans, that will enhance the economic viability of the people of rural Manitoba.

This government is talking about the need to expand our economic base. The government talks about the need to provide more jobs. The government talks about the need to provide an infrastructure which will allow for more jobs to be created. Mr. Speaker, this government has talked a lot about that. It has done very little, and it has done even less in rural Manitoba.

To end, we have provided the government of Manitoba, through this resolution, with a concrete, cost-effective answer to one of the concerns and one of the problems that face rural Manitoba, and we most sincerely hope that the government will support this resolution not only today but in their budget when it is brought down next month.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be able

to get up again this afternoon and talk about daycare, particularly rural daycare. The member opposite said a number of things we can partially agree to, that what Manitobans, particularly rural Manitobans, want is flexible, affordable and high-quality daycare.

The member talks about the erosion of standards. The fact is that the standards embodied in the legislation have not been changed, and those standards are there. She talks about the erosion of funding, yet the funding has been doubled on the daycare line in the last five budgets.

One would seriously have to question how the member analyzed this. If the standards remain the same and the funding has doubled, it would seem to me that she should recognize the tremendous advances we have made in daycare.

The member has indicated that she has ventured outside the city to visit parts of rural Manitoba, and I do recall her being in Brandon once last year and being able to view parts of my own constituency as well as other rural areas. I am sure that probably it was not her first time out there.

The Langruth daycare, as the member mentions, has been a pilot project that was funded partially by the province but more specifically by the federal government and at the current time does have partial funding from the province of Manitoba, particularly through the subsidies which are offered by the Department of Family Services.

The member does reference the special needs that are out there in rural Manitoba. I mean, we see this as far as the delivery of education is concerned, we see it as far as the delivery of health care as well as the many areas of life that Family Services are involved in.

By choice, many of us live in rural Manitoba and are pleased with the development of health care, education, family services, and the services in many cases are close at hand. I have had the pleasure of visiting a couple of rural daycare centres, namely the one in Ste. Rose that is sponsored by the St. Rose Kinsmen Club and the one in Russell, Manitoba, which is in the school system up there. It is interesting in talking to staff members who work in those daycare centres, there is certainly a recognition that they have a part to play within that community and respect the fact that their circumstances have to reflect the community levels that exist there.

\* (1720)

The member talks about the need for flexible daycare in rural Manitoba and, I think, has some knowledge of the fact that there is extended work being done in the spring and fall of the year particularly. I am very pleased that our department, along with the Department of Agriculture and the Women's Institute, have innovated some pilot programs which we think will go a long way to assisting rural families access daycare within their own communities.

I might say to the member that it is an historical fact that rural people are used to solving their own problems in unique ways that work out best for them. I applaud the Women's Institute for piloting a program for rural child care safety and putting in place the rural child care registry in which caregivers are matched with families who need care for their children during peak periods of farm operations. Again, this is a unique way of tackling a problem which is not a new one to rural Manitoba, but there is a recognition there that government and communities are not able to create and fund centres in every small community. There is a tremendous cost to government, so innovative ways have to be designed to meet these needs.

The pilot project was designed in co-operation with the aforementioned departments, and it was really in response to the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada's national child care survey. The survey results indicated that child safety has become a major concern as farm women assume more responsibility for farm operations without the benefit of reliable child care that was readily available and sometimes needed on the spur of the moment.

The child care safety registry was implemented in the community of Glenella last fall for the first time. Six caregivers were registered, and a number of farm families are utilizing that service. The community plans to reactivate the registry in time for spring seeding and again in the harvest season—again, a community response to a perceived need. We see this many, many times in rural communities where service clubs, chambers, town councils and other community groups including churches come forward and find these innovative solutions that are required for problems that are unique to rural Manitoba.

The member opposite has indicated that often farm families have little choice, and I am glad to hear her say that people who want to access daycare should have some choices about how they meet those particular needs, because I think it was not that long ago where that member and her party believed there was only one way to do things. I think her opportunity to observe how rural Manitobans tackle a problem probably has some long-standing benefits that she can apply to other things that she may be interested in.

As well as that pilot project in Glenella, we have some other communities, Minnedosa, Basswood, Stonewall, Melita, Swan River, Arborg and Riverton that have expressed an interest in forming these registries so that the child care can be accessed during those peak periods of seeding and harvest. Again with great thanks to the Women's Institute, we think that the community has come forward without the great involvement of government to resolve their own problems.

