



Second 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**

**Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation**

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

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 28, 1996

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

**PRAYERS**

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PRESENTING PETITIONS**

**Home Care Services**

**Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne):** Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of B. Cook, Jean Cook, Irene Marantz and others requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.

**READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS**

**Home Care Services**

**Madam Speaker:** I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Madam Speaker:** Dispense.

*THAT on at least six occasions during the 1995 provincial election, the Premier promised not to cut health services; and*

*THAT on December 16, 1995, a plan to privatize home care services was presented to Treasury Board; and*

*THAT this plan calls for the complete divestiture of all service delivery to nongovernment organizations, mainly private for-profit companies as well as the implementation of a user-pay system of home care; and*

*THAT previous cuts to the Home Care program have resulted in services being cut and people's health being compromised; and*

*THAT thousands of caring front-line service providers will lose their jobs as a result of this change; and*

*THAT profit has no place in the provision of vital health services.*

*WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care services.*

**Madam Speaker:** I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Broadway (Mr. Santos). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

**Madam Speaker:** Dispense.

*THAT on at least six occasions during the 1995 provincial election, the Premier promised not to cut health services; and*

*THAT on December 16, 1995, a plan to privatize home care services was presented to Treasury Board; and*

*THAT this plan calls for the complete divestiture of all service delivery to nongovernment organizations, mainly private for-profit companies as well as the implementation of a user-pay system of home care; and*

*THAT previous cuts to the Home Care program have resulted in services being cut and people's health being compromised; and*

*THAT thousands of caring front-line service providers will lose their jobs as a result of this change; and*

*THAT profit has no place in the provision of vital health services.*

*WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of*

*Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care service.*

**Madam Speaker:** I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

**Madam Speaker:** Dispense.

*THAT on at least six occasions during the 1995 provincial election, the Premier promised not to cut health services; and*

*THAT on December 16, 1995, a plan to privatize home care services was presented to Treasury Board; and*

*THAT this plan calls for the complete divestiture of all service delivery to nongovernment organizations, mainly private for-profit companies as well as the implementation of a user-pay system of home care; and*

*THAT previous cuts to the Home Care program have resulted in services being cut and people's health being compromised; and*

*THAT thousands of caring front-line service providers will lose their jobs as a result of this change; and*

*THAT profit has no place in the provision of vital health services.*

*WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider reversing their plan to privatize home care service.*

#### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

##### Committee of Supply

**Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Chairperson of Committees):** Madam Speaker, the Committee of Supply has considered certain resolutions and directs me to report progress and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Morris (Mr. Pitura), that the report of the committee be received.

**Motion agreed to.**

#### TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the 1995 Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund Annual Report.

\* (1335)

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### Bill 58—The Parental Responsibility Act

**Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson), that leave be given to introduce Bill 58, The Parental Responsibility Act; Loi sur la responsabilité parentale, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

**Motion agreed to.**

##### Bill 300—The Salvation Army Catherine Booth Bible College Incorporation Amendment Act

**Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert):** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe), that leave be given to introduce Bill 300, The Salvation Army Catherine Booth Bible College Incorporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation le Collège biblique Catherine Booth de l'Armée du Salut, and that the same be now received and read a first time.

**Motion agreed to.**

#### Introduction of Guests

**Madam Speaker:** Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members, firstly, to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us today His Excellency Daniel Dayer, Ambassador of Switzerland to Canada, and Mr. Claude Duboulet, Consul General of Switzerland.

Also in the Speaker's Gallery we have the Honourable Joanne Crofford, the Minister of Indian and Metis Affairs for Saskatchewan.

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you this afternoon.

In the public gallery, we have the student council executives from the Portage Collegiate Institute, the Arthur Meighen High School and the West Park School. These schools are located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Government Services (Mr. Pallister).

We also have fifty-six Grade 5 students from J.R. Walkof School under the direction of Linda Bergen. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck). Also, we have twenty Grades 6, 7 and 8 students from Leila North School under the direction of Mr. Fred Coppock. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski).

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you this afternoon.

### ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

#### Manitoba Telephone System Advertising Campaign

**Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition):** Madam Speaker, my question is to the First Minister.

During the election campaign the Premier promised that he would not sell the publicly owned Manitoba Telephone System. Subsequent to the campaign that promise was broken with many others, and we understand that the Manitoba Telephone System has now entered into a major advertising campaign to convince Manitobans it is a good idea to break the Premier's word from the election campaign.

I would like to ask the Premier, how much money is the Manitoba Telephone System paying for the advertising campaign and who has the advertising contract?

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Madam Speaker, those would be decisions that would be appropriately made,

and have been made, by the management and board of the Manitoba Telephone System.

I would not have that information at my fingertips, but I will undertake to obtain that information and bring it back for the member's information.

**Mr. Doer:** Madam Speaker, the decision to break the word of the Premier was made by the Premier. The decision to sell the publicly owned Telephone System, contrary to election promise, that decision was made by the Premier and the government and announced by the government. We understand the Telephone System has hired an advertising agency and is spending considerable amounts of ratepayer money to convince the public of this campaign.

Can the Premier confirm that Foster Marks, the advertising company that was engaged by the Premier during the campaign to make contrary promises, has been hired for the advertising campaign, and can the Premier inform Manitobans what role does Barb Biggar have in this advertising campaign?

**Mr. Filmon:** Madam Speaker, that is a repetition of the same question. I have indicated that I do not have that information at my fingertips. I have undertaken to get that information. I have been very open, as I was at the news conference in which we made the announcement about the recapitalization of Manitoba Telephone System into a private corporation. I said at that time that it was not an issue during the election campaign. It was not something we put out in any of our campaign platforms and when I was asked, I said that we had no plans to. I also indicated that the information that has subsequently come to our attention from the Crown Corporations Council in which they indicated that it is the highest risk Crown corporation that we have, with \$850 million in debt and in an area—

\* (1340)

**An Honourable Member:** Any Crown corporation is at risk with you in government.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Filmon:** Madam Speaker, you know, the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) does not have anything

worthwhile to say from his feet so he says it all from his seat. The fact of the matter is—

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. I would ask for the co-operation of all honourable members in showing more common courtesy to each other.

The honourable First Minister, to complete his response.

**Mr. Filmon:** Madam Speaker, that being the case, we have indicated the rationale for the privatization of the Manitoba Telephone System, and judging by the reaction, I would say of the employees as well as the general public they do not want to have anything to do with this ideological battle that the New Democrats, with their heads in the sand, want to conduct. The fact of the matter is that if people are going to be asked to invest in the Telephone System, they are going to want to know some of the things about the Telephone System and those things, obviously, are positive sides of the story which we are only too happy to share with the public.

**Mr. Doer:** Madam Speaker, of course the Premier knows that all Conservative candidates, especially in rural and northern Manitoba forums, promised that they would not sell the Manitoba publicly owned Crown corporation. It was an issue in the campaign and many forums that took place across the province, but we have seen the Premier's word on other promises and we are, unfortunately, not surprised on this one. I asked the Premier, how much is the campaign? He did not answer. I asked whether Foster Marks had been hired. He did not answer. I asked the role of Barb Biggar. He did not answer.

Can the Premier please tell Manitobans what is the role of Foster Marks, what is the role of Barb Biggar and how much are the ratepayers of Manitoba Telephone System going to pay for an advertising campaign to convince Manitobans that the Premier's broken promise is a good idea?

**Mr. Filmon:** Madam Speaker, the member opposite is wrong on every count. The fact of the matter is that all members of this government have stated exactly the same thing, that we had no plans to sell or privatize the

Manitoba Telephone System, which was the truth. The member is wrong when he says I did not answer the questions. I said that I did not have that information at my—[interjection]

Now the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) wants to get in. All of the leadership candidates over there have something to say.

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable First Minister, to complete his response.

**Mr. Filmon:** I said that I would take the question as notice and I would bring the information back to the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), and I will do that.

