



First Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(Hansard)

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The Honourable Louise M. Dacquay
Speaker*



MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, June 26, 1995

The House met at 8 p.m.,

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

(Concurrent Sections)

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Ben Sveinson): Good evening. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. The committee will be resuming consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Government Services.

When the committee last sat, it had been considering item 1. Administration (b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits, on page 71.

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): Mr. Chairperson, I have some questions that deal with the evacuation of some towns in northern Manitoba, the ones that are fleeing from the fires that we have burning up there right now.

All I need is a summary of what has happened so far, with the numbers of evacuations that have been taking place, the number of fires that are burning and people going helter-skelter. I want to get myself caught up with who is where, from where, and where they are staying, and all that sort of thing, just a summary of where they are at. Maybe we can start with Leaf Rapids first.

Hon. Brian Pallister (Minister of Government Services): We will just get an update for you on that, and I believe it will be coming up here in a second.

I will start with the Gods Lake Narrows situation, because I have a reasonable handle on that one. We began to evacuate yesterday from Portage la Prairie and have been proceeding with that evacuation. I believe, as we speak, all evacuees who were in Portage la Prairie are now returned home, transported back to Gods Lake Narrows. However, some of these evacuees

have travelled into, we believe, Winnipeg, so we are attempting to notify them of the availability of transportation back to their homes or attempting to locate them and co-ordinate flights to get them back to their homes. I know they will be appreciative of that.

(Mr. Peter Dyck, Acting Deputy Chairperson, in the Chair)

As far as Leaf Rapids—I think the member is aware of the unforeseen circumstances that caused the second evacuation to occur. I guess it is a good-news, bad-news scenario in the sense that because the evacuations were relatively close together, some of the folks had not returned home yet and had remained in Thompson and some in The Pas, we are told. So they had not gone back to Leaf yet. The other folks were moved, about 1,100 residents, to Lynn Lake. They are housed, some in private accommodations, some in accommodation arranged in the communities. Some are actually camping, as well.

As far as the South Indian Lake area, those residents are still remaining in Thompson and for the most part are housed there. I believe a few have made other arrangements, apart from those made in co-operative discussion with the community and with Emergency Measures and other government departments. There is progress being made at that fire, but it is still a little bit premature to try to have those folks move back home just yet.

Granville Lake, again, the firefighting is continuing there. Sixty-three residents of this community have been evacuated to Wabowden and Thompson. What we have done, because certainly with any issue around the disaster, and certainly this is an extremely illustrative case of that, there is a tremendous amount of stress associated with the circumstances these people are facing and that they are in, and so we have established critical incident stress debriefing teams, and these are folks who are trained and able to work with, in conjunction with, the evacuees to address their concerns, hopefully help them to work through some of the emotional trauma they are facing.

* (2010)

It is certainly almost impossible, I think, for most of us to appreciate, who have not come from a northern community or have not been through an evacuation process, what it would be like. I guess, you know, I have certainly been touched by the situations that these folks have been faced with, and I have learned from my discussion with them a lot more about their feelings and about the concerns that they have.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

Certainly there are no easy answers, as the member knows, with the case of Leaf Rapids. We were besieged, and I understand it is not untypical of situations like this, by requests to get back home. People wanted to be in their homes, and at the same time, in retrospect, many people may be now observing that it was too soon to go back, but these are situations where there are unforeseen circumstances that arise, very, very unpredictable circumstances.

That is the nature of fire. I know just last year on our farm, I was doing some cleanup involving myself with some fire, and I am lucky it did not get away from me. So I have been through it on a small scale in my family farmyard. Once that fire gets going, it is incredible how fast it can proceed and move and change in different directions. It takes on a mind of its own, it seems.

We need to recognize that there are a lot of variables at work in nature, and certainly it is unfortunate, the consequences we are seeing because of that truth in northern Manitoba this year. I hope that gives you a bit of an overview.

Mr. Struthers: Yes, it does. I just have a few more specific questions about where some of them are located. The people that have been evacuated from South Indian Lake, you said they are staying in Thompson. What facilities are they using within Thompson to house the people from South Indian Lake?

Mr. Pallister: Various facilities within the community: friendship centre, school gymnasium,

Keewatin Community Centre, Deerwood School. I know that in Thompson—I will not pronounce the name of the friendship centre properly so I will not attempt to, but the friendship centre has been used to house some of the older people that have respiratory problems or where their health is of some concern. So they are being housed in the friendship centre. I am aware that is one specific case.

Mr. Struthers: Is there anyone from Lynn Lake who has been evacuated from there or is everybody from Lynn Lake still in the community?

Mr. Pallister: At the present time, and we hope of course that conditions are such that that can continue.

Mr. Struthers: Anyone who is evacuated from a town and does not go to say, a prescribed locality that your department has mentioned, does your department pay for them to stay anywhere else? I am thinking of a hotel or lodgings with some relatives or a friend. Is there any money that goes towards those evacuees who stay other than at the community places?

Mr. Pallister: I would ask the member to understand that we are talking in general terms, and there are innumerable possible combinations and permutations of events that can occur around a disaster, dependent on many things, including the amount of time that our department and the communities have to put their disaster preparedness plans into place, to line up appropriate housing, these types of things.

Generally speaking, we will arrange communal, for lack of a better word, housing for all evacuees. If there are unique or special circumstances such as the example I gave you, where some of the older people needed special, separate housing, we will attempt to arrange that whenever possible.

In the case of the Gods Lake Narrows Band, I know that there were some women there—in fact, we had two births during the evacuation to Portage la Prairie. Women in their advanced stages of pregnancy were provided with rooms at a local hotel, as were some of the elders who were in extreme—I will not say extreme, but their physical condition was such that they did require that level of accommodation.

But generally speaking, we will only cover for the cost of communal housing except in those types of situations I used as an illustration. If someone is able to stay with family or friends in a community, that is of course acceptable and good for them. We would in that instance cover the costs of their food, provided they have receipts or evidence of incurring some cost, of course. I hope that gives a little bit of a better elaboration for the member.

Mr. Struthers: Yes, that does. The last comment I want to make was that we did talk with a woman who was 104 years old from Gods Lake in Portage, who was slated to go sleep on the arena floor, but one of her friends stepped in and she got moved to better accommodations in Southport. I know that those exceptions are made, and I thank the minister for that information. That is all I have.

Mr. Pallister: I thank the member for his interest and his interest in the past. I know this is, as he understands, as I think all members understand, a most emotional circumstance for the folks that are thrust out of their normal place of residence and forced into a new community. It is a difficult thing for them. It places some difficulties of course as well on the host communities, to accommodate and to provide as best they can for the needs of the evacuees.

It is certainly, I think, an illustration, as I am beginning to understand the process, of how we can more effectively work together among government departments and with the communities with various levels of government. I am told by all accounts that we are doing a much better job than we did in the past, in '89 for example, in giving some element of certainty and some better understanding of the structure that exists for people who are evacuated and for host communities so that we do not add those kinds of uncertainties to the already obvious uncertainties that cause the situation to develop in the first place. I think that is good. I invite the member, as I have in the past, if he has other comments, suggestions or concerns, I welcome those inquiries on his part.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I believe the Senate of Canada is entertaining some sort of a bill at this time, the intent of which is to put restrictions on cars as

to the mode of fuel that they can use. They have to phase out gasoline over a period of years. I think California is looking at this and I know that the government is looking at alternative fuels for the fleet. I wonder if the minister could inform us as to what has been happening lately in this area.

* (2020)

Mr. Pallister: We certainly are conscious of the number of these environmental initiatives in our department because we are pursuing them. As far as the specific one the member alludes to, I cannot give him detail on that at this point.

I can tell him that we do use, for example in the fleet vehicle agency, recycled oil. I can tell him in terms of sustainable development concepts that we are doing a paper recycling program known as Paper Rescue that you might have heard of, which was implemented back in '90 originally. What that does is—it has expanded now into 44 different locations across the province. We are saving a lot of trees. The member I am sure appreciates that. In '94, 110 tons of paper was recovered and recycled by this program alone. No doubt the member has seen throughout the Legislative Building itself the blue baskets for recycling purposes.

As well, over '94 over 14,500 Winnipeg telephone directories were collected from government offices in Winnipeg. That is about 24 metric tonnes of material that was diverted from landfill sites. That is a saving of over 400 full-grown trees.

Newspaper recycling: That has been taking place here and is implemented in the Legislature itself and is implemented in 27 other buildings. That is going on.

Composting at the Brandon Correctional Institution—in our government greenhouse we have been composting kitchen waste from the Woodsworth and Legislative Building since November of '92. In fact, the Norquay building as well joined that program last year and to date approximately 16 metric tonnes of kitchen-preparation food wastes have been diverted from landfill. Composting of grass clippings is going on at the Agassiz Youth Centre in Portage and the Selkirk Mental Health Centre.

Refillable cup program. Aluminum, plastic container collection bins have been set up throughout government cafeterias. Bottles, rigid plastic containers, we have implemented that in several facilities—cooking oil recycling.

An interesting area to me, I guess, is the water conservation pilot project where we retrofitted numerous of the toilet tanks and the faucets in 41 government facilities. They have been retrofitted with water conservation devices and we use less water now with every flush. This is important too. As well, a 2 percent reduction in building water consumption in '94-95 fiscal year has been achieved as well. Numerous initiatives along the lines of the sustainable development concept that the member eludes to with his question.

Mr. Maloway: My question though specifically was to deal with the fleet and the attempt of the government to reduce the gasoline consumption and whether or not any initiative was being taken in the area of propane conversions, because that has worked with some fleets.

Mr. Pallister: The member alludes to alternative fuels, and we did a trial with propane. The technology was not advanced to the degree that there were significant cost savings that could be generated there for the taxpayer or in terms of environmental degradation that there were significant gains to be had in that case either.

I think the single most significant illustration though of how we are working toward a cleaner environment is the fact that we have, with this particular special operating agency, 550 fewer vehicles burning fossil fuel right now in this province than we did just three years ago. There is considerable saving to be had there. So I would think that we are making progress in that regard.

Mr. Maloway: Then how many cars did the minister outfit with the propane conversion units, and how many are there currently in the fleet?

Mr. Pallister: Four or five years ago this was a trial that was done at that time and there were less than a dozen vehicles utilized at that time. This is not to rule

out the fact that it could be something that could be tried in the future.

Mr. Maloway: I appreciate the minister's response, and I would encourage him to take another look at it because, as he knows, a good chunk of Winnipeg cabs are burning propane and something, I think, certainly worth looking into.

Not having a government vehicle, and not being overly desirous of one, I really am not sure how your fleet fuels itself. Do you have an arrangement with one supplier, or do you allow the people to gas up wherever they please, and, if so, how do they pay for it?

Mr. Pallister: Each driver is given a fleet credit card, and they utilize the credit card to make their purchases. Each year the Fleet Vehicles SOA approaches the suppliers in an effort to negotiate discounts and has been successful in doing that. The discounts can range from 4 to 5 percent discount on the pump price for gas.

Mr. Maloway: So let me see, Mr. Chairman, if I understand this. The SOA goes to the independent gas stations and arranges a discount program. So I assume then that the person who drives the government car can gas up wherever they please. They have a government credit card, is that how it works? So at some of the chains or some of the gas stations there is a discount they get which the government sees an immediate reduction on. Now, if the employee does not go to one of the stations that you have approached, then, I guess, there is no discount.

* (2030)

Mr. Pallister: Just to clarify for the member, the SOA does not negotiate with individual retail outlets but does enter into arrangements with the companies like Mohawk, Co-op, Esso, Turbo, Shell. It is highly unlikely, probably it could be said that it is rare, that a government vehicle is filled up at an outlet which does not offer a discount of some significant size to the government of Manitoba.

Mr. Maloway: Could the minister tell us what efforts the government is making to retrofit its buildings with new furnaces and items of this nature?

Mr. Pallister: What I can do is I can make some comments for the member's benefit on energy management policy generally, and in the process of doing that, I hope that I will address his larger concerns about cost-effectiveness in terms of energy management in our property management area.

I will start off by talking about, sort of, the noncapital or low capital cost techniques that we are utilizing to reduce energy consumption in government-owned buildings and also in leased buildings. They are, for example, limiting building ambient temperatures to 21 degrees Celsius during the winter and between 25 and 29 degrees Celsius during the summer.

Of course, as we would note recently, with the exception of the Legislative Building for the most part, it is one technique that we utilize to reduce costs, reducing ambient lighting levels, utilizing higher efficient lighting sources, reduction of the building domestic hot water temperatures to 38 degrees Celsius, modification of janitorial schedules to allow day cleaning which reduces the lighting and ventilation system operating hours that were an expensive requirement prior to that technique being introduced, shutting down building ventilation systems during unoccupied periods, evenings, weekends, holidays, for example, educating client occupants to co-operate with the energy management program by turning off lights when leaving unoccupied spaces, dressing in more casual but seasonably sensible clothing, establishing a preventative maintenance program to maximize equipment operating efficiency and life-expectancy period, cycling and parking lot electrical receptacles, reducing the steam operating pressures in selected powerhouses during low demand periods are examples of the way in which we are proceeding to manage the energy resources that we have more effectively with a view to cost savings, at the same time recognizing that the quality of the workplace and the environment that people work in is essential to productive behaviour by staff, as well.

These are examples of noncapital areas. We are also working with Manitoba Hydro on the Power Smart initiative, three different projects. Where feasible, converting from electric to gas is another example. An example of a specific project for the member for

Elmwood was the recent renovation of the Ward Lab, where we spent about \$50,000 and upgraded the facility in terms of how we monitor and how we best deliver energy effectively within that building. There would be one specific project as an example to the member.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Chairman, under the area of Office Equipment Services, I was going to ask the minister whether he had an inventory of government computer equipment. I have understood from a source, anyway, that the government does not have a list of computer equipment, that, in fact, each department has lists, but they are incomplete, and nobody really knows what is going on in there with regard to all this equipment. Now, I am sure the minister will have a clarification of that.

Mr. Pallister: Certainly, Mr. Chairman, the purchasing of computer equipment is a decentralized responsibility, so our department is not engaged in central purchasing of computer equipment on behalf of all other government departments; rather individual departments have relative autonomy in dealing with the procurement of computer equipment based on their own unique circumstances.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Chairman, I understand the Finance department has undertaken a program to upgrade the computer equipment, so there is some sort of consistency within the government. It seems to me that the old system of each department buying its own equipment, and all of this equipment being incompatible with one another was basically from a bygone era with this new system. The minister has just told me a minute ago that, in fact, the departments are still buying their own individual computer equipment.

Mr. Pallister: The member alludes to a problem that is a concern I think to all provincial governments and the federal government, and I am sure not just in this country or in our provinces, but elsewhere as well, and that is the whole issue of microcomputer maintenance and service and purchasing, as well.

We provide the microcomputer maintenance and service for various internal and private sector agencies and co-ordinate them depending on their location in the

province. In certain areas, we contract with private sector suppliers to do the maintenance work, and other work is done by our own Supplies and Services department in the Office Equipment area for approximately 5,000 microcomputers and 3,000 printers, so the member is quite correct in alluding to the complexity of the problem.

There is an initiative called ITRO, Information Technology Review Office, that is looking into the development of more open systems, and the member is far more computer literate than I in these areas, so he may be aware of this initiative already, but with an idea to developing more open systems where there is more compatibility and so on in those systems.

I can tell him, though, that in terms of the Supply and Services aspects of this operation, two fiscal years ago Supply and Services took over the responsibility for providing a cost-recoverable service to maintain the computer equipment that we have.

Just to give an idea to the member of the relative activity that has gone on in that area, during the 1992-93 fiscal year Office Equipment Services recorded over 1,800 service calls of which about 1,200 were performed by our staff, over 600 by private sector vendors. In 1993-94, there were almost 2,100 calls recorded, and for this past fiscal year, 3,400 calls. So the level of service required in our microcomputer area is definitely on the increase. That is an increase of about 45 percent over the previous fiscal year.

* (2040)

As far as the breakdown for Office Equipment Services versus external vendors, roughly again, 2,600 calls were handled by Office Equipment Services and about 800 by external vendors. Our Office Equipment Services technicians are also available to provide help to desk-type service, total hours between April of 1994 and March of this year, about 580 hours to client departments at no charge.

This has the effect of lowering the total cost to the client through direct avoidance of service calls and sourcing compatible quality parts at the lowest price for the machinery they have.

As far as microcomputer parts, total costs associated with normal repairs and with the ITRO-approved rebuilds, over 300 ITRO-approved rebuilds and upgrades, approximately \$500,000 by centrally acquiring those parts through our Office Equipment Services department, and we estimate savings of about \$80,000 to the taxpayer. There is some information for the member.

Mr. Maloway: I would like to also ask the minister about the reference he makes to rental agreements and the fact that there are evidently something like 13,000 office machines. I assume those are fax machines and photocopying machines and so on. What is the policy of the government, or the evolving policy of the government, regarding these machines? Are they looking at some sort of standardization of the type of machines that they are buying or standardization of the maintenance contracts?

Mr. Pallister: I will attempt to describe the process in general terms. In essence, the standing order is prepared, specifications are outlined in conjunction with discussions with departments, various client departments. Various suppliers are then approached. The prices are procured. The particular machine or service required is categorized, based on generally things like size or usage, and then the lowest price hopefully made available to the departments.

So there is, in essence, an element of standardization that occurs as a consequence of the response to the specifications. Through that process, I guess the end result that we all hope for is that we have a cost-efficient service. An example of one of the things that we have done with regard to photocopiers, to try to—and effectively have reduced costs, is that we have set up approximately 100 key copiers which provide the departments with better functionality, better quality service and better supplies. These key copiers are placed in identified areas of greater use and then are available to various client users.

For example, in the provincial government building in my home town, that is one of the key copier areas. This reduces the number of individual installations for photocopiers, while at the same time allowing each of these departments access to a better quality, faster

service than would be the case with separate entities, separate copiers in each separate government office or work area.

As far as in 1994-95, there were 27 photocopier upgrades to better featured equipment at less cost to government, and eight new key-controlled copiers were added to this program. On an ongoing basis, this part of our department continues to evaluate the requirements of our clients and locates copier centres as required, specifically with regard to reducing the cost and providing, whenever possible, two-sided copying to the client department.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Chairman, is any thought being given to try to further reduce the paper in the government by having documents scanned, by means of optical scanners, into computers, into hard drives and thereby reducing the amount of paper that the government is using in a year?

There is a tremendous amount of paper produced around here, as all of us know. A lot of it never gets used and it is certainly technologically possible. Some industries are at the point now where they are almost in a paperless office situation through the use of scanning machines and computer technology.

Mr. Pallister: The member makes a valid point, a valid assertion I think that the overall objective is to reduce the outflow of paper unnecessarily. The technological advances that he refers to, the scanning and so on which are certainly impressive and exciting are something that would probably be best undertaken on a decentralized basis within given client departments that would avail themselves most appropriately of that service.

I can tell him that we have pushed forward in attempting to increase the percentage of our copiers that are capable of two-sided copying as a single illustration of an attempt to reduce paper. I can tell him that over half our copiers now are two sided.

* (2050)

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the minister a question about the proposed special

operating agency for the postal services. Now, I realize that it is still in the planning stages, but how does the minister envision this special operating agency taking form and how will it change? How will the operation change from the way it operates today versus the way it will be operating in the future?

Mr. Pallister: Well, the objectives, of course, with the special operating agencies, whether in existence or planned are the same, to provide quality services at less cost, to provide a greater efficiency and to become perhaps more responsive than was the case in the past to the needs of those clients whom we serve. Recognizing that we have customers in our department is something that we are doing and no different from a retail business, private sector operation.

We know that we have to become the agency of choice when we provide services to our clients. We have to have the attitude that we will be as efficient, as effective, as capable as possible in the delivery of those services that we are responsible for providing. So, in the interests of doing those things, the SOAs that we have thus far implemented which are at various stages of development have attempted to make, I guess a cultural change if you will within them which recognizes those facts and have done that to varying degrees of success given the fact that they are at varying stages of making that transition.

In the area of postal services, there have been many changes on an ongoing basis over the last few years and this is sort of another step in the journey, I would suppose. Becoming a special operating agency is just another step along the road to continuous improvement that this department and certainly the postal services aspect of this department are attempting to continue to travel.

Just as an example of improved efficiencies in postal services, at one time we used a postal truck, government postal truck and four full-time employees to take mail from the Legislature, I guess, into various other government offices around the city and that cost approximately a quarter of a million dollars. What we do today is we utilize a private courier firm and they provide that service to us at now less than \$70,000. So there would be a single example with, by all accounts,

improved capability. At a cost that is less than a third of the previous cost, this service is being done.

No one realistically expects that our postal services, just because they will perhaps become an SOA in the not too distant future, to provide the same level of service for less than a third of the cost, but on the other hand, we know that if we continue to look for cost efficiencies we will find them, and if we do not, we will not, so we will look for them.

Mr. Maloway: What is the name of the courier service the minister just referred to?

Mr. Pallister: Dynamex.

Mr. Maloway: Could the minister tell us then, at what point—because I believe he said that this service given to Dynamex was taken away from the postal service. This is a service that the postal service used to handle, no?

Mr. Pallister: That particular improvement was made over three years ago. The recent contract, and that was the figure I alluded to, was just renegotiated and was a figure of less than \$70,000. So they had a three-year contract initially which just came up for renewal, and they came in at a lower price this time.

Mr. Maloway: So is the minister saying he saved \$70,000 or the contract was for \$70,000?

Mr. Pallister: The contract was for less than \$70,000. The actual cost, not in constant dollars but in actual dollars four years ago, was over a quarter of a million dollars for that same service.

Mr. Maloway: Just a couple more questions to the minister. I had a question regarding—he made reference to the seven sites—this is under security and parking—that are contracted to private security services.

I was wondering if he could provide us with a list of these seven sites, and the list of the companies that are providing these private security services, and, certainly, if possible, to flesh out the information as to how long the private services have been providing this service.

Mr. Pallister: I have some of the information the member requested, not all though, but as far as the security contracts are concerned, there were two-year contracts with a third year negotiable option which was that third year option was recommended to minimize cost increases as had been seen in past for contracts.

For hanger T5, Pinkerton's of Canada, that particular contract has expired, and we have now installed a new security system that is centrally monitored. In the Woodsworth system, Inner-tec Security, Assiniboine Community College, we do that one internally, there is in-house security, as well, the Legislative Building, the Archives, Law Courts, Portage and Brandon Provincial Buildings, the Thompson Provincial Building, Manitoba Developmental Centre in Portage, the Brandon Mental Health Centre in Brandon.

For the member's information, there are mobile patrol and alarm response services provided in Winnipeg to numerous government-owned facilities. In addition, 59 alarmed government sites are checked by the mobile patrol when an alarm is activated. In terms of security, that gives the member a broader perspective, perhaps.

In Brandon, there is mobile patrol and alarm response provided at the Brandon mental hospital, Brandon courthouse, Rideau Park, Ag Services provincial building, Land Titles, the rural cabinet office and the Department of Highways yard and office.

Numerous sites in Portage la Prairie are provided mobile patrol and alarm response services, as well.

Mr. Maloway: I did not ask about the mobile patrol, but I thank the minister for answering it anyway. I was asking specifically about the seven sites that are contracted out to private security services, and he has given me, I think, one or two of them, but I wanted the sites, who they are contracted to, and were they tendered contracts?

Mr. Pallister: I am sorry, could the member repeat the last part of his question?

Mr. Maloway: I was looking for the seven sites that are contracted to private security services, and I wanted

the name of the private company. I wanted to know whether each of those seven contracts was tendered.

Mr. Pallister: They were tendered. We are just attempting to get the names for the member, but I can tell him they were tendered.

We do not have that information for the member here, but we can certainly get the information for the member and make it available to him in the near future.

* (2100)

Mr. Maloway: I thank the minister for that commitment.

I would like to ask him a final question and that is, he makes reference to reviewing existing leases regarding parking and security, and I was interested in knowing how many leases the government was involved in as far as Parking and Security was concerned and what was the motivation behind renewing the leases. I make the assumption that it is the same as his private sector leases where, when the real estate market dropped then, of course, the government was well within its right to look for a better renegotiating position as far as getting a better price from the private sector. People were concerned and I assume that his motivation is the same here.

Mr. Pallister: The member is partly correct in his assumption that we do review the leases with a view to procuring renewal at the lowest possible price for the taxpayers of the province. We also, of course, review the leases to ascertain the level of service required. For example, in the case of parking lot patrols where there are fewer vehicles, fewer stalls than was the case prior, we would hope to achieve cost savings on the new contract for security in that particular instance.

Naturally, as with any of the tender documents that we prepare in our department, we are reviewing them meticulously to determine that they are adjusted in such a manner as to result in the lowest possible cost in response to the tender.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Chairman, that is obviously not the question. The minister is the one that makes the

statement that he is reviewing existing leases for Parking and Security, and so my question is, how many leases exist in the first place? How many leases are there that he is reviewing?

Mr. Pallister: I am sorry, I assumed the member was still referring to security and that aspect, and that is why I was responding in the way I was. I believe what he is alluding to is simply how we make arrangements for parking for staff in various government buildings. That is something that is done as part of the actual lease arrangements that we enter into.

When the member asks or makes comment on us reviewing the parking requirements, we are doing that in conjunction with the regular reviews of the leases that we are entering into with properties that we have. So as is the case throughout other services that we provide in our department, when a lease comes up for renewal, we examine the parking requirements and, as I said earlier, if there are fewer parking requirements, for example, then we expect to pay less for parking than would be the case if there were more.

Mr. Maloway: So how many are there? How many leases do you have?

Mr. Pallister: We have 260 leases and with virtually all of them, there is some parking element to the lease. So to separate into a subcategory of some kind, I do not think that I can do that for the member. Suffice to say that the vast majority of leases make reference to parking within their terms.

Mr. Maloway: This concludes the questions that I had for the minister, and perhaps we could go line by line and pass the department and the minister's salary.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: 1. Administration (b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$369,200-pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$39,200-pass.

(c) Finance (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$635,900-pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$163,500-pass.

(d) Human Resource Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$442,200-pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$110,600-pass.

(e) Systems (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$351,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$60,200—pass.

(f) Lieutenant Governor's Office (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$97,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$62,500—pass.

2. Property Management (a) Executive Administration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$157,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$22,100—pass.

(b) Physical Plant (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$17,246,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$32,047,200—pass; (3) Preventative Maintenance \$161,000—pass; (4) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$1,670,000)—pass.

(c) Leased Properties (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$45,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$55,802,400—pass.

(d) Property Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$370,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$247,000—pass; (3) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$250,100)—pass.

(e) Security and Parking (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,513,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$480,900—pass.

(f) Accommodation Cost Recovery (\$37,048,200)—pass.

Resolution 8.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$70,125,000 for Government Services, Property Management, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

3. Supply and Services (a) Executive Administration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$170,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$14,500—pass.

(b) Government Air Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$3,324,500—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$5,299,400—pass; (3) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$8,623,900)—pass.

(c) Office Equipment Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$478,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$1,321,300—pass; (3) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$1,799,500)—pass.

(d) Purchasing (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,287,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$390,000—pass.

(e) Materials Distribution Agency—pass.

(f) Telecommunications (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$950,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$4,611,100—pass; (3) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$4,876,700)—pass.

(g) Postal Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$786,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$463,600—pass; (3) Postage \$5,000,000—pass; (4) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$4,850,000)—pass.

(h) Land Acquisition (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits—pass; (2) Other Expenditures—pass; (3) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations—pass.

(j) Fleet Vehicles Agency—pass.

Resolution 8.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,946,800 for Government Services, Supply and Services, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

* (2110)

4. Accommodation Development (a) Accommodation Development (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,148,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$718,500—pass; (3) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$475,000)—pass.

(b) Workshop/Renovations (1) Salaries, Wages and Employee Benefits \$1,900,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$248,000—pass; (3) Workshop Projects \$2,575,000—pass; (4) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$4,723,600)—pass.

Resolution 8.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,392,100 for Government Services, Accommodation Development, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

5. Land Value Appraisal Commission (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$79,200—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$66,300—pass; (c) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$57,400)—pass.

Resolution 8.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$88,100 for Government Services, Land Value Appraisal Commission, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996:

6. Disaster Assistance (a) Emergency Measures Organization (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$589,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$253,000—pass.

(b) Disaster Assistance Board (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$118,500—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$37,700—pass.

Resolution 8.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$998,400 for Government Services, Disaster Assistance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

7. Expenditures Related to Capital (a) Capital Projects \$13,012,300—pass; (b) Departmental Capital \$249,900—pass.

Resolution 8.7: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$13,262,200 for Government Services, Expenditures Related to Capital, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

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

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

Resolution 8.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,354,900 for Government Services, Administration, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

This completes the Estimates of the Department of Government Services. The next set of Estimates that will be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply are the Estimates of the Department of Environment.

Shall we briefly recess to allow the minister and the critics the opportunity to prepare for the commencement of the next set of Estimates? [agreed]
Shall we leave the clock running? [agreed]

ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Ben Sveinson): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will be considering the Estimates of the Department of Environment.

Does the honourable Minister of Environment have an opening statement?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Chairman, I presume my critic would like this to be as abridged as possible.

First of all, however, let me express my appreciation for the dedication and effort of the staff. The Department of Environment is not a large department, and they have managed to keep the issues in front of them and provide sound environmental management over the past year of which I think they can all be justifiably proud.

First of all, let me read the mission statement as the department has outlined into the record, and that is simply to ensure a high quality of environment for present and future generations of Manitobans.

Briefly, let me say that we have a professional staff with a high degree of professional and technical competence, in my opinion, and Manitoba has developed a good reputation across the country in terms of our involvement which generally exceeds the level

of involvement given the size of the population of our province relative to other jurisdictions. Manitoba has had the lead or been very active in a number of initiatives, including water quality objectives, harmonization of regulation, which I would like to touch on later, ozone-depleting substances control and contaminated sites legislation.

I am very proud of what I consider a very effective emergency response team, and I am pleased to indicate that, in my view, there is a good level of morale and sense of purpose among the members of the department. There are a number of issues which are consuming a lot of departmental time. As I mentioned, harmonization of regulation at the national level through the Canadian Council of Ministers of Environment has been a priority item for literally years. Partnerships with local governments have taken on singular importance in recent years, as well as a much closer liaison with all other departments of government.

In day-to-day operations, we are focusing much more on regional solutions and developing innovative approaches to enforcement, in fact developing an alternative approach to the command and control philosophy. We are placing greater reliance on setting objectives and targets and standards, as opposed to prescribing specific technologies and approaches in environmental control. We are extending our resources through involvement of others, using delegation and empowerment and using financial instruments, licences and orders to ensure clients respect the compliance and practise environmental stewardship.

The department has a very active continuous improvement initiative. In November of the past year, the department adopted a continuous improvement plan being led and implemented by an implementation team within the department with a full commitment of senior departmental management.

The mission has been to lead a process for involving everyone in the department and continuously improving how work is done to best meet customer expectations of service and quality and the vision to deliver the highest quality of service to achieve the best value for tax dollars. The focus is on satisfying needs as identified by our clients.

There has been a considerable amount of work using training, communications and pilot projects in the south-central region and financial services being brought up to speed by target date.

Other goals in this initiative have included awareness integration into the strategic planning process and consultation with external contacts.

* (2120)

Let me say just a word or two about co-location of the department. I am not sure if my critic has been aware of the joint initiative between the province and the federal authorities to potentially co-locate the two departments. The federal department is also looking for new physical property at the same time as the provincial department is.

I would have to be perfectly candid and say that I am not giving this much more than a 50-50 chance of achievement, but it is certainly a goal that I would support, but I sense that there may be more time needed to pull things together than what may be available to us, plus there is always a question about whether or not the provincial expectation of cost capabilities as compared to federal cost allowances for housing and space, whether or not we can find compatibility in that. It would be a first in Canada, and there are common needs that could be served. Perhaps I am not optimistic enough, but I put on the record that it would be a laudable objective but one which I think may be a while in coming.

During the last fiscal year, as I said, I believe we have a very capable emergency response unit, and during the past fiscal year, the department responded to 516 calls through the emergency system involving 394 environmental accidents.

With contaminated sites, we are continuing to work on the legislation in that respect and leading in a fair bit of the discussion across the country in relationship to how we should be managing the contaminated site liability issue.

Bristol Aerospace continues to be an interesting case, and I would just like to point out that a ground water

remediation facility started operating in 1994. The parameters for the facility are reported monthly to the department, and to date, all reported parameters have fallen within the criteria, so I would like to indicate that I think not only did we deal with that issue from a direct fallout from the discovery of the contaminated water supply, but there are ongoing efforts being put forward by the company itself.

I should touch on the Domtar issue for a moment. We issued an operating licence in September '94 to Domtar to allow Triwaste to commission their new thermal-phase separation unit on the Transcona site, a test unit for soil cleanup. The test has now been completed, and if results are successful, a second director's order will be issued to Domtar to complete the soil remediation which will take from 12 to 18 months. Baseline environmental risk assessment was submitted and approved in 1994, as required by the director's orders.

Something that the opposition may well want to spend some time discussing is the prevention initiatives that we are now embarking on, which, again, reinforces a shift in Manitoba's approach to environmental protection from control and remediation to prevention. The branch that I referred to was established in '93, to maintain the management of new program initiatives within the department, such as waste reduction and prevention, ozone-depleting substances and to promote the application of practices that avoid the creation of waste.

It is my expectation that this will be part of a thrust that is occurring all the way across the country because every jurisdiction is now finding that they need to spend more time on pollution prevention, so that they can eventually reduce their demands in relationship to long-term responsibilities for command and control or cleanup responsibilities. Perhaps I should spend a moment on waste reduction and prevention.

We have been successful in a number of areas in getting towards our 50 percent reduction. The tire recycling program, which I am sure my critic is well aware of, was set up in '93. In its first full year of operation, it recycled the equivalent of one million tires, which was funded by a tax which has now

become a levy of \$3 on new tires that was fully dedicated to the fund in support of this function. Those dollars have now been turned over to an arm's-length stewardship corporation, as an arm's length government body to manage these funds. During that process, we have now cleaned up over a hundred waste disposal grounds and eliminated their tire piles, and I am sure that they, as a result, have picked up a fair bit of cash in support of maintaining their program.

The board is made up of the Canadian automotive association, the Rubber Association, the Western Canadian Tire Dealers and Retreaders Association and the deputy minister of Environment as a direct appointment from government.

Balding material and recycling, which has been the topic of some considerable discussion over the last year is now a reality in over 70 municipalities across the province. We are fully expecting the City of Winnipeg to come on stream this fall. Under this program, support payments to municipalities will be up to \$152 a tonne for materials recycled from a depot or a curbside and the City of Winnipeg will be eligible for \$128 per tonne from a curbside and \$84 for depot programs. It is expected to recover in excess of 80,000 tonnes of packaging and fibre materials from residential waste stream once we have this program fully operational.

In 1995-96 the emphasis will be on smooth transition to having the stewardship corporations in place to provide funding for programs to promote tire and multimaterial recycling across the province. New waste minimization efforts for used oil composting and hopefully construction waste will also be pursued. A plan for household hazardous waste needs some additional work.

Along that line I should point out that I believe we have in excess of 6,000 tonnes of ONP currently being recycled annually in the province, but that means we are getting less than 20 percent of the estimated 35,000 tonnes of ONP, old newsprint, out of the system, and we hope that the new multimaterial collection system will remedy that. Given the high price of newsprint, we think that this will also become industry driven very quickly.

Another objective that we have in the short term is to have an oil recycling and collection system come on stream. We now have an opportunity to partner with the two western provinces and we think that very quickly we will be able to get that initiative up and running.

I presume we will be touching for a few minutes on the Sustainable Development Innovations Fund, for which I am also responsible. It was a very successful fund year this past fiscal year for projects approved under the fund. The authority totalled just over \$3.5 million. Support was provided to 215 projects for waste management and recycling initiatives, environmental industries, Environmental Youth Corps and other sector areas such as water conservation, supply, agricultural development, urban environment, Endangered Spaces and species, and also for education.

We provided funding for the development and implementation promotion of a number of innovative projects in support of sustainable development, and we will spend some time later discussing that, I am sure. We have been involved in a number of initiatives, some of which become much more important viewed in the larger context.

Having Clivus Multrum move to Winnipeg as its headquarters for producing its composting toilets and the plastic moulding expertise at Acrylon Plastics with facilities based here in Winnipeg and Winkler, allows them to produce here for world-wide distribution, plus gives us the opportunity to have that method of dealing with human effluent used much more aggressively in our own jurisdiction.

I am turning fairly quickly here. I would only indicate that I will not spend any time on regulatory initiatives, but let me indicate that the stubble-burning initiative has, in my view, worked out extremely well after having had another year under our belt. Last fall was again a situation where we saw a much more compatible situation between agricultural burning and the urban centres.

The State of the Environment Report was published again this year and we will discuss that, I am sure, later

on. Mr. Chairman, I will invite questions from my critics.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I thank the Minister of Environment for those comments. Does the official opposition critic, the honourable member for Selkirk, have any opening comments?

* (2130)

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Yes, I do, Mr. Chairman. I want to begin by thanking the minister for his abridged version of his opening remarks. He made many, many important points, ones that we will be exploring and looking into further as we proceed this evening.

I want to pay tribute to both of my predecessors as the critics for the official opposition. That is the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) and the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh). Both of them did an excellent job representing our party on environmental issues over the last number of years.

I want to use this time we have this evening to gain information regarding environmental issues, this being my first Estimates as the newly appointed critic. I want to take the chance to familiarize myself more with environmental issues and use this opportunity tonight to do so. As I mentioned to the minister earlier, as a guide I would like to go through the 1995 State of the Environment Report. I think it is an excellent resource for me as a critic and it will serve as a useful discussion document this evening.