I can recall in discussions with some of the executive members of the Women's Institute that they indicated even within their own communities that there were neighbours that they would feel somewhat reluctant to approach, but through the registry process they felt these families would come forward and that families who needed child care could then access the registry and be able to access that daycare that they require.

This is an alternative that I think other provinces are going to be looking to, because the daycare situation in rural areas in Saskatchewan and Alberta is much the same. There are some pilot projects that are going on there. We think the very positive experience that we have had with the Women's Institute and this particular program is going to be a model that other jurisdictions could look for.

I have met with the Langruth daycare executive in recent weeks to review the work that they have done. They have made some remarkable progress in putting in place a daycare centre in a rural area. If my memory is correct, they are serving some 42 children in a very, very small community where there is great community co-operation to not only staff the daycare—and I believe I was told that they had some 11 people who, in some way, were drawing some salary from working in that daycare and serving those 42 children. The co-operation of some parents taking their children out of the daycare at

times so that others could put theirs in is something that we often see in relationships in rural Manitoba.

I think, while I can support a number of things that are encompassed in the resolution, I am going to, Mr. Speaker, move an amendment to the resolution which I think probably better reflects the reality in rural Manitoba.

I would move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay),

THAT Resolution 12 be amended by deleting all words following the first "WHEREAS" and replacing them with the following:

Child Safety has become a major concern as more Manitoba farming operations have both husband and wife employed as working partners; and

WHEREAS safety of children in rural communities is a concern to families particularly during the long hours of seeding and harvesting; and

WHEREAS the government of Manitoba recognized the need for reliable child care for rural families; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba Women's Institute is piloting a program for a Rural Child Care Safety Registry in which caregivers are matched with families who need care for their children during peak periods of farm operations; and

WHEREAS rural families support the concept of a child care safety registry because it provides a safe alternative to having children with them during peak farming periods which are normally stressful periods for farm families.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba commend the Manitoba Women's Institute for working together with the Manitoba Women's Directorate, Manitoba Agriculture and Manitoba Family Services for designing the pilot program to enhance the safety of children in rural Manitoba.

**Motion presented.**

**Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne):** Well, Mr. Speaker, I—[interjection] Perhaps if the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) would care to listen he will hear some things that might expand his understanding of what is happening in daycare. He might hear a few things about daycare that would make him stop and reflect upon the actions of his minister and his government.

I frankly, and I of course would never reflect on the Chair or the Speaker or a ruling of the Speaker, but it is a little remarkable to me that we could amend a resolution that speaks about the Lakeview Children's Centre in Langruth and never—

**An Honourable Member:** Are you challenging the Chair?

\*(1730)

**Mr. Alcock:** Oh, I am not challenging the Chair at all, I am simply remarking on the resolution that is on the table before me.

In fact, I am looking at both resolutions in my hand here, and I am noticing here in the original resolution that the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) was speaking about rural daycare, that she was raising concerns about the degradation of the system in North America, that she was raising concerns about the safety of children, and that she was talking about an innovative pilot project in Langruth. I note that in the amendment that the minister has completely chosen to ignore that.

**An Honourable Member:** Challenge his ruling.

**Mr. Alcock:** No, you know, I have such respect for this Speaker that on an issue of this sort, I am prepared to accept his ruling without challenging it, but I also wish to address what I see as hypocrisy consistent with the policies of this government.

**An Honourable Member:** What hypocrisy?

**Mr. Alcock:** Well, when the minister spoke, and I realize he has run screaming in terror from the Chamber, but when he spoke—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Alcock:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate you chastising the other members and calling them to order so that they can hear what has occurred. I know that when you reflect on what has occurred here, we have had a very, very unusual action taken by this government, and I think when we reflect on this, we will discover—[interjection]

Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the speaking notes. I appreciate this. This will be very helpful. I now understand the basis upon which you made your ruling, so I would like to focus the remainder of my time on the remarks of the minister.

The member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) stood in the House and said that the circumstances that confront rural families are different from the circumstances that confront urban families. I do not think anybody disagrees with that. She said that

there are particular concerns about the children in rural families at particular times of the year as a result of the stresses that some rural families face, and that we need a different response to that which might be considered legitimate in the city.

I heard the minister say exactly the same thing. The minister said almost precisely the same thing, that the circumstances in the rural areas are different than the circumstances in the urban areas and, therefore, we need differing responses.