\* (1345)

#### **Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Actuarial Report**

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** My question is to the Minister responsible for MPIC. Yesterday, the minister promised to release the names of the outside actuarial firms and individuals who work on the actuarial reports at the MPIC.

I would like to ask the minister, can the minister tell the House the names of the independent actuarial firms and the individuals who work for the MPIC and the actuary in particular who did the report on the initial \$29-million tort claim reserve and the one who did the report on the increase of that reserve to \$49 million? What are the names of the actuaries who worked on this tort claim reserve?

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act):** Madam Speaker, it seems to me that these are professional people who are prepared to stand behind their advice. I will certainly inquire as to who it was.

**Mr. Maloway:** Madam Speaker, I am surprised that after eight years as minister, the minister still does not know who the actuaries are who do the work for the corporation.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. I would remind the honourable member for Elmwood, this is not a time for debate. The honourable member, to pose a supplementary question.

**Mr. Maloway:** I would like to ask the same minister, would the minister table all actuarial reports issued from March 1, 1994—that is the date the tort system ended—and June 10, 1994, the date the minister requested that the PUB reduce the rates for the 1995 year?

**Mr. Cummings:** On two counts, first of all, the member will have plenty of opportunity when we put the corporation in front of the committee of the House and we will certainly make all information available, and I will take his question as notice and make sure that we have the appropriate people available to respond.

#### Price Waterhouse Role

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** The minister knows that the committee will not meet for a number of months. It will not meet till the fall.

I would like to ask this minister, can the minister tell us the nature of work that former board chairman Don Penny and Price Waterhouse do for the corporation?

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act):** The member I guess has a bit of a short memory. He has forgotten that in 1987 the previous government that he was part of could not add. Apparently he still cannot because he is attempting on a minimal amount of information to indicate that there is a 23 percent increase in the offing.

I guarantee you that from the information that I have seen the people of the province will be pleasantly surprised when the corporation puts its application in front of the Public Utilities Board.

One of the things that has been the most important is that we have done a great deal to make sure that this corporation is run at arm's length, that it reports through the Public Utilities Board. Frankly, if the member is asking about who may or may not have done some work for the corporation, I will have to inquire because it certainly never crosses my desk.

#### Public Accounts Accounting Principles

**Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood):** Madam Speaker, the government likes to draw an analogy between families and their finances and government and its finances, but if a family hid revenues from the tax man and a trust fund and did not declare it, the tax man would come back with a fairly strong message. If the family did it over a number of years, they would be charged with tax fraud.

Can the Minister of Finance tell Manitobans why they should not charge him and his government with tax fraud over his various shenanigans with the lottery trust funds and his so-called balanced budget?

**Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance):** I would encourage the member for Crescentwood to look at the accounting practices right across Canada, what some other provinces like the Province of Saskatchewan, like the Province of Alberta are doing. We certainly do not need any accounting lessons from the members opposite.

Madam Speaker, we have taken the accounting of the Province of Manitoba and basically moved it to a full accrual accounting system, unlike what was taking place back in the '80s under the NDP when it was basically a cash system of accounting.

In terms of any stabilization accounts or lottery trust accounts, that information has been readily available through the Public Accounts. Finally, it came to light when members opposite decided it would be something worthwhile looking at in terms of looking at the Public Accounts. That information is clearly laid out in those documents, has been and will continue to be.

\* (1350)

**Mr. Sale:** Madam Speaker, can the minister tell the House why he wants to have it both ways? He wants to correct the past accounting errors for 1995 in his '96-97 budget, but he wants to claim a balanced budget on that error in accounting for 1995-96. The auditors told him he cannot do it. Why does he persist in trying to have it both ways?

**Mr. Stefanson:** Madam Speaker, as usual, as is the common pattern, the member for Crescentwood is

absolutely wrong. I encourage him to look at and read a letter that was tabled—

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable Minister of Finance, to complete his response.

**Mr. Stefanson:** Madam Speaker, I encourage the member for Crescentwood and members opposite to read a letter that was tabled in this House just last week by the Acting Provincial Auditor in terms of the accounting process. The Provincial Auditor recommended that we change the treatment of the recording of lottery income. That is taking place in 1996-97.

The accounting treatment that we are using in '95-96 is exactly the same as has been in place for the last four years in Manitoba. It is exactly the same as the Province of Saskatchewan, it is exactly the same as the Province of Alberta, and this whole idea about accounting practices and so on is certainly something we do not need any lessons from the NDP on because if you go back to the kinds of statements that were produced under the NDP when it was on not only a cash basis but they were taking some of the assets owned by the taxpayers of Manitoba and taking them off the books of government and transferring them to another corporation, we do not need lessons from them.

**Mr. Sale:** Madam Speaker, will the minister today commit to the House that if any Crown corporation is sold, the net proceeds will go directly to the debt retirement fund and not to his election slush fund, his stabilization fund?

**Mr. Stefanson:** Well, from the member for Crescentwood who is so concerned about accounting treatment, I should inform him that if an asset is sold by the Province of Manitoba, that will be reflected through our accounts, will be reflected if there is a gain on the disposition of the asset, will be reflected as a gain and revenue to the province. Ultimately, the distribution of those revenues and those surpluses flow to the fiscal stabilization account, as provided in our balanced budget legislation.

Madam Speaker, our target, as the members opposite know, is to get that account up to 5 percent of our expenditures. They have been concerned about us having

flexibility for any unforeseen expenditure requirements, a revenue reduction. That is why the target is 5 percent. Thereafter, we will be faced with decisions whether or not we can apply it to the debt, whether or not there are other services we have to provide, whether we do anything on the taxation front, but again all with a view with what is in the best interests of Manitobans.

### **Acting Provincial Auditor Intimidation**

**Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East):** Madam Speaker, I, too, have a question for the Minister of Finance.

It has been reported that the Minister of Finance was surprised that the Provincial Auditor had not talked to him prior to the last Public Accounts committee meeting about the issue of using accumulated lottery funds, allowing the government to show a surplus rather than a deficit for 1995-96. Also, it has been reported that the minister's staff met with the Auditor to seek a so-called solution to confusion that might arise from the Auditor's statement at the Public Accounts committee meeting. This is nothing short of intimidation of a responsible official in an acting position, nothing short of intimidation.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. I would ask that the honourable member for Brandon East pose his question now.

**Mr. Leonard Evans:** Will the minister assure this House, this Assembly that he will not take retaliatory or punitive action against the Acting Provincial Auditor who was simply upholding accepted provincial accounting policies?

**Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, that is a difficult question to respond to because it is so totally ridiculous. There is no intimidation of the Provincial Auditor, but certainly the Provincial Auditor, and he acknowledged himself, feels on many kinds of issues there should be a relationship in terms of keeping us informed of decisions and positions that they are taking. That was the view on this issue, that we had not been made aware of the more current concerns of the Acting Provincial Auditor. We certainly are aware of the concerns expressed by the previous Provincial Auditor



back in the 1994-95 report. We have acknowledged that we are taking those concerns to heart and we are changing the treatment of lottery revenues in 1996-97.

I encourage the member for Brandon East to go back and read the report of the Provincial Auditor for 1994-95 and what the Provincial Auditor says about the standards, and I will gladly, Madam Speaker, take the time to read that into the record if the member does not have time to go back to the Public Accounts.

\* (1355)

### Balanced Budget Legislation Accounting Principles

**Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East):** Madam Speaker, does the minister agree with the Provincial Auditor who stated that the balanced budget legislation was not designed around generally accepted accounting principles? That is, will the minister acknowledge that his surplus was the result of creative accounting, including the use of accumulated lottery funds and the transfer of 1994 revenues from the sale of Crown assets such as McKenzie Seeds to 1995, in order to show a surplus instead of a deficit?

**Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, the hypocrisy of discussing generally accepted accounting principles with members opposite, if you go back to the kind of accounting that took place from 1981 to 1988 when this province was on a cash basis and not an accrual basis, when the government of the day took assets and took them off the books of the government and put them into a separate corporation, Manitoba Properties Inc., we do not need accounting lessons from members opposite based on their past practices. I want to tell the member for Brandon East—

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable Minister of Finance, to complete his response.