In particular, I wanted to concentrate on issues related to water and to waste management. If we do, hopefully we will have a chance to get through and deal with the Sustainable Development Innovations Fund and I want to put on the record that I hope the minister will be bringing forward or talk to his House leader to bring forward the Manitoba Hazardous Waste Management Corporation so we can raise issues regarding that corporation as well.

I propose that we pass the Estimates as a whole and that we, instead of going line by line, ask questions

related to all issues here this evening, and when we are done, we just go, pass the line by line.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I thank the critic for the official opposition for those remarks.

Under Manitoba practice, debate of the Minister's Salary is traditionally the last item considered for the Estimates of a department. Accordingly, we shall defer the consideration of this item and now proceed with consideration of the next line.

At this time, we invite the minister's staff to join us at the table, and we ask that the minister introduce his staff present.

Mr. Cummings: On my immediate left is Norm Brandson, the Deputy Minister of Environment. At the end of the table is Wolf Boehm responsible for finances; Serge Scrafield over by the fan, assistant deputy minister responsible for approvals and everything else that we can give him; and Carl Orcutt immediately to Norm's left, acting deputy minister from time to time, assistant and responsible for enforcement.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We are now on item 1.(b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$321,400, on page 53 of the Estimates book and on page 23 of the yellow supplement book.

Mr. Dewar: I just wanted to raise one issue here. Last year, I contacted the deputy minister regarding the sale of the AMSCO cast products plant in Selkirk to a company in Edmonton called Quality Steel. I believe the deputy minister then contacted the person in Edmonton and I assume dealt with all the issues that were raised by the president or I believe he is a vice-president of Quality Steel. I just want to know or ask what issues were raised by the representatives of Quality Steel? I just want to know what issues were raised by this company.

Mr. Cummings: Every time we have a new investment or a turnover of some of these sites where there is potential for site contamination, there is a review by government or by responsible authorities. I presume that was the first part of his concern at that time and that was what I understand the department

followed up on that site to check for contamination and if there was any liability associated with the site.

(Mr. Mike Radcliffe, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

I sort of missed the second part of the question. Do you want to know what the result of that investigation was?

Mr. Dewar: Yes.

Mr. Cummings: We received assurances that dollars have been allocated for appropriate cleanup of the site, management of the site by the existing owner. Those dollars have been set aside to our satisfaction.

Mr. Dewar: What were some of the problems that were found on that site?

Mr. Cummings: Your usual contaminations that you get around a foundry. You have oil, lubricants and some associated wastes. You might get a bit of lead I suppose, but I am not sure that was even one that we found. It was not seen to be an unusual site, I am told.

Mr. Dewar: Was the ground water in the immediate area tested?

Mr. Cummings: We would have to check to see what all was done in review of that. We might find the answer in a minute or two if you want to proceed with another line of questioning. Other than that, I will have to get back.

Mr. Dewar: I do want to thank the deputy minister for responding to my concerns. The business was sold and the jobs there were saved, so I thought that was—I am pleased that they took such immediate action to deal with the concerns raised by the individuals from Quality Steel.

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Chairman, perhaps I could put something on the record that flows from that type of question.

Generally, in reviewing these sites what we end up with, as I have learned to understand it, is a risk

analysis of the site. If you were asking, was their ground water checked, I suppose the first question would be, was there any potential for it to have got into ground water? If it was a heavy clay with no sign of it having permeated down very far then you are dealing with a much different situation than if you are sitting where there is potential for permeation into a sensitive aquifer or things of that nature.

We have found a number of times in the Red River Valley that the contamination has been contained more to the upper layer until you get over toward where the Bristol situation was and further east as well. I do not know if that helps, or not.

Mr. Dewar: That is fine. I am prepared to pass this line.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe): The item under discussion is item 1.(b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$321,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$78,600—pass.

1.(c) Financial and Administrative Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$817,700.

Mr. Dewar: Mr. Chairman, under this particular line, the department looks after the administration of The Freedom of Information Act requirements. Have there been any in the last year?

* (2140)

Mr. Cummings: Each department has a Freedom of Information officer. Wolf Boehm is our officer responsible for responding to the requests.

We had 11 Freedom of Information requests. They ranged from two requests on the Domtar site; information regarding the review process of the Portage water diversion project in '91, '94 which would be more commonly known as the Pembina project; a copy of records and correspondence regarding a former gasoline service station and there were three requests on the one site; information regarding my international travel, that was an easy one; information from Woodlands; and information regarding toxic waste sites in the province—really nothing too complicated.

Mr. Dewar: I am prepared to let it pass.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe): The item under discussion is 1.(c)(1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$817,700—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$231,800—pass.

The next item for discussion is 2. Environmental Management \$10,914,000. The first item for discussion is (a) Environmental Operations (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$4,347,400—pass.

Mr. Dewar: Excuse me.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe): Sorry, we have a question.

Mr. Dewar: I do want to ask a few questions related to—this is where one would ask questions related to the enforcement of legislation and regulations pertaining to The Environment Act?

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe): I am sorry. Could you repeat the question?

Mr. Dewar: I would like to ask some questions about environmental licensing procedure, and this would be the appropriate line?

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe): What is your question?

Mr. Dewar: Okay, good. Thank you. I want the minister to provide to us today and update us on the proposed arena project and the environmental licensing procedure of the proponents.

Mr. Cummings: First of all, the proponent has to provide information to the federal authorities who will be responsible for screening whether or not there is federal involvement, in this case maybe a federal involvement whether or not they can answer the questions appropriately in the screening process so the feds can advise on whether the process they have been presented with has been acceptable or otherwise.

The issue of the arena, whether or not it is a class of development under our existing Environment Act, that

decision has to be made. But you can read as well as I can, if you look at the Environment Act and list of developments, it is not in there.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

We have a number of other things, however, that the proponent has to do in order to make sure that we do not have a problem on our hands. They have to make sure there is not contamination on the site. They have already taken steps in that respect. They have to follow all appropriate procedures and any activity that would occur on the site.

Manitoba Heritage has or will be reviewing the project as well. Based on any information we have received up to this point, there does not appear to be contamination onsite. There have certainly been contaminants there at one time or another, but there is no evidence that we have a contaminated site on our hands or that it is going to be a problem.

Just let me be a little bit more explicit about the federal process. We are co-operating as well. We are making sure the information is provided to the federal authorities so they can in fact decide in their screening process whether or not any process other than what is already begun needs to be followed for environmental review of the site to meet their standards. That will be their decision.

We have made no decision at this point either, but the information that I am giving you should give you a pretty clear picture of the fact that this project is an awful lot like a number of other ones we are faced with from time to time. The issues that are raised are every bit and in many cases much more so planning issues than they are environmental.

Some of the questions that have been raised around the siting of the arena and what that means to that part of the city, relate more directly to some of the planning issues and decisions within Plan Winnipeg than they do to what would be classified as environmental issues under The Environment Act.

Mr. Dewar: Does this project require a provincial environmental licence?

Mr. Cummings: As I said, it is not designated under the act, and at this point we have not made a final decision, but it does not appear necessary for it to be licensed under our act.

Mr. Dewar: My review of the act and my extensive knowledge of this area leads me to assume that Class 2 developments, No. 5, it talks about recreation, multi-purpose resorts, recreation and tourist developments that would not be included in there.

Mr. Cummings: No.

Mr. Dewar: So then the minister has said there has been some testing done at the site. Who did that testing, and what did they discover?

Mr. Cummings: First of all, we had the two departments, both federal and provincial, who did a review of the site, and, following on that as I understand it, the proponents have had consultants on site once they received permission to go onsite from the city. They have done testing, and to this point we have not found a problem.

Mr. Dewar: As the minister is aware, we raised the concern of a possibility of PCBs, considering that it is a former Hydro substation that is currently on the site. There has been no identification of PCBs there currently.

Mr. Cummings: None that I have been made aware of. Just a minute, I will give you the most—any equipment onsite has been emptied and sampled, and there is no evidence of PCB contamination found, and so that is good news. I mean, unless you are of the view that you want to stop the project.

Mr. Dewar: Stopping the project aside, it is good news that there is no contamination found in any soils in the province of Manitoba, of course.

I still have a few questions here about the act, and I am interested in the Manitoba Environmental Council. Can the minister provide us with some information regarding this council and their recent activities?

* (2150)

Mr. Cummings: That is a reasonable question. It is no secret that this is not necessarily an ongoing love affair between the Manitoba Environmental Council and the minister's office. The Environmental Council is there by clause in the act to provide advice to the minister and to the ministry. At one point, I felt that the Manitoba Environmental Council was too close to provide advice, that they were lodged among the department virtually with their office and their personnel.

I do not mind people on an ongoing basis having the opportunity to ask the department and/or political people about activities, but I think there needs to be some kind of a formalized logical progression of giving and receiving advice. So I have reconstituted the Environmental Council primarily with the same players that were always there, plus a few more, and I guaranteed them access to me and to my office a minimum of four times a year for a minimum of two- to three-hour meetings to provide ongoing advice on environmental matters and to exchange ideas.

We have accomplished a fair bit in the last six to eight months, and as much as we are now getting to the point where the council, instead of spending their time writing papers that they were presenting to the Clean Environment Commission and to every other public process—and they are still quite capable and able of doing that—they are also providing direct advice to the minister on issues, not only the issues as they are in front of us today.

We had a meeting last week which was somewhat interrupted, but we had at least half a meeting last week, and what we are working on is a situation where they will bring forward, and I will bring forward a mutually agreed agenda of future items that we see needing to be addressed, of an environmental nature, which means that they really have an opportunity to influence the thinking of myself and others prior to policy or decision being firmed up. At the same time, they have an opportunity to hear directly from the minister as to why we are moving in specific directions on matters of environmental concern.

Louisiana-Pacific is a situation where we have a licensing process that we followed through that we are

quite proud of. There are people who sit on that advisory council who do not agree with our direction, but that is the essence of good public debate and public advice.

I do not have to sit only with those who agree with me all the time to get a good understanding of the issues, and this is a council of that nature. The debate gets pretty exciting, let me tell you, but I think useful and a far better format than used to occur, let us say, three years ago.

Mr. Dewar: How many members are on the council and who are they?

Mr. Cummings: I cannot tell you the exact number, but we have people like Christine Singh, Bill Pruitt. I am told we have 11. I can get you a list. We have the former head of Ward Lab. We have Mr. Will Grieve, Rick Howard, Bill Turnock, to name some of the names. We will get you a list.

Mr. Dewar: Does the council have a budget and what is that amount?

Mr. Cummings: No.

Mr. Dewar: What level of remuneration do the council members receive for their advice?

Mr. Cummings: None.

Mr. Dewar: Is this a new practice?

Mr. Cummings: No. They never did receive a per diem. They still receive their expenses.

Mr. Dewar: That is fine. I would like to ask some questions related to the different classifications, Class 1, Class 2, Class 3 development of licensing requirements, the main differences between the different classifications.

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Chairman, I always have to be careful. This is sort of the reverse from the waste disposal ground classifications.

Mr. Dewar: I will ask that one later.

Mr. Cummings: A Class 1 is being reviewed because of pollution concerns only. A Class 2 would be for pollution plus other issues, and Class 3 would be for large projects where there is designation by the minister. An example would be Conawapa. We do not get that many Class 3s.

Mr. Dewar: Yes, I did see those in the regulations, but what are the main differences in terms of the approval procedure?

Mr. Cummings: A Class 2 would be a more complex issue, and you would be more likely to have a Clean Environment Commission public hearing process in reviewing it.

Mr. Chairman, I also have the names of the Manitoba Environmental Council. I can read them into the record. I have Christine Common-Singh, Rick Howard, Dr. Bill Turnock, Dr. Ian Rollo, Dr. Diane Malley, Dr. David Punter, Dr. Peter Miller, Will Grieve, Dr. Bill Pruitt, Dr. Derek Muir, and Mr. Jim Ball. There are a lot of doctors on there. That must be a healthy crew.

Mr. Dewar: Is there a requirement for public hearings on all the level of classes or just 1, 2 or 3?

Mr. Cummings: I suppose you could argue that under any given circumstance, hearings could be called at any level, but they are much more discretionary in Class 1. I should put on the record, they are in fact discretionary for them all, but obviously the onus is—[interjection] It is not a matter of waiving it so much as it is a matter of actually deciding to do it. Waiving would indicate that they are mandatory and then waived, but it is the reverse. There is always a requirement for public publication of information. The public is never excluded in that sense.

Mr. Dewar: Who makes the final approval in each of the classes to grant a licence?

Mr. Cummings: Classes 1 and 2 are directors' licences, and the minister would be the appeal. Class 3 is the minister signs the licence, and the next authority which would be cabinet would be the appeal.

Mr. Dewar: Who is the current director of licensing?

Mr. Cummings: Larry Strachan.

Mr. Dewar: So if a group brings forward a project, and Mr. Strachan either approves it or denies it, that group can appeal that to you?

* (2200)

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Chairman, it is not just Mr. Strachan. There are a number of directors who would have approval authority, but any director's decision is appealable to the minister's office.

In fact, just for information, something that took a little while to sink in with me, and it is not entirely related to what you are talking about but does provide some excitement out there from time to time, and that is a director's order, for example, regarding a contaminated site.

Very often, people get very excited if they get an order, but sometimes an order has to be issued so that an appeal can be launched in order to finally get someone other than just the owner of the property involved in the cleanup. It is not as onerous as it sounds. It is actually meant to be user friendly.

Mr. Dewar: Has the government ever appointed an environmental mediator to settle disputes between groups?

Mr. Cummings: Yes, not as often as probably we would like to, but we have had a few examples of where we have done it. Remember that you need to have two willing parties at the table to be able to mediate. If somebody tells you to buzz off, it is kind of hard to have mediation concluded.

On a couple of occasions or maybe three or more, I cannot remember the exact number, it is not large, we have asked the chairman of the Clean Environment Commission to sit down with both parties, when it is not something that is necessarily an issue that he would hear in a licensing sense, but because of his independence and being seen to be outside of the department and at arms length from the minister, he is a very credible person to sit down and attempt to mediate on occasion, and, in fact, has given himself the

opportunity to do some upgrading, so he is increasingly capable of doing more of that.

But a couple of instances where it should have worked, at least one party said, well, do we have to do this, and the truth of the matter is they do not have to. So if they walk away from the table, then mediation does not occur.

Very often, it occurred around the siting of lagoons or siting of waste disposal grounds, those types of things where it is partly a planning issue. I mean, you can engineer a safe solution for a landfill perhaps, but you do not want it next to your house. Well, we have regulations to protect it from being right next to your house.

We also used Jenny Hilliard on one occasion to attempt mediation in the general scrap proposal to develop an extruding plant—recycling shredder fluff.

I guess we had some success on the Teulon lagoon. Dale was involved in that one. Manigotagan sewage outlet, I believe we also had some success with that one, and Dale was involved there, as well, but it is not used as much as we would like it to be.

Mr. Dewar: Well, who decides how to use the mediation process? Is it the minister or do people come to you and ask, could you set up a mediator to help us settle this dispute?

Mr. Cummings: Generally, it has been by our own initiative. I cannot recall if we have actually been—on one occasion, we were asked, but we had such an ingrained disagreement between the parties that I did not do it.

So, occasionally, we would have directors who would recommend it or regional directors where they have a hot potato on their hands. It is sometimes more political than it is environmental, to tell you the truth. Nevertheless, you have to get all the people to the table, and you have to have a credible mediator.

I am not sure that we could legislate the requirement to have people appear at the table. I mean, they could appear there and then still not move. If they want to

truly settle it, however, they need to be willing to enter into the discussion.

I suppose it is very often ones that we were unable to successfully mediate where there are entrenched views that they simply do not want something, regardless of how many safeguards you offer them or issues that they might want in the licence.

Mostly, if they just do not want something, mediation looks like a sign of weakness on the part of the opponents, so they, generally speaking, refuse it.

Mr. Dewar: Mr. Chairman, I am prepared to move to the next section, which is Environmental Management, but I believe some of the issues that I will be raising probably fall into both.

Mr. Cummings: Leave it open.

Mr. Dewar: Leave it open. Okay, that is fine.

Mr. Cummings: He can pass it, but he can go back, if he wants to.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 2.(a) Environmental Operations (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$4,347,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$1,104,000—pass.

2.(b) Environmental Management (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,588,500—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$2,616,300—pass.

2.(c) Legislation and Intergovernmental Affairs (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$162,500—pass.

Mr. Dewar: Where are you, sir? I just want to find out what page.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Page 54, (c)(2). You do not have the blue supplementary book?

Mr. Dewar: I had to give it away to somebody else.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Page 33. Are you there?

Mr. Dewar: Well, we obviously want to stop the process somewhere, so we can ask our questions that we want to ask.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Okay, we will finish this one.

Item 2.(c) Legislation and Intergovernmental Affairs
(2) Other Expenditures \$95,300—pass.

2.(d) Manitoba Hazardous Waste Management Corporation—pass.

2.(e) Joint Environmental Assessment Review—pass.

2.(f) Alcohol Beverage Container Recycling Program—pass.

Mr. Dewar: I wonder if we can begin by just paying tribute to all those individuals who produced the State of the Environment Report for Manitoba 1995 Focus on Agriculture. I am probably giving too much praise to the government, but I do want to recognize all the men and women who put this report together and did all the background and the preparation of it.

What does this report cost to produce?

* (2210)

Mr. Cummings: Over two years, it would be about \$95,000 which is remarkably low. We assigned one person within the department to begin the next report as soon as this one is published. We are somewhat in a flux, looking at format. As you can see, it is a pretty substantial publication to put out every two years.

When you are looking at trends and the direction of measurements, sometimes you find yourself repeating yourself year over year, because two years is almost not far enough apart to know whether you have a blip in the environment as a result of some weather condition or other matters or whether there is something truly occurring, changes in the condition of particular areas that you are looking at.

There is some consideration being given to publishing a focus publication every two years and

doing a much more significant one along the lines of what you have in front of you every third one or some such rotation like that, not to avoid the responsibility of doing the report but to make it so that the trends are clearly representative of what is happening, and in the interim doing shorter focused reports. You could do something on water quality, agriculture, mining. You could do something every two years, as we do now, but focus it more sharply on specific aspects and without doing all of the comparisons and trends the same way that we do every two years now.

It is up for discussion, but when you compare our publication with what the feds have done, it cost them millions and millions of dollars to publish. I appreciate what the member has said. He has gone up several notches in my estimation, because something that has always frustrated me somewhat is that there is a lot of independence put into this publication, and we ask each department to provide information, and then the Department of Environment plus some editorial contractee compiles the report, and it is intended to give as clear a picture as possible of what is occurring out there.

From what I have seen of reports in some other jurisdictions, this is much more straightforward and readable. It is not written as deep research material. It is meant to be usable by schools.

The one question that needs to be perhaps addressed further is whether or not we should also be putting forward a report that is—now I am searching for words.

When we look at what has happened in some of the other reports, I find some of them contain an awful lot of salesmanship, which this one, we have tried to keep it less that way, but we took a significant risk when we started to put in trends because there is always a question of whether you are accurately judging which way the trend is going.

The other question that needs to be asked about this type of reporting is if we should not be looking at a state of the environment but a sustainability or state of sustainable development. That, obviously, would not be an appropriate title but to look more at the sustainability of our practices.

Mr. Dewar: How many copies are produced, and how wide is the circulation of the document?

Mr. Cummings: Five thousand reports are published. I would indicate that we have gone back to the original concept, which was that these would be distributed to schools and other libraries and free of charge to other individuals who may be interested.

For a brief period of time we thought that the product was of high enough value that people would likely want to pay something for it, but we ended up with a number in storage. So if we felt that if this was truly going to be out there and in the hands of as many people as possible, and if we believe it is as worthwhile as it is in putting the effort forward to do it, then we are better off to have those publications out there in appropriate hands as opposed to keeping them in storage. Just on the economic side, but I am told that 5,000 plus or minus a few, once you have everything set up and you start publishing, 5,000 is not an unreasonable number.

Mr. Dewar: On page 7 of the report, I quote. It says: Eventually, it is hoped that regular reporting will make environmental indicators as familiar as the cost of living index and the Gross National Product. My question is, how far is the department along in establishing such environmental indicators?

Mr. Cummings: It is not something that we would develop in isolation. Council of Ministers is working on what would be environmental indicators. The national round table is working on what would be considered acceptable indicators of sustainability. I spent a number of years on the national round table, and subcommittees of that round table worked and developed those indicators. They will be, at least in part, I think, adopted by CCME. It is more likely that is the direction we will go in getting reliable benchmarks as opposed to just indicators of the state of environment.

We already have other indicators that we can use. I mean, we know what is considered good water quality. We know what is considered good air quality and so on, but those are not the only indicators of environmental quality.

Mr. Dewar: Do you know if other jurisdictions in Canada or North America, do they have environmental indicators?

Mr. Cummings: I am not aware of any jurisdiction that has adopted a complete set of indicators of sustainable development or environmental indicators. I did not put on the record, however, where probably some of the more credible indicator work maybe ends up coming from, and that is, the IISD is working on indicators and is using Manitoba as a pilot. So we cooperate with all three areas, the IISD, CCME and the federal authorities.

Mr. Dewar: I would like to then move to the section on water, one of the concerns I wanted to raise tonight. Of course, there are a number of issues that can be raised, but I do want to concentrate on that in the time we have available. I know the member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) may be interested in raising some issues in this area as well.

It was announced earlier, I believe, this week or maybe last week, that the federal government is withdrawing financial support to the Freshwater Institute of Winnipeg, which is currently, I believe, located on the campus of the University of Manitoba. According to the press article I have before me, the team is slated for a reduction from a staff of 54 to 16. Is the minister aware of this staff reduction and the general withdrawal of funding?

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Chairman, in a general sense, we have been aware of the pending fall of the other shoe in a number of areas. There are going to be several shoes that are going to drop over the next couple of years with federal funding.

This particular one is freshwater fish, so they are in an area that is pretty narrow in its scope. Any interaction we would have with them in terms of whether this department would be directly impacted or not would be, I guess, on anything they do on water quality and associated fish habitat issues. Given the location of the member's riding, I can appreciate his interest in freshwater fish and what that might mean to the province. They do research, I am told, on areas such as mercury levels and other contaminants that

would be affecting freshwater fish, but they do not just serve Manitoba. I guess that is really where I am getting around to. They serve more than just Manitoba. So yes, we will lose something when we lose them, but it will not be irreparable.

* (2220)

Mr. Dewar: What action then is the minister going to take to try to fight this job loss?

Mr. Cummings: We have been meeting for the last number of months with federal Environment which has a lot more areas of responsibility than the provincial Department of Environment has. We are much more on the regulatory and quality monitoring side, and the federal area is much more dispersed and goes into a number of areas that cross over into Natural Resources.

It is indicated to me by the department that the freshwater fish habitat is already pretty well covered by provincial activities. That in itself will not disappear. We have had a number of issues that we have been discussing with the federal authorities in terms of reduction of funding, reduction of staff, and it has been a very integral part of discussion associated with CCME as well as just Manitoba to the federal authorities because this really even gets into harmonization:

If they are going to withdraw from certain areas, if they expect the provinces to just pick it up, I suppose they might be whistling in the dark. If they in some logical way want to reorient the responsibilities of the federal and provincial authorities, avoid duplication and overlap and at the same time make sure that we have more appropriate management of the issues, very often this could mean that the provinces could do more on the ground and respond more quickly to some of the issues.

If the feds would confine themselves to areas of research and perhaps more raw research as they have done—we have seen it in forestry and we have seen it in agriculture—instead of being all things to all people, the federal and provincial authorities could divide their responsibilities better, reduce the overall cost to all jurisdictions and manage our way out of what is going

to be a declining capability on the part of the feds and to some extent the province of Manitoba and other jurisdictions to manage these.

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

What I fear, however, is that they are going to arbitrarily withdraw, they are not going to follow what might be, I think, a pretty well laid out plan that has been discussed at the staff level. If that is the case, we are going to have increasing problems. If we can get the federal authorities to move in an organized way with their reductions and share some of their responsibilities with us, maybe we can do more efficiently what they are doing today and save them some money at the same time, and then we could all win.

I am not overly confident that is what is going to happen. So there is going to be a lot of serious problems arise as we go through the next three years. The feds have laid out a three-year plan in terms of gross numbers for reduction of staff and resources, but I do not think they have laid out a three-year plan on how they may interact with provinces to make sure that there are not big gaps in the management of responsibilities.

Mr. Dewar: Let us move to another issue. That is the problems that are faced by our First Nations people, and again, it is from your report where they talk about the high number of cases of hepatitis A involving First Nations people.

What role can the province play in ensuring that these communities can deal with this problem?

Mr. Cummings: While I am getting a note from the department here, first of all, you are talking about a basic public health issue in terms of water quality and protection of public health and the water that they are using.

I am in danger of answering you in a way that gets me into a whole lot of other areas jurisdictionally within federal-provincial relationships. I mean, the federal-provincial relationship on responsibility for treaty and status residents within the province speaks

directly to that too, because we have responsibilities on and off reserve for delivery of infrastructure and infrastructure really will dictate the water quality in many respects.

We work closely with the federal authorities, the same as the Department of Family Services, I would think. There are some of the communities that were able to co-operate much more closely with than others too in terms of where we can be of use, but we, through our public health inspectors and Dr. Guilfoyle, the provincial public health officer, becomes involved in these issues.

But I think it goes back to really this issue is not going to be easily resolved until some of the larger issues are resolved around federal-provincial responsibility for infrastructure and delivery of health programs in all of our communities, including our native and remote communities. The remote communities are not the issue so much as those that are on reserve or off reserve in many cases.

Mr. Dewar: Mr. Chairman, again just moving along, we do have quite a bit to cover this evening.

Under the heading Watershed Management to Improve Water Quality: The watersheds can be influenced by two types of pollution, the point source pollution and nonpoint source pollution. It suggests that one of the ways to deal with this is to establish a buffer zone along waterways. Is the minister aware of any examples of where this is being done currently in the province?

Mr. Cummings: Yes, on a case-by-case basis, there are some communities and some areas where they are of their own volition moving to establish buffer zones where they recognize that perhaps there is activity going on that is helping to nutrify some of the water courses. I mean, we now have codes of practices being put out by agricultural organizations. Well, first of all, the code of practice in protecting water quality, reducing access to water courses by livestock where possible. That is one aspect.

Our agricultural regs, it will take time before the full impact of the regulations start to really produce

measurable results, I suppose, but as you get new operations coming on stream and then as old ones are upgraded, they are developed in a way that is much more protective of any pollutant getting into the watercourse.

* (2230)

It seems to me there is a project in several areas, but there is one on the Little Saskatchewan, south of Minnedosa, where they are literally fencing cattle out of the river. I have avoided regulation in that respect because there is such a variation. How do you define a surface water? You have to do it area by area.

The member for Dauphin is sitting to your right and I am sure he knows as much about it as any of us do in terms of what happens. He probably is to your right actually. Each area has certain specific problems but defining surface water and how you might define a regulation around that.

This is why I am an advocate, as our government has proven I think, that we want to establish a good working relationship with existing conservation areas and establish more where the people in the area are willing to do so.

Lake Dauphin is actually, despite problems that are there, one of the better examples of where the local people have been given some responsibility. They have got involved, they are having battles locally. But the fact that they are keeping them local battles and not asking for wise men from the south to come in with buckets full of cash to solve the problem which are unlikely to arrive in any volume in today's world, they are going to come up with better water quality in the long run.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Penner): Mr. Minister, I just wanted to clarify one comment that was made here. I was not quite sure whether you said, right or right winger.

Mr. Dewar: As long as I am to his left.

The issue that surfaced recently is the toxic blue-green algae that has been discovered or tested for in

Manitoba, and I just want to ask the minister where in Manitoba are they currently doing testing for this algae?

Mr. Cummings: Some of the ones that we have, in fact we are doing some follow-up sampling on, from this report, is Pelican Lake, Rock Lake, three locations on the Pembina River upstream of Pelican Lake, approximately midway between Pelican and Rock and, again, approximately midway between Rock and Swan Lake.

We are not even attempting to do the whole province. We are doing some focused sampling, I understand, in the region, so that we get a picture of what is happening in a region, as opposed to a scatter-gun approach. We are also into Shoal Lake and Deacon Reservoir.

If you recall, a year ago, there were some questions raised about potential problems in water that was coming into the Winnipeg water supply that never did reach a level that we needed to do anything about, but there was a short time when there was some concern about an algae bloom that was leading to the type of nasty stuff that—I do not think I can pronounce the name, to tell you the truth. What did we call it? It is just called algae; that is, microcystis.

Mr. Dewar: Well, has the department detected any of the algae in any of your samples so far?

Mr. Cummings: Well, obviously, there was some detection last year. That is why there was some additional sampling being done this year, and, yes, there have been some samples that detected this algae, but none that are above acceptable levels. Let us put it that way.

Mr. Dewar: In what areas of the province are you finding the algae?

Mr. Cummings: I am sorry, I did not hear the question.

Mr. Dewar: Where are you finding the algae?

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

Mr. Cummings: I cannot give you specific locations and levels. This will all be published information when we are done. I am told that the most likely place to find it right now is probably farm dugouts where you will find levels that are detectible.

Mr. Dewar: What action can the department take to treat the algae, to kill the algae?

Mr. Cummings: Well, as I understand the situation, if we are able to study and determine locations and levels and so on, we have to decide what the risk factor is. Anything that can be done to reduce the growth of algae, I suppose would work on this stuff, as well. To back up what I was saying a moment ago, it seems to me that—and I am certainly not a chemist or a biologist—even things that we are starting to do in regular practice today, like aerating a farm dugout, will reduce algae bloom which will help avoid this type of toxic algae growing just the same as it would any other type of algae.

I do not think the intention—and I do not want the member to feel that there is impending doom out there, but it is something that we want to have information on in case we get a future situation where we have rapid growth and we need to know what the potential is for some of that to occur.

Mr. Dewar: Has the department detected any levels of the liver toxin in Shoal Lake this year?

Mr. Cummings: We cannot absolutely say that there has not been any level detected in Shoal Lake, but I am pretty sure there has not been, and, certainly, we have not had any of the tests anywhere that have been level that have been unacceptable or of concern. Hot weather has something to do with this. It does not mean we will not.

Mr. Dewar: How often is testing done in the Shoal Lake area; in particular, testing done for this particular algae?

* (2240)

Mr. Cummings: We routinely have done testing monthly. With this program, I am told, the city has

been asked to take some additional samples, and that will give us a better picture.

Mr. Dewar: Following up again in terms of Shoal Lake, we all know that is a source of Winnipeg's drinking water and it is a concern to all of us. There was a watershed agreement signed in 1994 between Ontario and the five First Nations bands bordering on Shoal Lake, and it states here that Manitoba had been invited to the discussions. Has Manitoba participated in the discussions so far.

An Honourable Member: Are we participating?

Mr. Cummings: Well, yes, we are participating, but there ain't much happening. We have a problem, and I suppose we will now have a chance to try the new administration on for size in this respect. There are two issues: one is just the straight issue of development in the area, but the second part of that is, we have always been of the view that there needs to be a management zone, if you will, in that area and that Manitoba should be entitled to be an active participant.

The Rae administration seemed to put an enormous amount of emphasis on native participation. I am not going to comment whether—like they certainly have a right to participate. The level of control and participation becomes part of the issue. The bands, at least one band said they would not talk to me. The only person they wanted to talk to was the Premier (Mr. Filmon). I mean that would be nice, but certainly if you want to have meaningful discussions, you have to allow some of us flunkies to get on with doing some of the work. That became an issue. You have to then look at if you are going to have regional management, is there going to be co-management of some of the resources?

First and foremost, what caused us grief over the last year is the complete abrogation of the Shoal Lake agreement that was signed between the City of Winnipeg, the province, the feds and Shoal Lake No. 40 Band. As I understand it, 40 now wants to get out of the agreement. The last letter I saw said they no longer recognize the agreement, as I recall. So going back to Ruth Grier's time as Environment minister in Ontario, we have actively pursued discussions in this

area. The former premier certainly seemed to agree to enhancing the Shoal Lake water quality agreement and doing something in that area, but we really have not had much action in the last while, neither have we had much demand for development.

The one band, 40 I guess, is still pushing for a road to go through there. We believe that would be the end of protection of the water quality in that area, to tell you the truth, that we really would have development spring up around what is a pretty pristine water supply source right now.

So the answer is a qualified yes.

Mr. Dewar: I wish the minister well in his discussions.

An issue, of course, that I have to raise, I raise it I think every year, is the situation concerning the quality of the water that flows by my community in the Red River. At this point, in Selkirk the last number of weeks, we are forced to rely on the Red River to supplement our drinking water. I believe it is 40 percent currently comes from the Red River, and residents of the community of Selkirk rely upon this water as their source of drinking water. The minister, of course, is aware that it is treated and all of us assume that it is safe to drink.

What actions can the minister take, or is he prepared to take, to deal with the big, big issue of cleaning up the Red River?

Mr. Cummings: When you talk about water quality and water supply, and I know that you are focusing on water quality, but I also think that we should be talking in the broader sense about water quality and delivery of water to all the communities in the capital region, I always find it interesting that there is probably surplus capacity in the Shoal Lake system somewhere that could put water into Selkirk, but I am not saying that in the sense that we should be abrogating responsibility to clean up the Red as much as possible.

The same thing is true in the other end of the city. I mean the St. Germain-Headingley issue was about the delivery of water to a large extent. They want quality

water delivered into their communities, but on the strict question of water quality in the Red, we are still in the ongoing process with the city. I mean, we are talking several, several millions of dollars to get the city's act cleaned up so you are not getting the problems that you see coming by your door.

Disinfection was recommended by the Clean Environment Commission, and we have in fact proposed that the city include disinfection in the development of its water treatment facilities over the next five years. We have asked for an overall sewage treatment plan and we have included the dollars. I guess the ball is sort of in the city's court at this juncture. Now the criticism is always—and I will acknowledge—that you can always go faster and get more done but you do have to have the dollars available to do it. We are not going to put people in Selkirk at risk. That is not going to happen. You need quality water. Drawing it out of the Red is tougher to treat and deliver.

I think what you will see to solve the problem is over the long term—not just even the changing of one plant in Winnipeg will answer your problem because it is that storm sewer overflow that is going to get you every time. You can have all your treatment plants right up to snuff, and you are still going to have a number of days when that storm sewer overflow is going to make the water quality in front of Selkirk less than desirable.

I would invite the member to think in the bigger picture about what we are talking about in capital region, and water is part of it. The city has a plan where they can go to another lake. They can go to Lake Natalie if they need to, I believe it is called. They can also go to the Sandilands out here for additional well water to supplement Shoal Lake water. Those pipelines can flow two ways.

The member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) has talked many times about the possibility of having a pipeline south from the city and it could be a two-way situation. Aquifer water could be accessed and come back to the city occasionally from that area if a system were in place and if our planners, municipally and provincially, could get together to look at the bigger plan on some of these issues. We would all gain, but they are massive

infrastructure dollars. We can build on the infrastructure that is out there, but if you will allow me one moment to be philosophical, I think the problem is going to have to get worse in terms of supply before you are going to get all of the different authorities to really turn their minds to co-operating on dealing with this issue.

Now that we have plenty of water in our rivers again, people are probably not as concerned as they were two years ago. Two years ago, they did not think we could take any water out of the Assiniboine to send down to the Carman, Winkler area. This year, everybody was probably hoping they could send a whole bunch down there. It is a reflection of the ebb and flow of prairie rivers partly.

* (2250)

Mr. Dewar: I thank the minister for the answer. There are two issues of course. One is the long-term cleanup of the Red and, of course, I realize that it is. The other is the short-term problem we have and that is to find a new source of drinking water, and that is an interesting recommendation or suggestion.

What they are currently doing in Selkirk is they are upgrading the water supply by phase one and Phase 2. Phase 1 is the construction of a multimillion litre storage container, underground storage container. Phase 2 of that project was to—and this is simple terms—dig a well to fill stage one, but the problem is that the federal government has now decided they are no longer committed to Phase 2, so what we are going to have in Selkirk is a huge storage facility with no capability of putting water—that is at the moment. I raised this with the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) the other day, and they claim they are working on that and I wish them well.

You mentioned the disinfection of the sewage. What would that cost?

Mr. Cummings: We are guesstimating, but if memories tell us correctly, \$13 million per plant and take \$13 million times three—does that sound right—plus the associated operating dollars which could be a half a million a year—pardon me, \$2.5 million, not a half. I

missed the \$2 million. So it is an expensive proposition.

Mr. Dewar: Whose responsibility is it to cover those costs? Is it the province or is it the City of Winnipeg?

Mr. Cummings: It is pretty much the city. The water development and infrastructure programs, very often the province assists in the early stages of development with the communities and then shift as the tax base grows but, at the same time, the city switched to a block funding program a few years ago at their own request, as I recall. I think it probably occurred under the Pawley administration. So their capital dollars are blended in with the approximately \$100 million they get every year transferred from the province.

Mr. Dewar: Do you know if the City of Winnipeg made an application to deal with this issue under the infrastructure projects?

Mr. Cummings: We would not necessarily know, but no one in this group has heard of it.

Mr. Dewar: I think you are absolutely right, because I do not think they have. I guess it is unfortunate, but it is not a big priority for the City of Winnipeg at the moment.

One of the recommendations of the Clean Environment Commission was to have a warning device to detect high levels of fecal coliform. Has the government moved at all in establishing this warning system?