What is different about the two presentations is the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) said, we need a continuum. She spoke glowingly about the Women's Institute and the fact that they have made some recommendations, and the minister spoke glowingly about the Women's Institute and the fact that they have made some recommendations. Except the minister has chosen, as this government always chooses, one very narrow interpretation of reality.

If I can commend the member for Wellington on this particular circumstance—[interjection] Yes, he snuck back in. The member for Wellington took the time to look at a range of possibilities and took the time to discuss and talk about and present a range of alternatives.

As the government so often points out, there are variations in rural communities. You might try a registry in some areas, although there are also some concerns about it. You might also try centres. You might try a variety of centres with different hours and flexible schedules as a way to respond to different conditions.

I think that is all the member for Wellington is asking for, is here is a demonstration project that offers an opportunity, that has proved to be effective in a rural community. The question is—and I am frankly rather puzzled, given the remarks by the minister, that the government is not rushing to support it. Why they bothered to amend this resolution, I am not certain what they hope to gain from it. I suppose the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) was perhaps a little impolitic in some of her WHEREASes where she might have held the government responsible for things that it does not want to be responsible for even though it is responsible for them. So I can understand the minister wanting to clean it up a little bit, but why he would choose to ignore the pilot project in Langruth and why he would choose to treat the volunteers and

the people who work in that community on this particular project in such a cavalier fashion is beyond me.

Surely what people are trying to do in rural Manitoba as they are in the cities in this province is coming together in a variety of ways to provide high quality child care in their communities. So why the minister would be so disparaging of Langruth and so negatively disposed towards what has been an innovative response to providing high quality child care by trained individuals in Langruth is quite beyond me. I would hope perhaps without a lot of confidence that this will come to pass. I would hope that the government would reflect on it and would think for a moment that not all children can be served in one way, not all communities need one response.

Those are the words of the minister, and why he would choose to dismiss one of a continuum of responses is, I think, quite inconsistent with his own presentation, although inconsistency on the part of this government and this particular minister is not something that we are unaccustomed to.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, with those brief remarks, I know the member for Wellington wants to put a few words on the record on this, and I believe the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) also, so I will yield the floor to allow the members to respond to this rather cavalier treatment by the minister.

**Ms. Barrett:** Mr. Speaker, yes, I appreciate the opportunity to get up yet again to speak more specifically to the amendment to this resolution put forward by the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) and also to comment on some of the remarks he made after my earlier comments on this issue.

The minister is speaking in his amendment about the rural child care safety registry, which has been piloted over this last season by the Departments of Agriculture, Family Services and the Women's Institute. This is a concept which has been, I believe, initiated originally in the province of Alberta with a great deal of success and is now in the province of Manitoba.

\* (1740)

Mr. Speaker, in our original resolution we talk about the need for child care services that recognizes the fact that the rural economy and particularly the farming economy and the farming cycle is variable. It fluctuates from season to season. All members of this House are well aware

of that and most certainly all rural Manitobans are well aware of that.

We have stated our support for the concept of a range of services which the rural child care safety registry is part of. However, as the member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) has stated in his comments, the amendment to the resolution on rural child care takes only one component—actually, it takes one problem and one component of a solution and discusses those, which is exactly what we are saying should not happen in our resolution.

The minister talks about safety for farm families, and we have talked about that as well. The horrendous statistics that face the children of Manitoba in this day and age in a modern industrialized farm community like Manitoba. There is no reason for a single fatality or a single accident to a child in this province due to the parents' lack of adequate supports for their children during farming season.

We have no quarrel with any of the things that the minister has stated in his amendment. The problem, Mr. Speaker, is that it again speaks only to a very narrow definition of child care. It speaks to a very narrow definition of the problems that face farm families and rural Manitobans. The Lakeview Children's Centre, as is the Rural Child Care Safety Registry, is part of a continuum of service provision that must be available to all families in Manitoba, rural and urban.

Our resolution speaks to the fact that, while there are seasonal fluctuations in the farming communities, in particular seeding and harvesting, Mr. Speaker, farming, as certainly all members on this side of the House do know and all members on that side of the House should know, is not a seasonal occupation. Farming takes place all year round. Therefore, it is not just at the peak seasons of seeding and harvesting that child care is needed in rural Manitoba. Flexibility in child care provision is needed in rural Manitoba all year long, not just at the peak seasons of seeding and harvesting.