**Mr. Stefanson:** Madam Speaker, to briefly conclude, there are many elements of so-called generally accepted accounting principles that have not been practised by provincial governments and federal governments because of the unique nature of government accounting.

I want to tell the member for Brandon East—and I will quote the Provincial Auditor because I am concerned that he might not have the time to go back and read that report: The harmonization of standards for public sector financial reporting is relatively new when compared to the standard-setting process which is in place in the private sector. We commend those who have been responsible for seeing that the province's financial statements have continued to evolve to match up with recommended standards.

That is what the Provincial Auditor said in 1994-95, unlike what was happening when he was a member of government, Madam Speaker.

### Acting Provincial Auditor Jules Benson Involvement

**Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East):** I would like to ask the minister, in this clarification, an education meeting between his financial officers and the Provincial Auditor, was Mr. Jules Benson involved in that meeting?

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. I would remind all honourable members that the clock is still running and this is your time.

**Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, I am assuming the member for Brandon East is getting his source from an article that appeared in one of our local papers yesterday that refers to Mr. Johnson admitting he had been called by the Finance department after his committee testimony. In terms of how the discussion with Mr. Johnson took place, I am not sure. I will have to determine whether or not it was a phone call, whether or not it was a meeting, and if it was a phone call, who made the phone call, if it was a meeting, who participated in the meeting. I will gladly provide that information to the member for Brandon East.

\* (1400)

### Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Rate Increase

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Madam Speaker, back in 1988, the Premier was the biggest critic when it

came to the politicization of MPIC. In the 1995 election there was no rate increase application put forward from MPIC. In 1996 we saw a 6.2 percent rate increase application put forward, and who knows what percentage increase we are going to see requested of PUB, other than the fact that we are not in an election year so there will be an increased application.

My question for the Minister responsible for MPIC is, can the minister tell this House why in an election year the board of MPIC did not ask for a rate increase and just a year after the election MPIC requested 6.1, and we do not know what they are going to be requesting this year?

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act):** Madam Speaker, obviously the member does not want to reflect on the kind of driving year that we have just experienced over the last six months.

Let me also remind him that with the introduction of the Personal Injury Protection Plan, we predicted significant savings would accrue to the plan and at the same time those who were dramatically injured would receive extraordinary benefits where that was necessary. I think he is unhappy because of the results of the election, but he should not be unhappy about the rates that MPIC has been charging.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Maybe then the minister can explain, given his answer, why it is there was no rate increase when you had the Crown Corporations Council in 1994 and in 1993 recommending that there should have been cash reserves so, in essence, what would have happened is we would not be receiving the type of increases that we are receiving today as a direct result of government incompetence?

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Cummings:** Well, Madam Speaker, I am certainly not laughing at the seriousness of the question from the member. I am laughing at the fact that he would even reference the fact that the corporation was directed to provide reserves. What does he think the \$29 million in the rate stabilization reserve was—corn flakes?

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Amazing answer, Madam Speaker.

My question to the minister is, would he not agree that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) was right in 1988 when he made the statement that the New Democrats were politicizing the MPIC rate structure and that the same principles that he used in 1988 should in fact be used today, and maybe ask the Premier to make an apology for manipulating this whole process of rate setting?

**Mr. Cummings:** Madam Speaker, we have been working diligently since 1988 to make sure that this corporation of all corporations is seen to be free of being politically maneuvered.

We have used the reference to the Public Utilities Board where they can recommend increases, if necessary, in the rates as they review them. We have seen the Public Utilities Board recommend that a reserve in fact be put in place for rate stabilization, and we have done everything we can to put the responsibility in the hands of the duly appointed board members to run that corporation to the benefit of the motoring public of this province.

#### **Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Actuarial Report**

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act):** Madam Speaker, while I have the floor I would like to indicate in response to a question that I took as notice—

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable Minister responsible for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation, to respond to a question taken as notice.

**Mr. Cummings:** Yes, if I may. Earlier in this Question Period I was asked about who was the responsible actuary for MPI. It is the firm of Tillinghast, and I believe the person is David Oakden.

#### **Community Release Centre Staffing**

**Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns):** Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Justice.

It was in June that the minister promised and I quote, very intensive supervision for adult inmates released on temporary absence passes. The Community Release Centre at 10 Midland Street in Winnipeg is responsible for supervising released inmates, as well as those on bail.

My question for the minister: Would she explain how she could promise this very intensive supervision when we understand that staff at the Release Centre has been slashed from a planned 14 in 1993 to just three today, a gutting of 79 percent?

**Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** The information that I have is not the same as the member opposite. It does not surprise me that he often has wrong information. Let me tell you what the staffing at the Remand Centre was in 1988 and before when his party was in government. It was one to two staff members supervising. It was less than a bare-bones operation at that time. It was this government that has increased the staffing at the CRCs and, in doing so, also has looked at where programming should be offered and that programming is not offered at the same level through that particular centre now.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Madam Speaker, could the minister explain the effect on public safety where these supervisors have been slashed from one for every 10 released inmates to one for every 60?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Madam Speaker, first of all, I do not accept any of the numbers that the member brings forward. We will be dealing with the Corrections line. I am prepared to move that Corrections line up when we move into Estimates this afternoon following Question Period, if that would be helpful to the member who is continually bringing forward numbers which in many cases are simply not accurate.

Madam Speaker, let me just say that prisoners who are out on temporary absences, the numbers fluctuate hourly and daily. There are changes continually in terms of the numbers because some people reach the end of their sentence, some temporary absences are for medical reasons, people attend funerals and so on. So the member is continually taking a very complex set of circumstances, a very complex series of issues and trying to wrap them into a simple question and trying to find some difficulties.

As I have said, we are coming to the Estimates of the Department of Justice. I will be pleased to move up the Corrections line following Question Period and answer his question in detail.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** How can the minister, who should know all of the documents in her department on the CRC, how can she talk about in-your-face Corrections? How can she talk about intensive supervision when, as of last Tuesday, 10 percent of those sentenced to prison, in fact, 135 adult inmates alone, are unlawfully at large?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Again, I do not accept any of the numbers put forward by the member opposite who freely throws out numbers and often does not have the understanding of what those numbers mean.

Let me just explain some of the changes that have taken place in Corrections because there has been a general decrease in prison population. That is one fact. Secondly, we have increased the qualifications that an individual must meet in terms of time served before they are granted temporary absences. So there have been some significant changes in the area of Corrections around temporary absences and around prison populations. But let the underlying and the most important fact never be lost, when they were in government they had one to two individuals supervising out of that institution, less than a bare-bones institution in supervision.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Madam Speaker, on a point of order. In response to the minister's allegations, I would like to table the count from last Tuesday.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable member for St. Johns does not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

\* (1410)

#### Louisiana-Pacific Environmental Licensing

**Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River):** Madam Speaker, from the time the Louisiana-Pacific agreement was announced, there were many issues raised by local people

with respect to this deal. In particular, independent sawmill operators asked for assurances that they would be able to have wood supplies for their mill. Bands in the area asked that treaty land entitlements be settled, which have not been addressed.

My question is to the Premier. Can he tell this House why his government has failed to address these important issues that have been raised since the beginning of the agreement? Why have they not been addressed before the issuing of the licence to Louisiana-Pacific?

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** You know, the member for Swan River cannot have it both ways. In her own constituency she goes there as a proponent of economic development. She goes there saying that she is all in favour of ensuring that they get jobs and economic investment and that Louisiana-Pacific is good for the economy. Then she goes to meetings of New Democrats and she says—Wowchuk spoke at length on the Louisiana-Pacific agreement with the Conservative government of Gary Filmon. She referred to it as a sweetheart deal which ignores environmental laws and concerns.