Mr. Cummings: Whether it will be the City of Winnipeg or otherwise, if the fecal coliform count gets high in a given body of water, we would post it. We have meetings going on this week with the City of Winnipeg about implementing something around that recommendation.

If you are asking, did we post any last year, I do not think so.

The recommendations of the CEC were more specific about a more aggressive communications program. That has not been implemented.

Mr. Dewar: Again from the report, it says in the summer of '93, record rainfalls resulted in frequent overflows of the sewage system here in the city of Winnipeg, which allowed, unfortunately, raw sewage once again to enter the Red River.

That was in '93. This year, as we know, the levels were high again. Has the department detected higher levels this year than last year or the year before because of the high level of rains?

Mr. Cummings: I almost hate to give you this answer, but first of all, we have been drier than normal in terms of local rainfall, statistically, plus you have high volumes of water going down the river, so probably the answer would be negative in terms of increased counts. It does not mean that the potential is not still there.

Mr. Dewar: Well, as long as the result is negative, I do not mind being corrected, but how often is testing done in Selkirk for fecal coliform?

Mr. Cummings: You will have to wait a minute.

The question was how often do we monitor. It is much the same as Shoal Lake water. We have a regular monitoring schedule, and then that can be modified if conditions would appear to warrant it, so there is some. You could argue that there could be a more rigorous testing program, but we know that the problem is there.

I imagine your question is based on protection of the Selkirk community, and that is more based on the management of the treatment system at Selkirk to make sure that the water is adequately handled.

I would like to correct something I put on the record a few minutes ago. The cost of the treatment of the city's three plants would not be 36 or whatever it was I said. It would probably be \$20 million and rising to put the three plants up to full capability for disinfection, plus the \$2.5 million operating once they were in place. I think I gave you a figure that was something like \$42 million or something. It is not that high.

Mr. Dewar: If you would not mind responding to that then, if the City of Winnipeg was to spend that money,

what impact would that have on the level of pollution in the Red River?

* (2300)

Mr. Cummings: Some days not very much. That is the argument. I can give you something more precise but the fact is that will not do away with the overload problem they have on the storm sewer system. That is a mechanical problem that has to be fixed. Any time we do not have that overload problem then the river would be in good shape. Look we know, as well—I am sure everybody at Selkirk probably knows—we are getting better quality water from the States than what we are delivering to you. That is acknowledged.

Part of it is agricultural, too. Believe it or not the agricultural—well, let me rephrase that. It sounds like I am sceptical. The fact is that the agricultural practices are improving, and I am told, and ask staff to correct me if I have the wrong understanding here, but the agricultural practices recently are improving to the point where they are not degrading the Red River the way they did a decade ago. So even in Manitoba, we are not having the impact that we did have but the city still has a major impact.

Mr. Dewar: The good thing is, of course, we do not rely upon the Red River as our source. It was just used as an emergency source a couple of years ago and now, unfortunately, this year.

I just want to ask the minister, is the minister completely convinced that the water, once it is treated, is safe for human consumption?

Mr. Cummings: Yes, I have no reason to believe otherwise.

The department has given me one other piece of information here that I did not give you before and that is, you asked me if all the plants were up to snuff would that solve the problem. To put that in perspective, you could then safely swim in the river but, on average, there would be 30 days when you still should not. So, on average, you get 30 days. No matter how complete the treatment system is at the plants, you still get 30 days when the city is

overloading and discharging through its rain sewer system instead of into its treatment plants. Is that correct? Yes.

Mr. Dewar: I still just urge the minister to continue to work on this on behalf of the constituents, not only of Selkirk, but all those who live downstream of the city of Winnipeg.

Mr. Cummings: Could I just add to that, that we have probably done more in the last number of years to get on with this problem than has occurred in the previous number of years. The debate is essentially closed about whether or not the city should put in disinfection. The water quality objectives and the report of the Clean Environment Commission would indicate that they should. It is a matter of how soon it gets done.

Mr. Dewar: What influence can you have as the Minister of Environment to force the City of Winnipeg to take some action?

Mr. Cummings: We licence their plants.

Mr. Dewar: Which means?

Mr. Cummings: I guess we could order them to do it tomorrow but that would be a bit of a violation of where we have tried to bring this along in an incremental way in terms of impact on the city's ratepayers and at the same time trying to protect the downstream users.

When we had the Clean Environment Commission hearings, the commission did not come out and recommend an overnight change. They acknowledged that this was a big enough problem, that the city had an infrastructure problem that has been built up over 80 years or maybe a hundred years, that it will not be undone easily. The city's argument, of course, is that even, as I said, with disinfection the 30 days mitigate against the good that would be done but, in the long run, we have to aim towards the best quality water in the rivers. So the Clean Environment Commission recommendations, we will continue to pursue them.

If you are asking me will I order or am I likely to order or is this government likely to order tomorrow

the city or anytime in the next short while, the city to within six months or six years have their disinfection in place, you are looking at an incremental upgrade of each of the plants. The west end plant just had \$22 million spent on it last year. There are other costs they have associated with their upgrades so we are trying to get them to integrate this improvement as they upgrade their plants. It is probably not as fast as the people in Selkirk would like, but it will get there.

Mr. Dewar: Well, I do agree with the minister there.

Following up on the Red River and other contaminants that are found in it, on pages 72 and 73 there is a number of graphs. One would indicate the level of salt, phosphorus and nitrogen. They all, unfortunately, seem to be taking a bit of an upward trend as the Red hits Selkirk. The dissolved oxygen fluctuates.

Can you explain why there seems to be such an increase in those levels? I guess we could begin with the salts.

Mr. Cummings: Well, '91 would be dry, would it not?

Mr. Dewar: Well, it is not only in the Red.

Mr. Cummings: This probably is not going to give the member much comfort, but I suppose, it is pointed out to me that the reality is that you are the closest community to the mouth of the river so you have got all of the total accumulative impacts of what may have impacted on the river from start to finish. I am looking at the phosphorous as one. That would seem to follow that trend. I do not know why '92 should be higher in that case. Nitrate levels are higher in '89.

Mr. Dewar: It is not only in the Red though. Obviously, it fluctuates for different reasons, but there just seems to be a disturbing trend over the last number of years from '85 upwards, and again '85, that there seems to be an increase in these chemicals.

Mr. Cummings: Well, I am not sure if this is relevant, but I know that '89 was a dry year. An awful lot of particles carry, which probably had adhered to them a number of combinations of materials off of agricultural

land. They were blowing and then they ended up, in some cases, they blew into drainage which in turn ended up, I am sure, washing into the system.

I am told that can be quite a source of pollutants getting into the water system where there is erosion that contributes to it, but I really cannot, on short notice, unless somebody in the department can help me out, answer your question in those areas.

The conclusion is, however, that there really is not a verifiable trend over the years and that may be the best sign. In fact, I would think it is the best sign.

In '85, nitrate levels, for example, there was a dramatic drop. There was also a drop in phosphorous in '85, and 1980 was not that far below '89, which was the high. It went down.

Have I still got the floor, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Yes.

Mr. Cummings: The graph, for purposes of illustration, those lines are up to the top of the graph, but I remind you to look at the numbers on the left-hand side. We are talking about milligrams per litre and we are talking about .2 to .6 to .7. I mean, they are very, very small measurements.

* (2310)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Chairperson, I thank the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) for being patient with me. I am just going to ask a couple of very brief questions.

There is an issue that is becoming very important to no doubt the residents of all of Winnipeg in terms of the proposal of an additional landfill site, but it is nowhere more important to the people which I happen to represent. There is a great deal of concern with respect to what is being proposed. The Clean Environment Commission is going to be conducting hearings with respect to it. I have had discussions with BFI, in particular, along with some of the city administrators, and I am somewhat confused. I would like to think I do not confuse that easily, but what I am

being told, or at least the questions that I would have is whether or not there is a need for an additional landfill facility?

I have not been convinced as of yet that there is in fact that need. It seems to me, and as I say, I believe I have touched base with the different stakeholders, if you will, that because of user fees being charged we have seen a company that has come up with a proposal to have their own landfill site, thereby not necessarily having to pay into user fees. If in fact that is the real reason for having another landfill site being brought to the city of Winnipeg, I have some real concerns with it.

I asked, for example, the city, which also has a conflict of interest in terms of, well, is there a need for a third, another landfill site to feed the city of Winnipeg or for the city of Winnipeg to use? The response I have received is, no, there is not. Again, I acknowledge that there is a bit of a conflict of interest, but it is a fairly convincing no. It is not argument that is being put forward.

The first question that I have is: Is there, in fact, a need, and can the Department of Environment justify the need for another landfill site to serve the city of Winnipeg? I know part of that argument when the minister responds will be, well, this landfill site is not only to serve the city of Winnipeg but also rural municipalities that are around the city of Winnipeg.

I know that is going to be part of the argument because that is part of the argument that BFI had provided me, but in essence what we are talking about is a vast majority of the material that is going to be going into the landfill site will be coming from the city of Winnipeg. The City of Winnipeg has a bias, so does the BFI. They also have somewhat of a bias and a conflict of interest.

When I met with residents from the Meadows West area, I had indicated to them that my primary concern will be, first and foremost, justifying the need. If they are able to justify a need, then it is a question in terms of finding the ideal location. No one wants one in their back yard, I will be the first to admit that, myself included. But if there is a need, let us talk in terms of what is the ideal location.

Having said that, again, another argument could be put forward in terms of the need to privatize. I am concerned in terms of if the government says, well, we want to provide competition, then is it next year we are authorizing another landfill site for Laidlaw because Laidlaw has a proposal that they want to put into place.

The minister could, quite accurately, indicate that, look, there are all sorts of private landfill sites throughout the different rural municipalities that are out there. I think we have to be fair in acknowledging that the city of Winnipeg is very distinct, and the size of a landfill site that we are talking about is fairly significant. I have been fairly clear in terms of, as I say, the residents that make up the area that I represent in terms of wanting to ensure that the right thing is done.

The question that I would ask the minister, because again we do not have too much time, is, there is a Meadows West residents' group; would the minister make available, if the Meadows West residents' group found it was necessary, to have someone from within the department go out and explain the process and the pros and cons? I know they have had representatives from BFI—I definitely do believe it would be advantageous if the minister would indicate that, if given enough time or notice, he would have someone from within the department come down and explain the process, because I know that there was a significant process, that BFI has already gone through a significant amount of investment. I treat it very seriously. So do the residents of Meadows West, and I am sure that they would welcome the opportunity to have someone from within the department attend one of the executive meetings in a very open fashion.

It is not to try to put them on the spot, but rather to get a better understanding of the issue at hand and also the process. I would ask if the minister would be prepared to make that sort of a commitment.

Mr. Cummings: Well, the member for Inkster covered quite a range of aspects of the discussion around the BFI proposal. He closed with a fairly specific question.

Explaining the process is one thing, but the department is not the proponent, nor am I the

proponent, which the department would be representing me and government, of course, in any of their undertaking. Explaining the process, however, might not be what the member has in mind. I mean, that is straightforward enough.

There is an ad in the paper this week that poses some questions. Those are the questions that were meant to stimulate thoughts and potential presentations to the Clean Environment Commission's first hearings in August. They are hearings under the part of the act that talks about the capability of conducting an investigation.

* (2320)

An investigation seems to imply a wrongdoing. In this case, an investigation is meant to imply a gathering of information. If the member has seen those questions—and there is also a brochure that has been put out that is very much along the lines of what is advertised in the paper. I should have brought one tonight for purposes of this discussion because it is meant to lay out just the very questions that you posed. What are we doing—and this becomes what we want at this stage—the need and justification to the extent that, is another site needed. Should the city have a monopoly?

I mean, that probably comes as close to crystallizing the whole question as anything else. Should the city have a monopoly over the waste that is produced within its boundaries? I will be interested to hear what businesses who produce commercial waste may have to say about that, because today they pay someone to take their—the city will not come and pick it up, so they have only one place to take it right now unless they find their own source, and some of them do haul outside of the city today.

The city probably does not know how much waste it is losing today, but some of it, it does not want to know about because they do not want it. Over in the Springfield area, I am sure there is some waste that has gone to the rural landfills out there. It is quite legitimate that it go there, but I am sure the city does not want to know about it. If they did, the owners of the waste probably do not want to haul it across the city and pay, what is it, \$43 a tonne to put it in Brady, if

they can find a cheaper place to put it. Now, that does not mean to imply that I think BFI or anybody else is going to undercut the city by very much, because if that is what the market is, then they probably would assume that they can make a pretty darn good profit at that price, given the known costs of operating, \$43 a tonne tipping fee.

That gets me back to my original comment about what are commercial operators going to say in terms of the fact that if the city does not come and pick up their waste today, so they have to hire a trucker—it might be BFI, it might be somebody else—to take it across the city to put it in the Brady landfill and pay them \$43 a tonne so that they can dump it, they may have something to say about whether or not there is an opportunity for a site that maybe does some recycling of some of their product. I do not know what BFI will propose. We have not seen their proposal, frankly, and maybe it is a discussion that is never going to have to be finalized, but we all assume we are going to see a proposal.

The question that the city made some good political hay out of was that they were going to lose revenue from the Brady landfill; therefore, they would not be able to enter into a recycling program because they would not be able to use the profits from Brady to pay for the recycling program. I suppose I might as well say it as think it. The fact is it seems to me they are going to make money on the recycling program the way the markets are starting to evolve right now, so the wheels are starting to come off of that argument.

But we do have a regional problem that needs to be dealt with. We are faced with a number of municipalities, some of which are part way into the process. I have already received a rather excited letter from one of the municipalities that is part way into siting a landfill in their own jurisdiction. They said, are we going to be roped into this discussion because BFI and the city are having a fight? Do we now have to come in and defend our proposal for a landfill too? No, but they might want to come to the hearings and make their feelings known about regional capability of landfill, because up until recently, the city would not allow some of the rural municipalities to get into Brady.

Now, I am not any dumber than the next guy. I know that BFI wants more than just the surrounding municipalities. They have had some discussions, and I really believe there needs to be more discussions between BFI as the proponent in this case and the city as the jurisdiction that is likely to be the most impacted by anything that they might do because of their capability to develop something of some significant size and see if there is not some swaps that are available.

Brady could accept materials from BFI, and the city could put materials in BFI's site, given appropriate haulage and reciprocity of tipping arrangements. Both parties have said they are willing to discuss, but then they never do, and both parties have said they are prepared to publicly defend their position, and this prehearing, the best way to describe it, that we have called will allow them to publicly defend their position in the framework of what the commission is asking. It will give everybody a chance to have a say at the table and not just those two players.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, what I will indicate maybe to the residents' association is that if they feel that it is necessary to have someone from the department to talk about the process, that they write to the minister, and I hope and trust that he would at least see favourably to responding positively to that.

The other comment I would make is I would think that there might be some benefit—I know the hearings are, I believe, at the Convention Centre—for the residents, because the residents are first and foremost my top priority, and I believe they should be for the government, because it is the residents who pay the property taxes and choose to live in the city, and they deserve the ability to be able to have that direct input.

I think it would be advantageous to provide them the opportunity to have one of the hearings within, for example, the Meadows West School or something of that nature.

Having said that, again, I appreciate the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) letting me come in at this point when he was asking questions, and the minister might want to quickly respond to those comments.

Mr. Cummings: Very briefly, I am usually more than willing to be flexible or encourage flexibility on these things, but the Clean Environment Commission has a very significant expense setting up and moving because of the recording, because of the scheduling and because of translation services in this case, I believe, as well, so they have sort of given me the indication that they want to set up in one location and it was fairly central to the region. In this case, they are encouraging the municipalities from outside of the city to come down to the Convention Centre, as well.

So I would encourage you to encourage your interested citizens to come. There is no reason why, however, if there is a committee or an organization in your area that would like to hear directly about what the process is and how they might become involved, we will do everything we can to help out.

Mr. Dewar: Mr. Chairman, all of us are deeply concerned about the situation concerning the forest fire problems we are having here in Manitoba, notwithstanding the great human tragedies, also the great loss of resources and in wildlife.

Is the Department of Environment monitoring the situation? Will the minister provide us with an update in terms of the environmental impacts on our province's ecosystem?

Mr. Cummings: You are probably a little bit ahead of us in the sense that we have a multidepartmental response to these issues and the Department of Environment is not a disinterested observer, but it would be what we can pick up through monitoring. Where this will show up likely is in water quality and air quality and ultimately in harvestable forest licensing, all of those areas. I am not sure that I can give you a real clear picture.

I think you are a little ahead of us in asking us how we can tell you, other than what the obvious impacts are regarding the environment. We would be called upon if there was ongoing air problems in communities. That is why we are evacuating people. You do not necessarily have to have a monitoring program to know when they should get the heck out. If it is an impending danger, you are better to be on the

safe side. The department is saying probably any ecological assessment will come after the fires are out.

* (2330)

Mr. Dewar: Again, moving along, there are so many important issues that we have to overlook today, but I do want to deal with the issue of waste management. The member for Inkster was talking about waste management and landfill sites, and so on. I met with an individual who raised some issues with us, Mr. Roy Sveinson and Mr. Sveinson is—[interjection]

I know the relationship there but he did ask us to raise some concerns here. His company is Moosehorn Supply. Is the minister aware of his proposals and some of the very interesting proposals that he has put forward in his plan?

Mr. Cummings: Yes, I have met with Mr. Sveinson on probably three different occasions.

Mr. Dewar: What are your general thoughts on his proposal? He tells us that his proposal here, his initiative, could recycle 80 percent of the wastes here in the province of Manitoba. I am sure that would be of great interest to the minister.

Mr. Cummings: There were a number of things occurred all about the same time. There were a number of proposals, not exactly like Mr. Sveinson's, but there were a couple of other proposals that did talk about single-site processing of all of the waste and an attempt to get the recyclables out at the same time. We were already well into a multimaterial program when the proposal first came forward in terms of implementation of fines and collection of levies and moving towards funding of the multimaterial program.

As the city has demonstrated several times in the discussions around the Manitoba multimaterial stewardship program, in the end it is the city's waste. If the city were to choose to go this route, I do not think that I would or should step in to stop them if it is a practical application.

There were several parts to this and one part was, was there any availability of funding through the

Sustainable Development Innovations program as well, did not mean to appear to be disinterested. We, in fact, reviewed it seriously, but we did not rate it high on our list of proposals that were lined up for funding under the Sustainable Development Fund, and you know the size of the fund.

By the time you get back to where you are dealing with proposals of this nature, you are down closer to \$2 million than \$3 million by the time you take some of the Green Team and things like that off the top, in terms of funding, and the tire recycling money that was there. So we did not dismiss this out of hand, but we did not embrace it either as a provincial strategy.

Mr. Dewar: What would you suggest I tell Mr. Sveinson about your approach so far? I think this is a very, very exciting initiative. He has claimed to us that he could recycle 80 percent of all wastes, and I think that sounds quite, quite exciting. I think the government should look at this very seriously. I want to know why you have not yet?

Mr. Cummings: Well, we did look at it seriously. The fact is that the \$5 million or so annually that is being collected is in the hands of the Manitoban stewardship board. If he were to convince them that this would be the way to go and then convince the city that he could have a contract—I mean, it can be exciting but it may not be doable. I do not have any personal animosity towards the proposal, but there is not any vehicle for funding. One of the questions was would we pay on materials being put in storage. That was exactly the reason why we did not go with almost all of the tire proposals that we had. People wanted to be paid to collect the tires, and they said, do not worry, we will dispose of them. Well, what a great potential for disaster that would be. Have \$5 million a year for three years, you have got \$15 million worth of stuff in a pile somewhere, and then the company disappears on you. That is not a risk I am prepared to take, but I am not in any way going to degrade or attack the proposal. It will work in some areas, but it just has not got its foot in the door here.

Mr. Dewar: So what action do you suggest I convey to the proponents of this proposal to get provincial support, or are they seeking provincial support?

Mr. Cummings: Well, you can tell them my answer is—my answer has not changed from the last meeting that we were at, and that was that there is more than me has to be convinced of the validity of this program.

We have set up a program that has got to be driven by the entrepreneurial skills of the private sector out there and have the blessing of the municipality. The funds are paid through the municipality to the recycling program that is considered acceptable.

As I recall, one of the first proposals that Mr. Sveinson put forward was to put an incinerator. I know the second one did not include an incinerator, but he was prepared to use heat recovery and put an incinerator on the campus at the U of M. All you need to do is do a review of the literature on how environmentalists view incinerators being fed by an unpredictable source of fuel and all the questions about heavy metals and everything else that can be emitted. That is a whole different ball of wax.

The second proposal, unless I have got the two proposals confused, was more for the managing of the entire waste and the removal of the recyclables, but if the recyclables are not going to be marketed quickly, you are going to need an enormous backlog of cash. I guess you can take Hansard and provide it to them if you are asking me for what you might say in terms of advice. I do not have any more advice than what I have already given.

Mr. Dewar: Again moving on, following up on an issue that was raised by my Leader with the Premier (Mr. Filmon), and that was a fine that was waived on, I believe, soft drink companies, can the minister provide us with a bit of an update on that, please?

Mr. Cummings: Yes, the fines have in fact not been waived. It does not mean that there may not be an eventual relief in that respect, but for the last six months everybody has been jumping up and down about the fact that we relieved them of this penalty. We have not done it yet, although we have indicated that the support through the MPSP and the Manitoba Soft Drink Recycling program could be used to—if they were to be put in place appropriately, there would be an opportunity for the remission of this penalty.

To understand this issue, you have got to go back to the implementation of the 2-cent levy on beverage containers. At the time that levy was to be implemented, the Manitoba soft drink industry was subsidizing the Manitoba Soft Drink Recycling program to the tune of over \$1 million a year. That has been verified.

As soon as the legislation and regulatory process was put in place, that would get the 2-cent levy up and running, they were under no obligation to continue running MSDRI, the big trucks that you see rolling around the city and the province collecting recyclable beverage containers.

* (2340)

If they had have shut that program down at the time that the levies were being imposed or the regulation was being put in place, they would have put at least half of our small communities that were recycling out of business. They had a contract with the Manitoba Liquor Commission which they could have probably broken, so we would have no recycling collection capability across the province. Simply by them shutting down that program, they would have saved more than the cost of the assessment for them not having met the targets that we set for the collection of beverage containers in the province.

I think there is another important distinction. These were not fines. These were an assessment, an additional assessment, that they were to pay if they did not meet the previously agreed to targets in terms of the percentage of collection. I cannot remember the exact numbers, but I believe they were being asked to collect 60 percent, and they were somewhere under 50 percent. That is the type of ratio.

So what we got was a significant collection program continuing in the province at the time that we were in transition. What the beverage container industry asked for was if they continued that program and aggressively worked to implement the MPS fee or as it is now known the MMSB, the Manitoba multimaterial stewardship board program, they asked that they have those additional assessments waived, which under the act I understand the minister has the authority to do.

That has not occurred, but as I have always indicated, that was the approach that we wanted to have happen in the province. We did not have any fewer numbers of dollars being spent. We probably ended up having more dollars being spent in support of recycling than we would have had otherwise because of the ongoing subsidy to MSDRI.

So the end result is—as you have asked, what is the full story behind that. We are doing a full accounting of the verification of the monies that the beverage container industry has spent in support of MSDRI, and we are looking at the contribution, where we are taking \$5 million annually rather than \$1 million annually out of the beverage container industry under the new levy program, and we are putting all of that together to get the best bang for our buck in the collection of the materials. I cannot tell you much more than that. It has not occurred yet.

Mr. Dewar: Well, unfortunately, we are running quite low on time.

Mr. Cummings: We have the staff here from the Sustainable Development Innovations Fund if you would like to ask some questions in that area. I presume you might have some concerns about that, so we could do that before we shut down.

Mr. Dewar: The member for Dauphin has some specific questions he would like to raise, so I will let him raise those now.

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): Actually, I have a whole bunch of questions that I am not going to be able to get into. They were questions that I have been asking before, and your colleagues in cabinet have sort of sifted me down through the Estimates process, and I am landing on your table here.

Mr. Cummings: Did they pass the buck?

Mr. Struthers: You go deal with them.

It has to do with environmental assessments. What stage is the environmental assessment surrounding Louisiana-Pacific at? I know they have done the assessment having to do with the building, and the

building has been underway, close to being built, I understand.

Are there going to be further assessments on the environment surrounding the extraction of the hardwoods from the area?

Mr. Cummings: The forest program?

Mr. Struthers: That is right.

Mr. Cummings: I guess I should preface this by saying we are the only jurisdiction in Canada that has forest management licensing that is overlaid by an environment act licensing, and the Clean Environment Commission will be holding hearings on the forest licensing to Louisiana-Pacific in September.

Mr. Struthers: Okay, still sticking with Louisiana-Pacific, the other question I had was, what technology is Louisiana expected to have to control the emissions coming from that plant? From your department, what are your expectations of Louisiana-Pacific?

Mr. Cummings: I know why the member is asking the question, but I have to go back to the fundamental aspect of the way licensing is done, and that is a standard is set that they must meet, and how they meet that standard from a technological point of view is generally left up to the proponent, because they have the capability of deciding the best balance of cost and benefit to achieve the final level of air quality, in this case, that is required under the licence, but it will have the E-tube and the RTO, as I understand their present intentions.

Mr. Struthers: Mr. Chairperson, from what you just told me then, how is your department going to enforce any kind of standards with Louisiana-Pacific? If it is left up to them, how will your department be looking at enforcing the standards that you want them to meet?

Mr. Cummings: I would not want you to imply that it is left up to them, that the standard is left up to them. The standard, we will enforce the standard—[interjection] You say how? We shut them down. I mean that is as simple as that. They meet the standard or they do not operate. That is not something I would

ever likely expect to have happen, but that is the reality of the licence requirements.

Monitoring is done under our supervision, so that we have a good grasp of emissions. The debate about what the technology should be in that plant, the very first technology that they talked about putting in was already far more advanced than everybody talks about the plant that was in B.C. The opponents were pointing to the plant in B.C. and talking about all the problems it was having. It did not even have the beginning of the technology that they were planning on putting into this plant at Swan River, so there was no comparison between the two plants.

Then the debate, as I recall, during the hearings, degenerated down—degenerated is not the right term, but the debate revolved around whether or not they would have the most modern technology. Through the course of the debate, the discussion was the one we just had is, we set the standard and how they get there will be their problem.

They have said they could get there by various means, but then near the end of the hearings or part way through the hearings they have said that was when they were going to put in the RTO technology, I believe, if I have got the terms correct, and everybody seemed to be happy, and that was how it evolved.

The discussion after that was that they had a plant in the States that was operating with that technology and it had a Monsanto unit attached to it. I do not understand the processes any more than what I have been spoon-fed, but the bottom line was that they felt they could meet the emissions with that other system.

The fact was if they could meet the emissions, we would be prepared to license them, but their experience with that plant apparently began to deteriorate, and they decided to stick with the original E-tube and RTO technology. So that is the long and the short of it.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Resolution 31.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$10,914,000 for Environment, Environmental Management, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

Item 3. Clean Environment Commission (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$231,500—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$182,000—pass.

Resolution 31.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$413,500 for Environment, Clean Environment Commission, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

Item 4. International Institute for Sustainable Development \$1,375,000—pass.

Resolution 31.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,375,000 for Environment, International Institute for Sustainable Development, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

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

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

Resolution 31.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,472,300 for Environment, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

This completes the Estimates of the Department of Environment.

* (2350)

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INNOVATIONS FUND

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Ben Sveinson): The next set of Estimates that will be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply are the Estimates of the department of Sustainable Development Innovations Fund. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

This section of the Committee of Supply will be considering the Estimates of the Sustainable Development Innovations Fund. The minister for

Sustainable Development, does the minister have an opening statement?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): I am prepared to waive the statement.

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): I am also prepared to waive the statement.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We thank the minister of Sustainable Development for the short comments, and we also thank the official opposition critic the honourable member for Selkirk for those short comments.

We are now on page 138 in the Estimates book and on page 11 of the yellow supplement book.

Mr. Cummings: Given that this is the first time the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) has had to wrestle with this one, the Sustainable Development Fund is dollars are supplied from the waiving of the provincial sales tax on disposable diapers. That is where the revenue comes from plus a levy against liquor bottles. It is allocated under a committee system, under Agriculture, under I, T and T, Energy and Mines, Environment, Rural Development, and Natural Resources. In those general categories, applicants apply under the fund for programs always not of an ongoing nature, more of a one-time nature, although we do the odd one for two years, a two-year project. So with that perhaps I can leave you with those thoughts.

Mr. Dewar: I just have a few questions. The obvious one is what are some of the innovative projects that the fund has supported, briefly?

Mr. Cummings: There were 199 approvals during the fiscal year that we are looking at, and I can give you some examples of the areas that we have looked at. For example, there were a number of biological control programs of encouraging and funding some work on areas like leafy spurge control using biological methods, bladder campion, safe use of pesticides.

One other interesting one that we did, and this came up in discussion almost in a roundabout way in the House in another department's Estimates.

We funded a small program in the core area of the city to encourage people to grow their own gardens on vacant lots where we supplied some help, some seeds and a rototiller for those who were interested in growing their own produce. Because we are also trying to reduce the amount of pesticide used in areas and diversify demands in an agricultural area, which makes some of our activities much more environmentally sustainable, we did fund some research into haploid canola.

In the interests of reduction of energy requirements, we assisted with a small project to reduce the bulk of hay for shipping, a unique program. We put some money into research on strawboard, a combination of aspects of that. We did a project at Gull Lake, which was a water improvement project out in the member's area.

Mr. Dewar: Well, perhaps the minister could provide me with a detailed list of the projects funded and what level in terms of grant assistance.

Just one final question, what is the process for someone who is seeking approval for a grant under this program?

Mr. Cummings: Through any one of the departments of government that I mentioned or through my department or directly to the Sustainable Development Co-ordination Unit, we have a proposal form that would be sent out to those who were interested.

The process is that once it has been received and assumed to be appropriately filled out, it goes to the appropriate department for an assessment and an evaluation of whether or not it should be recommended for support.

It goes to committee, and then it is either denied or approved. If it is approved, there will be a portion of the money that will be dispensed upon appropriate documentation with a holdback. If it is over \$25,000, it has to go through Treasury Board, the appropriate documentation and processed there. Under \$25,000 can be approved directly by the minister of the department. It is not always this minister. It can also be other departments.

Mr. Dewar: I want to thank the minister for those answers, and we are prepared to pass this line.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 1. Sustainable Development Innovations Fund \$3,200,000—pass.

Resolution 32.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,200,000 for Sustainable Development Innovations Fund for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

This completes the Estimates of the department of Sustainable Development Innovations Fund.

The next set of Estimates that will be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply are the Estimates of the Department of Labour.

The time is now twelve o'clock. Committee rise.

STATUS OF WOMEN

* (2000)

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson (Gerry McAlpine): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. The committee will be resuming consideration of the Estimates for the Status of Women.

When the committee last sat, it had been considering item 1. Status of Women (a) Manitoba Women's Advisory Council (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits, on page 136.

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Mr. Chairman, when the committee adjourned at six o'clock, I had been asking some questions about the executive director and what was happening with that position.

If I could just summarize it, I believe the minister told me that the position had been vacant since January 1, and there was now a process underway and within two weeks there would be an advertisement for the job, advertising the job of executive director.

It was hoped that the process would be conducted expeditiously so that somebody may be in place for that position on August 1. Is that an accurate summary?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Mr. Chair, yes, that is correct, as I understand it from the advisory council.

Ms. McGifford: I know too that the minister expressed, not concern but pointed out if the process were slowed down, for example, if somebody, I suppose, were hired who needed time to give a proper leave or resignation from another position, that would be allowed for.

Mrs. Vodrey: I am told that would be considered and allowed if that became the person who was the one for the job.

Ms. McGifford: I believe also the minister said that it was not unusual for a position like that of executive director to be vacant for the six months for which this job has been vacant.

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, I am told that throughout the civil service, that is a possibility.

Ms. McGifford: Could I ask why the executive director resigned?

Mrs. Vodrey: She moved away. She moved to another country with her family.

Ms. McGifford: I think I remember now the minister having told me that in the House. Let me back up.

What exactly is the job description, and perhaps I should not say "exactly," but generally speaking, what are the executive director's duties?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told by the chairperson that the executive director has been responsible for staffing, for the financial issues relating to the budget and also has done some work as a policy analyst, particularly in relation to the social and the economic issues.

Ms. McGifford: Is that a general description, or is this what has been done recently?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told that is a general description.

Ms. McGifford: Can I ask who is responsible for directing research in the office of the advisory council?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told that direction is given by council and the executive director then oversees the fulfillment of that.

Ms. McGifford: So the executive director oversees the research in the advisory council. That is correct?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, I am told that is correct.

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, I would like to ask the minister, who has been doing the executive director's work in the basically six months that that position has been available?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am told those duties have been assumed by both the chairperson of the advisory council and also other duties by the analyst.

Ms. McGifford: Well, then, as far as the analyst is concerned, that must have made her a very busy person. I am wondering in regard to the chair, I would like to know how the chair combines executive director's duties with the chair's official duties.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, the question was how does the executive director then assume those kinds of additional responsibilities?

Ms. McGifford: The question, Mr. Chair, was, it would seem to me that there is one set of responsibilities that are the chair's and one set that belong to the executive director, and I am wondering how the chair in her allocated time does both sets of duties.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, the chairperson has assumed those responsibilities by working some additional hours in order that they are fulfilled.

Ms. McGifford: Has the chair received remuneration for those additional duties?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, and it was through operating per diems.

Ms. McGifford: I think I am left puzzled, because my understanding is that the advisory council was deemed to best work with an executive director and with a chair and that these two positions were distinct one from the other, and yet we understand that for six months, the duties have been more or less combined, and this seems to me passing strange.

Mrs. Vodrey: To say combined, the member would somehow assume that they were sort of compacted or squished into a single block of time.

There is a recognition of the desire to have a new executive director, but until that could be accomplished and in order to make sure that the advisory council continued to function in what we really believe is an efficient way—they are an energetic council; they are a council that I believe is working well with the women of Manitoba.

So the chairperson, until the time the executive director is hired then, has assumed some of the duties that might have been done by the executive director, but as I said, we are looking for a new executive director. The chairperson has been able to identify what that person might do, and the competition is in process.

Ms. McGifford: My understanding is that it had been identified, that there is a job description for the executive director so that the chair did not really need to identify what the executive director would or should do. But what I am curious about is, why did it take so long? Why did it take this long to make a decision to advertise for an executive director?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am not sure what the member is looking for, if she is looking for something underlying in the process. The questioning seems to lead me to think that may be the case, and I do not know how to answer her because that is simply not the case. The answer is that there is a process the chairperson gave in a general sense, which I replied to this evening, what the executive director might do.

The chairperson has identified what the executive director's duties would be. The process is ongoing. Somehow I have a feeling had things gone the other

way, we had quickly rushed to fill the position, then the member would have said to me, well, what is the hurry? Why did you hurry and do that right away and not take a fair amount of time? So I am not sure, I mean, if there is something underlying that the member wants to identify, I wish she would do so because there is not an underlying issue or problem in this case. It is proceeding as it should, and we all look forward to the appointment of the executive director.

Ms. McGifford: I would ask, Mr. Chair, that the minister not impute motives to what I would have done if a set of circumstances that do not exist had indeed existed. That seems to me irrelevant to our conversation this evening.

My duty as a critic is to work for the full and equal participation of women in society in the province of Manitoba. What I am learning, and, I must admit, what I had learned earlier was that for six months one of the leadership positions in the minister's department had not been fulfilled. I do not think it is irrelevant or untoward to ask some questions about why it took six months to make a decision to advertise for that position. It could have been done in one, two, three, four. I am wondering why it took six.

* (2010)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, well, I have given the member the answers. I have answered in the same way, I believe, three times. If there is something more that the member would like to know, perhaps she could be precise.

Ms. McGifford: I do not think that the minister really has answered my question as to why it took six months to advertise for this position.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, the answer may not be one that the member wants to hear, but nevertheless it is the answer. That is why I am asking her, is there something else that she is trying to uncover here that I do not believe is there? If she would give me the opportunity to say so, then I would be glad to do that.

I have told her from the beginning that this was a position which we are seeking to fill now, which was

vacated when someone left the country. The chairperson of the advisory committee is determining the kinds of needs, if any, that may be different that she would require in an executive director if she is more comfortable now and/or as she gets to know how the advisory council is functioning. With that in mind and through the process required by the civil service, we are in the process of filling that position.

I am sure as we get on in the process of these Estimates the member may ask me to identify further work that is being done, I will be happy to do that. I think that the record of this advisory council and the staff who support it is very good. In fact, I believe it is really genuinely very active, and I think, as she has told me she has spoken to the women's community across Manitoba, I am sure that is the feedback that she must be getting. Because I also have been acquainted with the advisory council for some time. I see this to be a very active one. So, if there is any—you know, frankly I do not know what additional information to provide for her.

As I am reminded, council is arm's length. When the request for the staffing was put forward, I signed it; I moved it along. That is the process. Now, if the member is suggesting that a minister should be more intimately involved with the advisory council, I think that makes it very difficult for the council to operate at arm's length. So I have given the answer, I think, now four times and I am struggling to find what additional information might be suitable to the member.

Ms. McGifford: Well, what I am asking, I think, is extremely simple, and I am sorry that the minister has difficulty in understanding my question. But my question is, why was the position not advertised three months ago? Why did it take six, for example? I do not think I have had an answer. Now I think, perhaps, the minister was telling me that it took this long for the chair to decide what work she felt needed to be done by the executive director, so that for six months a job description was being drawn up.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: Just for clarification for the committee, I would just like to remind the committee that the minister has the right to answer the question the way she sees fit, and

unfortunately that is the way it is as far as the committee is concerned. So I would just remind the committee of that, that the minister when she is asked a question, she can answer the question the way she wishes to answer it.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I think the member has grasped what I have been telling her in the last few answers, the last time that I have repeated the answers, and that is that to my knowledge the chairperson has taken time to look at the office structure, what is required to have people work together, and any changes that she might determine should be there in a job description for the executive director. I say any, if any. But it is appropriate that she take some time to consider this.