Another thing, Mr. Speaker, that this amendment neglects to address is the fact that many farm families, many rural families no longer have the luxury of having one partner do the majority of the farm work or the majority of the harvesting and seeding, and the other partner in a more traditional way takes care of the children and the support for her partner to do the major work on the farm of the

harvesting and seeding. Today many, if not most, farm families are obliged to have two partners working. That means that the need is for either one or both partners to work either full time or part time off the farm during the entire year or during part of the year. This means that we cannot have a child care system in rural Manitoba that is directed solely to peak seasons of seeding and harvesting. We must have a continuum of service that provides child care throughout the year to farm families and to rural Manitobans. The minister's amendment to our resolution does not address the broader issue of the needs of rural Manitobans in child care.

The minister also stated in his discussion that the New Democrats when they were in government and continued almost up until today, according to the minister, to think that there was only one form of child care that was the best form of child care or the only form of child care.

Mr. Speaker, as I have on past occasions and as I will continue to do when the minister puts this inaccuracy on record, I will correct his statements. The Manitoba New Democratic Party governments in the early and mid and late '80s instituted a child care policy that was a model for the entire North American continent. One of the reasons that it was a model was that it provided for a continuum of service. It provided for a range of child care options for families.

Mr. Speaker, we have child cares in the province of Manitoba instituted by the former New Democratic Party government that provide service 24 hours a day. We have child cares in the province of Manitoba instituted by the former New Democratic Party government that provide child cares in the workplace. We have child cares in the province of Manitoba instituted by the New Democratic Party government that provide for a range of flexible services in the rural areas of the province of Manitoba.

Our child care act put in force by the New Democratic Party government in the province of Manitoba allows for not only licensed child care services in a daycare child care setting, it allows for nursery school services which are under enormous attack by this government at this time. It allows for child care in schools which this government has neglected to implement, and it allows for family daycare. The New Democratic Party when it was in government instituted a child care policy that provided the full range of services to all Manitobans.

For the minister to stand in his place and say that the NDP only knows one way to do things when it comes to child care in Manitoba cannot go unanswered and will, Mr. Speaker, never go unanswered as long as he continues to put those statements on record which are inaccurate to say the least.

Mr. Speaker, we will not be able to support the amendment put forward by the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) to our resolution not because, as I have stated earlier, there is anything wrong with the amendment per se, but it slices off only a narrow part of the problem facing rural Manitoba families and the necessary child care provisions for those families.

We must regretfully vote against this amendment, as I have stated, because it does not address the real needs of the people of Manitoba. It does not address the real child care needs of the children in the province of Manitoba no matter where they live.

Mr. Speaker, again, the minister neglects in his amendment to address the concerns that have been raised not only in child daycare, but in other areas of his department about the geographical reality of the province of Manitoba, which is that while 60 to 75 percent of the people in the province of Manitoba now live within 45 minutes of the city of Winnipeg, there are still 25 to 40 percent of the people of the province who live outside that sphere of influence of the city of Winnipeg.

Services for those people must be maintained and enhanced not only in child daycare, but in educational services, in services to children with special needs, in services to adults with special needs, in services to the frail elderly, in health care, in education, in services, most particularly, Mr. Speaker, to families in desperate need of safety.

The Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) has eliminated a entire crisis centre for women and children in northern Manitoba on the grounds that there are adequate resources provided by his government in the region. We must ensure that the provision of services to the people of Manitoba, when it comes to child care, do not fall under the axe of this government's cutbacks. That is why we cannot endorse the amendment as put forward by the minister.

We reiterate our concerns for the child care system in rural Manitoba, and we must state that we will be supporting our resolution that has a much

broader implication rather than the much more narrowly focused amendment put forward by the Minister of Family Services.

\* (1750)

I would also like to rhetorically, if I may, ask the Minister of Family Services if he is prepared at the end of the pilot project funding for the rural child care safety registry to commit ongoing operating funds for that registry in rural Manitoba. The minister is apparently unable or unwilling to provide to the Lakeview Children's Centre the comfort of a commitment to ongoing core funding for a daycare which has proven itself to be a massive success in providing services to the children of rural Manitoba. That child care centre is likely not able to exist in the near future due to this government's inability or intransigence when it comes to funding adequately these resources.

So, Mr. Speaker, when the minister talks in glowing terms about the pilot project of the rural child care safety registry, we on this side of the House find the alarm bells ringing, because there are a number of instances: The Elder Abuse Resource Centre, Victims' Assistance money, crisis shelters, a reduction in the subsidy paid to child care centres throughout Manitoba. We see a number of instances where this government has paid only lip service to services for children.