The fact of the matter is that she represents, of course, the worst of the New Democratic Party. It is the no-development party, and that is what happens when she comes and attempts to play both sides of the issue.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader):** Madam Speaker, a point of order, Beuchesne Citation 417 is very clear: "Answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised, and should not provoke debate." I realize the First Minister is sensitive about the member for Swan River, but she represents the constituency of Swan River.

**Madam Speaker:** On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Thompson, I would indeed agree he has a point of order. I would request that the honourable First Minister not provoke debate in providing his response to the question.

#### Cutting Areas

**Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River):** Madam Speaker, since the government has said many times that

it has more than enough wood to meet the needs of Louisiana-Pacific even though many people have disputed them, and the Clean Environment Commission has made recommendations that there be no harvesting—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. I am sure there is a question here.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Will the minister explain why his government has refused to accept the recommendation made by the Clean Environment Commission that says, no harvesting of wood will occur in the boundaries of areas considered currently under consideration for additions to the Duck Mountain Provincial Park? Why are you ignoring that recommendation if you are so sure there is so much wood there for all of this development?

**Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources):** Madam Speaker, I covered part of that in my Estimates when I said that the areas that were being considered to be set aside for endangered spaces, that no cutting is allowed there until we have established the rules properly and had a chance to look at it.

The assessment is being done right now. Once that is done, we will establish whether there should be any cutting allowed or not.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Madam Speaker, I would like the minister to explain to people of rural Manitoba and the Swan River constituency, who have asked that the Roaring River Canyon and the Shell River Canyon be set aside and now the government is allowing logging in here, how does this fit in with their 12 percent set-aside plan? Why are they not listening to local people when they make recommendations for areas to be set aside because they want green space?

**Mr. Driedger:** Madam Speaker, the two areas that the member for Swan River has made reference to are areas that we are looking at. We are working together with the company to make sure that no cutting takes place that will create a problem for us out there.

Madam Speaker, the company of Louisiana-Pacific I have to say is a good corporation, easy to work with, with my department. We are looking after the concerns. They are very conscientious about environmental impacts, endangered spaces, and I wish that all the citizens of

Manitoba would have that kind of an attitude in terms of looking after basically our concerns environmentally with endangered spaces.

### **Manitoba Hydro-Centra Gas Joint Venture**

**Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James):** Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro.

Last week's announcement of the agreement in principle to undertake a joint venture between Manitoba Hydro and Centra Gas raises a lot of questions concerning the conflict of interest in the areas of competitive services like home heating and appliances, energy supplied to medium- and small-sized industries, as well as the eventual privatization of Manitoba Hydro.

My question to the minister: Can the minister produce any departmental Manitoba Hydro or independent consulting report that would recommend such an unprecedented move?

**Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act):** Madam Speaker, first of all, I have to challenge the member's statement that this is an unprecedented move.

If the member would spend some time studying the energy industry across the world, certainly in North America, she would recognize that there are efficiencies to be gained in working co-operatively here. In fact, if anything, this kind of move assures the long-term viability of Manitoba Hydro. It is a very good move for the corporation, and I think the member is trying to make far more of it than is actually the case.

As well, if she would read the recent ruling of the Public Utilities Board, she would find that they deliberately said to the corporation, find ways to reduce your costs of delivering your service. This is certainly one of them in line with that thinking.

**Ms. Mihychuk:** Will the minister finally put on the record that the big winner in this deal is Centra Gas with roughly 130,000 customers, while Manitoba Hydro has three times as many customers, and that Manitoba Hydro is being used to subsidize the private sector?

**Mr. Praznik:** I may be appealing into a void, but I am going to appeal to the member's common sense, because it does not take someone of great ability to figure out that it costs the consumer more when you have two people coming to one place to read two different meters when one person while they are there can read both. The vast majority of Manitobans, except perhaps some of the members and her colleagues, can figure out that there are savings in that process.

Madam Speaker, the Public Utilities Board of this province, in restricting the rate increase for Manitoba Hydro, challenged it to find these kinds of savings. I am excited by the opportunities for Manitoba Hydro to be a participant in serving our customers better and helping them get their best value for their energy needs.

If we do not get into this business, Madam Speaker, someone else will, and the member will be getting up criticizing us for not getting into it. This is just silly.

**Ms. Mihychuk:** The only one being silly is the minister trying to fool Manitobans.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. I would remind the honourable member for St. James that on a second and final supplementary question, there is to be no debate and no preamble. The honourable member, to pose her question now.

\* (1420)

**Ms. Mihychuk:** I would ask the minister to be serious and I hope straightforward. Will the minister tell us what the numbers will be after Manitoba Hydro is forced to turn over its detailed customer information to its competition, Centra Gas?

**Mr. Praznik:** The purpose of this service company that we have struck jointly with Centra Gas is, firstly, to address those particular areas where we are both providing service now and we can reduce costs by providing it together. Surely the member for St. James is not asking to double the cost of reading meters simply because she does not want to work out a better arrangement.

Secondly, this company gives Manitoba Hydro the opportunity to work with another energy provider to find

ways to better service our customers, because if we do not get into that business, someone else will and we will lose that.

I have referred from time to time as the members being tied up in Jurassic Park. They should get out of this building and go and find out a little bit about what is happening in the energy sector across North America and realize that Manitoba Hydro wants to be on the leading front of where we are, not where they want us to be, which is in the past.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. Time for Oral Questions has expired.

#### Speaker's Rulings

**Madam Speaker:** I have two rulings for the House.

I am ruling on a matter I took under advisement during Question Period on May 14, 1996. The opposition House leader (Mr. Ashton) raised a point of order about the orderliness of an answer given by the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to a question posed by the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak). It was contended that the answer was in contravention of Beauchesne Citation 417. The citation reads, Answers should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and should not provoke debate.

The question related to the privatization of home care services and the minister had begun to answer when a point of order was raised about comments in that answer about the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), which the minister subsequently retracted.

Because the minister had just begun to answer, it was difficult to judge the orderliness of the content of the answer at that point. However, I would encourage ministers to deal with the matter raised when answering a question.

\* \* \*

On May 14, 1996, I took under advisement a point of order raised by the honourable member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) respecting words used by the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) in answer to a question posed by the honourable member for Radisson. In raising the point of order, the honourable member asked that the

"incorrect statements" be withdrawn. I believe the words used by the honourable Minister of Health in question were: "I remind the honourable member of her inaugural speech in this House where she quoted Karl Marx proudly. Karl Marx, she was so proud to tell us, said: From each according to his ability, to each according to his need. This honourable member who worships at the shrine of Karl Marx ought to be cheering loudly for our Pharmacare program."

I believe this was a dispute over the facts. The honourable member for Radisson was contending that she had quoted Tommy Douglas and J.S. Woodsworth—

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. This is a very serious matter.

—while the minister in his answer was referring to a quotation from Karl Marx. There is therefore no point of order. However, I would admonish the Minister of Health for his choice of words; a phrase such as the one he used that a member "worships at the shrine of Karl Marx" did cause disorder and impaired the decorum of the House.

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### Rusalka Ukrainian Festival

**Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli):** Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise this afternoon and relay to the House my participation in the eighth annual Rusalka Ukrainian Festival held in Teulon this past weekend. The Rusalka Ukrainian Festival is truly a unique two-day event featuring the vastness of Ukrainian culture and heritage. The events surrounded participants with festive music, pageantry, colour and delicious foods. Additional entertainment was offered through a free stage packed with delightful performers. There were many visual displays and exhibits, and for those individuals who enjoy taking a hands-on approach to activities, there were a number of workshops in which to participate.

\* (1430)

I would like to take a moment to congratulate the organizers and volunteers of this year's festival for the outstanding job they have done on the Rusalka Festival

once again. The countless hours of volunteer time and effort to pull together such a highly successful event was clearly evident. I would therefore like to salute the organizers and volunteers on their efforts and let them know it was admired by all those attending.