I am certainly supportive of filling the position, and as I have told the member, we are well on the way to doing that. I do not know that there is anything further I can add to her information regarding the filling of this position.

As I said, do not let me impute motives to her—one might, another person might say if it was filled within a month or two that somehow we had hurried up and rushed to fill it and had somehow tried to, you know, short-circuit the process. Now we hear the argument on the other side.

So all I am trying to assure her through this quite long process of speaking about the filling of the position of the executive director is that we are doing so according to the civil service. We expect it to be filled as soon as possible.

I am told that the advisory council would like to see it filled by the beginning of August. However, I am also told that depending on the number of applications or, as the member herself has identified, maybe someone has to get out of a contract if they are the successful applicant. It will be filled as soon as possible.

Ms. McGifford: Well, I am very happy to hear that, and I am sure that it will be a very sought-after position because it certainly is an important position, and the

role I think of executive director is an important leadership position for the women in Manitoba.

The minister has said, and I have always understood this, that is that the advisory council is at an arm's length branch of her ministry—is at arm's length from government. Now, earlier the minister said that the advisory council employees are not employees of government. Perhaps I misunderstood then. Could I have a bit of clarification here?

Mrs. Vodrey: The employees of the advisory council are employees of government. It is the council members who are not direct employees of government. They are paid a per diem; that is how the arm's length nature is established.

Ms. McGifford: Then the position of executive director, policy analyst and office persons are government positions, but the chair and the council itself are appointed positions.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, those employees of the advisory council are civil service employees for the purposes of payment but they do not report to me directly as minister. They report to the advisory council.

Ms. McGifford: I need to have my memory refreshed. I think the minister told me that the chair's salary came from personnel services.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, from operating.

Ms. McGifford: Could the minister tell me what the chair's salary is, please?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, it is by per diem. It is \$82 a half day and \$152 a full day.

Ms. McGifford: May I ask if there is a set number of days or half days that the chair works?

* (2020)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, it is by an allotment, and the amount that is budgeted for the chair is \$22,220.

Ms. McGifford: I would like to ask some questions about, well actually not some, just a question about indirect salary costs and ask what those are.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told that number is for vacation pay.

Ms. McGifford: May I ask why there is such a decrease between '94-95 and '95-96?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told that vacation pay is tied to seniority in the salary of individuals filling that position, so in this case, this is what is projected for the individuals who are currently in that position.

Ms. McGifford: I am wondering also about the quite large decrease in Supplies and Services. Has that anything to do with rent, or may I ask which is the budget line for rent?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am told that this 4.9 reduction is for rent.

Ms. McGifford: And I understand the advisory council along with the Women's Directorate changed offices, and that was some time ago and it is cheaper. Is that it?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, that move took place May 1, '94, and the rent is less expensive.

Ms. McGifford: I would like to ask some questions about the council members themselves. May I ask, please, how many council members there are and how many there is allowed to be.

Mrs. Vodrey: The number of council members at the moment is 16, including the chairperson, and I am told that the total number possible is 18.

Ms. McGifford: I am wondering what the general guidelines are as far as selecting council members.

Mrs. Vodrey: Things that are looked at are, first of all, some geographical representation, that we have women who are available to act on the advisory committee from different parts of Manitoba, rural and urban Manitoba, northern Manitoba.

In addition, we also look for women who were involved in different professional activities, different sectors, as well as some women who may not be currently involved in the workforce.

So we are looking at women who represent what we believe to be the experience of women across the province of Manitoba.

Ms. McGifford: How many members from the North are there on the council and where are they from?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am told two from the Thompson area, one from Russell, and then as we move a little bit closer into southern central Manitoba, one from Brandon, two from Portage la Prairie.

Ms. McGifford: Are there any aboriginal women on the council?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, I am told two, Anita Campbell and Gladys Cook.

Ms. McGifford: Is the minister satisfied that there is a sound mix of council members, or to rephrase my question, is the minister satisfied that the council accurately represents the mosaic of women in the province of Manitoba?

Mrs. Vodrey: I believe that it is a good mix. It is a good mix because not only are the women representative from around the province and from different groups around the province, but I believe that they are women connected within different groups around the province.

Some are from education, some are from health, some are from post-secondary education, and these women operate in circles of influence around the province, and so I do believe that they bring a very good representation of women from around the province.

Ms. McGifford: How long do council members serve?

Mrs. Vodrey: Council members are appointed for two years.

Ms. McGifford: Are the council positions paid positions?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, the per diem is \$50 for a half day and \$87 for a whole day or anything over three and a half hours.

Ms. McGifford: May I ask how frequently the council meets?

Mrs. Vodrey: Council meets six times a year.

Ms. McGifford: Are those meetings generally a half day or a day in duration?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told three meetings are a day and a half long, and three meetings are a day long.

Ms. McGifford: Where do the meetings take place?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am told that the meetings take place in the boardroom, but there has also been one meeting in Gimli, in the Interlake region.

* (2030)

Ms. McGifford: I am wondering if the advisory council has ever considered meeting at various places in the province. While I suppose the council has met in a couple of different places, I was thinking of moving from the north to the south and rural and urban.

Mrs. Vodrey: I am told that the council has a meeting in November scheduled in Thompson, and they are looking to schedule another meeting in southern Manitoba, perhaps southwestern Manitoba around Morden, but they have not been specific about that place at the moment.

Ms. McGifford: I am interested in the process or exactly—or maybe I should not say "exactly"—what happens at the council meetings themselves. My first question is, how is the agenda established for the meetings?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am told that the agenda is set by issues which are brought forward by council members

including the chair, and that the agenda is approved each meeting.

Ms. McGifford: So that one meeting is, I guess, towards the termination of one meeting, the agenda for the next meeting would be set by council members bringing forth the issues that council members wish to discuss at the next meeting. Is that basically the way works?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, yes, that is one way, in addition to other issues which may arise in between.

I am told that the advisory council has also done strategic plan in which they have identified certain issues of importance to the council where they have agreed upon certain topic areas, and those are also included in the agenda.

Ms. McGifford: Could the minister comment on the strategic plan, such as what are the identified issues for the forthcoming year?

Mrs. Vodrey: The areas are education and training women in politics, boards and commissions to encourage and facilitate the participation of women on decision-making boards and commissions, women and health, immigration, to be informed of changes in immigration policies and to determine their effect on the status of women, social policy review, the issue of violence against women and, also, the fourth world conference on women in Beijing, and they have assisted the NGO group in that area.

Ms. McGifford: I am wondering if a member of the general public, a woman of the general public was interested in having an issue discussed at the advisory council, if there is a process or a way of that happening

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told that letters are received by the advisory council, and those letters and their issues are raised on a regular basis at the advisory council meetings.

Ms. McGifford: So there is some back-and-forth communication between the public and the advisory council. My understanding is then, there is room for women from the broad community to feed their

concerns to members of the advisory council, who, in turn, would raise those issues at the advisory council.

Mrs. Vodrey: I am told that representatives of groups have written to the advisory council to have their issues raised. Individual women have also written letters to have their particular concerns raised, and also some individuals, as well as representatives of the community, have made presentations to the advisory council.

Ms. McGifford: Is anyone from the advisory council going to attend the Beijing conference?

Mrs. Vodrey: No, I am told they will not have a representative there.

Ms. McGifford: I am also interested in the process of advising government. I read that one of the activities of the council is to advise the Manitoba government on matters of concern to women, and I am interested in the method by which—how does this happen? How does this process work?

Mrs. Vodrey: First of all, as minister, I receive the minutes of the meetings. Then, also, I do have meetings with the chair on request, and I have also had the advisory council in to make sure that that two-way process is facilitated. The advisory council also has made representation to departments. By way of example, they had representation on the consultation process for the maintenance enforcement bill.

Ms. McGifford: Then there are two ways that the advisory council advises government. One is directly by meeting with the representatives from a department and the other one is through the minister.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, that would be correct. I had not thought of them as direct or indirect, but in fact, I suppose they could be categorized that way in terms of direct work through departments and also by making sure the minister receives advice which then can be useful in terms of decision making.

Ms. McGifford: That was just a way of clarifying it for myself. Can I ask, please, which departments the council has directly consulted with this year?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I have spoken about direct then to the Department of Justice. I am not sure if the member would call this direct or not.

Family Services did consultation on their single-parent initiative and the advisory council took part in those. They have also taken part in consultations by the federal government, making presentations as well regarding the social services reform.

Ms. McGifford: I am curious about how it works. If the chair, for example, has met with the advisory council and the council has decided that there are certain issues on which it wishes to advise the government, does the chair then phone up the Minister of Family Services, for example, and say, hey, I have got some good ideas for you? How does that work? I guess what I am asking is, does the chair take the initiative or does the chair wait to be called?

* (2040)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told the process is by way of letter to that minister, though I would receive a copy of that as Minister for the Status of Women to be aware that the advisory council was interested in dealing with an issue and relating to certain ministers.

Ms. McGifford: So the chair would send an unsolicited letter to the Minister of Family Services and at the same time send a copy of that to the minister.

Mrs. Vodrey: That is right, and I am sorry. On my last answer I forgot to tell the member that yes, these are unsolicited. These are issues which have been generated by work of the advisory council which then they follow up with government.

So it is not a matter of them waiting to be invited by a minister, though, I suppose, ministers may also do that, but this is a proactive approach.

Ms. McGifford: My understanding then is that the advisory council has this year, for example, consulted or provided advice to Justice, Family Services, federal departments. I am wondering about some of the other ministries that the chair and the advisory council may have provided advice?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told they have intentions to contact two other ministers. I do not think I am able to tell you what that is. I would be preempting them to do so, but I gather there are issues which relate to Urban Affairs and Finance.

Ms. McGifford: Thank you for the answers to those questions.

I am also interested in groups that the advisory council consults with. I am not speaking about ministries here. I am talking about women's groups. I wonder if the minister could comment on groups in the community that the advisory council has worked with this year.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told the list is very, very extensive, and it is not put together on a single list that I can read to the member.

I will give you some examples of the names that have been brought forward: the Provincial Council of Women, the Coalition for Education and Training, the Beijing group, LEAF. They have met with three different resource centres, the Women's Institute. Then they have regular contact with women's groups, where they provide the photocopying service, and also regular contact with groups of women where they provide the fax service as well.

Ms. McGifford: I wonder if I might have a copy of the list, not necessarily tonight.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am just checking for the staff. It is the extensive list of groups met with that the member is asking for. Yes, we can provide that to you.

Ms. McGifford: Can the minister tell me some of the concerns that women have brought up, or groups have brought up, in these consultations? It does not have to be in-depth, just generally speaking what people seem to have identified as the major issues.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I can give the member a list of some of the issues which have come up. Some of these have come up through presentations, others have come up through phone calls into the office on the kinds of community contact the advisory council has.

Requests for information and issues brought forward regarding child support, legal matters pertaining to separation and divorce, issues relating to Education and Training, employment, domestic violence, housing, funding, scholarships, student loans, how to enter politics, resume preparation, literature search, statistics on women, stalkings and pensions are among some of the issues that have been raised.

Ms. McGifford: That certainly is an interesting list, and it would seem from that list of items that there very well may be women in the community who phone the advisory council in search of direct service. I wonder what the advisory council does because I am almost certain that happens.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told that this happens quite frequently. I am very happy to hear that because it does say that there is that community contact, and the advisory council is really women of the community.

The advisory council staff have developed a base of information from which they are able to provide information to the person who is calling either to give them names of other groups they might contact or how to help them within government to make a contact to find out the information that they need.

Ms. McGifford: Who in the advisory council does that work?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told that it has become somewhat of a shared responsibility based on some particular expertise of people who are involved. At the moment, it is shared primarily through the analyst and through the chairperson, and both have some special areas of expertise which they are able to offer.

Ms. McGifford: Thank you for the answers to those questions.

I am wondering what kind of outreach work the council does to ensure that the range of women's organizations and women present their issues to the council, or indeed, is that a possibility. Is it feasible for the council to do outreach work?

* (2050)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told that at every meeting there is a group or an individual who is invited to present on issues, things such as rural child care. The Gimli meeting was considered an outreach meeting. I am told that there were 20 groups that were invited. Four actually presented.

Ms. McGifford: I guess I am thinking of the fact that although I am sure that the advisory council makes very valiant efforts to be open and available, I am thinking of women whom we all know of who are truly so marginalized that the idea of writing a letter or attending a meeting or making a phone call is just not feasible or possible. I am wondering if there is any effort or any way of reaching the kind of group that I am sure the women present know I am talking about.

Mrs. Vodrey: I can only provide the member with the information that has come to me almost verbatim, that you would be surprised at the women who actually do pick up the phone and make that contact, that it truly is a very wide-ranging group of women who have used this as their particular entry point.

I know the member knows that women have to decide how it is that they are going to enter and get help, and, often it is not necessarily in the formal way that other people might, that often it is by phoning up and seeking information and through that, actually getting some other kinds of help they need. So I am told that in fact this really is effective, and I am very glad it has been that way too.

Ms. McGifford: We have been talking about the advice that the advisory council has provided to government and the meetings that the advisory council has had either directly or the influence that it might have had indirectly through the minister.

I guess I am wondering how often government follows the council's advice.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told that with this advisory council as it is now, certainly they believe that they have been able to have influence to government in a number of areas. They believe one area is in the single-parent initiative. The second area is in the area of maintenance enforcement. The third area, they said

the area of midwifery, they were very active in previously, though now that process is on its way. Also, they believe that they have been able to influence in the area of violence against women.

Ms. McGifford: I am not sure what the single-parent initiative is. Is this the Getting Started program or Taking Charge!?

Mrs. Vodrey: It is a program called Taking Charge! and my colleague the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) is the lead minister in dealing with this project.

Ms. McGifford: The Taking Charge! program, I think we have discussed in the House on a few occasions lately, and am I right in understanding that in fact Taking Charge! has not got off the ground yet?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, Taking Charge! is a co-operative effort between the federal government and the provincial government's Department of Family Services. They have made progress. There is a board that is appointed. They are in the process of hiring an executive director. I am told that they had in the range of 300 applications, and they hope to be up and running by August.

Ms. McGifford: This is the program, if I understand it correctly, that will be a kind of storefront program that will provide supports to single mothers on welfare and allow them to take training, et cetera, so that they may be employable.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am informed that it is a program that is taking a holistic approach. I have heard it referred to as she has mentioned, a storefront approach. The holistic approach is that it should take into account the continuum of needs on an individual basis so that as individuals present themselves, if they have the full continuum or range of needs being child care, education, training and job placement, that will be taken into account. If they only have some needs and maybe others, those will be taken into account.

Ms. McGifford: I understand too that the women in the community, women who may, indeed, take this program or maybe part of this program, had some

influence in helping to shape it and provide guidance and direction. Do I have the correct program in mind?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, I am told that there was consultation with women within the community to determine what they saw their needs were and how they felt they could best be dealt with.

Ms. McGifford: I am wondering about the library in the advisory council. I have a few questions about it; first of all, what the budget is for the library. Maybe we could start with that.

Mrs. Vodrey: I think I have the answer that the member is asking for. The library, itself, does not have specific dollars allocated to the upkeep of the library. However, there was a project which was set up, and it was to get the library onto a database and to set up the library.

Ms. McGifford: I was actually looking at one of the Expected Results which reads, to continue the development and maintenance of a reference library for use by students, women and the general public and government departments. I had assumed that would involve some money.

I also wondered if the library on an ongoing basis acquires new titles, one question. Second question, how well used the library is, if there are some stats available, and third question, how the library is advertised, so that people know it is there to be used, or if it is advertised.

* (2100)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told that the library does add new titles. I am told that actually, currently, it seems to have a set of titles or an availability that does not seem to be available in other places. So it seems to be very up to date.

I am told there is a mailing list of about 2,000 who receive information, but, also, there is a great amount of word of mouth information, and there is the chair of Women's Studies who has spoken to her students about it, social work students, education students, human ecology students and with the Outreach program at the

university, as well, it is receiving a great deal more attention and seems to be very well used.

Ms. McGifford: How does one get on the mailing list?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told that people call in. They have seen publications, and they ask to go on the mailing list.

Ms. McGifford: Does the council keep any stats as to the number of people who use the library?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, no, I am told that they do not do that.

Ms. McGifford: Is it a lending library?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, no, it is a reference library, though I am told that people using materials are able to photocopy those materials at no cost.

Ms. McGifford: My last question about library is, who selects the publications that the library houses?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told that, by and large, it is the chairperson and also the analyst who have a look at the possibilities and are aware of the needs and the requests that have come forward.

Ms. McGifford: I said it was my final question about libraries, and I have one more. Do the chair and the policy analyst review feminist periodicals or where do the titles come from?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told that, first of all, information is received in the mail regarding publications.

Secondly, I am told there is a good contact within the feminist community. They have in the past had publications that the feminist community has considered important and continue to do that.

Ms. McGifford: That was the last library question.

Can I ask the minister what she sees as the yet unresolved equality issues for women?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, this is a pretty broad question which I think deals with a number of issues. So I guess I would really start from the very beginning and reflect on some of the socialization issues which we have really been dealing with both from the advisory council side but also from the directorate side and as Ministers responsible for the Status of Women across Canada. We can talk a little bit about that project when we get into the directorate side, but it seems very clear that there has to be right from the very beginning a process of socialization that is equally encouraging to young women and that does not have young women treated differently either by family members or by people within groups of society or within the education system. I know that the Department of Education is certainly looking at all of the textbooks and curriculum that it has to try and make sure that it is looked at in terms of any gender bias.

Then there is, I guess, the more difficult issue of how do you give effect to a program within a classroom that deals with people's almost-unknown-to-them biases and that has to take place, I suppose, in the process of teacher training, as well as in the process of just general socialization.

When we look at the socialization issue, then we have to look at how young women form their hopes and their aspirations for themselves and what it is that they are looking for. I think that leads us to the very broad issue of economic security, how it is that women choose what they will study and have the courage to choose certain areas that in many cases may have been areas of nontraditional study for women and how women can, in fact, look at being in economically viable positions.

We have been really interested and concerned about those choices. That is what brought us to the Training for Tomorrow scholarship in terms of wanting to make sure that women would consider, and perhaps they just needed a nudge to consider, some of those areas of training which we know, according to labour market forecasts and actual hiring practices, lead people to jobs and good-paying jobs, but they needed somehow to be encouraged. Women have had to understand that when these opportunities are there, that they also can understand it applies to them.

I understand that we also have to look at the issue of power in women's lives, and I just want to go back to the education process for a moment, because within some of the programs within education now, some segments of them actually look at that issue in relation to women. It helps women to look at this not only in terms of their choice of careers, but it helps them to look at it in terms of their relationships, as well, and to recognize that imbalances of power within a relationship also lead to other kinds of difficulties. So what happens in those early years through the process of gender socialization will affect women, both in their economic security choices and also in the area of relationships.

Those are some of the major areas where I believe we are able to make a difference, as well.

Ms. McGifford: I think it is very interesting. I think Status of Women's groups are often caught between the devil and the deep blue sea and that we can work with the socialization of young girls and do work with young women to hopefully influence their attitudes, and on the other hand, one of the problems is the socialization of young men, and that work does not seem to be ongoing. I think that leaves women often in a very unfortunate position where they may have done their work, but that is only 50 percent of it.

I wonder if the advisory council has done work with teenage pregnancy.

Mrs. Vodrey: Within the Damsels in Distress conference, the issue of reproductive issues was looked at as one of the issues for consideration in that conference.

* (2110)

Ms. McGifford: May I ask when the conference took place, please?

Mrs. Vodrey: November '93.

Ms. McGifford: Has there been any more recent work? Is there going to be any follow-up? Actually, I heard very positive things about the conference, and I wonder if there is going to be anything like it again. It

seems like it was very successful, and some ongoing work of that kind might be really helpful for young women.

Mrs. Vodrey: I am told that much of the work has been advisory to people who have been putting on conferences or working in their own area.

One of the examples that was just raised to me was a conference that took place in St. James School Division. It was called a Teenology conference, and to my memory, it was in the spring or in March, and this was where young people came together to actually look at a number of the issues that were of importance to them.

I am also told that the advisory council has offered advice to individual teachers and has remained in touch with the ad hoc a cappella group.

Ms. McGifford: I wonder if the advisory council has considered taking a leadership role or consulting with the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) or the Minister responsible for the Status of Women on the developments in the Political Science department at the University of Manitoba.

Mrs. Vodrey: First of all, one of the council members is a dean of one of the faculties at the university, so we do have a connection through one of our members into the issues as they relate to the university, but the advisory council has also written letters.

I am told that a letter has been written to the selection committee for the new president, and they have been doing their best to continue to take sort of a positive and encouraging role around the role of women within the university.

Ms. McGifford: The minister said for the new president, and I am assuming that she meant for the new head of Political Studies.

Mrs. Vodrey: No, the new president of the University of Manitoba.

Ms. McGifford: Has the council considered writing to the Dean of Arts and expressing concern about the

events, which it is very hard to get to the bottom of really, in Political Studies?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told that through the president's advisory council there is an ongoing relationship. However, I am told also that a letter is being prepared.

Ms. McGifford: That letter to go to Dean Currie, the Dean of Arts.

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, that is correct.

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, I am very glad to hear that a letter is going forth. I think it is a very disturbing situation for the women in Manitoba, and I think that many women and girls are unsure about entering that department and that real leadership is needed, so thank you.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Chair, the minister indicated that the council has advised various government departments on issues important to women, and I would like to ask a few questions as it relates to rural women. Although there are issues that affect women right across the province, they do affect women in rural Manitoba differently than they do in urban centres.

(Mr. Mervin Tweed, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

We know that statistics tell us that women from rural Manitoba who end up in a divorce situation where there is farmland end up to be some of the poorest women in this province, and in fact farm women do have very little assets. So I am wondering whether the council has looked at these issues, particularly divorces and separations, pensions for rural women, and has been able to put anything together that offers supports for women in rural Manitoba.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told first of all that there are a number of calls from rural women which come into the advisory council because of the toll-free 800 number which brings the information in. I am also told that first of all we have rural members on the council, and two of those rural members are actively

involved in farming, so they simply bring to council's discussion the perspective of rural women and rural women who really want their concerns considered within all of the issues that are being discussed.

I understand too that council had Lois Brockman attend, and she described her study on rural child care.

Ms. Wowchuk: The minister said rural child care. There are other issues as well, and one of them is child safety.

We have heard of some terrifying accidents, and I want to ask whether the council has offered any advice to the Department of Agriculture or the Department of Health with respect to child safety and other issues—you said rural day care, that they had dealt with rural child care—and whether the council is at all involved with addressing the issue of child safety, or is that beyond the scope of the?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am told, to this point council has not met with any ministers on that particular issue, but it is a fairly new council with its new members. However, in just speaking with the council members who are here, they will happily take that information under advisement and get a sense from council about their level of how they might like to proceed with those issues.

Ms. Wowchuk: Another new initiative in rural Manitoba is the rural stress line, and that line is something that I think is very important. I would like to see that grow, as would many people in rural Manitoba, because for many people that is an access to services and I wonder whether the council had any input or has done any assessment on those services or whether they have had any input into development of that service.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told, no, the council did not have input into that service.

* (2120)

Ms. Wowchuk: The other organization that represents women's issues in rural Manitoba is the Women's Institute, and I wonder if there is any connection or

whether there are meetings to share ideas between the women's advisory committee and the Women's Institute.

Mrs. Vodrey: The Women's Institute was a partner in the Damsels in Distress conference, and I am told that there is an ongoing relationship between the advisory council and the Women's Institute.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chair, I would encourage the council to make a special effort to address those concerns that face rural women because—I am not sure of the process of how they contact.

They tell me that there is a toll-free line, but the women in rural Manitoba, particularly with the declining economy in the province and people leaving the province, farms becoming bigger and people carrying a bigger workload and not having as many people to communicate with, I think it is very important that we have these services, such as the rural stress line and I would encourage the council to look at the other issues, one of them that I mentioned earlier, daycare.

The minister says that council has addressed daycare but also the issue of farm safety and I am very much interested in expansion of the rural stress line. Those issues I would hope that the minister would encourage council to look at and just the different issues that affect farm families and affect farm women.

(Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told that one of the members of council has been consistently looking, particularly at that economic development side, at how to encourage women from rural Manitoba into the workforce, and that is a part of what happens on a regular basis, but I am sure the advisory council will consider the issues that have been brought forward by the member for Swan River and they will be passed on, I am sure, by the chairperson who is here this evening.

Ms. Wowchuk: One of the other areas I have a lot of interest in is, and my colleague for Osborne raised the issue of teenage pregnancies. The minister indicated that there were two aboriginal representatives on this council.

I represent a large number of aboriginal people, three reserves and several Northern Affairs communities. When I meet with people, there are a lot of young women who are pregnant, and a lot of young women who end up pregnant because they do not have the information they need. It also seems to be just like an escape to get out of poverty and without realizing what they are getting into, they are being tied down for many, many years trying to raise a child. They do not realize what they are getting into.

So I wonder whether the council does any work with aboriginal communities to ensure that they know what is available, and what kind of communication there is between council and the aboriginal community.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told that a division of Marymount is a group called Roots and Wings. Roots and Wings is a group for young aboriginal women who are returning to independent living from a time when they have most recently had a baby. They have recently requested, I am told, 250 copies of the handbook, Parenting On Your Own, which I have been speaking about this afternoon and this evening as well.

Then, I guess since we are also speaking about issues of teenage pregnancy, there are a number of issues, as the member says, and it is really a complex issue. There are complex issues of personal self-esteem, of family relationships, of issues of belonging and all kinds of complex issues which are, I think, part of adolescent behaviour, as well as maybe complicated by other factors for young people. So, admittedly, it is a very complex issue.

The advisory council is very interested in it, as is the Minister responsible for the Status of Women and the Department of Education that really from the beginning is trying to address some of those issues of self-esteem within a number of the courses and curriculum, including the health curriculum that they are part of.

Ms. Wowchuk: If there was a community that was trying to grapple with this issue and was looking for some supports on how they could start dealing with some of the issues, and for example, if there was a group of young women who wanted to start looking at financial management and just getting control of their

own affairs, if they made a call to the advisory council, what action would be taken by the council to address that particular concern if that kind of a call came in?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, well, obviously, in such a situation, I understand it is hypothetical, so it is obviously difficult hypothetically to answer exactly from every angle. But I would think, first of all, the advisory council has said that they certainly do a lot of referring, and, if the advisory council is the point of entry for a community trying to deal with an issue, then that would certainly be an entry which they would try to support.

They would have to support it by making sure that the community or the individuals or the group got to the right place, who could actually provide them with if it was direct service or whatever type of support is necessary. So that is certainly done, and we have spoken about that as one of the roles of the advisory council. I think it is important to say that, so we do not raise false hopes about what this advisory council can do, but, as I have said, when the advisory council becomes the point of entry, that is good, and they will do everything they can to deal with it.

* (2130)

In addition to that, what they can do is, if it is a group, they might ask if that group or representatives of the group might like to make a presentation to the advisory council, because the more information the advisory council has about these issues and how they affect communities, then the better the advisory council may be at looking at what points they can advise government. That is the good part of the advisory council. The advisory council itself is so multi-disciplinary that, when a group of individuals or a group of whatever kind approaches the council with a problem, there are people on that council who deal with a number of those issues.

We have a medical doctor who understands the medical side. We have educators who deal with education from the junior high, high school, college and university level. So we have a whole range of expertise which is already sitting there on the council, which is available, as well, to try and put their minds to

the issues which might be raised by a community. So it is a two-pronged approach.

One, they cannot do everything because they do not offer a program, but they can provide the direction and the referral. In addition, they do have the community expertise, and they are involved in other kinds of groups themselves as well which may then provide the information.

Ms. Wowchuk: Does the council have the ability or the resources to travel to do outreach work if they wanted to meet with a particular group of people other than having—the minister indicated that they have their council meetings, I believe she said, six times a year. But I am looking for other flexibility, whether there is room within the budget to do outreach, to travel to a particular area to hold meetings or to meet with people.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, as I said earlier, one meeting was held in the Gimli area. In November there will be a meeting in the Thompson area. There will also be one other meeting. I believe that will take place in southwestern Manitoba, it has been suggested, somewhere around Morden, though the area has not been specifically determined.

So it certainly is possible for council to look at meeting outside the city of Winnipeg, and, through that, those meetings attempt to bring people from the catchment area in and make sure that they have the opportunity to present.

Ms. Wowchuk: What I am looking for is—the minister has indicated there are these scheduled meetings, and I am looking for whether or not there is flexibility where, if the council decided that they wanted to do a special project where they wanted to meet with some community outside the six meetings that are scheduled, whether they have flexibility in their budget that they can go out and address a particular issue.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told that in the past there have been times when council has done that, and the midwifery issues were an example of that, where there was a group or some who did meet more regularly around that issue. So it is possible, but it is very hard for me to say right now, in response to a very

hypothetical question around a hypothetical issue, exactly how they would approach it. But I am sure it would have consideration.

I can honestly say that this council is really making an effort to connect with Manitobans, and that does not take away from those before them, but this is the one I know the best, because I happen to be minister now. I can honestly say that I hear this council making sure that the community is there, is brought in and is able to bring forward issues, and as I said earlier, the good part is that this is such a multidisciplinary council. When those issues are brought forward they are heard from 16 different types of experience, you know, hear and filter the issues, and they have made an effort to also be out and around Manitoba. So I would say that if that problem was presented to them I am confident they would find a way to deal with it.

Ms. Wowchuk: I am pleased to hear that the council is working as well as they are and they are doing the outreach. Has the council looked at economic development in the North? Again, we have women who are wanting to diversify, and we have some very good skills up in the North, but these women have not had the opportunity to have the business development that they need. So I am wondering whether the council has looked at that, and what progress has it made in helping women in the North have some economic development?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, one of the council members, a woman whose name is Anita Campbell, a member of the council, works at the Thompson Friendship Centre, and I am told that she just knows the northern community very well and is extremely well connected within the community. So when the advisory council has received inquiries or requests, some questions from the North, I am told that they have referred a number of these women directly to one of their own council members in the North, because she knows the community so well and she is able to provide additional resources for those who are interested and who want it.

I am told that two of the members from the North, Anita Campbell and Annette Dreilich are both really interested in the economic development issues as well. They have not formally brought an issue or a package

to council, I am told at this point; however, those issues are part of the framework or the frame of mind and background that they bring to the council.

Ms. Wowchuk: The minister indicated earlier that there were two vacancies on the council. I wonder when those vacancies will be filled and if the minister is looking for a particular skill or interest to bring to the council or why they have not been filled.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, they are not really vacancies. The act provides for naming up to 18 women, but it does not require that 18 women sit on the advisory council. So, in the naming of this council, I named 16, including the chair, and I believe that we do have a very good mix.

I have left two open for the opportunity to fill those when in fact a special need is identified or an area is identified. Had I filled everything right away we would have had no option to do that. So at this point I now look to council for advice to say, here is where we need something in addition to help us do our work. I am certainly open to naming those additional members, but I want to make sure that it is what is needed now to do the work of council.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chair, I just want to indicate that there was some comment made that I was putting down rural women. I want to state very clearly on the record that I think the women in rural Manitoba are very bright women and have played a very important role in the development of rural Manitoba and in no way am I putting them down. So I would just want to correct the member across the way who was implying that I was putting them down.

I think it is very important. Women have played a very important role. I think back to my own family. The role of women has also changed. When I think back to what my mother did and what my grandmother did, it was because of supports of women like that that I had the opportunity to be where I am today, but we also have to remember that women do face some difficulties and it is very important that we have those services there, not only for the women but for children as well. In some cases there are men who also need supports, but in this case statistics have shown that it is

women who at most times need the support. So I hope the council, when they are doing their work, will recognize that although rural women have the interests as urban women they have to be addressed in a different way because there are services that are lacking and we do need the supports for the women in rural Manitoba.

* (2140)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, just in response to the member's comments, let the record show that she was not pointing to the Minister responsible for the Status of Women. I think that is really important to clarify. You know, nothing else need be said. Just in case there was ever any confusion on the record, I think that is important to say, because I will tell you, you certainly will get no argument from me in that regard about the importance of rural women.

In fact, I think most of us here can point to family members, certainly on my husband's side of the family, who are pioneers of Manitoba. His grandmother was a pioneer homesteader in Riverton, and so I certainly can point to women in our family who have taken the same incredible role and have made it possible for each and every one of us who are sitting here today to have the opportunities that we do.

It is always a danger to single out any one group, so I probably should not even do that other than to say, I guess one of my first opportunities as Minister responsible for the Status of Women was to attend the Farm Women's Conference. It was, I think, the first opportunity I had to really, as minister, get to meet and know a number of rural women, and every year I am just absolutely delighted in attending that conference. I just have said every time I have been there, the vibrancy among that group of women is just absolutely there to touch. It is just wonderful.

I have since gone on to meet many other groups of women too, but I suppose that one, being the first one that I really came to know as a group, it really was a very important one. So the member certainly can believe that she has support from this minister regarding the importance of rural women, what they do, in all ways.

Ms. Wowchuk: The minister mentioned a particular group and a conference which is a very important conference. I do not know whether the advisory council has anything to do with the planning of that conference, but if they do I look forward to the next conference where there might be some real issues.

Sometimes some of the topics of discussion—I feel in some of them there are some weaknesses in the topics of discussion, and I would like to see some of the speakers bring some real good discussion and information that will help rural women. When I was making my comments I was not referring to the minister who had indicated that I might be slighting farm women. I want to set that straight as well.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Mr. Chairman, I want to reflect for a minute on the discussion and the direction the discussion was heading for a while, and I became a bit concerned about that direction. I happen to know that in my previous life as head of the farm organization in the province, that one of the farm organizations, namely the Keystone Agricultural Producers, were probably the organization that brought forward the idea of setting up a crisis line in this province, and that of course took a number of years and debates, debating amongst the various farm groups and organizations.

Women's organizations especially became very actively involved in that debate, in the establishment of the crisis line. I am extremely pleased that eventually we have set up a crisis line. It is not only to reflect the needs of farm women or rural women or on farms or in various communities. It is also a great help for the male population in rural Manitoba specifically when you have a situation such as this spring when we had nothing but rain and rain and rain, and farmers and businessmen especially needed somebody to voice their frustrations to or concerns and sometimes ask for help, even if it just needed to have somebody to discuss their concerns with. So I think it serves a very useful purpose.

I also know that many of the women in rural Manitoba play an extremely important role in the management of the various family-owned businesses and farms which are large businesses these days, many

of them multi, multimillion-dollar operations, and the women become very intricately involved in the management decisions and play very often a key role in the accounting end, the money-management end of the business. So the importance of the role of the women in especially rural Manitoba, many of the smaller communities, should never be underestimated.

Many of the women are very, very bright women, very, very bright business people, and I certainly want to reflect that and have this committee reflect that view of women in society today, because I think very often in debates and comments such as this we underestimate the ability as a group, their ability to contribute to the economy of this province and society as a whole.

I think that we need to, much more aggressively, reflect on the needs of the business development side of the issue and debate instead of on the negative side, and I think we need to take a very positive approach to developmental initiatives reflecting financial needs of individuals, women as individuals, as individual business people and women as having the ability to access proper financing in the business world and all those kinds of things.

I would hope that the committee on the Status of Women would reflect to a much greater degree in that area and very positively look at some of the things that need to be changed in some of our approaches that we have had in the past. I would commend the work that has been done so far and recommend that they take that direction in a very positive manner. Madam Minister, if you can support that and encourage it it would certainly be helpful to the female community in much of Manitoba, not only rural Manitoba.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, just to end my colleague's very positive comments, I just wanted to pass on to members of the committee the advisory council tells me that they have given three nominations of rural farm women for the women entrepreneur of the year. So I think that is a real positive way in looking at some of the recognition that I think is absolutely due.

Ms. McGifford: The infinite variety of women, whether they be rural, urban, northern, southern, national or international, never fails to amaze me. So

I am not surprised at all at the comments from the member for Emerson.

I wanted to just address a couple of things and that was to get back to something the minister had said earlier. I am sure that she is right about the efforts of council, and I am sure that the council works very hard and is very open and tries to include the community as much and as broadly as possible. I have really enjoyed the opportunity of talking with the minister about the council and learning about the workings of the council.

I have two quick questions about the council and the way it works. One of them is, when we were speaking earlier I did not ask a question that is of interest to me, and that is, what is the decision-making process within council?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told that an issue is brought forward, there is discussion and then substantive motions are made to make sure that this is recorded.

Ms. McGifford: I am interested in whether a vote is taken or whether the council works collectively.

Mrs. Vodrey: I am told that there is a vote on substantive issues.

Ms. McGifford: My other question is whether members of the council tend to have areas of expertise that they develop so that, for example, each person on the council may become—and I should put it in quotation marks I guess—the "expert" on a certain aspect of women's activities or those times in the lives of women in Manitoba, that sort of thing?

* (2150)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told, yes, that would partly be by interest developed on the council, but it would also be by virtue of the background that a number of the women bring. As I have explained, we have women with medical backgrounds, education backgrounds, education at the post-secondary level, that being college and university, women who are homemakers, women who are involved in northern

businesses, farm businesses. So it is really, I think, a very good mix of women.