We would ask the minister to give us some assurance that child care provisions for all people in Manitoba are fully funded and are adequately funded so that all children in Manitoba, no matter where they live, can have the assurance of quality, highly flexible child care in the province.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows):** I am pleased to be able to participate in this debate because I believe our former Family Services critic has put forward an excellent resolution. I am disappointed that the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) was unable to support it and in fact amended it so completely that it bears no resemblance to the original resolution.

I would like to begin by asking the question, why do we need daycare in rural areas, and can we justify the cost? I think there are a number of reasons why I can answer that in a positive and why we can justify this. [interjection]

The member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) said he is opening a brand-new daycare next week. I would

be interested in knowing if it is going to be open until 9 p.m. and whether it is going to provide special services for children of farm families during harvest and spring seeding. The first rationale I think that we can use to justify it is that people in rural Manitoba deserve the same level of services that people in Winnipeg get; therefore, child care centres should be accessible and affordable and available for people in rural Manitoba just as they are in Winnipeg.

Secondly, I believe that the need is even greater, particularly at times of year such as seeding and harvest, than it is in other places. Of course, the reason for this is that it is a safety issue.

As one of the articles from the Free Press says, quoting Rita Roeland: The Manitoba Safety Council says, farming is the only industry in the world where children are allowed on the worksite.

That has dangerous consequences for children in many cases. For example, we have statistics on farm accidents. [interjection]

Well, the member for Emerson is asking a rhetorical question, but I will answer it anyway. That is, yes, it is normal for children to grow up on farms. Many members opposite grew up on farms. I lived on a farm, and I am aware that there are many benefits to growing up on a farm. There are many benefits and good things about living on a farm and learning about hard work, but there are also risks. One of the risks is the danger of accidents.

There were things that happened on the farm that I lived on that were not particularly safe. I remember my cousin Neil driving a tractor when he was—well, steering a tractor when he was three years old, because they could not afford to hire help other than me. So he was needed at haying time.

The risks for children are great. To quote from this article in the Free Press from October 5, 1992: An average of two Manitoba children die every year in farm-related accidents and 20 to 30 more require hospitalization largely because of inadequate rural child care services.

Once again this is from the Manitoba Safety Council.

The reason they are needed in rural Manitoba is so the children are not on the worksite, especially at times like seeding and harvest when they are at risk of being injured on their own family farm. These things happen very easily. They happen very quickly.



For example, at both seeding and harvest, farmers are using grain augers. Grain augers sometimes have safety covers and sometimes they do not. It is very easy for a child or an adult to get their clothes caught in an auger, to get a limb caught in an auger. They are a dangerous instrument because people can be maimed and injured, and children do get maimed and injured in farm accidents in Manitoba every year.

The advantage of a child care centre is that children can be in a safe place where they are not at risk and not in danger.

We also need child care centres that have flexible hours and where people can take their children, especially during the busy time. The Lakeview Children's Centre at Langruth offers extended hours, the only one in Manitoba, as far as they are aware. That makes them unique.

Statistics Canada, in their national child care survey, and the rural child care project of the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada confirmed that many farm families require child care for their children, particularly during harvest and seeding times, but throughout the year as well. That is why the Manitoba Child Care Association is urging the government to provide funding for the Lakeview Children's Centre.

They go on to say in their letter to the minister: Today only the Langruth centre is in fact piloting the kind of model which is most sensitive to farm families' needs for quality, licensed, flexible and extended-hour care. That is due to a federal

initiative, the Child Care Initiative Fund of Health and Welfare Canada.

So this was funding that they received on an experimental basis. But, you know, the federal Conservative government promised a child care initiative. I believe they promised it in the 1984 election and the 1988 election but did not deliver on that promise. I think the reason is that ideologically many of their members do not believe in it. In fact, I think the attack on child care in this province is because there are many members in the Conservative caucus who do not believe in child care.

I know from talking to one of the parents who said she talked to her MLA in Winnipeg who said he never put his children in child care and implied that therefore no one else needed to or no one else should. I believe that this government is using the deficit as an excuse to do the things that ideologically they believe in, that they could not do before and now they have an excuse to do. That is why we see fees going up. That is why we see 400 fewer spaces, and that is why we see a cap on subsidized child care spaces.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) will have eight minutes remaining.

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Thursday).

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Wednesday, March 24, 1993

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