I would also like to thank the several hundred or approximately 700 dancers who attended from throughout the province. I should note that the reputation of this event has increased so dramatically that the number of dancers actively participating has more than doubled since the festival began eight years ago. It was truly enjoyable to witness the fine performances throughout the festival and I wish all the dancers the very best. All the dancers involved have made a sincere effort to preserve the Ukrainian heritage and the Rusalka Festival is a tribute to that effort. The Rusalka Dance Club has through the years since its inception significantly improved the recognition, promotion and growth of the Ukrainian culture.

In conclusion, I hope that all visitors from both within Manitoba and outside Manitoba enjoyed the celebration of Ukrainian culture and heritage, as much as I did. Thank you.

### Teaching Profession Collective Bargaining

**Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James):** Madam Speaker, today I would like to make a few comments on the teachers of Manitoba in reference to the ongoing attack by this government on the status, professionalism and morale of our public school teachers. I want to preface my remarks by pointing out that I spent a fair bit of time during my tenure as a school trustee—for five years—negotiating with teachers, as well as other support groups, in our education system. In that time, all sides in those negotiations faced difficult and tense situations involving the livelihoods, quality of the workplace and professional standing of teachers.

I also very clearly understand the challenges facing school trustees and administrators in the ongoing struggle to deliver a quality education to our children while juggling what seems to be fewer and fewer resources. I have no lessons to take from members opposite on the challenges of governing. Thank you.

However, Madam Speaker, I must say, at this time, that I have never seen teachers react with such emotion and conviction as what we have seen over the past five days. I have to admit the reaction has been extraordinary, but it does not really explain the reaction by trying to minimize the numbers of teachers who are upset or marginalizing them by questioning their professionalism like some members opposite have.

I think we must all recognize the reason for their fervent reaction, and I believe the reason is simple. It is the reaction of people who believe they have been betrayed. What is fair in removing the rights of teachers well beyond anything asked for by trustees. How is that fair? Members opposite quote from the teachers' handbook. I ask, when will the government speak and act with respect and dignity, deal judiciously with others, always mindful of their rights? If anyone needs to be criticized, it is the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) and this government.

### Tourism Summer Events

**Mr. Frank Pitura (Morris):** Madam Speaker, now it appears that spring has finally arrived, summer cannot be far behind. At least we hope. What that means is that people across this province, across this country and across the continent and globe will be seeking holiday vacations. Let me, as a member of the Legislative Assembly, extend a heartfelt invitation to all who make Manitoba their vacation destination. I extend that invitation because of late our province has witnessed an increase in tourism both from our neighbours to the south as well as international guests.

Last year, U.S. travel to Manitoba went up by 2 percent which meant that over one-half million Americans came to enjoy all that our province has to offer. Add to this the fact that travellers arriving here by air went up by 13 percent, resulting in some two-and-a-half million people getting off planes at Winnipeg's International Airport and why not, Madam Speaker, we have so much to offer. Last year alone Folklorama attracted one-half million people. The Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature was viewed by some 650,000 people. Over 55,000 people attended the Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach and approximately 370,000 people took in the bucolic splendour of Riding Mountain National Park. Those numbers are expected to increase this year and we look forward to welcoming our guests from wherever they

come. Interestingly enough, many of our guests are actually Manitobans who are discovering areas of their province that they have not visited before.

As the MLA for Morris, I wish to extend a personal invitation to events in my constituency: June 4-6, Ag Expo in Morris; June 22-23, the Miami Fair and Rodeo; July 11-13, the Carman Agricultural Fair and Exhibition in Carman; a weekend full of activity in Morris from July 18-21 with the RCMP Musical Ride as well as the Manitoba Stampede and Exhibition; and to finish off the summer at the St. Pierre Frog Follies on the August long weekend. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

### Maples Collegiate Racism Protest

**Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples):** Madam Speaker, it is with pleasure I rise today to inform the Chamber and my colleagues of a protest tomorrow on the steps of the Legislature, a protest that all members could support, a protest against racism. This is a protest of, we are estimating, around 200 students from Maples Collegiate.

Tomorrow at 9:30 in the morning, the students of Maples Collegiate will be walking from there to the Legislature, and expecting to arrive here between 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to protest racism. This was arranged by the Maples Collegiate Unity Group.

In the fall of '95, Maples Collegiate participated in the Leadership Mentorship Conference. The most significant issue which the students identified was that of racism. Consequently, the unity group was formed. Under the guidance of Mr. Duboff, it became a tightly knit group dedicated to educating others to the evils of racism. The group organized open forums, panels, discussions and displays and culminated with a day of harmony on April 17, '96, where they had many speakers come in and the whole school was dedicated to antiracism exercises for the day.

These students are the leaders of Manitoba. Too often we only hear about youth violence. Yet violent crime comprises only 1 percent of the 5.4 percent of youth who come into contact with the law every year—just a popular myth, but it sells newspapers and makes good headlines. The real story should be the kids who organized this rally.

If walking nine kilometres is all it takes to show support for them, I will walk with them tomorrow and I will walk with them every year. I ask all members of this House to support their protest.

### Teaching Profession Collective Bargaining

**Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin):** Madam Speaker, I would like to put a few words to the Legislature about the recent cuts to education and the protests which have evolved over the last several weeks on behalf of teachers who are doing their protesting on behalf of the students of Manitoba.

It is not the first time that I have seen this government set a policy based strictly on their ideology and then have no rationale to back itself up. The other part of the formula that this government uses in dealing with education and other areas is to, first of all, implant their ideology in policy and then turn to scapegoats to try to provide the rationale for the policy they are implementing.

As a former teacher, I am deeply offended at the attack that this government has launched against public education, and I am deeply offended when this government attacks teachers when they democratically speak out against what the government is doing. This government has backed teachers into a corner. Does this government now expect these teachers to sit back and not react to what the government is doing? Does the government expect teachers to quietly and meekly get hit by this government and not say anything?

The cuts that this government is implementing on our public school system is hurting children, and teachers are standing up for these students. Madam Speaker, I know teachers; I have been one. Teachers are motivated by the well-being of their students. Teachers get very excited when things go right in the classrooms; teachers get very angry when this government picks fights with their students.

I want to end by giving some advice to this government. End your attack on teachers, end your attack on public school systems and start to work together with teachers and with parents to provide that balance that we seek. Thank you, Madam Speaker.



## ORDERS OF THE DAY

**Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, would you call for second reading Bills 20, 40, 44 and 48.

## SECOND READINGS

### Bill 20—The Highway Traffic Amendment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act

**Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation):** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Reimer), that Bill 20, The Highway Traffic Amendment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (Loi modifiant le Code de la route—modifications diverses), be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

#### Motion presented.

**Mr. Findlay:** Madam Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure to have a chance to make a few brief comments on Bill 20, which will deal with miscellaneous amendments to The Highway Traffic Act regarding emergency lighting, traffic control, general penalties and mandatory suspensions.

These amendments come about after recommendations of proposals that have come from the Manitoba Association of Fire Chiefs and the Fire Commissioner's office effectively to modernize The Highway Traffic Act to reflect in many cases what is modern technology and what is currently going on today.

There is a variety of amendments contained in this bill. I will just refer briefly to the different areas. The first area will be emergency vehicles. They include the provision of The Highway Traffic Act relating to the definitions of an emergency vehicle. In other words, the definition will be broadened or modernized and the lighting required on such emergency vehicles and the privileges and responsibilities of a driver operating an emergency vehicle.

\* (1440)

In all cases, these elements of The Highway Traffic Act have been clarified for the public. The new provisions do not oppose new requirements on emergency vehicles but formally recognize newer types of vehicles and vehicle lighting.

In the area of traffic control, several amendments have been made to the provisions regarding traffic control devices in order to recognize recent innovations in traffic control such as transit priority signals and left turn signal assemblies which are currently in use, particularly in the city of Winnipeg.