Ms. McGifford: So women bring a certain knowledge with them and then there is flexibility within their role in the council to follow their own interests and become the kind of member that complements the council and that they wish to be?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told first of all, yes, there is recognition for special talents and special interests, but in addition I am told that it is important that they become knowledgeable about a wide range of issues. So there have been guest speakers who have been brought in, or at various times some members of council have in fact done presentations for council themselves.

Ms. McGifford: So the council encourages the renaissance women approach?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am told, yes.

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, I have no more questions on 22.1(a).

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: Item 1. Status of Women (a) Manitoba Women's Advisory Council (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$175,500—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$110,300—pass.

1.(b) Women's Directorate (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$485,400.

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, I have some questions about the Women's Directorate. I am, first of all, interested in the Salaries and Employee Benefits and if we could start with the managerial position. I understand that is the assistant deputy minister's position.

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, that is correct.

Ms. McGifford: How long has the ADM been in that position?

Mrs. Vodrey: Four years.

Ms. McGifford: Could I ask the minister what the basic duties of that position are?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, it has responsibility for the budget process, the planning process, the supervision of staff and the setting of priorities.

Ms. McGifford: Does the ADM meet with the minister regularly?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes.

Ms. McGifford: Could I ask how frequently, please?

Mrs. Vodrey: Once a week on a regular basis.

Ms. McGifford: My next question is in regard to the professional/technical positions. I gather that six staff years implies that there are six positions.

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, that is correct.

Ms. McGifford: I asked that question because I did not know whether there were 12 part-time people or six full-time people, so I take it that there are six people who work full time.

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, Mr. Chair, it is six full-time people.

Ms. McGifford: Could I have some details about their positions, the kind of work they do, what their titles are?

Mrs. Vodrey: We have two what are considered managers, the manager of policy and the manager of outreach, and then we have three policy analysts. That makes five.

Now, the sixth position the member asked, is it six full time? I correct myself. I beg your pardon, the sixth position is in fact two half-time positions, outreach workers.

Ms. McGifford: I would like to come back later and ask some questions about the outreach work, but right now, could the minister explain to me the indirect salary costs?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, these relate to vacation benefits, as they did in the advisory council.

Ms. McGifford: I am also interested in the scholarships, that the Women's Directorate, in fact, gives away awards. I wonder if I could have some details about the scholarship—exactly where the money comes from; is there a list of the winners; are there any special criteria. I guess I would like to add at this point that I think these scholarships are very commendable.

Mrs. Vodrey: The scholarship is contained in a budget line under Other Expenses, and it is listed, Scholarships. It is the last line before Total Grants.

The qualifications for that are that individuals meet an academic qualification, that they have been accepted into one of the programs that are approved. The programs that are approved have been put forward by the community colleges.

They have worked with the labour market forecasters to look at what are jobs in a technical area where women have previously not applied, the nontraditional areas where employment is very likely.

They submit then an approved list of course areas. Women then who have been accepted into those course areas and who have the academic qualification and who have also written an essay—and that is the other part, that women have been required to write an essay.

Ms. McGifford: Writing the essay seems to me very important, so we get women who are skillful not only in science but as writers, which is a very important combination. I asked if there was a list of winners available.

Mrs. Vodrey: We do not have it with us at the moment, but we can certainly provide it.

Ms. McGifford: I am wondering if there is a reason why the scholarships are being awarded to women who attend community colleges and not women who attend other forms of post-secondary education.

Mrs. Vodrey: Well, there are some scholarships available for women at the university level targeted to

women. I am thinking particularly of engineering, and I think there are some scholarships for women in other science targeted areas. This is in keeping with the Roblin commission recommendations.

Ms. McGifford: Will these scholarships be awarded on an ongoing basis, or is it one shot only?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yearly, Mr. Chair.

Ms. McGifford: Well, that is certainly encouraging. I am very happy to read about that and hear about it.

The last annual general report from the Women's Directorate that I was able to obtain was the '92-93 annual general report, and I wonder if the directorate is intending to do a '93-94, if it is in the planning stages, or what is happening with that.

* (2200)

Mrs. Vodrey: I am told it is at the printer.

Ms. McGifford: So I am assuming then it will be available, well, as soon as it is printed. I am wondering if the directorate has a mailing list.

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes.

Ms. McGifford: How does a woman get on the mailing list?

Mrs. Vodrey: She phones, she can drop a line, or through the newsletter, there is a contact number.

Ms. McGifford: Is it the major publication that the directorate mails out about women?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes.

Ms. McGifford: Are there any other publications?

Mrs. Vodrey: There is usually a mail-out to high schools for Women's History Month.

Ms. McGifford: Do women ever write in, in response to About Women? I guess I was wondering about the

idea of an editorial page or something like that, if it had ever been entertained or if it is just simply not feasible.

Mrs. Vodrey: I am told it is not really that feasible because it is not really all that timely. The publication is twice a year.

Ms. McGifford: The toll-free women's line, I wonder how many women use it, if there are any statistics on that?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am told that calls range about half a dozen or so a week.

Ms. McGifford: Thank you for that.

One of my other questions was about the Outreach program, and I wonder if I could have some details about the Outreach program, what that program does, who it reaches out to and what its mission is, that sort of thing.

Mrs. Vodrey: I do have some fairly extensive information on that I would be more than happy to provide to the member. I can do that by letter, if that is helpful.

Ms. McGifford: I would certainly appreciate a letter and more information about that program. I am certainly a supporter of outreach. I think that it works very well with women, and it is a very fine way of including women in various groups and certainly in the Women's Directorate.

One of the things that I read is that the Women's Directorate does work to promote the celebration of women's achievements through such events such as national Women's History Month and International Women's Day. I wonder if I could have some details about what was done for both of those occasions.

Mrs. Vodrey: Well, as an example, we partnered with Eaton's, and we had eight storefront windows. We also had eight women in the store to speak extensively. There were opportunities for a lecture series or an informal opportunity to speak, and these women acted as role models.

Ms. McGifford: Were these women from the directorate?

Mrs. Vodrey: No, women from the community. For instance, Mayor Thompson was one.

Ms. McGifford: So the directorate created relationships, partnerships with women in the community, politicians, for example, who, in turn, participated in the Women's History Month and participated in, I suppose, celebrating women in history in this way.

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, that is correct.

Ms. McGifford: And International Women's Day?

Mrs. Vodrey: Looking at International Women's Day, we have hosted luncheons in Thompson, Portage and Winnipeg. We also have had speakers on International Women's Day.

Ms. McGifford: Does the Women's Directorate have a speaking bureau?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, yes.

Ms. McGifford: I am assuming the speaker's bureau may be called by the public school system, for example, or whatever, and that women from within the directorate go out and participate in community education?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, the directorate does sometimes provide the speakers. They act as speakers themselves, but because there are so many requests, they partner with the community and try and arrange community speakers who are available too.

Ms. McGifford: I would like to thank the minister and her staff for very patiently answering all our questions tonight.

I have no more questions.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: Item 1.(b) Women's Directorate (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$485,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$99,100—pass; (3) Grants \$54,000—pass.

Resolution 22.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$924,300 for Status of Women for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

This completes the Estimates of the Status of Women.

HOUSING

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson (Gerry McAlpine): The committee will now continue with consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Housing.

Is the Minister of Housing and the critic for Housing—will it be the will of the committee that we recess for five minutes until 10:13 p.m.? Leave? To leave the clock going?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: We will resume here at 10:13 p.m. Committee recess.

The committee recessed at 10:08 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 10:15.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: When this section of the Committee of Supply, sitting in Room 255, last sat considering the Estimates of the Department of Housing the committee was discussing line item 1. Administration and Finance (b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$364,800, on page 93 of the main Estimates book.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Chair, our Housing critic is not here yet, but I would like to take this opportunity to raise a few issues as they relate to some of the policies that the government has.

In particular, I want to ask the minister about a decision that was made a couple of years ago to cancel

the regional housing authorities and move to a different system. That was not received very well in the communities. People were not happy to have that change made. They felt that when they had the regional housing authorities, they had the ability to be much closer and they felt they were having much better service. In particular, I was very concerned to have the housing authority in Swan River discontinued and have that service moved to Roblin.

Can the minister give an assessment of what he feels the status of service is now that he has moved to Regional Housing offices?

Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister of Housing): Mr. Chairman, the member for Swan River is correct in stating that there was an amalgamation of the boards back in May of 1992, where we brought the number from 98 down to one board with 13 districts. There are now nine rural districts and four urban districts, if you want to call it.

In looking at the logistics of size and the scale of management, it is a lot more efficient to look at a more comprehensive board in a sense. The 13 districts, the board that is set up now has a representative from each of these districts, so there is still input and there still is the availability of community participation on a decision-making quality regarding the board make up.

I think the member has to recognize that this direction and this decision was taken with the idea of efficiencies, of trying to take away some of the duplication that has come about through the various districts and just the common sense of trying to bring a closer cohesiveness of direction within the department by the amalgamation. It makes it much easier to administer. There is more direct contact in a sense of decision making now. There is a sense of oneness. In fact, other provinces have looked with serious overtures towards what we are doing here in Manitoba with the idea of following the same type of model for the various districts in their area.

As mentioned, we have the four urban areas here in the city of Winnipeg, and then with the nine rural districts, there is still the availability of representation

within the nine areas for their services that they give through the Manitoba Housing Authority.

In all, the efficiencies and the cost of bringing things together under a more cohesive group was the idea behind bringing it from, like I say, almost a hundred down to what we have at present.

* (2220)

Ms. Wowchuk: The minister said that the purpose of this was to bring services closer, to make it more cohesive and more direct contact. I have to disagree with the minister because this, in fact, has not resulted in more direct contact, and I look at our region, where the regional office was placed in Roblin, and Swan River has a large number of housing units.

I cannot remember the exact number right now, but, certainly, there is not a more direct contact, and I have to say to the minister that I do not believe that services have improved. I have talked to many of the tenants who are in housing, and this is their feeling, that there is not a better service, that there is less contact. When you think that a large portion of the people who are residents are senior people, I have to say that I do not believe that this is a better service, but I wonder if the minister can indicate—he said it is streamlining.

Can the minister give any indication as to what the saving has been for the department? Has it resulted in spending less money, and, if so, what percentage are we saving by going to this system?

Mr. Reimer: The member for Swan River brings up some interesting comments in her assessment of what is happening in that area.

I should point out to the member, recognizing Swan River, as she has mentioned, with its social housing in and around the area, we do have a maintenance co-ordinator stationed right in Swan River, so there is a presence there of continuity and contact regarding the Housing Authority. We recognize that there is a contribution within the Swan River area for contact for some of the problems associated that she has mentioned.

I should point out, too, that the savings that I alluded to regarding the co-ordination of all the services is maybe a bit involved with the fact that at the same time, there were other directions taken. There was a computerization that was brought into effect at that time. There were other amalgamations brought forth within the department, and at that time, there was an additional direction of costs within the amalgamation. So to look at one specific area of the province and say, well, what did we save in this particular area, it is hard to say.

In the area of Swan River, we have a total of 189 units that are under sponsored management within that area. So there is a significant area, as she has mentioned, and this is one of the reasons why we have a maintenance co-ordinator right in that area, to be on top of those units.

Ms. Wowchuk: Can the minister indicate whether there has been a change in policy with regard to caretakers? Again, I understand in some of the units there are caretakers who reside right in the unit and maintain. Has there been a change in policy and a directive to reduce the number of caretakers?

Mr. Reimer: Mr. Chairperson, there is no program of reducing the caretakers' participation in the housing units. I think that what does happen sometimes is there is a sharing of buildings, if you want to call it, for one or two caretakers, so that is ongoing. I should point out that if there is a specific problem or area of concern that the member has regarding some of the units or one particular unit or something that has been brought to her attention, we will certainly take notice of it and try to look at it in a constructive manner.

Ms. Wowchuk: Can the minister indicate if it is normal policy if there is a caretaker in a facility to tender out that position for other people to apply for it? Is this happening quite often? Is it a policy to tender out units when there is a caretaker in place?

Mr. Reimer: Depending on the circumstances regarding the individual position, sometimes there are competitive bids asked if it is a steady position. If it is a union position, well, then there is the natural process of selection on that too. If it is a long-term position,

then there is a bidding process or a selection process involved with that too, yes.

Ms. Wowchuk: I will make the minister aware of a particular case where there is someone who is a caretaker—and the facility is the Rainbow Lodge in Swan River—who had been working there for I believe four years and residing right there, and for some reason that position has been tendered out now. The person who is in the facility feels that they are being treated very unfairly. So if the minister's staff could check into that and let me know why this is happening, then I would appreciate it, because the person who is being put in this awkward position is not quite sure what is going on.

With respect to the housing units, can the minister indicate what the vacancy rate is in Manitoba Housing units at the present time?

Mr. Reimer: Overall, throughout all of Manitoba, it is just over 8 percent which is very, very close to the national average.

Ms. Wowchuk: Can the minister indicate, in comparison to the national average, what the standard would be of the quality of the home of the Manitoba Housing units here in Manitoba, whether they meet the national average or whether we are falling behind the national average?

Mr. Reimer: It should be recognized that the quality of the stock of housing here in Manitoba is reflected to a degree on the participation which is involved with the federal government. There is a strong participation by the federal government when the housing stock was set up. Now that the federal government has pulled out of all of its funding for new stock, what has happened is it puts more of an emphasis on the maintenance and the upkeep of the buildings and the housing.

So we are very, very concerned with the fact that the federal government has shown by its direction that they are seriously looking at a withdrawal of funding of sorts from the Housing department that it is going to put a severe strain on trying to maintain and improve on the existing stock of what we have here in Manitoba.

In general terms, the maintenance program, the conscious effort by the people involved and the attitude of trying to provide adequate housing and accommodations to the people have prevailed, and in general our stock is of the quality that is recognized on an average within Canada. So we are on a stringent maintenance program of analyzing where the needs are, an ongoing basis of inspection by Manitoba Housing. So it is not as if there is an abandonment of our objectives, but we have to recognize that the limiting of funding that has been initiated by the federal government has made it harder and it will make it more challenging for the department to look at the priorities of spending and the direction that we will take.

* (2230)

I look forward to the First Ministers' Conference along with the Minister of Housing, Mr. Dingwall, for the federal government. There is a conference coming up in the early part of July which the department and myself are looking forward to with anticipation to bringing forth our views as Manitobans as to what we feel is important and where we are concerned about the direction that the federal government is taking the money.

I expect some strong dialogue and some healthy dialogue with the minister when we get to Newfoundland, which is in the early part of July. So those are of high priority and of high importance by our government to get some sort of commitment by the federal government as to what and how they are doing. So the conference will be very productive for us, we believe.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Chair, the minister seems to indicate that our housing stock is very good and he is very happy with the quality of the housing units, but some of the statistics that have come up recently, I tend not to want to believe those numbers.

The minister also indicated that the federal government would not be putting any more funding into new housing. Can the minister indicate through this department whether there are funds available or whether there are plans to build units, or are we just in a program now of repairing existing units?

Mr. Reimer: The member would appreciate that with any type of scenario that is put forth because of the fact of funding, all priorities under the direction of expenditures are recognized as to where the money should be going or what is available, and we have to be very cognizant of this in our evaluation of funding. I could point out that we are spending—like last year I believe it was over \$14 million just on maintenance of our units, and we are looking at managing approximately 13,000 units. That is a significant amount of money that is put into just the maintenance budget for that.

As the member mentioned, I guess there is always the perception that more would make it better, but at the same time I think there is the realization that a lot of money that is spent is on an ongoing basis because of the fact that we are looking at some fairly old stock, if you want to call it, in the market, and the maintenance on it does go up.

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Mr. Chair, I wonder if I might ask the minister a couple of questions that are related to the constituency of Osborne which I represent.

Two of the large apartment blocks in Osborne are Fred Tipping and also the Centre for the Deaf. I heard the minister earlier comment on the vacancy rate in Manitoba as being somewhere in the region of 8 percent, yet my experience, I must confess during the election, in Fred Tipping was that the vacancy rate there is probably much higher than 8 percent. I wonder if that is true, and if it is, if there is any explanation for its being so.

Mr. Reimer: When I mention a figure of around 8 percent, I am talking about all of Manitoba, and it is about 8.5 actually in March. In the family projects, which are the ones that maybe the member is referring to, it is averaging about 6.3 percent and in the unit that the member for Osborne is referring to, Fred Tipping Place. In the seniors or the elderly projects, and here again these are all the projects, it is just over 10 percent, almost 11 percent, 10.8 percent. While there are pockets of high vacancies that I think the member is aware of, it is generally improving and it is similar to the private market in a sense.

The biggest problem we have for vacancy units is in the bachelor suites where it is well over 13 percent, but in various regions they will vary. The member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) the other day was asking about her particular area, and there is a low there of only 3 percent in that particular area because of the mix of the units that are available.

In the Fred Tipping Place, the best figures that we have available at the present time, we are talking about 205 units, and the vacancy rate is 39 units, so that is about 20 percent, I guess, 19 percent.

Ms. McGifford: Twenty or 19 percent seems to me to be quite high. I understand the minister's comment that the vacancy rate is particularly high in the bachelor suites, and I have certainly heard that the bachelor suites are becoming increasingly unattractive. Having spent a lot of time in that apartment block, I realize that the bachelor suites are very small, but I wonder if there is anything that could be done to make those bachelor suites larger. Could the walls be knocked out? Is this a possibility, and has it been considered?

Mr. Reimer: I guess we can go back a little when the projects first came into being, and at that particular time the emphasis and the demand was for single-unit apartments. When the building started and the building of all these units started, there was a high concentration of bachelor units. As time progressed, what we are looking at now, as the member for Osborne is pointing out, is we are now to a point where some of these units are becoming vacant and a high vacancy rate and the suggestion of moving walls and things like that. These are some of the considerations that the department has. At the same time, on a trial basis or a demonstration basis, we are also looking at adding single people into the bachelor suites on four projects to pick up some of the vacancy rate in these seniors complexes.

* (2240)

Ms. McGifford: I think that the minister has partially answered my next question, and that is that having gone through Fred Tipping again—Fred Tipping, for example—it seems to me that the seniors block is almost a thing of the past, because although seniors may predominate in the block, there are a lot of other people

who are not quite so senior living in that apartment. One of the things that I heard from the seniors in that apartment was that they had moved into Fred Tipping because they wanted a seniors block, and they felt I think a measure of safety and comfort because of that. Now a lot of different kinds of people were moving in, and that was a problem for some of them.

I wonder if my perception that the seniors block is on its way out is accurate. If it is, then it is probably important to guide seniors, at least give them that knowledge before they move in.

Mr. Reimer: The so-called seniors block, as has been alluded to, is not on the way out, as the member for Osborne was saying there. They are part of the housing stock that is there. Where there have been chronic vacancies of units, this is where there has been this mix of trying to rent the bachelor units. The emphasis on seniors blocks has not been to have less of them or to diminish their importance.

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, one of the things that folks in Fred Tipping talked to me about was a buzzer. I think the buzzer is a safety feature and is designed for people to ring if they are unsafe or if they need some, I suppose, medical help or whatever. Apparently the buzzer used to be free, so I was told. Now folks are paying \$6 for it, which is a problem for many of the people in an apartment like Fred Tipping, people living on fixed incomes and all that sort of thing. I wonder if there is any way of getting rid of the cost.

Mr. Reimer: Mr. Chairman, the fee that the member is referring to is a service fee for the monitoring of a help line, if you want to call it, for the individuals. At \$4 a month it is a relatively inexpensive 24-hour monitor. For the value that it adds in a sense of security and well-being to the individual—it may sound like it is a service fee in a sense, but for \$4 on a monthly basis it is fairly inexpensive for the services that are provided on a 24-hour basis.

Ms. McGifford: I stand corrected. I thought it was \$6; so it is \$4.

There are two problems that residents identified. One was that they did not have any choice, and the

second one was it was only useful if they happened to be having their heart attack near the buzzer. Things do not usually happen that way.

Mr. Reimer: I guess nobody wants to have a heart attack really, whether you are by the buzzer or you are not by the buzzer.

I should point out too that in the private sector, monitors of that source can range anywhere between \$15 and \$20 a month for a monitoring of sorts on a 24-hour basis. Hopefully, a monitor is there not to be used. It is like fire insurance. You hope you never have to use it, but at the same time you do have the policy for the protection and the peace of mind that in case something does happen you have people there to help you. Because it is a 24-hour monitoring system, that sense of security I think buys a lot of peace of mind. The anxiousness that some people have of living alone that they have a contact in case they do get sick, it serves a useful purpose that way.

Ms. McGifford: As I said, many people told me that it did not serve a useful purpose. I think the difference between the private sector cost that the minister referred to and this one is that this one is imposed, and, in the private sector, I assume you have a choice.

If I could just move on, I have one other question. That is about the Mayfair and Stradbrook development. Again, when I was visiting people there during the recent election, a lot of people complained about safety. I do not know if the minister is familiar with the design, but there are several apartments where you actually go down into a well in order to ring the doorbell. For anyone who has done any work in safety audits, I think it is quite apparent that it is quite dangerous in design. I suppose there is not a direct question so much as an implicit one. I wonder if there is any way of making it safer.

Mr. Reimer: I think, as the member for Osborne has indicated, it is a concern on her part. By bringing it to our attention, we can take note of it and see whether there is any type of problem that we can try to look at it in a corrective manner. Bringing it forward at this time is, I believe, the proper manner that we can look at it that way.

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): I just want to clarify that I have agreed to have the MLA for Inkster ask questions for about 15 or 20 minutes, and then I will resume the questioning actually on the line issue that the member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford) was just dealing with.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: Item 1. Administration and Finance (b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$364,800.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Chairperson, thank you to the member for Radisson.

I had given some notice to the Minister of Housing with reference to the MHRC-Qualico deal with Meadows West Phase 2. It was just a few minutes ago in Urban Affairs that I was talking about this particular agreement. Now that we are, in fact, in the right department, I am wondering, first and foremost, if the minister can provide an actual copy of the agreement that was reached between MHRC and Qualico.

* (2250)

I know, as I indicated earlier, with the Ladco-MHRC deal, I was provided a copy of it a few years back, shortly after its actually being signed. Is it something that is possible to get a copy of?

Mr. Reimer: I think the member for Inkster can recognize that because we are bound by the legal documentation and the legalese of a development between MHRC and Qualico that the parameters of reference have to be addressed between the two parties. If there is no problem with the release—he mentioned, I believe, when he talked about the Ladco development that the agreement was made available. If there are no impediments that are seen, we will certainly provide him with a copy of that agreement.

I should point out to him just for his information that there are approximately 750 residential lots that will be developed over the next eight years. The estimated value is about \$7 million, with MHRC's share estimated in excess of \$5 million. Application for subdivision has been made under the name Keewatin Meadows Development Corporation, and the earliest

possible date for start-up of the development is—we are looking at very, very shortly, which is summer of '95. As I mentioned, we will make every effort to make sure that he gets a copy of that agreement.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, I would appreciate that, and if in fact for some reason we are not allowed to have a copy of the agreement, information such as time lines, information in terms of how decisions are made, for example—I know in the Ladco, there were representatives from MHRC and Ladco that sat on a management—or that administered the project, if you will. I cannot recall offhand all of the details of it, but anything that might be able to facilitate me having a better understanding of this particular agreement would be much appreciated.

I know with respect to the Meadows West residents association, Qualico has made an attempt to go out and talk to the residents association. That is something which again was appreciated, and it was through, actually, the co-operation of the Department of Housing that we were able to get some of that co-operation with Qualico. The purpose of this is to try to provide the residents of Meadows West input in terms of the overall development of the Meadows West Phase 2, because there is a great deal of concern for things such as schools, community clubs, and they want to make sure that those concerns are in fact being addressed in any proposal before they actually get underway.

In fact at the last, most recent, Meadows West general meeting I was at, I believe they actually had some of the architectural designs. There is a significant amount of concern with respect to the density, in terms of the possibility of row housing and so forth. The feeling of the residents that I have perceived thus far is that they want to see nothing less than single detached homes being built in the Meadows West Phase 2. I know that Qualico has requested, I believe—I cannot really recall the exact terminology that is being used—zoning that would allow for row houses of different sorts to be constructed. That has raised some concern with a lot of the residents. There are other aspects where there are concerns which I believe virtually could be overcome if in fact the residents were provided the opportunity to have direct input.

I have indicated to the association that if need be, if there are concerns, we can bring them right to the department direct. I would anticipate that, and if in fact in the future there are some problems, the minister will likely hear from the Meadows West residents association.

The minister will want to comment on that, and then I will move on to the other section.

Mr. Reimer: Yes, the member for Inkster is right in his concerns regarding where the development agreement is and the implications for the area. I can tell him, through the knowledge that has been provided to me, it is before the city in the sense that the public have access to presentations at this particular time regarding the Meadows West development, so we are more or less into the process right now as we talk, that this is being evaluated by the city. So the development agreement is open for public scrutiny right at this present time, right now, from what I understand. We will keep the member informed with the agreement as we get it for his use also.

Mr. Lamoureux: Again, Mr. Chairperson, that would be appreciated along with—I know that there was a draft proposal in terms of what the Meadows West Phase 2 was going to look at. They had built in the cul-de-sacs, the bays and so forth. If there are modifications, because no doubt there is a board that oversees the whole development or the management committee that oversees the whole development, if I could be put or placed onto a mailing list that would see these modifications to changes, again it would be definitely beneficial for me, in terms of the meetings that I go to in Meadows West, to be included on that.

Otherwise, I would like to move on to another area of constituency concern to me, that being the Gilbert Park housing complex. It is one of the largest nonprofit housing complexes in the province. I have found that in the past, in particular, the former Minister of Housing was very sympathetic to the need to try to move more towards tenant management in that particular nonprofit housing complex.

We have seen individuals like Amie Chartrand, and the executive as a whole, who have really attempted to

do what they can, in a volunteer capacity, to try to get tenants more involved in the complex in trying to get a better understanding of what it takes to run a complex of this nature. Ultimately, they would like to be able to move towards that control over the internal affairs of the Gilbert Park complex.

I have always believed that this is ultimately the way that we need to go as another form of an alternative to nonprofit housing. An ideal scenario, I would like to say, another 10 years from now, five years from now, it would be virtually run as a housing co-op would be run, thereby allowing the tenant, as opposed to being in a tenant-landlord relationship, to be more of a resident of a community.

I just see phenomenal benefits with the Minister of Housing if the Minister of Housing were to move in that direction. The former minister had gone as far as saying that she was prepared to see this as a pilot project of sorts where they would do what they can to promote and encourage tenant management being implemented in this particular complex. The minister actually drove out. I was the chauffeur for the day, drove the Minister of Housing out into the complex to show her first-hand, meet with some of the personalities with respect to Gilbert Park and the local elementary school.

* (2300)

I would extend the same offer to this Minister of Housing because I do believe that, if properly handled and administered, the personalities are there to make this project work. I would hope that this minister would see fit to continue in some form of a pilot project of sorts in ensuring that movement is made towards ultimate tenant management.

I would ask the minister just to comment in terms of what he feels the potential over at Gilbert Park could be or just some thoughts on the record from this particular minister.

Mr. Reimer: Since taking on the portfolio of Housing, the name Gilbert Park has come up quite a few times, an example of how, when people get involved on sort of a grassroots level, and they have the energy and the

commitment to make their place a better source and centre of living, changes can happen.

The member is right in his assumption that Gilbert Park has the strength of a strong community-based initiative by some people that are in that area, and that led to numerous changes in the structure of Gilbert Park: the tenant relations officer, playground equipment that has been put in, the general cleanup itself of the grounds in the immediate area environmentally, the pride that has been put forth by the maintenance work that is carried out on a priority and the cost and the budget factors that are involved with it.

They have even got into the furniture and toy recycling as an initiative for the existing and the new tenants and also a clothing club and a sewing club and training in aboriginal crafts, the fact that they have a Winnipeg Boys and Girls Club as a full-time community development to initiate youth programs and training. An aboriginal child and family support worker is now very active in the development. These are a lot of very, very powerful and very positive initiatives that are in essence spearheaded and put forth by the people in Gilbert Park themselves.

This is why a tenants association and a strong tenants association involvement is so much part of a stronger complex, because as pointed out, we are talking about 254 units in that complex which was started away back in 1963 and 1970. So it has taken awhile and it is the asset assessment of the community that makes these happen. It is an interesting scenario, because there was an article in the paper—I guess it was about a couple of weeks ago, well, maybe about a month ago—where there was a conference held here in Winnipeg.

One of the keynote speakers was talking about how you revitalize housing projects and certain areas of the city that have become sort of decayed or in a downward spiral. They call it an asset assessment basis and look at who you have in the community, the strengths of the community, building on those strengths of the community, finding leadership within the community, delegating the authority and the responsibility of support to the individual or group of people and have them come forth with the initiative to

make things happen. These are the ways success stories happen.

Gilbert Park is a very good example of how this has happened. The member mentioned one particular individual in there, Mr. Chartrand. I have not had the pleasure of meeting the gentleman, but I have heard his name mentioned quite a few times, so I guess I am going to have to make a point of getting over there and saying hello to him anyway, so that I can put the face to the name, if you want to call it.

It is that type of initiative that really puts a project on its feet, in a sense, and it becomes a pride of living in the area with the supports that they provide from within themselves, the strength within themselves to make things happen. These are a lot of the things that government cannot provide, because government cannot be the total facilitator of all things that have to change or have to happen within a certain housing authority.

The member is right that the commitment that we have demonstrated by being part of the Gilbert Park has been picked up a lot by the people involved with the community themselves, and you can only hope that other areas of Winnipeg that have large tracts, if you want to call it, or concentrations of units, would look to this as a model and partly look at this as a way to revitalize their particular area where there is high vandalism and problems with drugs or alcohol or other types of vandalism and crime and try to come to some sort of resolve with it.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, I am quite pleased with the minister's response, and I am sure I am not stepping over across the line by Mr. Chartrand, or Amie, by making that open invitation.

I am sure that he would welcome the opportunity to have the Minister of Housing come by, and I can indicate to him that he will find that the treatment he will receive would be quite well. If he talks to the former Minister of Housing, I do not know if he provided bannock. I believe he did provide some bannock and some good grub when she came down for a visit. It was kind of a nice, informal discussion.

I would extend to this minister, as I extended to the former minister, my full co-operation in this particular area. I want to be as creative in trying to assist in coming up with solutions in this whole area as much as possible. He will find that I can be extremely co-operative and, in fact, would be more than happy to do as I did to the former minister and take a drive out with him and make sure that he gets a very good idea in terms of what Gilbert Park is all about. He might want to continue it on in terms of a pilot project.

Having said that, Housing is an area in which I used to be the critic a number of years ago and have a lot of concerns in a lot of different areas of housing. We got to very briefly talk about that when we were in the Estimates of Urban Affairs, but for this time around I am going to forgo the number of questions that I could be asking and wait until the next year's Estimates come up and look forward to working with the minister with respect to the Gilbert Park project in my area and also to receiving information with respect to the MHRC-Qualico so that the residents of Meadows West will be kept informed in terms of what is happening in the Meadows West area. I appreciate the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) being patient. Thank you.

Ms. Cerilli: Mr. Chairperson, when we left off the other day, we were having a discussion about vacancy rates. I know that has also been discussed briefly here tonight. Quickly, though, I would just like to conclude that area of discussion by asking the minister what the government's strategy is to fill the vacant suites or the vacant units of the Manitoba Housing Authority properties.

Mr. Reimer: To do what?

Ms. Cerilli: Your strategy for filling the vacant suites.

Mr. Reimer: There are various aspects regarding trying to fill the vacancies. As mentioned before, the biggest problem with vacancies is in the bachelor units. The bachelor units themselves are the ones that are posing the biggest problem with trying to fill the vacancies.

* (2310)

I guess some of the things that we have to look at are the upgrading and the renovation of common spaces and the suites and the projects themselves. There is always that type of evaluation that is going. There is the awareness that there should be, or there could be, the addressing of the conversion of bachelor units into one-bedroom units, which we alluded to before. There is the possibility of a rental differentiation between bachelor units and one-bedrooms for the sake of renting. There is the provision possibly of additional services that could be looked at and then alternative use as elderly seniors housing units.

Ms. Cerilli: Just to clarify then, that was for the bachelor suites.

Mr. Reimer: Yes, it was for bachelor suites that I was talking about.

Ms. Cerilli: To clarify that, am I understanding correctly that there are actually waiting lists for public housing for larger units, for family-size dwellings, for greater than two or three bedrooms?

I have a report done by the Canada Housing and Renewal association that believes there are 200,000 families in Canada on waiting lists. I am wondering how many of those are in Manitoba.

Mr. Reimer: The member has to recognize that there are vacant two- and three-bedroom units even here in Winnipeg. In certain areas there are vacancies. There is also the recognition that it is a matter of choice for a lot of people whether they want to move to that particular area or that particular complex where these suites are available.

I guess there is always the preference of wanting to locate in certain areas because of convenience or because of family or because of job location or the social amenities that are associated with a certain area. In those areas, usually there is a waiting list possibly in some of those complexes. In general, there are vacancies available in two- and three-bedroom units.

It was just pointed out that even in the complex I was just talking about recently, Gilbert Park, we have units in there that are upwards of four bedrooms and five

bedrooms that are vacant. It is just that people may not want to be in that particular area or they feel that is not the position that they are wanting to be in.

It has just been pointed out, too, that there is a turnover in units. For example, in the elderly one-bedrooms, we have applications on hand; we have 111 units and the vacancy rate is 149. So there is room; it is just that it depends on the mix and the location of the people and where they want to be.

Ms. Cerilli: The minister is saying that in some parts of the city there are no waiting lists, even for upwards of three-bedroom units in apartments, townhouses or single-standing houses.

Mr. Reimer: The member is right. As mentioned, on three-bedroom units, there are applications on hand of just over 230 and there is a vacancy of just over 130. There are approximately a hundred that cannot be accommodated. That is in the three-bedroom units. That is just in the city of Winnipeg.

In certain areas of the city, like one area, north Winnipeg, you have 36 applicants and you have 102 units. You have a vacancy in there of almost 60 units, a lot of surplus stock. It all depends on the area of the city that you want to go to.

Ms. Cerilli: Maybe I could deal with this in a different way, too. Rather than just talking about waiting lists, talk about the time it takes for someone to actually go from applying to moving in and living in social housing in Manitoba. What is the range in the amount of time that it takes in different parts of the city and the rural areas as well?

Mr. Reimer: I may sound repetitive when I say that it depends on the part of the city, but it does really, because in the north end there is a very short waiting list of wanting to get in, and in other areas, for example, like St. Boniface, you can wait upwards of a year or more maybe to try to be in that particular area of the city. It is the adage of where do people want to be and what is available. It can vary.

Ms. Cerilli: I want to move now to the issues I was raising today in the House. We have had a couple of

very disconcerting incidents of children falling through ill-maintained windows in public housing units in the province. It was interesting, when I was reading the Estimates from '92, the minister then talked about how most Manitoba social housing rental stock is getting older, that the majority of the housing was built in the '70s and it has now reached the point where significant ongoing maintenance is required. This is a direct quote: "As our housing ages the costs of modernization and improvement also mount. The challenge to my department will be to manage more efficiently in order to generate increased funds for proper maintenance of the housing stock."

My concern is that the department is not meeting this challenge, that the budget for maintenance is not keeping up with the demand of the deteriorating housing stock. That is compounded, I guess, by the decrease in transfer from the federal government of over \$270 million over the next few years.

I am wanting the minister to specify for me what the amount to the budget has been. I have tried to find that by looking at the charts in the back of the Estimates book. I know that the minister back in '92 said that there was \$15 million allocated for modernization and maintenance.

Can the minister tell us what that line is this year?

Mr. Reimer: \$14 million.

Ms. Cerilli: So there has been a \$1-million reduction from the last two years in maintenance budget for social housing. A number of questions could flow from that: how that is translating into choices that are made in what gets done and what does not get done, how that has affected staffing for such things as on-site caretaker and maintenance. I will start there.

Mr. Reimer: I should point out that we are talking about a budget of around \$14 million for approximately 13,000 units. It should be pointed out, too, that some units have come off—the number is going down because there has been the so-called sell-off of some units that are no longer in the housing market. The budget item of \$14 million is still a strong commitment to try to renovate and revitalize the existing stock in the

parameters of trying to be aware of where the priorities should be and where the funding should be and where there is a need. It is still a significant amount of money.

Ms. Cerilli: My two subsequent questions were—first of all, how, then, is that allocated; how does the budget break down for maintenance?

* (2320)

Mr. Reimer: I just point out to the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) that there are actually two different areas of expenditures within the Housing department. One, as was just alluded to, is the \$14 million; it is an operational fund for the sort of day-to-day maintenance. This is allocated by the various districts throughout Manitoba. You have \$14 million for that.

You also have about another \$14 million for capital improvements within the housing stock. The capital improvements would be something like a roof restructuring or something that is of a major area for improvement.

The maintenance of \$14 million, the capital improvement of \$14 million, you are looking at \$28 million for, as I say, 13,000 units. That is a lot of money that is committed to that type of endeavour.

Ms. Cerilli: I want to clarify, then, if I am finding this budget line on page 33 of the Supplementary Estimates book. Under Other Expenditures, there is Other Operating, and it says \$13.5 million as the estimate for '95-96.

Mr. Reimer: Is that 33 in the yellow?

Ms. Cerilli: Right. If that is not where I should find it, where can I find it?

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: I would just like to inquire of the committee, are we—my understanding is that we were going line by line. That was at the outset of the—just for clarification, then, the committee is agreed to have general discussion on the total Estimates? [agreed]

Mr. Reimer: I believe that page 38 would give a better indication where the funding allocation is. What we are talking about is on page 38, not page 33.

The \$14 million that I alluded to for the maintenance and repair would be on this page, and the \$14 million for capital improvements would go through a capital supply bill, which is not included on this page or in this book.

Ms. Cerilli: There is a section here, Housing Operations Subsidy, Private Nonprofit, \$13,982,700.

Mr. Reimer: Yes, correct.

Ms. Cerilli: Then there is another \$6 million there. [interjection] I appreciate that.

The issue being, though, that we are looking at a housing stock that has deteriorated. I want to try and maybe use some specific examples. I know of the Keenleyside housing complex in my constituency that had major renovations over the last year or so. We are still waiting to have the landscaping done. How much did that cost?

Mr. Reimer: I have been informed that project, which was started way back in 1972, has gone through a complete face lifting and renovation for approximately \$1.8 million. The landscaping is in the final phases of coming together, and that will be the final part of the project itself.

Ms. Cerilli: The minister is not suggesting that \$1.8 million was from this 1972 budget? What budget was that from?

Mr. Reimer: No, I certainly did not imply that that was since 1972. I just mentioned that as a matter of record, how long the complex had been around. But, no, the funding has only been in the last two years, \$1.8 million.

Ms. Cerilli: That provides me a good benchmark since I am quite familiar with that housing development.

Two other issues then with respect to this \$14 million for maintenance and the \$14 million for capital in this

year, the minister had said that is for 13,000 units, but I am of the understanding there are over 21,000 units of social housing in the province, so what is the difference in those two figures in terms of the money being allocated for maintenance?

* (2330)

Mr. Reimer: The member is alluding to different factors regarding the housing. There are sponsored units also that make up the number that she is referring to, the 20,000 units. There are also the nonprofit units that are managed. The 13,000 are the units that we manage directly under the Manitoba Housing Authority, and the total nonprofit units that are directly managed and sponsored are just over 16,000 or 16,870 units, page 67 in that green book, I believe it is.

Ms. Cerilli: The annual report?

Mr. Reimer: Yes, the green book.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: Referring to the Annual Report for Housing?

Mr. Reimer: If we look on the next page, we have the total private nonprofit units and then the rental supplement units that are on those pages too.

Ms. Cerilli: I thank the minister for that. What I am not clear about is how the \$14 million then is actually spent and how we are going to decide to spend that money, if that money is paying the staff that do the maintenance work or if that is entirely to go to tender to contractors to do the work. The \$14 million that is part of the operating, what is that covering?

Mr. Reimer: Yes, out of that operational budget, there is room for maintenance by people on staff. They have the opportunity to do it. If the maintenance requires an outside type of professional like for door handling or for spraying of cockroaches or something like that, then we will call in outside experts to look after the operations and to handle that type of—[interjection] It has been pointed out to me that, approximately, maybe about \$10 million of the \$14 million is contracted out to different people, but that is just a rough estimate as to the amount of money that goes out.

Ms. Cerilli: Then am I correct to assume that \$4 million of that is going to pay salaried staff through the Manitoba Housing Authority, who are the onsite maintenance people, caretakers?

Mr. Reimer: The member must remember that there is the purchase of supplies, there is the purchase of locks and doors and other things and apparatuses that are needed within the parameters of that operational budget too, so the monies are not all just salaries. There is a lot of merchandise too that has to be purchased with that too.

Ms. Cerilli: How many onsite caretakers are there, and what is the formula for determining the unit ratio for onsite caretaking?

Mr. Reimer: There are currently 288 employees and 104 contract caretakers working within the present MHA. They are salaried, it was pointed out to me. Out of that 288, there are also salaried caretakers in there. The black numbers are not with us at this particular time. We can get those numbers for the member to break out of that 288 because there are caretakers in that number, too.

Ms. Cerilli: If I wanted to do some figuring, I could just work that into the 13,000 units or the 21,000 units and we could get some sense of how that works out, or I could look at the table because some of those units are going to be side by side and they would not have someone onsite.

Maybe the minister could help me out here. I am trying to get a sense of the workload for these people for looking at—and that is why I was asking for the formula to try to identify the demands being put on these people. I am interested in knowing too the difference between someone being contracted and someone being salaried, but I am just trying to get a sense because we are trying to address this issue of having someone respond promptly, as the current cases we have had made public recently where people are saying they have made calls and they have not been responded to, and they have then finally been given the screws to fix the window themselves. We want to make sure that people are going to be getting good

service and having the properties that they are living in properly maintained.

Mr. Reimer: I have been informed that part of the direction as to the allocation of caretakers within units and the workload that is carried forth by the caretakers to a degree—not to a degree, but is covered to a large extent by the union contract that covers the employees.

We have MGEU employees in Selkirk, Brandon, The Pas, Portage la Prairie, Dauphin and Churchill, and then we have another union, the IUOE, covering the Winnipeg inside workers and also another branch of the IUOE covering the Winnipeg outside workers.

The negotiation with the union more or less is a factor in the allocation and the workload for caretakers, so it becomes not a definitive formula of saying that when they look after a certain amount of units, why they then become caretaker controlled, or whether they get to a certain point, then they take over another. It depends on the union contract that covers that particular area and that particular worker that is covered by the different—you have three unions actually involved. Then you also have nonunion locations which are in Gimli, Altona and Roblin. That is quite a mix match of different conditions.

* (2340)

Ms. Cerilli: What the minister is telling me is the allocation of caretakers per number of units that they are responsible for is something that is dealt with under the collective agreement with the employees. There is no formula that is set out in policy from the Manitoba Housing Authority. That is something that has just sort of been worked out through negotiations.

Mr. Reimer: Just as a further clarification on it, it has been pointed out that there is a broad guideline in a sense of looking at the criteria of a caretaker. What comes into effect is a lot of times the mechanical responsibilities of a building, the heating or the cooling of a building, the amount of hallways that are in the building, the amount of units in the building. There is a fair amount of parameters that come into effect when there is an analysis of whether a caretaker is necessary.

In general terms, they look at a criterion of somewhere around 75 to 100 units, and then there is the warrant of a consideration for a caretaker when it gets to that, and at the same time the consideration of, like I mentioned, the garbage requirements of where it has to be hauled and how far it has to be hauled and whether there is a compactor involved with the building, the amount of floors and hall space. There are variables involved, but usually in the area of 75 to 100 units is where the caretaker allocation comes in.

Ms. Cerilli: We are getting somewhere here. There are two ways of approaching this. The problem is that we have aging, deteriorating housing stock. We have a certain amount of money which sounds like a reasonable amount of money, \$28-million total, to try and maintain and repair this housing stock. One way we can go at it then is to look if we have the staff resources and the personnel to do it to ensure that repairs are done promptly and that there is going to be the person power there to do that.

I guess the other side of it is looking at the value of the properties and the costs that are incurred to maintain them. I was noticing when I was reading the comments by the former minister, he was talking about being careful, that we are not going to get to the point where it is going to be so costly to repair social housing that we are not going to recover the cost. It is not going to become cost effective, I guess is what I am getting at.

I am wondering if there are certain units, blocks, complexes where we are reaching that point, in the minister's opinion, and what kind of process the Housing Authority goes through in deciding how they are going to spend the money, how they are going to prioritize those major capital repairs and work that is being done.

Mr. Reimer: Mr. Chairman, I guess one of the first priorities that Manitoba Housing has when they are looking at supplying accommodation and housing for people is the fact of the health and the safety of the individual in going into any type of building, because that is of primary importance. The funding that the member for Radisson mentioned is a concern. I repeat myself when I say that the way the indications are with

the federal government and their cutting back of funding is of a great concern by this government and this minister in trying to maintain the stock of housing, because her concerns are echoed in my concerns in the fact that we are looking at aging buildings and aging accommodations and the upkeep on them but nothing to go up, so we have to look very stringently at the federal government for their commitment for the continued maintenance on these programs.

I look forward quite optimistically in bringing forth our case to the Ministers of Housing conference that is coming up in the early part of July and also with the minister on the federal scene, Mr. Dingwall, in conveying our concerns to him with the utmost urgency that the funding is maintained or there is the equivalency of funding transfers so we can be in a position to continue to provide this funding. This is one of the things that this government and this minister will take forth quite emphatically to the federal government, that we look very, very strongly on a commitment to social housing not only in Canada but particularly in Manitoba.

Ms. Cerilli: The minister talked about anticipating a cross-Canada ministers conference on housing. I am wondering if he knows now the anticipated impact of the \$270-million reduction to the provinces for social housing from the federal government, what portion of that is a reduction for Manitoba this year. How much has the budget been reduced this year?

Mr. Reimer: In looking at a global amount of reduction for Manitoba there are a couple of factors that have to be recognized. What the federal government has said is they are reducing that amount of money that the member for Radisson mentioned, \$240 million or whatever it was, globally across Canada. For Manitoba that will amount to about \$5 million less.

What they have done is they have indicated, because of refinancing of monies that are borrowed and at a lower rate, that there should be no significant impact on the amount of money that is being transferred to Winnipeg, but at the same time the savings that were indicated were supposed to be reallocated back into the housing market.

The federal government, with their decision making and their direction, have decided that saving they would keep. In essence they have refinanced, they have saved money and they are not allocating that money back into the housing stock where it should be going. This is a concern on our part.

* (2350)

Ms. Cerilli: So we are losing five million bucks.

Mr. Reimer: Right.

Ms. Cerilli: That is this year.

Mr. Reimer: Yes.

Ms. Cerilli: How is that going to be absorbed in the department? I see we are not showing a reduction, we are actually showing approximately an almost \$3-million increase this year for the estimate.

Mr. Reimer: The analysis that has been brought forth is the fact that the savings that were realized and were supposed to flow to Manitoba are \$5 million less than what was anticipated, and because of the federal position as mentioned, of refinancing, that is the money that we are not getting now, see, and it is \$5 million less that we would have to put into the system for any type of programs or expenditures or renewing of our existing stock or improvement of our stock, so it is a savings that was realized federally but not given back to us provincially.

Ms. Cerilli: I guess what I am getting at is this year it looks like from the budget that you have absorbed it, that you have added in the money at Manitoba's expense. Am I correct in that?

Mr. Reimer: I guess what has been pointed out is the fact that the—I believe the member is looking at the two lines on page 38 regarding the funding. We have been able to, through the efficiencies of the department, maintain our commitment to the program within the framework of the Manitoba Housing Authority, and this is why there is that slight increase of funding that is noticed in that particular comparison between '94-'95 and '95-'96, so this is where the efficiencies come in and

the fact—[interjection] That is right too. It has been pointed out to me too that we are looking at a time lag of projects that are coming on stream now that were initiated a couple of years ago. This is why the budget line is like that, has the implications that it has right now. Most of it is in the second-bottom line there, the CMHC-administered units, in that particular contribution line. There are more units coming on stream in northern Manitoba.

Ms. Cerilli: If I am understanding this correctly, we are not going to see the impact yet because there are a couple of year time lags. There were new units that were approved and the money has been sitting there for those and now that is coming and flowing through the budget. That is why we are seeing that there has not been a reduction. The province has not actually increased its allocation over the last year to the department through the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation. It is simply that the money that was allocated in previous years from Canada Mortgage and Housing is now starting to flow through. Comprehend.

Coming down the road though are we going to see then an impact on new projects? I notice from '92 there was \$27 million allocated for new construction. Now we are seeing that. What are the projections? I think there have been major cuts, particularly for remote northern reserve communities. I know I have something somewhere that talks about a 50 percent reduction from about 1,200 units to 600 units. So within two years we are going to start feeling the effect of this in Manitoba. Is that what I am to understand?

Mr. Reimer: I should point out that actually it has been since 1994 that there has been no commitment for any new housing starts. What is coming to fruition, if you want to call it that, is the fact that these units that are coming on now were previous commitments and as they come on stream there are no new ones being initiated and none since 1994.

Ms. Cerilli: I knew there had not been any new ones since '94. I have a really good document that I am going to refer to. It is called Housing and Sustainability: An Action Guide for Community Leaders. It is part of the Good Ideas series that is put

out by the rural and small town program at Mount Allison University—worth reading. It talks about a housing policy in Ontario, a province of Ontario policy statement on land use and planning for housing, and if my memory serves me correctly, I think it has a recommendation here that provides for—policy to enable at least 25 percent of new residential units to be affordable housing.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. The hour being twelve midnight, committee rise.

URBAN AFFAIRS

* (2000)

Mr. Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): Committee can come to order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Chairperson, I am wondering if the minister can indicate how much he would have at hand with respect to demographics of the city of Winnipeg.

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please. Is the staff outside? If the staff is outside, they can come in, by the way.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, as I was asking, I am interesting in knowing if the minister has some more recent information, as opposed to the 1991 Census, with respect to the population in Winnipeg.

Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister of Urban Affairs): To the best of my knowledge it is approximately just over 600,000—612,000.

Mr. Lamoureux: I believe the last census put it at something like 638,000 or something of that nature. We do not have anything more precise than that right at hand?

Mr. Reimer: The last figures that I have before me were for 1993, and at that time there were 628,900 people.

Mr. Lamoureux: Does the department deal with projections for the city in terms of what they would

anticipate population will be at over the next number of years?

Mr. Reimer: We are just in the process of getting those figures. Maybe we can hold off on that for a few moments while we find those figures and we can come back to that.

Mr. Lamoureux: Actually, there are a number of questions that I have in this area. One of the things that I am hoping to be able to get a better understanding of is the satellite communities and the type of growth that they have been experiencing compared, let us say, to the city of Winnipeg and what sort of projections the Department of Urban Affairs would have with respect to them.

I was actually at a public meeting that happened to be dealing with boundary redistribution of the school divisions and I heard this rather unique phrase. I do not want to take credit for the phrase. It was something to the effect of a "rurbanite" where we get a lot of individuals that used to live in the city of Winnipeg that moved out into the satellite communities to gain a bit of an experience of the rural community and yet still be able to commute back and forth in a rather reasonable amount of time to the inner city, if you like, or to the shopping centres and the many different venues that the city of Winnipeg has to offer.

What I am hoping to be able to do is to get some numbers from the minister with respect to some of those satellite communities.

The population of Manitoba is somewhere in around 1.1 million people. I was under the impression that the city made up somewhere close to 65 percent of the population of the province. I would imagine then when those stats come out they are really talking about metropolitan Winnipeg, if you will, quite possibly.

What I am interested in is trying to figure out what sort of numbers within the city of Winnipeg. I will take it 628,000, those would all be within, let us say, the city of Winnipeg property tax base. I am equally interested in those satellite communities, communities just outside the city of Winnipeg.

I do not know if maybe he has some sort of a map that includes those communities or what he would classify as a satellite community to the city of Winnipeg.

Mr. Reimer: Just to further clarify for the member for Inkster, I do have some figures that are out of the Capital Region Strategy in which there is talk of population in the area of growth. What they are indicating here in this pamphlet is that Winnipeg's population is expected to increase by about 5 percent between 1991 and the year 2011. In the regional growth, which is just outside Winnipeg, they are looking at a population growth of about 1.5 percent per year.

We have to be a little cognizant and recognize that when we are talking about populations and we are talking about percentages of population, when we talk of 5 percent of a population base of over 600,000, we are talking fairly significant numbers. When we talk about 1.5 percent in the regions outside of Winnipeg, you can see that there is growth of people in both areas. It is one thing to compare a low figure of 5 percent in, say, 630,000 people and 1.5 percent when you are talking about some of the regions around Winnipeg where you may have upwards in some areas of 1,200 people and 4,000 people.

The statistics can be interpreted in various ways when you look at the percentage applied to them.

Mr. Lamoureux: I am somewhat surprised in terms of the 1.5 percent increase. I would have anticipated that it would have been considerably higher than that.

The minister makes reference—this is the Capital Region Strategy. Unfortunately, I do not have a copy of that. Could the minister provide me a copy of that particular document?

Mr. Reimer: We will make sure we get a copy to the member in the next day or two.

* (2010)

Mr. Lamoureux: Thank you. I would appreciate that.

I wanted to move on in terms of the rivers. I made reference in my brief opening remarks to the Assiniboine and the Red River. I meant to get some sort of indication in terms of what this government or the Department of Urban Affairs is looking at.

I know a number of years back the NDP administration had set up a fund, or they were hoping to create a fund, for riverbank improvement. I think it even targeted something like a hundred million dollars towards this potential fund, or at least it was a commitment from the government.

When I was with the Institute of Urban Studies, I had done a report on what I believe was called the Mewasin project out in Saskatoon. There they had a long-term plan for the Saskatchewan River, and it included things like walkways, other forms of entertainment, parks and so forth. I am wondering what sorts of long-term plans the department has with respect to our rivers, walkways, this sort of thing, cleaning up the river, if there are block monies that are being given to the city that are conditional to river improvement or bank improvement, that sort of thing.

Mr. Reimer: The member for Inkster is right in his assumption that one of the great attributes of Winnipeg is the fact that we do have the convergence of the Red and Assiniboine rivers which is of natural beauty in a sense of the character of this city of Winnipeg. This was recognized many years ago by previous administrations within the city and within the province of the quality and the esthetic contribution that this can make not only in this area but anywhere along the riverbanks here in Winnipeg.

This is one of the reasons, when The Forks was developed, that there was a very conscientious attitude and look toward the riverbanks as a place of leisure type of activity, the walkways themselves, the whole greening of the area, if you want to call it, and the emphasis on making it a very family-oriented and a community area of gathering which The Forks has been, and the fact that the riverbanks and the walkways along there add such significance to the lifestyles of Winnipeg for their recreation and for just pure enjoyment of what we have to offer.

Recognizing that, as the member for Inkster has seen from the south end of this building how we have tied into the riverbank along the Assiniboine River where you can walk now right from the Legislature quite easily right down to The Forks and back, and you can go even around the corner and eventually right to Juba Park and the Alexander Docks with the walkway.

Recognizing that in the Winnipeg Development Agreement, which I alluded to earlier, there has been provision put in there for the continual improvements and beautification of the walkways on the riverways, and the provincial government is committed to expenditures of approximately \$2 million for this project for the beautification of the walk.

The member is aware that the Winnipeg Development Agreement is a tripartite agreement between the federal government, provincial government and the City of Winnipeg for \$75 million over the next five years in which there is participation of \$25 million per level of government in various areas of improvement for the city of Winnipeg, so it is quite a significant amount. It is recognizing that there is a quality of life that people expect and the whole presentation of the esthetic qualities of not only the riverbanks but of the walkways involved too.

Mr. Lamoureux: I think that quite often we underestimate the value of our rivers. I think that there was a fact sheet that I was provided, just to give you some sort of an idea of the appreciation, and it makes reference to The Forks site, if you will, in 1991 where it said virtually all adult Winnipeg residents, some 97 percent, had heard of The Forks, and almost 81 percent had visited the site in 1991 alone.

I think that they are a phenomenal resource. It is the natural beauty of the rivers and the banks that tend to draw people to them, and I think what I would like to see is more of a long-term plan for the rivers.

I appreciate the efforts and work from all three different levels of government that have gone into the development of The Forks as we know it today and the extension of the walkways. I think it is equally important that government develop some sort of a long-term—in co-operation obviously with the city. In fact,

many would argue and possibly quite correctly that the city should be playing the lead role, but the province does need to be at the table in the development of our riverbanks in particular.

I am interested in knowing, within the Department of Urban Affairs, do they have any sort of a plan other than, let us say, The Forks to acquire or to ensure that there is more access to the public to the riverbanks? I look in particular around the zoo, by Assiniboine Park, for example, where there are trails that go by there and the addition or extension of current trails that are there. Does the Department of Urban Affairs have these sorts of discussions with city officials, and if so, what sort of plans do they envision?

Mr. Reimer: The member is right in his analysis of the fact that the waterways here in Winnipeg are playing and will continue to play a very significant role in any type of development for the esthetic qualities and the appearance of the city, mainly because of the fact that we do have the Red and the Assiniboine rivers which come together, but we also have small little rivers, for example, the Seine River which actually runs through my constituency to an extent.

There has been quite a movement in the last four or five years which started with a study by the Save Our Seine group in which they wanted to look at the Seine River and see what type of help they could give in trying to clean the river up, try to recognize where the flow patterns are, where the problems are with the obstructions of the Seine River.

A small grant was obtained through the Department of Natural Resources for the initial study of it. What has happened with that small grant that was obtained through the department to the Save Our Seine group, it has grown into quite an organization of very conscientious and very concerned citizens in trying to promote the Seine River, trying to clean up the Seine River.

I am not sure exactly how far it has been cleaned up, but I think it has been cleaned up right through from perimeter to perimeter regarding the amount of effort that has been put in there. That is a good example of people that are recognizing the qualities and the great

beauty we have of the rivers that are running through Winnipeg.

* (2020)

The member mentions the Assiniboine River. It is another river that will demand more concentration because of the fact of the residential area that runs through it. I guess it is like anything, the more there is an awareness of the qualities there, the more attention that will be put through people's groups and interest groups and to a degree funding toward improvement on it.

These are very, very strong qualities of character for the city of Winnipeg. I think more and more people are recognizing the value of them and their beauty for the enjoyment of these wonderful summers we have here in Winnipeg, and the winters too, because in wintertime they are put into use particularly around The Forks.

I think the member has been down there during the wintertime. They have skating on the river, they have carnivals on the river, the Festival du Voyageur ties into The Forks, there are the celebrations that we have had down there with New Year's Eve. It has become quite a centre of exactly what it is meant for, a gathering of people. The Forks is a meeting place, and it has become quite a meeting place.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, the minister accurately points out the Seine River, and maybe what I should be doing is just talking in terms of the waterways in Winnipeg in trying to get an understanding of whether or not there is some form of a long-term development of our waterways in the province.

I would assume the department does have discussions with the city on this particular topic. Has there ever been any sort of a discussion in which there would be some form of a joint committee to review our waterways and to maybe come up with some sort of a policy with respect to the long-term usage of all of our waterways?

Mr. Reimer: It should be pointed out that the lead government, if you want to call it, in the approach to

the waterways through here in Winnipeg, like the Red and the Assiniboine and the other rivers that I alluded to, like the Seine River and, I guess, to an extent some of the other ones, they are mainly initiated and implemented by the City of Winnipeg as to the direction and any type of studies on their usage. So the City of Winnipeg plays the lead role in any type of evaluation as to the use or the direction or the implementation of any type of plans around them.

Mr. Lamoureux: I would acknowledge that, too. In fact, earlier I did just that, so no doubt the city would have the leading role to play, but equally—and again I am trying to recollect from a number of years back where I believe it was a joint project out in Saskatoon with different levels of government, and I believe it was called the Meewasin project or something of that nature. The question is, does the provincial government here, the Department of Urban Affairs believe movement in that direction would be a positive thing to try to get people with vested interests? Obviously, in the development of our rivers, we would have to have the province playing some form of a role, and the best way to start that off, of course, is to be sitting at the table helping to contribute to what our rivers could be providing for the citizenry into the future.

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

I will let the minister respond to that before I move on to the next line of questioning that I had, but again I would emphasize that I am interested in the long-term proposals. Maybe the city has approached the minister or the department in some capacity, or something of this nature. Does the minister himself want to see a long-term proposal for our waterways?

Mr. Reimer: I guess that, with any type of initiative regarding the riverfront and the riverbank improvement, we are willing to sit down and talk to the City of Winnipeg and offer suggestions.

I believe it was back in 1990 there were discussions initiated by the then-Minister Ducharme regarding the city of Winnipeg and how we could participate in the improvement and the knowledge and the direction that

should be taken regarding the river and the riverbank creation and its attractiveness. The ball was never carried by the city. The overture was made by the then-Minister Ducharme, and it just seemed to die a natural death in a sense that there did not seem to be that type of interest shown by the City of Winnipeg at that time.

It is not that the area is not worthy of discussion. It is just that the city has indicated their jurisdictional position of being the lead government on it, so that the initiatives that they would come forth with, I imagine it is like anything, we will sit down and talk with them.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, yes, it would be nice if possibly City Hall would take more of an interest if in fact they have not done it to the degree in terms of wanting to be able to participate or get the province to participate. I think maybe it is because we do have other projects where you do have the different levels of government participating. Maybe there has been an emphasis on that and maybe not as much emphasis as some of us would have liked to have seen with respect to the overall plan for our waterways.

I made reference to zonings, that sort of thing, land usage. In Winnipeg we have a 24-hour airport, for example. I know there is a great deal of concern both from the air industry and the communities that are just off the side or fairly close to the landing and departure runways. I am wondering if the minister can give some sort of an indication in terms of what, if anything, the province feels it can be doing to address some of those demands that are out there.

Mr. Reimer: Mr. Chairperson, I believe what the member for Inkster is referring to is the airport vicinity development plan and the WINNPORT project that has been brought forth by I guess the Minister of Highways (Mr. Findlay) and also the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey), because it does have the ability to look at Winnipeg as mentioned because it is one of the few, or I should say, I guess, it is maybe one of the very few that is 24-hour operation.

Under the Winnipeg Development Agreement, under the WDA, under the strategic and sectorial investments section of the Winnipeg Development Agreement

under the through transportation there was \$5 million to fund projects that support and enhance Winnipeg's historical role in the transportation industry and maximize its economic development opportunities. The projects could support implementation of the airport multimodal cargo hub initiative and the development of an airport area plan to facilitate the Northern Hemisphere Distribution Alliance project. So there is a recognition of the importance. Through the WDA there are monies earmarked for looking at future development.

* (2030)

It does form a very integral part of Winnipeg and Manitoba and the opportunities that can arise from it as it is being developed.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, I am interested in knowing what sort of restrictions on zoning or building of any sort that the province through the Department of Urban Affairs or maybe even in other capacities or other departments, like I made reference to the Department of Highways, but what are the types of restrictions that are in fact out there? Building over waterways, I know there was some discussion years back in terms of the possibility of a bill that would prevent the construction over waterways. What sorts of limitations are there for construction currently that the province imposes on the city? In particular, I am concerned about the airport.

Mr. Reimer: Mr. Chairman, the member must recognize that a lot of the zoning and the application of zoning is within the City of Winnipeg jurisdiction.

In regard to the airport development, there are certain restrictions that fall into the character of concern within the province, and in the development of it, there is a concern that that is addressed. In general, the zoning and the application of zoning are within the jurisdiction of what the city feels that they want to address.

Mr. Lamoureux: For example, is there anything then that would, let us say, stop the city if it wanted to have residential development continue west and north of the airport? Is there anything that prevents the city from, let us say, building a walkway over the Red River or

the Assiniboine River. Is there anything that the province has some restrictions on in terms of potential development in the city of Winnipeg?

Mr. Reimer: Yes, Mr. Chairman, there are concerns regarding, as the member mentioned, residential development that goes into certain areas within close proximity to the airport, and they would fall under the Plan Winnipeg policies. The concerns would be addressed through that and also through the special airport zoning that is in place in regard to what can or cannot be developed in the proximity of the airport itself. The special airport zoning: there is airport zoning that is in place which will designate and restrict certain types of development in and around the airport—part of Plan Winnipeg policies and special airport zoning. They would come into effect of any type of development that is within the purview of the airport.

Mr. Lamoureux: I want to move on in terms of urban revitalization, which was another area that I wanted to talk to the minister about. In pockets throughout the city of Winnipeg, virtually you will find that there are a number of things that could likely be done to improve a neighbourhood's appearance. For example, I made reference in my opening remarks to the community of Weston, and the reason for that is that I spent a few years in Weston and was quite involved with the local residents' association and was quite impressed in terms of how the residents' association was able to attempt to get their community revitalized.

There were a couple of programs back then, for example, the housing co-op start program. There was an in-fill housing program. There was the revitalization agreement between the Department of Urban Affairs and the City of Winnipeg in certain sectors of Winnipeg. All of these were able to provide for many of the individuals that lived in the community that wanted to improve the appearance, if you like, of the community. They could actually get involved and participate in and actually see things being done.

I guess I would want to start off with respect to the revitalization boards. If the minister could just indicate how many revitalization boards were established over the last decade type thing. I was fortunate enough that shortly after getting elected there was the Burrows-

Shaughnessy Revitalization Board. How many revitalization boards are there today that are still active, and when is the department looking at bringing in additional revitalization mechanisms?

Mr. Reimer: Mr. Chairman, the Winnipeg Development Agreement that is in place right now between the three levels of government, as I pointed out, is a five-year agreement with \$25 million from each level. It creates quite an opportunity in various venues to help the community in very diverse ways. It is there to create employment. It is there to assist people to find jobs. It is there to create a healthy and a safe environmentally sound community. It works in various components.

The principles behind it are that it is city-wide. So there are various areas within the city, not only in the so-called core area that can be eligible, but other areas within the city, as the member has alluded to regarding his constituency of Inkster. Being city-wide, there is the availability of funding that can fall into the neighbourhood improvement area where there is \$7 million which has been allocated. It is predominately really to revitalize older predominately residential neighbourhoods. It will target declining neighbourhoods and stable environments also with pockets of deterioration and emphasize citizen involvement.

* (2040)

I believe what the member was referring to was regarding the pockets of help that could be available. It also addresses the need for housing, which I think he alluded to, to expand the availability of housing for people having difficulty in accessing adequate shelter. It also provides for the homeownership opportunities for low-income families and assistance to community groups to provide housing for high-need groups.

It has its overtures to all aspects of the various neighbourhoods so that it is not only for a downtown revitalization but it is also for the fact that other areas of the city can take advantage of it.

In looking at the labour force development there is availability for job access. There is availability for career access under the WDA. There is also the

availability for pilot projects and demonstration projects which are joint development of pilot projects between employees, unions, schools, community agencies with the idea and the focus on preventative and self-help measures that predominate the development of partnerships; for example, career education initiatives in inner-city schools and possibly even school-business partnerships.

The Winnipeg Development Agreement gives us a broad spectrum of opportunities to look within the community and look within the people and look within the—do an asset assessment valuation of what is available and use that as a catalyst to build upon. The funding that is available for it is for use for various projects like this.

I would think that there is an opportunity, since it is city wide, that even the member for Inkster, if there are projects in his area that he might be thinking, could maybe tie in here. It is a good opportunity to follow up on it through the various levels of government.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, if I understood correctly, under the Winnipeg Development Agreement there is a component known as the neighbourhood improvement program which would be, in essence, the capital revitalization of communities of approximately \$7 million over a five-year time span. Are there any other revitalization programs? I am thinking more specifically of programs such as the Burrows-Shaughnessy, the Weston revitalization program, some of the more inner-city revitalization programs.

Mr. Reimer: Mr. Chairperson, there is a program that has been pointed out to me. It is the Manitoba/Winnipeg Community Revitalization Program. This is a 50-50 cost-sharing initiative that was developed between the city and the province in 1985. It is designed to improve the living conditions in Winnipeg's older residential neighbourhoods.

The committee of residents for the group is involved in planning the revitalization of their neighbourhood. It is delivered by the city's community planning division and monitored by this department, the Department of Urban Affairs. The areas designated to receive the funding are identified in the city's annual

capital estimates. The neighbourhood requires approval by the province prior to the final approval by the City Council.

Between 1985 and 1991, the province committed just about \$6 million, \$5.9 million, as its 50 percent share toward the revitalization of five areas: Weston was one; Spence-Memorial was another one; Transcona Centre; Burrows-Shaughnessy, which the member has alluded to, I believe; and Fort Rouge, which is at its Phase 1 stage. The site offices for the Weston, the Spence-Memorial, the Transcona Centre and the Burrows-Shaughnessy projects have been closed, and final reports have been prepared by the city.

(Mr. Chairperson in the Chair)

The Fort Rouge community revitalization strategy was approved by the province on April 15, 1994; the Elmwood community revitalization strategy was approved by the community at the annual general meeting on May 12, 1994. The annual general meeting for the Glenwood project was held on March 21, 1995, and the east Norwood area will be held on May 31, 1995, or I guess it has just been held, to review the community strategy there.

The Norwood-East and the Glenwood projects have received initial funding and have yet to establish a site. Negotiations are being conducted to lease space in the St. Boniface-St. Vital community centre on St. Mary's Road.

I should point out that I have a list of the various projects and their costings, and they are from Fort Rouge, as mentioned, Elmwood, east Norwood, Glenwood—yes, those are the areas.

Mr. Lamoureux: What is the annual commitment that the government makes? This is actually the program that I was wanting to get into. What sort of an annual commitment has been going on average to this particular program?

Mr. Reimer: The amount of money that has been committed since 1985 has varied. It has varied from a low of \$500,000 to a high of a million dollars a year in these various things. There is an ongoing commitment

of a very strong and conscientious government to the funding of these projects, and it shows by the results that I believe were even mentioned in one of the local papers just a while ago in regard to one of the areas.

They said that in Elmwood, close to the member for Concordia's (Mr. Doer) area, I believe, and the Radisson area also—[interjection] That is right, there was a recognition of the value by—the people in the area were saying how it was money that was well spent, and the community was well aware of the payback and the community involvement in making the project viable.

Mr. Lamoureux: Actually, I am somewhat familiar in terms of just how much the community members actually take an interest. I actually served on the Weston revitalization board for maybe just under a couple of years or somewhere around that period of time.

It is in fact a very good experience for individuals that live in the community to be able to participate in the development of the community. You will find or at least I have found that individuals that participate in the community revitalization boards remain very much interested in the follow-up in many of the different projects.

I remain committed to the community in terms of its development well into the future, and this is one of the reasons why I am a supporter of this particular program, because I acknowledge that there is a need for us to go into communities and assist in revitalizing in different forms.

* (2050)

The minister made reference or we talked briefly about the neighbourhood improvement program, and I am wondering if he can give some sort of an indication on how dollars or these capital dollars would be disbursed, the process.

Mr. Reimer: This is a good example of community involvement in these resident revitalization programs, because the community has the opportunity for input. They have the ability to be part of the decision making. Although the administration of it is by the city of

Winnipeg, I should point out, there is a sense of consultation with the community in their project and their revitalization of what they seem to bring forth.

With the consultation with the city, as 50 percent partners we pay our share that is brought forth on the recommendation by the city. This city in essence is bringing it forth from their participation and their consultation with the people in the community. It is truly a grassroots type of endeavour of revitalization and a betterment for their community in their particular area and their endeavour of what they feel is important.

Mr. Lamoureux: Maybe the minister can give examples of how some of that money has been allocated. To what type of projects?

Mr. Reimer: As for examples that the member is asking for, there are various ones. I guess what comes to mind first is that there are the recreation facilities that the communities are mainly involved with and which they want to see betterment of; the community centres themselves, the community facilities, I should say, in their particular area, the betterment of them in their priorities; also street improvements, some street improvements in certain areas that they feel are warranted; children's playgrounds, the improvement of children's playgrounds and the structures involved with that, something for the community as a sense of gathering.

At times, even housing is looked at in a certain way for improvement. These are all centred around, as the member can recognize, the community and what the community feels as a priority for their particular area of enjoyment, for the quality of life in their particular area. Those are some of the examples.

Mr. Lamoureux: Under the community revitalization board, of course, it is the community members that make up the board; the board then determines what its priorities are going to be for building within the community, whether it is a play structure, a housing program or many of the things that the minister has just made reference to. Here it is the administration that actually ultimately determines and then they consult with members of the community, or is there an application process? For example, if a particular

community wants to build a community club, they would go to the neighbourhood improvement program and ask for an application, or are there some criteria because it is in fact a revitalization program? What we are talking about is a replacement of community clubs or upgrading community clubs or play structures, this sort of thing. Could the minister maybe just comment on that?

Mr. Reimer: It should be pointed out that the direction of emphasis and the priority is placed by the community. It is by the people that are within the community themselves, their analysis of what they feel is important for that particular area and their quality of life or their quality of recreation or what they feel is important in that area. It is then brought up to the City of Winnipeg, which is the administrator and the powers-to-be in regard to the viability of it and the analysis of it, and then the consultation is between mainly the city and the community as to what they feel is the best to work.

The residents elect representatives to the community executive, and then those people there work with the city as the contact. So the City of Winnipeg would have contacts, in a certain area, of people that the community would elect to be their spokespersons regarding the various projects. It truly is a grassroots affair in a sense of where the direction and where the emphasis comes, and it comes from the community.

Mr. Lamoureux: I just want a bit of clarification. If there is a community that is out there that wants to be able to participate, they would then elect a resident of that community to sit on what sort of a board? I appreciate that the minister is saying that, yes, this grassroots, it is community driven, similar to possibly the revitalization board, but I am just not necessarily making the connection in terms of how these communities are, in fact, defined with respect then to have a resident elected from that community to represent the community. It is not quite clicking.

Mr. Reimer: I should point out that the areas that are designated to receive the funding are first identified in the city's annual capital estimates. Once that particular area has been identified, it requires approval by the province as an area of concern, and once the area has

been identified, the city will then make overtures within that particular area to look for people to come forth with ideas.

It would look for these people to be involved with the program, that they are designating a certain area for this type of program. From there that is where you would get the people involved elected by the community at large to represent them. That starts the process of identification. That starts the process of consultation. It sets in motion an analysis program of what needs are recognized and where the emphasis should be placed for the expenditures of funding.

Mr. Lamoureux: Does the minister have a list of the designated communities that the city has developed?

* (2100)

Mr. Reimer: Mr. Chairperson, the areas that have been identified as mentioned since 1985 have been Fort Rouge, Elmwood, east Norwood and Glenwood. The total commitment on those four areas is just over \$10 million, \$10.5 million. As mentioned, our share would be half of that.

This is an ongoing type of project. We have not been made aware of any new identifications that the city has come forth with, but then these come through as budgetary submissions on their part. Whether there are new ones in the works or additional ones, we have not been made aware of any as to date.