Two further amendments enhance the responsibilities of a traffic authority, meaning generally a local government, and will simplify their administration in two key areas. The first area is that of pedestrian corridors. Traffic authorities, again meaning local governments, will now have complete control over the placement of pedestrian corridors. The requirement for the Highway Traffic Board approval prior to installation has been removed. Madam Speaker, local governments like the city of Winnipeg, city of Brandon are responsible for these corridors and should have the final say in where they are located and when they are put in place.

Secondly, we are talking about temporary parking permits, the removal of the limitation on issuance of temporary parking permits to residents. The Highway Traffic Act currently permits a traffic authority, in other words a local government, to issue parking permits to residents of an area but not to a person who may be visiting a resident, so common sense tells me that the proposed amendment will serve the public well which will give full discretionary authority over the issuance of parking permits to the traffic authority which is consistent with a general responsibility over the parking of vehicles in their jurisdiction.

A third issue dealt with under this bill is an increase in the permitted maximum fine under the general penalty provision. The current \$100 maximum fine was set over 10 years ago and is out of touch with current values. We are increasing the fine to \$500, in other words, a maximum fine, which is consistent with the general penalty provision under The Summary Convictions Act.

The last area of amendment dealt with in the bill is one that my department is introducing on behalf of the Department of Justice. We are adding two new criminal code offences related to auto theft and auto vandalism to the section which provides for mandatory licence suspension upon conviction.

My learned colleagues will recall that The Highway Traffic Act was amended in 1994 to introduce mandatory suspensions for various auto theft and auto vandalism offences. That is the extent of the amendments dealt with under this bill. They are generally modernizing what is going on and bringing us up to speed with what is currently available in the way of technology. I look forward to discussing this bill in greater detail with my colleagues at the committee stage. Thank you.

**Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows):** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen), that debate be adjourned.

**Motion agreed to.**

#### **Bill 40—The Pension Benefits Amendment Act**

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Labour):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Ernst), that Bill 40, The Pension Benefits Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les prestations de pension), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

**Motion presented.**

**Mr. Toews:** I am pleased, Madam Speaker, to introduce Bill 40 which proposes to amend The Pension Benefits Act.

The main purpose of the amendment is to give the Minister responsible for The Pension Benefits Act legislative authority to enter into agreements with the federal and provincial governments which will simplify and streamline the regulation of pension plans for employers operating in more than one jurisdiction. Presently, Canadian employers operating in more than one jurisdiction are required to administer their plans in accordance with up to 11 separate pieces of pension

legislation. While the laws are substantially similar, sufficient differences exist to make the process expensive, time-consuming and cumbersome to administer.

In 1994, representatives of pension commissions from across Canada, including those from British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Alberta and Ontario, proposed to their respective governments an agreement whereby pension plan sponsors would be required to administer their plans in accordance with only a single set of legislative requirements.

Under the proposed arrangement, the pension plan would be subject only to rules of the jurisdiction in which the largest number of plan members are employed. Such an arrangement would significantly simplify plan administration and reduce cost to employees and for employers who sponsor pension plans. As the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) can testify, this is a concern of some of his constituents who came to see me with him, and I trust that this will go some of the way to alleviate the concerns he raised.

The importance of removing unnecessary impediments to operation and expansion of private pension plans cannot be underestimated. For some time now, employers have been pointing to the rising costs of compliance as a major reason why the number of employer-sponsored pension plans has been in decline in every jurisdiction of the country.

As the ultimate beneficiaries of pension plans are working Manitobans seeking to enjoy a financially secure retirement, the government of Manitoba recognizes the value of reducing unnecessary regulatory overlap and duplication. Success in achieving this goal will allow this government to create an environment in which employers are encouraged, rather than discouraged, to offer pension plans to their employees. It is important to note that the multilateral agreement being considered provides that matters relating to the division of pension benefits on marriage breakdown and the garnishment of pensions for the purpose of maintenance enforcement are to remain under Manitoba law.

In closing, I would like to say that, in our view, action to promote the expansion and establishment of employer-

sponsored pension plans is long overdue. Madam Speaker, this amendment represents a significant step in that direction, and I commend it to this Assembly for approval. Thank you.

**Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows):** I move, seconded by the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen), that debate be adjourned.

**Motion agreed to.**

#### **Bill 44—The City of Winnipeg Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act**

**Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister of Urban Affairs):** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Ernst), that Bill 44, The City of Winnipeg Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Ville de Winnipeg et apportant des modifications corrélatives), be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

**Motion presented.**

**Mr. Reimer:** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to introduce for second reading Bill 44, The City of Winnipeg Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act.

The bill contains the following: The repeal of a transitional provision on the city's administrative organization; new legislation to permit Winnipeg City Council to pass district improvement by-laws to charge a district improvement levy for the purpose of undertaking local improvements within a designated area of the city; elimination of the requirement that the city maintain a civic charities bureau to approve applications to solicit funds for charitable purposes; clarification that Plan Winnipeg must be reviewed and readopted within five years from the date of third reading of the Plan Winnipeg by-law; streamlining the planning process by eliminating the requirement that the city's Executive Policy Committee conduct public consultations prior to first reading on a potential Plan Winnipeg amendment; and clarification that the Public Utilities Board is not mandated to review City of Winnipeg rates for services it provides.

Let me explain a little more of these details. Transitional provisions for the city's administration organization: Subsection 43(2) of The City of Winnipeg Act contains a transitional provision which can now be repealed because the Winnipeg City Council adopted its administrative organization by-laws on February 22, 1995. Prior to adopting its administrative by-law, council was functioning on a transitional basis on former legislation in The City of Winnipeg Act which prescribed the city's administrative organization.

**Local improvement districts:** The proposed amendments would permit council to designate an area for the purpose of undertaking local improvements by charging landowners a district improvement levy. Either City Council or a petition to council from landowners can kick-start the process.

The next step would be for a district approval to be developed. The district proposal would identify the boundaries of the proposed local improvement district, each local improvement to be undertaken, the estimated cost of each local improvement and the estimated rate of the district levy which would be paid by property owners in the district.

A committee designated by council would hold a public hearing on a district proposal in order to give area residents an opportunity to review, discuss and ask questions about the district proposal. Based on the outcome of the public hearing and the recommendations of the committee of the council which conducted the public hearing, City Council may then give first reading to a district improvement by-law.

If that happens, notice will be given to all property owners and they will have at least 30 days to object to the designation of their area for the purpose of undertaking district improvements and charging a district levy. Implementation of the district improvements will proceed unless owners having a total land area which is greater than 50 percent file an objection.

This new legislation was developed as a request of the City Council in order to respond to situations where several local improvements are needed in a given area of the city which would benefit an entire district and not just the property owners fronting on the capital improvement. The type of situation I am referring to here is one where

the local improvements required are the extension of trunk services, waste water and land drainage, sewage, roads and boulevards, all of which would provide service for an entire district as opposed to an individual street.

Existing legislation on local improvements requires the city to establish an annual uniform rate for each type of local improvement, whether it is sewage, sidewalks or lane lighting, and that this rate is applied city wide on a front-foot basis. Levying local improvement charges on a front-foot basis in an area that requires major extension of services would be inequitable because it would mean that property owners who front on the street where an oversized water main is to be located would carry the entire cost of a local improvement which is intended to give residents within a given area access to water.

The district improvements legislation provides council with the flexibility to be able to deal with situations where an area of land basically lacks any servicing and landowners are prepared to cost-share all the costs required to service the area through a district levy.

The Civic Charities Bureau: City Council has requested that the legislation in The City of Winnipeg Act and The Charities Endorsement Act no longer require council to have the Charities Endorsement Bureau. Instead, council would like to have the authority to delegate to a staff person the approval of applications to solicit funds for charitable purposes. Presently, decisions on applications are made by a citizen board consisting of 12 persons.

This amendment would put the city on equal footing with other Manitoba municipalities. Under The Charities Endorsement Act, municipalities other than Winnipeg have the authority to appoint the person or body that will provide applications to solicit funds for charitable purposes. For example, Brandon, Portage la Prairie, Selkirk, the city clerk treasurer is designated authority by the local council to approve applications for fundraising activities.