Mr. Lamoureux: If there was a community that was out there that was not on this list, then the way to get on that list would be to approach City Hall and say, hey, look. we as a community want to be able to have funds to revitalize or bring in programs that will help revitalize our community. The way to go is through City Hall, get listed, and then if the province deems that particular community is acceptable in terms of revitalization dollars, it then would say, no problem. The dollars, or at least the possibility of dollars, would then flow.

Mr. Reimer: The member is right in his assumption. The best way to approach it if there is a certain area or community that is looking at accessing the program is

to make their overtures to the local councillor, and at that time the process becomes apparent.

Mr. Lamoureux: Does the department do anything with respect to maybe areas in which there is a need for revitalization and maybe there have not been those overtures that have been made in terms of seeking revitalization dollars?

Mr. Reimer: The emphasis and the direction of the program are really driven by the City of Winnipeg. We, more or less, take the responsibility of involvement once the project has been identified, and then we become partners with the city at that time. The initiative is not driven by Urban Affairs. It is more or less driven by the City of Winnipeg and the community groups themselves. We get involved as a 50-50 partner once the areas have been identified by the city. It is a City of Winnipeg initiative really.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, I can appreciate the fact that the city again should be playing the lead role on this whole issue. I do believe that, as a department, there is that role and the department does play that in terms of making dollars available to ensure there is a certain amount of revitalization that is ongoing, if you like. That is absolutely critical.

I am wondering if the department can give some sort of indication of the housing stock or commercial stock. Do they have some sort of, let us say, a time period, like this percentage of the housing stock would have been built roughly in this time period, commercial development, so they can see into the future what the future demands are going to be in terms of area revitalization? Does the department venture into that sort of whether it is called investigation or trying to keep on top of urban needs into the future?

(Mr. Mike Radcliffe, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

Mr. Reimer: As pointed out, a lot of the emphasis is regarding the City of Winnipeg and their analysis of the situation. This is, again, because the City of Winnipeg has the availability and the staffing to do an evaluation as to their neighbourhoods and where they feel there should be an emphasis. We rely on them to bring forth

their projects, because they have the ability to do a proper analysis of their housing stock and their community re-evaluation and evaluations. Our Department of Urban Affairs is not in a position to do that type of in-depth analysis, whereas the City of Winnipeg can do that through their department. It is a reliance on the City of Winnipeg to bring forth the projects or the areas that they would like some action taken towards.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, I would wonder then if the government of the day would actually seek advice from the Department of Urban Affairs when it wants to introduce a program that will have an impact. For example, we had the home repair program that was instituted. One would think they would have some sort of an idea of housing conditions and things of that nature.

* (2110)

I guess what I am looking at is some sort of idea whether or not the Department of Urban Affairs has some forecasting capabilities in terms of what the future demands are going to be on the Department of Urban Affairs or the province in terms of contributions into the future on ensuring a certain quality of housing stock, commercial stock. Obviously, that same principle, it is not just the City of Winnipeg ultimately, but the same sorts of questions could be asked of the minister of municipal affairs in terms of trying to find out just how much potentially is out there.

Mr. Chairperson, 10 or 15 years from now, for example, are we going to have to come up with fairly significant programs because there was not enough revitalization in certain quadrants, whether it is the province or the City of Winnipeg, whereas if we did provide additional incentives for people to revitalize the communities the future costs could in fact be saved? This is what I am looking for: it is to get some sort of an idea whether or not the Department of Urban Affairs is aware of the overall or general condition of housing stock and the type of dollars that are going towards revitalization into the future.

Mr. Reimer: Mr. Chairman, what the member is asking about, I guess, is a bit of an overlap between the

two departments, the Department of Housing and the Department of Urban Affairs, in a sense. To try to differentiate the two towards the Department of Urban Affairs is sort of like juggling jello. You cannot get your hand on it because it moves around on you.

In essence there is no forecasting mechanism within the Department of Urban Affairs to foretell where the trends are in housing and which way the market dictates. We can look at the housing over the last 50, 60 years or so. We can look back to some of the housing that came in the market after the Second World War where we had little bungalows and little 600- and 700-square-foot homes. At that time they were the homes that everybody wanted. There were thousands of those homes built.

As you go through the trending of society, you have to bring in the other variables of housing stock, the so-called baby boomers, the families, the social values of how many children, the awareness that you are into an aging population now regarding housing and the emphasis that is going that way. There are a lot of variables that have to be brought into fact when you look at the housing and the housing stock.

Then again, as mentioned, through the two departments that I represent, Housing and Urban Affairs, there is a bit of an overlap between the two. As for the forecast for housing, we in the Department of Urban Affairs do not have the ability to do that type of forecasting.

I do not even know whether the City of Winnipeg has the ability to do forecasting as to what type of housing or what types of accommodation needs are going to be needed in the future or at the turn of the century. It is kind of crystal-ball gazing, and I guess we are not in that department yet.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, I am sure that the minister would at least concur in part that, if you drive around the city of Winnipeg, you will see, in particular in some areas, where the housing stock is actually fairly dilapidated. You could see significant dollars in the future having to be invested in some of these areas in order to upgrade. Ultimately, good, successful revitalization programs could prevent things or

minimize premature suburban sprawl, if you like, seeing different areas becoming that much more high in terms of transients and so forth.

I appreciate what it is that the minister is saying and will accept it just at that, that there are limited resources from within the department, but I would anticipate that, or at least would like to emphasize, I do believe that the department has a responsibility in ensuring that some form of forecasting of urban needs such as housing and commercial stock, the aging of it, the condition of it overall, because ultimately it will have some form of an impact, maybe not in next year's budget but in years that will come, especially if we do not address the issue in the short term.

I wanted to move on to a couple of other issues before we start passing the department. I made reference to the whole concept of land banking and once again, just like I am sure I could virtually bring this up in the Housing Estimates as much as I could within the Department of Urban Affairs, there was a policy in government to get involved in land banking and I am wondering if the minister could indicate whether or not this is the opportune time to ask with respect to land banking, and if it is not, maybe he in his other capacity as Minister of Housing, in case we do not get to Housing, could provide me some information in terms of the current status of land banking in the city of Winnipeg.

Mr. Reimer: I just wanted to point out to the member for Inkster, under the Winnipeg Development Agreement there is quite an amount of money that has been put aside for redevelopment, if you want to call it, and community development. For example, the north Main strategic development alone is \$10 million of allocation of funds for that type of redevelopment.

The aboriginal community's facility is over \$2.5 million dollars. The neighbourhood improvement, as we were just talking about for neighbourhood revitalization and neighbourhood infrastructure, is \$7 million.

We talked briefly about housing, which is about \$1.5 million, and then when we get down to, again, the downtown revitalization area, just for that area alone

we are looking at \$4 million. We have briefly mentioned the riverbank development. We are looking at \$3.5 million in there. Heritage buildings, which we alluded to, for the building preservation and district cultural landscape preservation, we are looking at over \$6.25 million. There is a significant amount of money that is being earmarked for that revitalization and that character that we want to put back into the city.

We have also, in 1994, I should point out that we gave the legislation which was enabling the city to give tax credits for home renovations of a structural kind. We have given the authority to the city to make these types of decisions, and they have been reluctant to do these things. The province has been quite proactive whenever the city has come forth in wanting to bring forth a program or an area of concern, but, as I mentioned, the legislation that would give tax credits for home renovations, they have not moved on it and we have given them the authority to do that.

We have been quite proactive in any type of initiative that we have taken with the City of Winnipeg. While I was just talking about the City of Winnipeg, the member, before we broke for supper, was asking me about the percentage of funding that was given to the City of Winnipeg as a percentage with other cities. I will just give him these figures here. The level of support from the provincial government—and these are other various major Canadian cities—as a percentage of provincial revenue to the City of Winnipeg, Winnipeg gets 17.5 percent; Regina from the province gets 7.5 percent; Saskatoon gets 8.6 percent; Edmonton gets 6.5 percent; and Calgary gets 6 percent. I do not have the figure, I was not able to pull out the figure for Toronto—the member for Inkster asked about Toronto—I do not have that figure.

When he looks at the comparison of, say, Winnipeg to Edmonton, for Winnipeg, 17.5 percent of their revenue comes from the Province of Manitoba compared to Edmonton, which gets 6.5 percent, so we are very generous in our support of the City of Winnipeg as a percentage of the revenue that they receive. Too often you hear the comment made that we are the lowest, but these are the figures as of 1994.

* (2120)

Mr. Lamoureux: I did ask the question with respect to land banks, but what I will do, I am going to defer those questions with the land bank. What I am interested in is knowing the current status of the land banks. I am familiar with the only other deal, MHRC-Qualico deal.

If in fact there is other land that has been purchased, if the minister can sometime over the next couple of weeks, sometime in the not-too-distant future, over the next few weeks type of thing—I am in no urgent need for it, to get it back to me.

(Mr. Chairperson in the Chair)

I am also interested, in particular, with respect to the MHRC-Qualico. I would even appreciate the opportunity to have a copy of the deal. I know I was given a copy of the Ladco deal by Minister Ducharme at the time.

Unfortunately, I have to defer some comments with respect to BFI. The minister made reference to fees. I do not necessarily believe at this stage in the game that there is a need for a second or third landfill site to service the city of Winnipeg. I do not think that that has been established as of yet. It seems that the real reason or one of the primary reasons why another landfill site is being looked at is because of the City of Winnipeg's tipping fees, if you like.

If that is in fact the case, it would be somewhat sad to see another facility being built because obviously no one wants to have a landfill site put in their backyard. So, if we can justify that there is need for a third landfill site, then, fine, let us go for a third landfill site and look in terms of where would be the best location. I have not been convinced that that is in fact the case.

Anyhow, now that that is on the record, I did want to ask a few more questions with respect to the budget itself. Before I do that, I want to just clarify what the minister just told me. That surprised me to a certain degree, when he says 6 percent. Are we talking about the overall expenditures or revenues to the City of Winnipeg? The Province of Manitoba only makes up 17.5 percent, and the percentages that he just gave are the Province of Alberta's contribution; for example, to

Edmonton. The City of Edmonton is 6.5 percent. Am I interpreting what he said correctly?

Mr. Reimer: This is a great opportunity for the member for Inkster to call in an old chit from the University of Winnipeg because this was taken from the Institute of Urban Studies, University of Winnipeg. It is a book called *Budgeting and the Prairie City: A Commentary*. The authors are Peter Diamant and Shelly Cory. So the figures that I quoted are from— [interjection] I can give you the exact revenues if you want them.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Table it.

Mr. Reimer: Table it? Okay.

Mr. Doer: You have to table it.

Mr. Reimer: No, I do not. I just said where I got it from.

Point of Order

Mr. Doer: I believe that the rules state that if a minister refers to a document, they must table copies for all other parties, which he just did. So I thank him for that copy, and we could wait till tomorrow to get it. I think he has given us assurances that he will provide that. [interjection] Thank you, and we would like a copy of that as well, please.

Mr. Chairperson: The honourable member does not have a point of order. If he will refer to Rule 29.1: Where in a debate a member quotes from a private letter, any other member may require the member who quoted from the letter to table said letter.

* * *

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, not even wanting to question your ruling, but I would appreciate just a photocopy of that particular page because I am definitely interested in the actual revenues being given to those cities.

There are a couple of lines that I indicated that I wanted to get a brief comment on. The one is the

Lotteries Funded Programs, or the Unconditional Grant to the City of Winnipeg, \$5 million. Is that with respect to VLT revenues?

I am also interested in the Dutch elm disease. It is an issue which seems to come up on an annual basis. Is this something of an ongoing \$700,000 into the future, or is it kind of a year-by-year decision whether or not to put money into the program?

Mr. Reimer: For the last two years there has been a level of funding that has been at the \$700,000 mark for Dutch elm disease. It covers various aspects of the monitoring of the disease. To date, it has been fairly successful because I recall that the level of the disease has been maintained here in the city. Because of the program, there has only been approximately about a 2 percent tree loss. The program has been quite successful at holding the level of the disease at a controllable aspect, so we are quite satisfied with its success.

Mr. Lamoureux: And then the question with respect to the Lotteries?

Mr. Reimer: I am sorry, what was the question on Lotteries?

Mr. Lamoureux: On page 141 of the main Estimates, the Lotteries Funded Appropriations, I am just curious, does that come from—I understand that that is just expenditures from Lotteries—but would that come from the VLTs?

Mr. Reimer: The monies that are allocated in that line come from Lotteries. I do not believe they are earmarked specifically out of—yes, that comes straight from Lotteries, and it is given unconditionally.

Mr. Lamoureux: If the minister, and he can get it back to me, I am interested in knowing how much of that money would be coming from the one-armed bandits, as the Leader of the New Democratic Party puts it, the VLT machines. If the minister can, and, again, he does not have to get it back to me immediately, but I would appreciate it sometime in the not-too-distant future, and we are quite prepared to pass the Estimates.

Mr. Reimer: The member is asking for a specific percentage of the \$5 million which comes out of VLTs. I can relay that message or try to get that information through the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), whether there is a breakdown.

An Honourable Member: You cannot get any information. We tried.

Mr. Reimer: No? Well, I will take it as a challenge to try to find it. We will try to see what we can come up with for the member for Inkster.

* (2130)

Mr. Chairperson: Item 1. Administration (b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$176,700—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$43,700—pass.

Item 2. Financial Assistance to the City of Winnipeg (a) Unconditional Current Programs Grant \$19,987,500—pass; (b) Unconditional Transit Operating Grant \$16,672,500—pass; (c) General Support Grant \$8,000,000—pass; (d) Dutch Elm Disease Control Program \$700,000—pass.

Resolution 20.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$45,360,000 for Urban Affairs, Financial Assistance for the City of Winnipeg for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

Item 3. Urban Affairs Program Support (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$515,900—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$221,800—pass; (c) Capital Region Sustainable Development Strategy \$30,000—pass.

Resolution 20.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$767,700 for Urban Affairs, Urban Affairs Program Support, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

Item 4. Expenditures Related to Capital (a) Financial Assistance to the City of Winnipeg \$16,000,000—pass; (b) Urban Initiatives \$1,000,000—pass.

Resolution 20.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$17,000,000 for

Urban Affairs, Expenditures Related to Capital, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

Item 5. Lotteries Funded Programs (a) Unconditional Grant to the City of Winnipeg \$5,000,000—pass.

Resolution 20.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$5,000,000 for Urban Affairs, Lotteries Funded Programs, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

We now revert to the Minister's Salary.

Item 1. Administration (a) Minister's Salary \$11,400—pass.

Resolution 20.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$231,800 for Urban Affairs, Administration, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

This concludes the Department of Urban Affairs.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): We will now move on to Legislative Assembly.

Does the minister have an opening statement?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Pass.

Mr. Chairperson: Would the critic for the opposition have an opening statement?

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Pass.

Mr. Chairperson: Item 1. Indemnities (Statutory) (a) Members \$2,845,600—pass.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Chairperson, I am not going to ask a number of questions on this particular line, but I did want just to take the opportunity to express some concern that we have with respect to the Legislative Assembly. It is important from our perspective that opportunities for all members of the Chamber be given for MLAs to have direct

input. This is one of those few vehicles in which as an independent, according to our rules, in which we do have an opportunity to ask questions.

My preference is not to have to necessarily ask questions at this level but rather to be able to continue to receive at least fair or equitable treatment in the future with respect to issues dealing with Legislative Assembly. With those very few words, we are quite prepared to pass the department.

Mr. Chairperson: For the information of the honourable members, these three lines that I am about to read are statutory requirements. They do not need to be passed.

They cannot be changed without legislative changes.

1.(b) Additional Indemnities \$95,100.

2. Retirement Provisions (Statutory) (a) Pensions and Refunds \$1,557,800; (b) Registered Retirement Savings Plan \$133,000.

3. Members' Expenses (Statutory) (a) Constituency Expenses \$1,774,500; (b) Temporary Residence and Living Expenses \$391,300; (c) Commuting Expenses \$9,000; (d) Travel Expenses \$352,600; (e) Special Supplies and Operating Payments \$114,800; (f) Printing and Franking \$166,500; (g) Committee Expenses \$5,000; (h) Severance Payments \$220,000; (j) Car Allowance \$90,500.

4. Other Assembly Expenditures (a) Leader of the Official Opposition Office (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$122,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$32,500—pass.

(b) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,928,600—pass.

(c) Other Expenditures \$1,083,300—pass.

Resolution 1.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$4,167,200 for Legislative Assembly, Other Assembly Expenditures, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

5. Office of the Provincial Auditor (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,696,600—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$432,600—pass.

Resolution 1.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,129,200 for Legislative Assembly, Office of the Provincial Auditor, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

6. Office of the Ombudsman (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$735,400—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$117,200—pass.

Resolution 1.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$852,600 for Legislative Assembly, Office of the Ombudsman, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

7. Office of the Chief Electoral Officer (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,121,900—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$5,938,800—pass.

Resolution 1.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$7,060,700 for Legislative Assembly, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

That completes the Legislative Assembly. I thank the honourable minister.

* (2140)

CHILDREN AND YOUTH SECRETARIAT

Mr. Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): We will now move on to the Youth Secretariat.

Does the honourable minister have an opening statement?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): No.

Mr. Chairperson: Does the critic of the official opposition party have an opening statement?

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): It is interesting when I look at the news release for the secretariat and notice that it was put out the same date as the report released on the Health of Manitoba's Children. That report is very comprehensive and very extensive, and I am hoping that we will see more from this secretariat in addressing the issues raised and the recommendations raised in that report. I also want to acknowledge the work of the critic for Health for the NDP in this area. The MLA for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) has spent quite some time asking questions with respect to these matters in the departmental Estimates for Health.

When I was preparing for this, I had the opportunity to read the health report. It has really caused me to give some serious attention to the need for integrated services and the approach that this secretariat is taking. It really is, I think, a systemic, systematic, multi-disciplinary preventative approach contrary to the somewhat punitive approach that this government often takes to dealing with children.

That punitive rather than preventative approach can be seen in their approach to a number of things that they have dealt with in Justice that have not looked at preventative matters as much as punitive matters, the way that they have approached changes in education with the attitude of expulsion as a solution, again rather than prevention, when they have at the same time increased class size and demand on teachers and withdrawn support on teachers, when they have reduced the budget in Education by 2 percent a couple of years ago, and we have seen 400 teachers lost in the province under this government. A number of the other personnel that are in schools have been lost under this government that provide the kind of supports that this secretariat is addressing so that young people with special needs can have their needs met.

Then there are some other things that this government has almost done and has done with respect to preventative measures for children, things like looking at eliminating physical education for children which they reversed at the urging of the community and the members on this side of the House, as well as the thing that they look like they are going ahead with, which is eliminating health education. They were even

looking at eliminating recess. All of those are things, I think, are not with the best interests of children in mind and are very much not in keeping with the preventative approach to child welfare, health and status issues. Similarly, in their approach to young people with eliminating the Student Social Allowances Program, the New Careers program, the BUNTEP and Access programs, all of these, I think, are not a very preventative approach to providing for the needs of young people in the community, and similarly, in reducing the subsidies and subsidized spaces for child care and not addressing the funding needs of parent-child centres which were providing such wonderful examples of preventative care in the community.

I think we are seeing a shift in attitude to dealing with children and the needs of children, and I think this follows on the shift and attitude we have seen as a result of much work. In the women's community we know the status of children is often dependent on the quality of health, education and status for women in the community. As we have seen the protection for women in domestic situations improve in our society, I think now we are also seeing similar changes in attitudes with respect to children.

With that I will close my opening remarks and look forward just to asking some specific questions with respect to the activities of this secretariat.

Mr. Chairperson: I thank the honourable member for those opening statements.

At this time, we would invite the minister's staff to enter the Chamber. Would the minister introduce the staff present?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I would just like to introduce Mr. Reg Toews, who is the assistant deputy minister in charge of the Children and Youth Secretariat.

Ms. Cerilli: Mr. Chairperson, I just want to begin then with asking the minister to clarify, I understand there are four staff in the secretariat, if the minister could tell us the functions of those four staff.

Mr. Chairperson: Before the minister answers that, we are on Resolution 34.1 (1) Children and Youth

Secretariat (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$378,800.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, Reg Toews, as I indicated earlier, is the assistant deputy minister in charge of the Children and Youth Secretariat. There is one secretarial staff for support and other than that there are four staff positions that have been seconded: one from the Department of Justice, one from the Department of Education and Training, one from the Department of Health. There are two people who are seconded into one position, half-time, from the Department of Family Services.

Just recently we have decided to add someone from Culture, Heritage and Citizenship from the Recreation branch to the secretariat, because I think a lot of the issues dealing with children have the need of understanding some of the recreational opportunities and activities that should be looked at in a co-ordinated fashion. There will be someone from Culture, Heritage and Citizenship shortly appointed to work with the secretariat.

I want to indicate these are all seconded positions. There are no additional staff costs and any of the activities that are undertaken by the secretariat are activities that would look at redirection of resources within departments or transferring resources from one department to another to deal with the issues around serving children and their special needs.

Ms. Cerilli: Just to clarify then, these are all seconded staff and the budget for this line, which is \$144,000, that is all money that has been transferred from these five other departments. It is not any new money.

Mrs. Mitchelson: The \$144,000 in this line is not staff salaries. It is operating costs. That is for space and telephones and all of the other things that are necessary to operate an office, and that is money that is recovered from within the departments that are participating in the secretariat, so it is not new money.

The staff salaries are still in each department. There are staff here who remain in the department but they are seconded over to the secretariat for support.

Ms. Cerilli: That is what I understood. The question was, then there is no new operating money for any services they may wish to provide that is also going to simply be the reallocation and re-co-ordination, if you would, of money and services from those departments that are represented in the staff.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, that is correct. The secretariat itself will not be undertaking new initiatives or new programming. What it will be doing is co-ordinating and looking within departments where the overlap and duplication might be, and where it might make better sense to deliver the programming. That advice will be given and monies will be reallocated from department to department as need be in order to try to address those issues.

* (2150)

Ms. Cerilli: Assuming then as well, the staff who are listed, perhaps other than the two sharing the position from Family Services, are working on this function full time and that function would be to, as the minister has said, analyze how services could be co-ordinated better, specifically, I understand, just for children with severe medical conditions or lifelong disability. I am wondering how those staff are undertaking that analysis of the co-ordination.

Mrs. Mitchelson: That issue was an issue that has been partially addressed already by the secretariat, and I think there was an announcement made whereby we were looking at medically fragile children and how we could best try to address their needs.

One of the concerns, one of the issues that I have heard many times from parents out in the community with medically fragile children is that they have gotten, can I say, the bureaucratic runaround where there are several different intake processes, and it depends on whether you are in the health system or the education system. Maybe it might just be in child care. You need child care services, and there are several different intake processes, and there was no co-ordinated effort to try to address the issues. It was a health problem, and yet the Department of Education was being asked to fund some of the support services.

Also, the Department of Family Services was involved through Children's Special Services, and there was no co-ordinated approach, and what we have been able to do by working through the secretariat and working within all departments is take \$650,000 from the Department of Health, move \$450,000 to the Department of Education to deal with the needs of the medically fragile children in the school system and take the other \$200,000 and redirect that to Children's Special Services and Family Services, so there will be one intake and referral process, and we should be looking at from birth right through to 18 for all children. There will be one central intake process, and the referral will be made through Children's Special Services.

So the dollars have been reallocated in order to streamline the system, make it cost-effective and manageable. The Department of Education now has the funding from Health to deliver the service, and Children's Special Services and Family Services has the ability to co-ordinate and do some of the staff orientation in our school system or in our child care system, wherever it might be appropriate.

Ms. Cerilli: I thank the minister for that answer. I am wondering how many young people this is anticipated in assisting. Bear with me for a moment.

I see from the child's health report that there are approximately 850 severely disabled children in Manitoba, 2,723 with moderate disabilities and 14,814 with mild disabilities, and from that, how many children does this new approach expect to service?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I do not have those statistics. I might just ask my honourable friend if she might provide for me a copy; in the Postl report, okay.

Mr. Chairperson, could I ask what page in the report that is on?

Ms. Cerilli: It is interesting if the minister is saying that she does not know how many children are going to be serviced, but she has already decided the amount of money to be allocated to the different departments.

I am reading page 105 of the children's health report.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I guess the figures that are on page 105 in the Postl report and the numbers that we have are compiled in a different way, so when my honourable friend gave me some numbers—I guess what I should be explaining is if you look on page 105, the 21 technologically dependent children are the very high-needs category.

In the instances where we are providing support for medically fragile, it is in the way of providing nursing services within the school system so teachers do not have to provide medical treatment or nursing services. The \$450,000 that has come from the Department of Health into the Department of Education will go to fund the nursing services that need to be provided for the technologically dependent. That 21 in that category and those in the next level, we had indicated would have been in the 300-plus number that needed some type of support and service from trained personnel.

Some of those could be paraprofessionals that are working in the school system, but what we wanted to do was provide the ability to train those paraprofessionals or professionals in the school system to do the tasks that were non-nursing tasks but were needed in order to maintain these children in our school system. Those were the areas that we concentrated on.

The other 3,000-plus or 6,000, I guess, that are indicated in the book in these numbers are being looked after through different levels of funding in the Department of Education presently, and there was not a pressing need to address that issue with reallocation of resources.

The money that came from Health was money that would allow nurses to provide the nursing services that are required and free teachers up in the system to do what they do best and that is teach our children.

Ms. Cerilli: I thank the minister for that answer.

The second initiative that was to be completed by the secretariat is an interdepartmental protocol for children and adolescents with severe to profound emotional behavioural disorders. I also would recognize that this is another report, or I should say another recommendation, that stems from the children's health

report that talks about the Level 5 children having a joint responsibility through Health and Family Services.

So I am wondering if that is what this is to be addressing. Can the minister tell us how far along we are in developing this protocol?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, the protocol was signed by all four departments back in March. There was a paper at that time that was released, and I will share a copy with my honourable friend, that talks about the protocol. All of the interested partners have received a copy of the protocol agreement and it will be implemented coming this school year in September, and how the protocol will work will be circulated to all of the interested partners over the summer.

* (2200)

Ms. Cerilli: Thank you, I appreciate receiving that.

It appears then that the initial two goals set out for the secretariat have been met. I am wondering if other than evaluating these two activities, what the future goals and objectives of the secretariat are?

Mrs. Mitchelson: There are several different initiatives that the secretariat is working on. Can I indicate that the responsibilities of the secretariat is to work under the direction of the Human Services Committee of Cabinet to co-ordinate many intersectoral activities and projects across departmental lines and to resolve some specific impasses between departments that presently exist.

There are two initiatives that have been completed or are still underway, and that is the interdepartmental protocol and the dealing with the medically fragile children in our school system. Those two are well on their way to being implemented and resolved.

There was an initiative within government that had been in the works for several years which was the Red River Community College child and youth care worker program. It involves a commitment from the Department of Education and Training, the Departments of Family Services, Justice and Health. I

think we are at a point where we finally have all departments working together and contributing so that the program can be up and operational by January of 1996.

What the secretariat has also been doing is trying to compile from all four departments the number of dollars being spent on serving children and children's needs. We will be looking at a budgetary process, possibly into the future, that will try new ways of delivering certain portions of the budgets in each of those departments in a more co-ordinated fashion to serve children. So we will be testing new ways of delivering, attempting to see whether departments are doing things that are very similar to each other and would it be more appropriate for one department to take the lead on that programming and have dollars transferred internally to see a more efficient program.

So they are working on that and that includes, of course, as I said earlier, reviewing programming that is ongoing within departments, seeing if there is an overlap or duplication of similar programs that are trying to serve the needs of the same children and co-ordinating that, getting one department to take the lead in every instance.

Other work that is in process, of course, is dealing with the Postl report and the recommendations that have come from that report, looking at what recommendations are feasible to input in the immediate future and which ones may take a little longer to implement, but that will be a major part of their work over the next period of time.

There have been some issues around Seven Oaks Centre, and we are trying to get a co-ordinated approach interdepartmentally to resolve some of the issues there, and the secretariat is taking the lead on that.

As individual issues come to the attention of government, the secretariat has been asked to co-ordinate, do some information gathering and see if we can find new solutions. In the instance of rural foster home placements, a number of the school divisions that are surrounding Winnipeg have expressed concern about the large number of foster home placements that

are occurring, and the family services agencies have expressed concerns about the refusal of school divisions to meet the needs of these placements. So the secretariat is reviewing the situation trying to gather as much information as they can to get a sense of how that issue may be addressed.

They are pulling together profiles of high needs children throughout the system that receives services from all four departments or any two of the four departments. So they are developing those profiles and gathering information to see whether there are more effective ways of providing intervention and support for those children.

One of the issues, of course, that is always raised is the privacy and the confidentiality issues between agencies and departments, and I think we want to try to address that issue. One of the issues that has come to my attention in the past is from agencies dealing with children. It might be a daycare or child care facility, for instance, that has a child in their care and there are family problems or issues and there might be another child from that same family in the school system.

Child cares and schools cannot share information with each other that might actually help to identify family problems, and there might also be a better way of trying to work with those families to address the issues. So we are looking at all of that to see whether there is not a better way of trying to co-ordinate the services for families.

Those are big issues, and I am not sure there is an easy answer to that because there is a lot of privacy, confidentiality and information sharing that cannot happen presently, and unless we can try to work together more co-operatively, we are not going to see the improvements in the family circumstances that we might be able to see if we could all work together around the issues.

One of the issues for me, if I might just mention, is the issue of adolescent parents, adolescent teen pregnancy, and I have had many discussions throughout the community around how we try to deal in a more proactive way with early intervention.

We all know the issues around pregnant moms not looking after themselves and having children with low birth weights, fetal alcohol syndrome and all of those things that contribute to problems and need for special intervention as a result. Sometimes it is the Child and Family Services agency that has the lead, sometimes the school division, if there is an early identification, it might be the obstetrician who is the first person to see that young woman, could be the public health nurse, although they do not seem to be as involved in the early intervention side of things as they maybe were in the past.

* (2210)

I guess we are trying to find a co-ordinated approach, not only with the service providers but with the community at large. How do we all try to come together and resolve the problems around trying to ensure at least that children are born healthy, and once they are born healthy, how do we provide the supports to ensure that they are fed, nurtured, loved and cared for in a manner that they will not need to use our Child and Family Services system or our justice system, and they will not have the emotional behavioural problems that might present themselves in school as a result of lack of parenting skills.

So there are some major issues that need to be addressed, and we are seeking some co-ordination and some proactive thinking from the secretariat around some of these issues and how we might be able to better address the needs of children before we get into the circumstance or situation where they have to be apprehended from their homes or disciplined or expelled from the school system or, you know, God forbid, end up in our justice system.

Ms. Cerilli: Well, that is a very ambitious and somewhat comprehensive set of goals and objectives for these essentially six staff who are working in the secretariat.

I want to pick up on just two things with the limited amount of time that we have here. I am pleased to see that this secretariat is directly then responsible for analysing the recommendation from, as the minister

calls it, the Postl report, recognizing Dr. Postl's work there.

One of the other things that the minister mentioned just lastly that I want to connect with are issues around teenage pregnancy and motherhood, and fatherhood, I guess we would also say. That is, one of the recommendations in the Postl report that is repeated over and over again is the recommendation to have health education in Manitoba's curriculum, and that is one of the things that the education blueprint document has been recommending to eliminate. Currently in Manitoba we are in a transition period where it is really questionable about what different school divisions are doing and what different schools are doing.

One of the concerns that I have heard and that I would share is that we are no longer having a requirement for all K-8 students to have health education and that there be a component of comprehensive health education as recommended in this report through high school. What we see right now is no requirement for health education. There is a curriculum change being looked at in the physical education curriculum, and the health education curriculum is going to be halved into parts and integrated into the other courses in the core curriculum. I have heard that presents a number of problems, first, in ensuring that there are qualified health educators or in-service teachers teaching those units, and it is also difficult to ensure that those units are taught if they are simply one part of a science curriculum or English curriculum or what have you.

So I am wondering if the minister shares this concern, and also the concern that in the physical education area, there is another concern that it would mean a loss in activity time. We do not want to have teachers and young people in the position of having to choose what is more important, children getting education on issues like drug and alcohol prevention, human sexuality, personal safety or to have physical activity time. I think they are both important. I am sure the minister would agree, equally important, and I do not want to see schools being put in the position to choose one or the other. We do not want to see a loss of physical education activity time in order to have some health units integrated into the physical education curriculum.

I am wondering if the minister is advocating then on behalf of children in Manitoba, the interests of children's health in Manitoba, to ensure that there is going to be all those 4,000 teachers that have been in-service in the family life curriculum, to make sure that they are going to be teaching those units and that it is going to be required, as well as a comprehensive mandatory health education curriculum.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I think what we have to be looking for, for all of our children, is the ability for them to have a healthy, quality lifestyle. My sense is that it is not only the school division or the school day. I do not think school and teachers are the only vehicle to help and to facilitate that kind of healthy public policy that we are all looking to see. I mean, we all know if we live quality, healthy lifestyles, and we are loved and cared for and nurtured, that in fact we are going to be better people.

You know, we have not had the opportunity to talk about child poverty and some of the issues surrounding child poverty. I think I had the opportunity in my Estimates on Family Services to discuss the issue of child poverty to some degree, but I have come to believe that when we look at measuring the numbers for child poverty, there are two different types of poverty. There is financial poverty and there is behavioural poverty, different types of poverty based on the kinds of lifestyle options that are presented to young children.

Not necessarily does every young person that lives on a low income live in poverty when we look at the definition of poverty as opportunity. I think that many children that grow up in poor households, and I made the comment that probably if the statistics had been gathered when I was growing up, and they may have been, I probably would have come from a household that lived below the poverty line. I do not ever consider myself a child that lived in poverty because I had a family that cared, I was loved and I was nurtured and I was encouraged to do my best. The quality time that was spent with me as a child was what enabled me to become a professional and feel good about myself and my circumstances, have some degree anyway of self-confidence in the ability to make something of my life.

I think when we are talking about children, and ensuring that they live quality, healthy lifestyles, there is more than a role for just the school division or the individual school or the individual teacher to play in ensuring that our children lead healthy lifestyles.

* (2220)

So, yes, I believe in physical education and that children should have that opportunity for physical activity, but there is no question in my mind that a lot of the issues around loving and caring and nurturing and providing opportunity for children can be developed and worked into a lot of the curriculum that is taught in our school system, and I think that is the challenge for us as we move ahead into the future.

I do not think that we can just sit and look at what has happened in the past and think that is good enough. The world is changing and if we have the opportunity and the ability to try to deliver healthy positive lifestyles for our children, whether it be through the science curriculum or the phys ed curriculum or the math curriculum, I think that we have to look at those innovative and creative ways.

Heaven knows, there are not enough hours in the school day to provide all of the things that have been provided in the way they have been provided in the past. I think the challenge for all of us into the future is going to be to have to look at new and innovative ways. I think that we have to get beyond the old-think and look at the new direction and skills and the qualities that our children are going to have to have to live in this very competitive, very challenging and very changing world.

Ms. Cerilli: I do not think I could ever be accused of being one going back to old-think. I think that the government though is going back to old-think in eliminating health education as a required course. We had one of the best programs in Manitoba. It was recently evaluated in 1991. I have a report here.

When I asked that specific question, I was hoping that the minister would give me some assurance that the recommendation from the Postl report to keep mandatory health education as a course in the core

curriculum would be accepted. This is one opportunity the minister could have of ensuring her concern about teenage pregnancy is addressed, and that is recommended in the report, too, that that is one way—not the only way, there are many other agencies that can do that kind of work as well—but that is one way to ensure that all students in Manitoba are going to receive that kind of preventative health care in an area that is so crucial.

I want to ask the minister another specific question. I think this will be it, because I understand that my Estimates in another department are beginning. Will the secretariat look at an issue such as also related to her concern about health care for adolescent moms and their babies? Will it also look at the policy that this government has implemented to move to a 24-hour release for new moms from the hospital? This has had a huge impact, I understand, on the success rate for breast feeding. It has had an impact then on children's health, a dramatic impact. Given the minister's background, I know she would be aware of those concerns. So will the secretariat be looking at making recommendations for a policy which obviously is aimed at cost saving and freeing up time in the hospital beds but could have serious implications on maternal and child health?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I want to indicate that the issue that has been raised is an issue that I am not so sure we have moved in the wrong direction with early discharge from hospitals, but I think what we have to do is examine the role of the public health nurse and what role they play in the community.

I am very receptive to trying to understand and get a sense of where we are at and where we need to go. I think that there is a major role for nurses to play in community health and well-being, so I am very interested in trying to find a way of ensuring that the follow-up support in the community is there for women and for children. I am not so sure as we look to all of the co-ordination of services that we will not find that the public health nurse becomes a very important player in the development of Healthy Public Policy.

I am very open and receptive and I am certainly not turf protective of what activities are ongoing within the

Department of Family Services. If it makes sense for interventions to take place in a different way, I think we have to be open and receptive to trying to do what is in the best interests of the people of Manitoba and break down the barriers so that we do have the opportunity to utilize the skills and the resources that are there to the best of our ability. So I am very open and very receptive to examining that whole issue and trying to find the right combination of supports.

Ms. Cerilli: Mr. Chairperson, I think the idea that women being released from the hospital, given that they are healthy, into their home environment to initiate breast feeding and care of their new baby could be positive, as well, as long as there is going to be that community and home support.

The problem I think is why we are seeing the success rates for breast feeding decrease then is because those supports are not there currently, that the budget cutbacks have also affected public health nurses and resources in the community. What we are seeing is women released with their new babies from the hospital and left on their own and then having to make costly trips, and I would say very stressful trips, back to the doctor in the hospital.

So I think it seems then that the minister is open to that kind of recommendation. I am hoping then the secretariat would also look at those kind of decisions that this government is making that are affecting children and pre- and post-natal health.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Chairperson, I think that probably all of us could come up with some creative ideas around how we can try to solve the problems that exist.