The readoption of Plan Winnipeg: Minor wording changes have been proposed in this bill to state that the specific five-year review and readaptation of Plan Winnipeg must be undertaken five years from the date on which the previous Plan Winnipeg received third reading by council. The existing legislation states that Plan

Winnipeg is to be readopted five years from June 30, 1992. Since Plan Winnipeg was, in fact, not readopted until 1993, the June 1992 date would see the plan reviewed and readopted sooner than the five years from the date it was passed.

Executive Policy Committee's consultations on Plan Winnipeg amendments: City Council has requested the elimination of the requirement that EPC hold consultations on a proposed Plan Winnipeg amendment prior to first reading. This requirement has raised the following issues, how broadly to consult, EPC's role in the consultation phase, confusion in the public's mind with respect to the distinction between a consultation meeting and a public hearing, and the approval process is more cumbersome than it needs to be.

Elimination of this provision in no way affects the requirement for a public hearing on Plan Winnipeg amendments. If council gives first reading to a Plan Winnipeg amendment, it is still required to hold a public hearing on the amendment.

Role of the Public Utilities Board with respect to the City of Winnipeg user fees: In February of 1994, a complaint was filed by community groups with the PUB regarding Winnipeg Transit fares and requesting the PUB to review the fares. In February of 1995, the Court of Appeal ruled that the Public Utilities Board has no role to play in reviewing transit fares. The Court of Appeal stated in its judgment that the legislation in The City of Winnipeg Act clearly gives the city the authority to set its rates for services provided, including transit fares.

The Public Utilities Board Act has remained unchanged since 1959, and newer legislation under The City of Winnipeg Act enacted in 1971 takes precedent. The amendment to The PUB Act included in this bill is intended to reflect the Appeal Court's judgment and to eliminate the conflict of law which presently exists.

I have described for members in the House the main features of Bill 44. Essentially, the bill provides opportunities for enhanced local government autonomy and accountability. In conclusion, I would recommend the bill to the honourable members of this Legislature for their consideration and adaptation. Thank you.

**Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows):** I move, seconded by the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen), that debate be adjourned.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Bill 48—The University of Manitoba  
Amendment Act**

**Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training):** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Urban Affairs and Housing (Mr. Reimer), that Bill 48, The University of Manitoba Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Université du Manitoba, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

**Motion presented.**

**Mrs. McIntosh:** Madam Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of The University of Manitoba Amendment Act, and I am pleased to offer for the benefit of members of the House a very brief explanation of this bill.

Madam Speaker, this amendment act consists of two critical components. The first component relates to the membership of the University of Manitoba Board of Governors. While appointing two student representatives to the board is common practice, currently under the terms of The University of Manitoba Act such student representation is not a requirement.

It is not mandated, yet, given that students represent a key aspect of our educational system and directly contribute to the cost of their education through tuition fees and taxes, we feel that they deserve to have a greater voice in the university decision-making process. This amendment would, therefore, entrench in law the existing practice of appointing students to the board.

\* (1500)

This amendment will also bring the University of Manitoba's Board of Governors in line with those of the University of Winnipeg and Brandon University. The regulations for both of these universities mandate the inclusion of student representation on their respective boards. Under the terms of this amendment, six of the 23

members of the University of Manitoba board must now be students. This increased student representation will be accomplished by requiring that three of the 12 members currently appointed to the board by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council be students, as well as giving the University of Manitoba students union the authority to appoint three members from amongst the student population. The seven appointments to the board will be accordingly changed from six to three.

The second component of The University of Manitoba Amendment Act addresses an increasingly important concern as expressed to us by the University of Manitoba. The University of Manitoba approached my department for assistance in establishing legislative grounds which would allow it to pursue age-related policies, including mandatory retirement, with its respected academic, managerial and professional staffs.

Under the terms of this amendment, the University of Manitoba may now enter into negotiations with its bargaining units over such issues as mandatory retirement at age 65 or older. For those staff not covered by a collective agreement, the University of Manitoba Board of Governors may by by-law impose a similar mandatory retirement requirement.

By allowing the University of Manitoba to negotiate such issues through the collective bargaining process, we believe that academic renewal and pursuit of excellence will be fostered. At the same time, such a step will also give the university a greater flexibility in responding to the increasingly difficult fiscal environment for post-secondary education, in particular, the effects of the drastic reduction in federal transfer payments.

I must point out that once these concerns were raised with us by the University of Manitoba, my department also consulted with the University of Winnipeg, Brandon University and St. Boniface College to see if they required similar legislative action. Those places indicated that action was not necessary at this time. My department has left the door open, however, for future discussions with these institutions on these issues if they so desire.

Madam Speaker, I believe this covers the key aspects of the bill. The University of Manitoba Amendment Act is but a small example of the steps my department is

taking to, in the words of the Roblin commission, do things differently in our higher education system. Through the efforts of the interim transition committee and the recently announced subcommittee on tuition policy, we are forging ahead in our plans to make our post-secondary education system second to none in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and accountability. The citizens of Manitoba expect and deserve nothing less.

My department and I look forward to continuing work with the many stakeholders in higher education, students, educators, administrations and taxpayers, in achieving this goal. I look forward to the increased student representation, the mandated student representation, on the University of Manitoba Board of Governors. I look forward to students having an ability as consumers of the system and as the people who pay for the services they receive, I look forward to their opportunity to have a substantial and meaningful say mandated for them on matters that concern them directly and greatly. Thank you.

**Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows):** I move, seconded by the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

### House Business

**Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, in discussions amongst House leaders, I wonder if there is leave to sit in three sections of Committee of Supply for Wednesday afternoon.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave of the House to sit in three sections of Committee of Supply tomorrow, Wednesday afternoon? Agreed? [agreed]

**Mr. Ernst:** For Wednesday afternoon, then, in Committee of Supply, committee No. 1 in the House will be Finance; committee No. 2 in Room 255 will be Consumer and Corporate Affairs, and Sport; committee No. 3 in Room 254 will be Highways. In the event that Highways completes its agenda, it will be followed by the Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave to amend these committees as posed by the honourable government House leader? [agreed]

**Mr. Ernst:** Is there leave to waive private members' time on Thursday morning?

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave of the House to waive private members' hour on Thursday morning? [agreed]

**Mr. Ernst:** Is there leave on Thursday morning to meet in three sections of Committee of Supply?

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave on Thursday morning then to sit in three sections of Committee of Supply? [agreed]

**Mr. Ernst:** Is there leave to sit in three sections of Committee of Supply on Thursday afternoon?

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave to sit in three sections of Committee of Supply on Thursday afternoon? [agreed]

**Mr. Ernst:** I will announce the subject matter of the committees of Supply for Thursday morning and afternoon tomorrow. [interjection] Thursday at 9 a.m.

**Madam Speaker:** Thursday at 9 a.m.?

**Mr. Ernst:** Yes, Madam Speaker.

Also, is there leave to ensure that Friday rules apply on Thursday morning?

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave to ensure that Friday rules will apply on Thursday morning's sitting of the Committee of Supply? [agreed]

**Mr. Ernst:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh), that the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) be appointed the Chair of the third Committee of Supply for Wednesday afternoon, Thursday morning and Thursday afternoon.

Motion agreed to.

**Mr. Ernst:** I move, seconded by the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh), that Madam Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a

committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

**Motion agreed to,** and the House resolved itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty, with the honourable member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson) in the Chair for the Department of Agriculture; and the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) in the Chair for the Department of Justice.

### COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

#### AGRICULTURE

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Ben Sveinson):** Order, please. This afternoon, this section of the Committee of Supply, meeting in Room 255, will resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture.

When the committee last sat, it had been considering item 3.4.(d)(1) on page 15 of the Estimates book.

**Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River):** Mr. Chairman, when we look at the Expected Results of this department, there is an indication that there is a complete detailed soil inventory on land, inventory maps.