If we had all of the answers or if we were doing everything perfectly, we would not be in a circumstance or situation where we needed the many resources that we put in place today for our health, our education and our social services.

We are always open to suggestion and idea and positive constructive recommendations on how we can do things better and that is what we are trying to accomplish through the Children and Youth Secretariat.

Mr. Chairperson: 1.(a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$378,800—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$144,000—pass; (c) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$378,800)—(pass).

Resolution 34.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$144,000 for Children and Youth Secretariat for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1996.

This concludes the Children and Youth Secretariat.

I thank the minister and her staff.

OTHER APPROPRIATIONS

Aboriginal Justice Initiatives

Mr. Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): We will now move on to the A.JI.

The honourable minister, would you have an opening statement?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Chair, no, I am prepared to get right to the questioning.

Mr. Chairperson: Does the honourable critic for the opposition have an opening statement?

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupertsland): I will keep it very short, Mr. Chairperson. I believe that it is pretty much straightforward.

I am looking forward to hearing about some of the initiatives of this government relating to the aboriginal justice topics, and I do not want to prolong our discussion here this evening with a long opening statement.

I just want to put on the record that, of course, we are all aware that the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry came to be in 1988 and was primarily established to examine the death of Helen Betty Osborne in The Pas, and, of course, J.J. Harper, and as well, to examine the overall justice system as it relates to aboriginal people in the province of Manitoba.

* (2230)

After a very exhaustive review of the situation throughout this province, of course, the commissioners came up with a hearty list of recommendations, 293 to be exact. About 101 of those relate directly with the Province of Manitoba. We have asked on numerous occasions during Question Period and other opportunities we have had to find out where the government is at with respect to implementing some of the major recommendations of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry.

The report, as you know, Mr. Chairperson, was tabled in 1991, and we are fast approaching the anniversary date, the fourth anniversary in August of 1995 of the tabling of the report by Judge Murray Sinclair and also the former associate Chief Justice of the Courts of Manitoba, the family division, Justice Hamilton.

I had the opportunity of talking with Justice Hamilton recently and he talked to me about the disappointment he felt in that this government had not moved on some of the major aspects of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry.

(Mr. Mike Radcliffe, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

I believe that my questions tonight will be straightforward, Mr. Chairperson, with respect to the initiatives that have been undertaken by this government, by this minister and the minister before her. As I say, I do have specific questions. I believe that the AJI, and I indicated in this House before, that it was an exhaustive review of the situation faced by aboriginal people, and also the report dwelled into the conditions that aboriginal people endure on a day-to-day basis throughout this province, some of the Third World conditions that they have to live in. As you know, the AJI was highly praised by many people, aboriginal people throughout this country but also the aboriginal organizations in this province.

Also, at that time, I just want to quote what Mr. Axworthy said, who at that time was an opposition member in the House of Commons, about the

Aboriginal Justice Inquiry. He told reporters that the federal government must be prepared to make substantial changes to the Indian Act, the Criminal Code and even the Constitution if that is what it takes to implement the report.

I believe the Province of Manitoba has that opportunity yet, Mr. Chairperson, to implement and call all the players together, the First Nations community, the Metis community and other aboriginal organizations and also the federal government. I believe the province has that opportunity to facilitate a meeting to begin the process of implementing the major recommendations of the AJI.

As you know, the aboriginal organizations in the province of Manitoba, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, the Manitoba Metis Federation, Indigenous Women's Collective and the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg jointly asked the Province of Manitoba to undergo a process of being able to work on the report. Unfortunately, we have not seen much action on the AJI, and I look forward to some of the minister's comments with respect to what has happened.

Also, I am taking into consideration here that tomorrow there is going to be a joint meeting, a government meeting, if you will, between the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs executive and the cabinet, including the Premier (Mr. Filmon), and I eagerly anticipate the outcome of that meeting. Perhaps it will lay the foundation for a much better way of dealing with outstanding issues, one of them being the AJI, in this province.

Mr. Chairperson, very briefly, those are some of the opening remarks I would like to make.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe): Does Madam Minister of Justice have any staff whom she wishes to introduce at this time?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, Mr. Chair, if you could call in the staff, I would appreciate it.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe): It would be appropriate for the staff for the Minister of Justice to enter the Chamber at this time.

Madam Minister of Justice, if you could introduce your staff to the committee once they are settled.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I would like to introduce Mr. Bruce MacFarlane, who is the Deputy Minister of the Department of Justice; Mr. Ben Thiessen, who is the Acting Assistant Deputy Minister of Corrections; Mr. Mike Watson, who is the Director of Regional Prosecutions; and Mr. Greg Yost, who is the Executive Director of Policy.

Mr. Chair, I should just clarify at this point. I am here as Minister of Justice, but, also, this evening my colleague the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Praznik) is here, as well. In our efforts to answer the questions in the most comprehensive way, I am wondering about the protocol, if either my colleague the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs or myself may answer the questions or if we both may in an effort to provide the most full answer to the member.

Mr. Robinson: That would be fine.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe): Yes, you are in accord with that suggestion. The Chair certainly recognizes the honourable Minister of Northern Affairs and welcomes him to the committee.

Madam Minister of Justice, having no preliminary statement and no Minister's Salary on this item, the first item for discussion is 27.1 Aboriginal Justice Initiatives \$1,000,000.

The honourable member for Rupertsland, you have a question.

Mr. Robinson: Yes, I do not have a working document to work with here.

* (2240)

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe): Oh, excuse me. Certainly, the Clerk will provide you with one forthwith.

The Clerk having now provided the honourable member for Rupertsland with a working copy of the document, the first item that was under discussion—

perhaps we could just wait while the Clerk is withdrawing from the Chamber to obtain another copy of the document for the Minister of Northern Affairs.

The Clerk having now provided the Minister of Northern Affairs with a copy of the relevant documentation and the member for Rupertsland being in possession of the document, we will now proceed with consideration of the first item.

The first item under discussion 27.1 1. Aboriginal Justice Initiatives \$1,000,000. Does the honourable member for Rupertsland have a question on this issue?

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Chairperson, I guess immediately my response is to get a copy of what the allocations are going to be on the list of the funded initiatives, whether they be test projects throughout, and I certainly look forward to the Minister of Justice and also the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Praznik) providing me with a copy of those test projects that are being financed under this particular item.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, there have been a large number of initiatives which have taken place following the Aboriginal Justice report. There have been, as I said, a number of initiatives which have been funded through the Justice budget. I think it is important to note that the list of projects, which I am happy to speak to the member about this evening which are funded by the AJI fund, are not the only initiatives which have been put forward following recommendations from the AJI.

In following recommendations from the AJI, I can tell the member that out of the Justice budget, we have initiatives relating from policing through Prosecutions, through Courts, through Corrections, that follow the whole continuum of the Justice system. Some of the initiatives which have been funded from the AJI fund, is the member looking for some of those initiatives in terms of being able to tell him what the projects are?

Mr. Robinson: I believe it is important for Manitobans and aboriginal people to know where money is being spent on these initiatives. We believe that aboriginal people have made it a point to say that indeed they have that ability to control certain aspects

of their lives. I am aware of a few, the Hollow Water holistic healing project, for example, and also the St. Theresa Point court system.

I would like the minister to expand on some of these initiatives that are being funded by this government throughout the province, and, also, I would like to further add my comments to what she has to say about the programs that are currently funded under the Aboriginal Justice Initiatives.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am happy to speak about the projects that we have undertaken. From the Justice budget in the Corrections area, and I will begin with the Corrections area, we have funded the Dakota Ojibway probation services. We have funded the Ma Mawi Centre. We have funded community participation agreements with aboriginal band councils. That is in the area of probations, specific community participation agreements to deal with probation issues.

We have funded the deployment of Community Corrections positions to aboriginal communities. That is in the area of staff time. We have had aboriginal staff consultations.

We fund aboriginal programming in our youth institutions, and that is by making sure there are elders available and additional programming for aboriginal youth. We have projected in this coming year programming for aboriginal offenders. That is new funding through the Department of Justice that was not there previously.

We have provided funding for native spirituality. That is at Agassiz Youth Centre and also the Manitoba Youth Centre. That, by the way, has been constant. Most of these have been constant. We are projecting into this budget. That would make it over four years.

The member has spoken about the AJI reaching its fourth year anniversary, and these projects that I am telling him about are projects which are ongoing, but the new one, as I said, is the aboriginal offender programming.

We have funded, and are funding in this year, aboriginal cultural awareness training. We are also

funding community resource centres in aboriginal communities, and this year, for the first time, funding for community justice committees in aboriginal communities. That is a new initiative that is coming up in this year, again, funded through the Department of Justice.

We have honorary probation officers in aboriginal communities. That has been a four-year commitment.

We have further initiatives within Corrections, but I think that is a start. Perhaps I can add to that a little bit, but what I was looking at really was from budget allocations.

Perhaps I can speak more fully around programming of native elders, local elders council, native liaison workers, aboriginal-specific substance abuse programs, aboriginal cultural awareness training, the process of aboriginal recruitment, the Dakota Ojibway probation services and Aboriginal Advisory Committees within our institutions, aboriginal staff consultations, some of the aboriginal programming in Community Corrections. Native spirituality, I believe I mentioned. So we have quite a large number of program initiatives and dollars allocated in the area of Corrections.

* (2250)

We are certainly looking at our staffing in the area of Corrections, and in Community Corrections, aboriginal staff is in the range of 15 percent, and Community and Youth Corrections, 13 percent.

I will move on then to the Prosecutions area. Within Prosecutions, we see the First Nations policing policy and we have had funds projected in ever-increasing dollars over the past four years to enter into the First Nations community policing agreement. As the member knows, we are actively working with, I believe it is 63 communities around the First Nations policing policy, and we have completed the DOPS agreement under the First Nations policing policy.

In addition, the member has mentioned the Hollow Water Community Holistic Healing Circle which we participate in and fund and intend to continue funding this year. By the way, that is from the AJI fund. That

is the first that I have mentioned specifically from the AJI fund. Also, from the AJI fund is some funding for the negotiation of First Nations community policing services, the travel required. That is the member whom we have seconded from the RCMP, the travel fund for him to travel to all of the 63 communities to start the process of consultation.

From the AJI fund, we also have identified funds for consultation. Those consultations are what the communities themselves will do, as required under the First Nations policing policy, so that they can determine the type of policing service that they want as a community to suit their needs.

In addition, under Public Prosecutions, we have provided a grant to the Winnipeg Police Services for an aboriginal training program. That also came from the AJI.

In Pukatawagan, Pukatawagan has developed a sentencing circle process that operates as part of their diversion process allowing for aboriginal offenders to be sentenced within the community. Waywayseecappo has also developed a sentencing circle process that involves community elders in the sentencing recommendation process.

In the division of Justice called Protection of Rights, we have money identified for the northern paralegal project under Legal Aid. In this, three paralegals who are fluent in Cree and English are based out of Thompson and The Pas. These paralegals fly into communities in advance of the court party to help improve the quality of service being provided by duty counsel by interviewing clients, filling out Legal Aid applications, interviewing witnesses, preparing the criminal docket matters for lawyers. The paralegals also provide services that are not available in northern communities such as drop-in clinics, community legal education services and addressing public interest legal issues.

Also identified is, again, funding through the Department of Justice, the Human Rights Commission. The Human Rights Commission began a Focus [phonetic] project on issues affecting the equality of persons of aboriginal ancestry in December 1993.

The project which will last about two years involves co-ordinating a variety of projects including assisting the Community Legal Education Association to hold a human rights conference in December 1993 on the theme, Aboriginal Peoples, The Untapped Workforce, [phonetic] having a series of aboriginal speakers present their views to the commission, purchasing a number of videos on aboriginal history and issues to be part of the commission's free library, working with The Pas Friendship Centre on a video on discrimination to be presented in several native languages, and addressing various aboriginal groups and participating in cultural awareness workshops.

In Courts division, we have an Aboriginal Court Worker Program, and this again is funded through Justice. The aboriginal court worker program is a service provided for native people who become involved in the criminal justice system and who need assistance or guidance. The program workers act as liaisons with police, counsel or probation services. They advise the accused of alternative courses of action and legal aid, contacting counsel, bail applications and contacting relatives or social agencies as well as maintaining contact with reserves or First Nations organizations.

In addition, in Courts, as I mentioned from the AJI funding and the member has noted, out of the AJI fund, the St. Theresa Point youth court model.

Also, in Courts, we have aboriginal magistrates recruiting. The department has nine aboriginal magistrates who have jurisdiction over such matters as swearing documents, assessing fines according to legislation and releasing or remanding into custody persons who are accused of having committed offences. The department is currently recruiting additional magistrates.

As I mentioned, we are always looking at the recruitment of aboriginal staff and both regional and Winnipeg courts are involved in this. Then the aboriginal court initiatives, the staff in Courts participate, along with members of the criminal justice system, in a number of aboriginal court initiatives. The use of elders, sentencing circles, healing circles and the greater use of community involvement are becoming

more commonplace, and Courts continue to explore additional options with First Nations people in order to provide more culturally appropriate responses for young offenders and adult court.

I just have a couple of others that are from the Corrections area which I think may be important to make sure they are on the record. There is funding for culturally appropriate programming for aboriginal offenders across Manitoba who are convicted of spousal abuse. I think that is an important area.

Secondly, funding for the development and the implementation of a cultural awareness training program for aboriginal offenders on probation in the Brandon area, and, three, funding for the acquisition of video equipment to assist the reintegration of young offenders at the Agassiz Youth Centre who are from the remote communities in northern Manitoba; and, fourthly, funding for a conference of Corrections and Child and Family Services workers representing 10 communities in the Southeast Tribal Council and funding for the province's share of a special education program in Winnipeg designed to reduce the youth custody population. This project was entitled the youth development program. It was jointly run by the Community and Youth Corrections branch and the Winnipeg School Division No. 1. The program was comprised of a comprehensive educational component, an individual and group therapy component and broadly based support services network.

There is one project in Shamattawa which I think is also worth bringing to the attention of the committee just early on in our discussions. In 1985, Corrections identified that a very large number of Shamattawa youth were being sentenced to custody. At the initiative of this branch, the federal Departments of Indian Affairs, Health and Welfare, Justice and the Solicitor General, as well as a number of aboriginal agencies, were called together to develop a more co-ordinated approach to providing services in this community. Enhanced recreation funding, a fly-in camp and other program initiatives resulted.

In 1989 the federal government agreed to contribute a sum of money, slightly over \$200,000, to a justice worker project in Shamattawa in conjunction with the

contribution of staff support training and supervision. By reassigning internal resources, Corrections supported the project to its completion in 1992. Now I know that the completion date of the project is a couple of years ago, but I believe the effects are still being noted. When this project began on July 1, 1989, 18 Shamattawa youth were in youth correctional facilities. On May 30, 1992, this had decreased to five, and while other factors may have contributed, I understand that in 1995 there are perhaps one or two youths in custody.

So those are some of the initiatives which run across the divisions in the Department of Justice, funding either through the Justice budget or through the AJI.

* (2300)

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Chairperson, I do want to thank the minister for outlining some of the initiatives. It gives us good ideas to where we would like to direct our questions and what areas we would like to touch upon. I thank her for the comments that she has made and some of these things we were not aware of, being where we are. It is good to know that these positive things are happening throughout Manitoba.

I believe that it has always been my practice as a member in this House to commend the ministers of the various departments on any positive initiatives that occur, particularly when it relates to aboriginal people, and I will do that again tonight.

Many times we are not aware about some of these initiatives that the minister has just outlined, and I would like to begin perhaps with the matter that the minister alluded to earlier, and that is that the justice system as was recommended in the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry has to be more sensitive to the needs of aboriginal people. The commissioners did recommend extensive changes to the justice system in this province and these things included aboriginal employment at all levels in the justice system. I know the minister talked about some cross-cultural initiatives that have been happening with staff.

I am wondering if the staff of the provincial jails, let us take for example, and other areas of the department

have increased with aboriginal people, being that aboriginal people appear to be the largest consumers of the justice system.

That is a very difficult thing for me to say, being a member of a First Nation, but we do employ a lot of people, jail guards, probation workers and social workers throughout this province. Being that we are a very small percentage of the overall population of this province, nevertheless we overpopulate the jails and the justice system.

I am wondering if the minister will just comment on any initiatives to bring the number of employed people at the provincial jails and any part of the justice system, whether that has improved or not in the last four years.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, we have been aware of the need to not only do awareness among all staff members of the needs of aboriginal people within our institutions but also to have staff who are fully qualified who are aboriginal people and can be sensitive to the issues that these people have within our institutions.

I have some figures for the member. First of all, in the area of probation officers, there are 23 of 100 probation officers who are aboriginal people. So that number is a significant increase, I am told, since the A.J.I. We have 23 Juvenile Counsellors I, one Juvenile Counsellor II, one Juvenile Counsellor IV, two teachers, one trades instructor, four clerical people and five spiritual leaders or elders within our provincial institutions.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Chairperson, the A.J.I, when they tabled their report, concluded that the higher rates of crime among aboriginal people could be attributed to the despair and the dependency and the anger and the frustration and the sense of injustice that seems to exist in aboriginal communities, all which they concluded stem from the cultural and community breakdowns that have occurred over the past century.

I just want to know—I know that the minister in her remarks talked about the positive things that have been happening—whether or not she can give this committee an idea as to whether or not there has been improved relations with respect to the justice system and its

relationship with aboriginal people throughout Manitoba, First Nations communities and other aboriginal communities.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, in my earlier remarks I spoke about our efforts to make the system more sensitive and some of the projects we are dealing with, and we spoke about the Hollow Water, Pukatawagan, Waywayseecappo projects within those communities. We are also working with MKO; the members knows that that is the umbrella group for about 25 reserves. We are working with MKO to establish local justice communities.

We are also working with a number of the southern communities to look at what their interests are and how they would like to develop. We have also been trying to look at initiatives which have been brought forward by the communities and look at how we can develop those within the justice system. Then the community participation agreements I think also really deserve some discussion because they provide community support services such as crime prevention, court report writing, probation supervision for youth and adults.

I have in front of me 21 communities who have signed community participation agreements, and I am not sure if the member would like those on the record:

Berens River First Nation, Bloodvein First Nation, Chemawawin First Nation, Cross Lake First Nation, Fisher River First Nation, God's River First Nation, Grand Rapids First Nation, Lake Manitoba First Nation, Lake St. Martin Band, Little Grand Rapids Band, Little Saskatchewan First Nation, Mathias Colomb First Nation, Moose Lake Cree First Nation, Nelson House First Nation, Oxford House First Nation, Poplar River First Nation, Sagkeeng First Nation, Sandy Bay First Nation, Sioux Valley First Nation, South Indian Lake community council, Waywayseecappo Band.

That is the list of the community participation agreements at the moment.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Chairperson, I wonder if the minister would elaborate on what the community participation programs are meant to do.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, it is to allow the band to provide correctional services that are culturally appropriate to that particular community. So it is not a generalized approach that is then given to each community, but it is to allow each community itself to develop the correctional services that are most appropriate to them.

* (2310)

(Mr. Chairperson in the Chair)

The areas of support services are the ones that I have mentioned. They can look at crime prevention programs that are most appropriate to their particular band, court report writing, probation supervision for youth of their band and also for adults within their band.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Chairperson, I know that we are short of time on this particular item, but there are a multitude of issues that are related to this. I do not want to be the one to be holding up this committee. I would like to move along to other areas.

One of the other areas that was identified by the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry was a provincial court study that was compiled by the Justice department. It reported that aboriginal persons are 1.34 times more likely to be held in pretrial detention, and for aboriginal women ages 18 to 34 the difference was about 2.4 times.

For adult males between the ages of 18 and 34, aboriginal persons spent 1.5 times longer in pretrial detention, and aboriginal detainees have a 21 percent chance of being granted bail, while nonaboriginal detainees had a 56 percent chance. Since that report was tabled, Mr. Chairperson, I would like to find out if these numbers have improved.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I would like to start by saying where the court has refused bail. Where the court has refused bail, it is based on the facts of that case. It is based on the seriousness of the criminal activity that the accused is being brought forward on behalf of, so I do not think we can ever lose sight of that. However, for some other issues, the community

participation agreements that I have been speaking about, they can provide the bail supervision. So that is a change within the last three to four years, and that is an ability for the communities, where these agreements have been concluded, to allow the person to remain within their own community.

Also, I have spoken about, I believe, the appointment of community magistrates bringing the justice system closer to the community, and with the appointment of community magistrates, it can allow for the bail hearing to take place within the community.

So those two steps are now available and more frequently used. We do not have an update on the figures from that study. However, I can tell the member about the action which has taken place.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Chairperson, another area that is of concern to aboriginal leadership and aboriginal people generally is the circuit court system that we have, and I know that there has been some communication, particularly with God's River and Gods Narrows, in the last little while. The judges recommended—when I refer to the judges, I am referring to the commissioners of the AJI—they recommended that judges must be prepared to go into an aboriginal community and stay until the dockets are completed, and Legal Aid must implement reform so that no further delays occur pending appointment of counsel so that the accused persons can meet with their lawyers at least a day before the court hearing.

Now, we have had a lot of discussion on this matter. I know that corrections are being made in God's River and Gods Narrows, but because of the forest fire situation recently, the most recent court sitting was cancelled until late September. However, the community leadership from those two communities still tell me that there are remands of cases that sometimes are up to a year long. I am just wondering what the comment of the minister may be with respect to correcting that situation in some of these communities that do have these remands that sometimes go beyond a year.

Mrs. Vodrey: I have to say that I do not have information that says there are not court dates available

before the year. So that date is a date that is longer than the current information which I have, which is based on recent visits to the community by officials. So I just feel it is important to get on the record that there seems to be some difference of opinion in terms of the length of time.

However, I think the overriding concern is that there has been some delay in the northern courts, and that has been acknowledged, and the delay in the northern courts has come for a number of reasons. The member mentions forest fires now. It has generally been as a result of weather and being unable to get into some of the remote communities. So we have had a senior planning group which is made up of representatives from Courts, from Prosecutions, from Legal Aid, who have gone up into the North.

Most recently, I am told, a week and a half to two weeks ago there was a meeting of about 28 officials who are looking at a process to try and deal with some delay which has occurred in the northern courts, and I can tell you that the approach that I am going to speak about is one which has judicial support as well.

For lack of a better term, the approach is just being called the blitz approach, and it is an approach to try and deal with the fact that there is in fact some delay, and we want to try and clear it up. This approach will involve the court party going up and making more frequent visits until they have reached a point in which they feel that we have managed to overcome the delay.

I think that the important part of the blitz approach is that it has really been a co-operative approach. There has been a recognition from all parts, and I say that there is judicial support, as well, from all parts of the justice system, that we really want to try and deal with the delay, and the length of that delay seems to vary community to community, so there is now an active approach. I believe that the blitz approach is in place. I do not have the date of the first visit under that particular term but I understand that it is to be shortly.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Chairperson, I guess the point is that the recommendation that was put forth by the AJI, and not only that it is still ongoing today, is that chiefs and councils and community leaders in northern

communities would like to see a court party go into a particular community and complete the docket on that particular visit as opposed to remanding certain cases for periods of what we have experienced here at three to four months. I am just wondering if there have been corrections made to that as well.

* (2320)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am not sure if the member knows but the length of stay of the court party, whether the court party flies in at all, in fact, based on weather conditions or other reasons is judicially decided, and so it is a matter of the judiciary determining whether they will attend and for how long they are willing to stay. It is not something that this minister can specifically order to have happen.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Chairperson, yes, I am aware of how the circuit court system works. In some areas of the province there appears to be no problem. On the other hand, in some other areas we have had complaints from communities that there have been these delays where we have a court party that comes in in the morning and they are out by four or five in the evening. We had one example where a judge could not fly at night time and wanted to leave the community by a certain hour, and to the chief and council of that particular community they did not feel that was fair considering the size of the docket on that particular day.

I would like to ask the minister, one of the other recommendations with respect to delays is the AJI recommended that it should not take more than 180 days from the date an individual is charged until the trial begins. The judiciary should establish and enforce time limits and reflect this goal. I would just like to get the minister's response to that proposition that is now four years old.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, we would view that as a reasonable time limit, certainly when we make an effort to be sure that there is court times available. That is why we have the blitz approach.

As I said, we have recognized that there has become, for whatever number of reasons, some delay in some of

the northern circuit courts that we would like to reduce, so we are certainly looking at doing that. However, as I am sure the member knows, it may be that time is available, and Prosecutions may wish to proceed, defence counsel may not. Defence counsel may choose not to pick a day that is within that time frame, and we have found that with courts across Manitoba.

There may be dates available, and those dates simply are not the dates chosen. So I think we need to distinguish between whether or not there are dates available and whether or not those dates are in fact used by counsel.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Chairperson, it is widely known, particularly by the aboriginal leadership, and also it was reaffirmed by the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry—and I am getting into the area here of juries—that there has been systemic discrimination against aboriginal people. Studies conducted by the AJI confirm that aboriginal people are underrepresented on juries in northern Manitoba and are almost completely absent from juries in the city of Winnipeg.

Aboriginal people are not properly represented even on juries trying an aboriginal person accused of committing an offence against another aboriginal person in an aboriginal community. I am just wondering what the minister's department is considering to correct that particular area of substantial concern to many First Nations and aboriginal communities in Manitoba.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I will do my best to answer the question with the information that I have, and if there is anything further, I am happy to get back to the member.

The point of the jury trial is that an individual is entitled to an impartial jury. People drawn or selected from jury duty—I understand there is a number of ways in which individuals can enter into the pool of people who may in fact be selected, and I would remind the member as well that potential jurors are drawn from the community where the case is tried. The selection is governed by the process of the Criminal Code. There is a specific process, and it is regulated by the trial judge. If, for some reason, individuals feel that this has

not been fair or that the trial has not been fair, then it can be raised at appeal.

Mr. Robinson: I am quite certain that the whole matter of juries and how aboriginal people can become more involved in that whole area will come up again in the time to come, and the minister need not reply to my question but if she would get back to me by letter on this particular issue. I guess I am aware of the time, and being that it is quite late, I know there are other things that are in store for tomorrow's order of business in this House, but I wonder if the minister would get back to me on the whole matter of juries and how aboriginal people could have a greater role in the whole jury system.

I was interested to hear, in the minister's remarks, about the sentencing circles. I am aware of their role, but there is one that I was not aware of, and that is in the area of spousal abuse. That is a predominant reality of everyday life in aboriginal communities, unfortunately, in many communities throughout Manitoba.

I am wondering, with her comments, what activities are these programs geared towards? Is it geared towards restitution for the person that has committed the crime, and is there a holistic healing method in dealing with some of these matters?

* (2330)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, first of all, I am told, in a general way all of our programs are being adapted to be culturally sensitive. In areas of treatment of offenders in domestic abuse, we have both a short-term program and a long-term program and both of those types of programs are being adapted to be culturally sensitive. For example in The Pas area, I am told, our probation officers will go into the community, they will have one or two days of cultural awareness and then they will take the program which is in the process of being generally adapted and look at how it can be adapted and work within that community.

I am also told that Waywayseecappo has been part of a two-year pilot project, and that particular pilot project has looked at a more holistic process of dealing with

spousal abuse, dealing with both the education about spousal abuse and also ways to deal with the offenders.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Chairperson, as the minister is aware, in Manitoba we have primarily four nations of First Nations people. We have the Dene, we have the Ojibway, we have the Cree, we have the Dakota. In the traditional forms of government of these four nations that I have outlined, they have still within their reach the traditional understandings of governing themselves, and it is primarily a patrilineal society in this province.

In British Columbia, on the other hand, and also in other areas of Canada, among the Six Nations people, it is a matrilineal society where the woman plays a much more prominent role in the systems of government governing that particular nation.

I appreciate the minister's remarks on cultural sensitivity with respect to the initiatives that she talked about in Waywayseecappo. My question on this particular issue, because this issue of spousal abuse or domestic violence, whichever way we may want to term it, is becoming a more serious problem daily in spite of this government's and other governments' zero tolerance for matters like that.

As it pertains to aboriginal communities, I am wondering if this government and also this department particularly could work with community leadership in having, as they are doing in the Yukon, other people in the community, elders, mothers-in-law, fathers-in-law, on the father's side, the father or the mother, all be part of these healing circles or the sentencing circles, as we call them.

To what degree are we examining the traditional systems, the government, in the modern-day scheme of things, in the way we are initiating these projects with First Nations communities? I am wondering to what degree we are using the traditional beliefs of the four nations particular to Manitoba.

(Mr. Mike Radcliffe, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am told that when a course is given within a community, an elder participates in

the giving of that course and gives certainly a part of the course. Also, the Aboriginal Advisory Committee which we have set up advises on the content of the course, and I am told that as a result of that committee, there is a sensitivity to the four nation groups.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Chairperson, I wonder if the minister would elaborate on what the Aboriginal Advisory Committee is and whom do they advise.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, there are two types of committees that I think need to be defined. The Aboriginal Advisory Committee that we have been speaking about is a staff group and that staff group advises on the content of programs such as the domestic violence program. Then there is an advisory committee within each of our institutions and that committee is made up of staff, community and elders, and what they do is they operate within each institution and provide advice within each of the institutions. There are elders at each one of our provincial institutions.

Mr. Robinson: On that very subject, Mr. Chairperson, I am wondering if the aboriginal languages or the aboriginal language component is an important consideration in the work of these committees.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, first of all, in the area of recruitment, in looking at the recruitment one of the qualifications that is being considered is the ability to communicate in one of the native languages. We have an aboriginal staffperson on the staff recruitment committee to ensure that in fact there is a communication ability for the new person who has been recruited. Secondly, I am told that of the courses or programs which are delivered within the communities, a portion of the program is delivered in the language of that community.

* (2340)

Mr. Robinson: Through my other involvement prior to being elected in this House, I was involved in the struggle of off-reserve First Nations people not only in Winnipeg but in other areas of this province and in this country. We have come to realize that over half of the treaty and Status Indians across this country now reside

in off-reserve environments like Winnipeg. The minister has talked about some of the initiatives that are happening in First Nations and native communities throughout this province.

I am wondering what plans are there. I know she talked about the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre and also some other off-reserve-oriented programs, but I am wondering, these things that we have been talking about on sentencing circles, whether the minister would feel that would also apply in off-reserve environments like Winnipeg, which has been considered the largest Indian reserve in Canada.

(Mr. Chairperson in the Chair)

Mrs. Vodrey: I can tell the member that we have been working with the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg, who have been interested in developing a proposal for aboriginal justice services. I have to say that this is just in the proposal stage now and obviously would be required to be looked at in the light of all the services which are being offered but that I think it is important to note that there has been some discussion with a formal group.

Also I am told that we have had a three-year project on domestic violence in Winnipeg, which has been seen to try and look at multicultural issues and aboriginal issues. Response to aboriginal communities has been also a part of that and has been seen as one specific area to be looked at.

Mr. Robinson: I do look forward to further conversations with the minister, particularly on the diversion program for youth at the Aboriginal Centre in Winnipeg. I understand that project deserves a lot of support. I certainly want to make a pitch for it here tonight, and I do encourage the province to be involved in the initiative that the minister has just talked about. I know that it is in the preliminary stages at this time and at the discussion stage, but I do recommend highly for this government and this minister and her officials to seriously consider that, considering the high number of aboriginal youth that wind up in the justice system.

I would like to move on to the area of First Nations policing policy, Mr. Chairperson, and I know that the

province of Manitoba entered into an agreement with the federal government and the Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council.

I would like to ask the minister at what level or to what degree—and I know she mentioned it earlier in her remarks that there has been discussion with the 61 First Nations across this province on initiating and developing First Nations policing policy in this province. I am just wondering to what degree and who has been talked to by this government. Are there any negotiations that look positive for implementing the policing programs in tribal council areas or individual First Nations communities?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I see that all of the communities, to my knowledge, have been consulted with and that is by our representative on loan from the RCMP, and that is Paul Currie who has been the person who had been doing the direct work with each of the communities. Now the community's role is to do a consultation process, and it is a community consultation process within their own community for the communities to look at what type of policing service they would like. As I mentioned earlier, there has been funding made available under the AJI for some of the costs which may be related to that kind of consultation.

Some other communities are a little bit further in that they are in the process of having spent some time consulting, that we will look for them to come up with some of the plans that they would like to put forward. There are two communities further that I believe we are very close to signing an agreement with, and that is the status.

Mr. Robinson: I want to thank the minister for her comments on that. I know that the Southeast Resource Development corporation that represents the communities in the southeastern part of Manitoba have also been talking about a policing initiative to serve the communities they serve in those areas on the east side of Lake Winnipeg.

I would like to ask the minister, the Island Lake Tribal Council has recently, meaning about February of this year, sent a Letter of Intent to the minister,

February 6 to be precise, and this was upon the urging of the federal representative for the aboriginal policing directorate that the federal government would be prepared to enter into an agreement with the Island Lake Tribal Council on policing. However, I believe the commitment they were waiting for was from this government on a tripartite process.

* (2350)

As I said, the Letter of Intent was forwarded on February 6 of this year but there has been no response to that letter to the Island Lake Tribal Council. Another letter was sent on May 24 to the minister's office but there has been no response to that letter as well.

I am just wondering, the Island Lake communities of Wasagamack, St. Theresa Point and Garden Hill are probably good examples of where policing initiatives are drastically needed to keep law and order in those four communities. I wonder if the minister could give an updated status report, if you will, on that particular request from the Island Lake Tribal Council.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, as I look through the information available to me, I see that the Island Lake Tribal Council communities, a number of them are in the consultation process right now. I see that one is moving from the consultation process and into the negotiation process. I am sorry; three are looking at that point.

If the federal representative had been urging us on, the federal representative is fully aware it is a tripartite agreement, and this is exactly the issue that we always come back to. There are three parties. There is the federal government, the provincial government and also the community, and I believe this government has a record of concluding the First Nations policing agreements, but they are detailed. They are extremely detailed, and they are extremely complex.

The First Nations policing policy framework requires that certain things be done, that there be fully noted and thought-out and worked-through processes such as training, accountability, financial accountability, and so on.

So though this government, I can honestly say I believe we have really been aggressively working. As I have said before, when I returned from Ottawa—with a commitment from the federal government that they were prepared to proceed under the terms as we knew it of the First Nations policing policy, that the new federal government had not made any changes—on the Thursday afternoon, we had our representative in the air Sunday evening on the way to those communities.

So I believe that this government has really proceeded in good faith and has proceeded as quickly as possible, but these are complex legal agreements which really must be for the benefit of all three parties, and particularly the citizens of the community, and must be done carefully.

So I would only say that I see the status of some of the Island Lake Tribal Council communities, I see that some are proceeding to negotiation phase, and I think it is important that that negotiation phase for everyone concerned proceeds carefully. That is how we will be doing it, because we understand they are all different, too. We understand that it is not sort of an agreement that we then lay on one community and then another.

So that is how we are proceeding, and I hope I have cleared up any question about this government being the one who has not been participating, because I can assure the member we certainly have.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Chairperson, the Island Lake Tribal Council does most of their work collectively with the four communities that I mentioned. They have informed us, whether or not this dialogue is happening or not, that they are doing this as a collective effort and to date have not received any word from this government. In fact, they stated to us that the only discussions they have had have been with the federal government.

I am wondering when all three parties will sit down and begin the long, tedious negotiating that has to occur in order to implement First Nations policing in those four communities that I talked about.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I do not want to dispute what the member is bringing forward as information

which has been given to him, but I can only give him information on the other side, and that is to the best of my knowledge what this government's participation has been, and I can only tell him on the other side that this government has been a full participant.

As I explained, the consultation has taken place in some communities. Other communities, as I see, are progressing into the negotiation phase, so I am puzzled by some of the communities making the claim that this has not happened, because my information certainly indicates that it has.

Mr. Robinson: Tomorrow, when we resume in this committee, Mr. Chairperson, I would like to table letters that I was copied from the Island Lake Tribal Council that were addressed to this minister, as well as a Letter of Intent to proceed on a First Nations policing initiative for those four communities in northern Manitoba, signed by Chief Joe Guy Wood, who is chairperson of the Island Lake Tribal Council.

So I will be tabling that information that I have before me tomorrow, because I do not want to dispute what the minister is saying. I am sure she is well aware of what goes on in her department, but according to the information we have that has been provided to us by the Island Lake Tribal Council, it appears that no dialogue has occurred with respect to policing in those four communities of St. Theresa Point, Wasagamack, Garden Hill.

I would like to move on to another area, if I may.

Mrs. Vodrey: Perhaps the member would like to table that information tonight so that I can have a look at it and be prepared for the meeting tomorrow afternoon or whenever this committee resumes. As I said, I am

more than happy to look at it, and if the member is tabling it, it would be helpful to table it now.

Mr. Robinson: Yes, I will gladly do that, Mr. Chairperson.

I would just like to move back a little bit here briefly, Mr. Chairperson, with respect to magistrates that we have in Manitoba, and I would just like to know how many are aboriginal. I believe that was mentioned earlier. I cannot recall the details.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, the information that I gave earlier this evening was that the department has nine aboriginal magistrates who have jurisdiction over such matters as swearing documents, assessing fines according to legislation, and releasing or remanding into custody persons who are accused of having committed offences.

The department is currently recruiting additional magistrates and this is also part of our northern court strategy. Though I spoke about the blitz approach in terms of the court party, we recognize, as well, the appointment of community magistrates may also be quite helpful in terms of bringing justice directly to the community.

Mr. Chairperson: The hour being 12 midnight, committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Marcel Laurendeau): The hour being after 10 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Tuesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, June 26, 1995

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