Can the minister indicate who does those maps, whether there is any connection with the data information that is done through Manitoba Crop Insurance or whether this is a separate set of inventory that is done; and, if it is, who does that work, whether it is done in-house or whether it is someone else who does that work?

**Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Chairman, there is a joint federal-provincial unit, and has been of some long standing, called the federal soil survey unit that undertakes this responsibility and has provided the data to organizations such as our Crop Insurance Corporation.

It is done entirely separate from the Manitoba Crop Insurance Corporation.

\* (1510)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I did not quite understand the minister. Is that work done then by employees of the Manitoba Department of Agriculture, or is it work that is done by someone outside of government?

**Mr. Enns:** I am advised that it is done by government staff, but, again, federal and provincial. Manitoba Crop Insurance has, over its 20-odd year history, developed pretty sophisticated data with respect to yield production of various crops and crop husbandry procedures and so forth on which premiums are based. The base soil information that categorizes the different soil classifications is done by this joint federal-provincial unit, and it is, I am advised, a government operation.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Can the minister indicate, of the crop samples that are done for disease testing and herbicide and insect damage, are those tests done by the Department of Agriculture or is this something that is offered by an outside firm? Can he also indicate what the fee structure is for this? Would it be billed back to producers, and has there been a change in the rate of fees that is billed back to producers?

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, my director of Soils and Crops indicates that they do, within the branch, the agricultural samples themselves for which there is no charge. There is a charge, a \$10 fee, for nonagricultural samples, gardens and the likes of that.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** The publications that are done by this section, are those publications done in-house or within the Department of Agriculture, or is this work contracted out to an outside source to do publications?

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, again I am advised that staff, of course, those who have the specific disciplines regarding a particular subject matter, do provide the writing, the make up of the material that gets into these brochures, but then the actual printing is contracted out as a rule.

There are some instances, as you would expect, where there is a fair amount of co-operation and co-ordination between other provinces, particularly on the prairies, with respect to information that is germane to the region, to the prairie agriculture. So there are some instances where we will use or co-ordinate, or our material will be used in

other provinces where there is co-operation between the different provinces.

I would have to just surmise, but inasmuch as that the Queen's Printer as we once used to know, which was an essentially in-house publishing and printing shop which no longer is in existence as such, that departments like my Department of Agriculture have, under tender, normal contracting procedures avail themselves of outside printing houses for most of the actual printing work.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Can the minister indicate then whether there would be one contract that is let for the whole year for the Department of Agriculture or whether each separate job is tendered out? If there is one contract that is let out, who does the printing for the Department of Agriculture?

**Mr. Enns:** As the honourable member would understand, the many different printing firms are anxious to have a portion of that business. We are directed, I believe through Central Administration for publishing work, to tender out.

What will happen sometimes is several, two or three items might be tendered out together as a package for maximum efficiency in terms of pricing. There is no single contractor, and we do not contract out the total requirements of the Department of Agriculture per se. We do not operate that way. We operate as the demand for a particular brochure, publication, is decided upon or that demand is required.

Then we follow the same kinds of procedures that are probably dictated to us by some shop like Government Services that tells us—and there are specific criteria; I do not have them in front of me—that if the contract is for in excess of a figure, whether it is \$5,000 or \$10,000, then it must be tendered out, there must be a number of bids received and so forth.

The normal practices are followed by the Department of Agriculture, but to answer your question directly, we do not have a printer providing all the printing services for the Department of Agriculture in any given year.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** So when we look at the Soil and Crops branch, it would not be the Soil and Crops branch that would decide who would do the printing for them. That

package would be requested, it would go to Government Services, Government Services would let the tender?

**Mr. Enns:** I am advised that the appropriate shop is actually Information Services. It is that branch or division of Government Services that contracts out and assures that the criteria for public purchasing is fair and equitable, of all information, and it is also the same organization that, for instance, will from time to time when television or radio advertisements time needs to be purchased, that is the branch of Government Services that provides that.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Can the minister give an indication of this branch out of the budget how much would be spent on printing and on advertising? Is there a figure available in the proposed expenditures that you anticipate will go for printing of material and promotional advertising?

**Mr. Enns:** There are some that would say that all governments print too much material. This branch is involved in providing, in the main, factual cropping information that today's farmers require. We co-operate with partners.

I know, for instance, one of the major publications is the annual seed catalogue, and selection which I have to marvel at as the growth of the number of varieties, the options open to a producer when he plans which particular variety of seed he wants to use.

It is not just a matter of deciding to buy canola seed but which ones of some 30-40 varieties now that are available. That is fairly extensive, likely one of our most major printing jobs that this branch would be responsible for. We have always received excellent co-operation from other partners in terms of providing some advertising dollars in that same publication.

I would like to particularly single out the co-operation that we have received in the distribution of Manitoba's major—in fact, I call it the one and only—regular farm publication, the Co-operator, which at the appropriate time early in the spring helps in the distribution of this important seed information by using their subscription list which goes to pretty well every farm family in the province of Manitoba.



Everybody gets the Co-operator and that is how we manage to save considerable monies in the distribution of the document and provide I think a pretty significant service to our farmers. I do want to acknowledge the support of the Manitoba Co-operator, which is, of course, the child of Manitoba Pool, that assists the department in providing this agricultural service.

\* (1520)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** So the minister is indicating that there is no breakdown in this budget as to what would be anticipated to be spent on printing and advertising and providing information to producers.

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, I think the member would have to maybe—we do not use that format too much any more, although I think it is still available to her—request for an Order for Return to determine that kind of—somebody would have to go through the printing budgets of half a dozen branches, whether it is the Animal branch, the Crop branch, the Veterinary branch. We could find out what the total amount would be, but I do not have it available.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I was looking to the minister for—there is a line, Communication, that is \$140,000. Is that money that is spent on printing and advertising and getting information to producers? That is the question.

**Mr. Enns:** My deputy advises me that of the \$140,000 that she specifically refers to, about \$30,000 to \$40,000 may be actually devoted to printing. It also includes all other forms of communications, telephone costs and other communication costs that are involved, I suspect, including from time to time maybe getting notices out on radio or television.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I had asked earlier about chargebacks to producers for diagnostic services. Can the minister indicate what is the anticipated amount of revenue that this department would expect to collect back from producers in fees for services?

**Mr. Enns:** Are we talking back about the seed or the diagnostic lab? This is not a big-ticket item. From the agricultural producers, nothing, because it is a service that we provide, and we generate a modest sum of about \$2,000, my director tells me, from the samplings that we

are asked to pass judgment on, inspection on from the nonagricultural community.

Mr. Chairman, I just want to put on the record that during the lunch time, I had a chance to visit with my chief agricultural critic from the New Democratic Party, and she assured me that she would treat me gently and kindly for the remainder of this examination of Estimates, she would not cast any disparaging remarks about my parentage, most particularly about my mother. I just want to indicate to her that I expect her to live up to that commitment that she made to me just a few hours ago at lunch.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, the minister also agreed in that discussion that he would give short and brief answers so that we could proceed very quickly through these Estimates and complete them at some point this afternoon. I think we can both hold up our end of the bargain and hope to complete the Agriculture Estimates this afternoon. Basically, the minister is saying, in this particular area, the service to farmers is provided free of charge. There is no fee for service.

**Mr. Enns:** That is right.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Of the expenditures for 1995-96, the estimated amount was \$683,000 that was budgeted. Can the minister indicate whether that amount was spent or whether there was a surplus, whether we did not spend that amount in this department?

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, I am advised that the monies that were projected to be spent were, in fact, spent.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, I have no further questions on the Soils and Crops branch.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Item 3.4. Agricultural Development and Marketing (d) Soils and Crops (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,310,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$684,600—pass.

Item 3.4.(e)Marketing and Farm Business Management (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, again in this section, I would like to ask a few questions with regard to services that are provided to producers. There is a lot of work, as

I understand, working to develop farm management resource material. The minister indicated earlier on that there was lots of work done with marketing clubs.

Can the minister indicate whether in this department if all the work that is done is done in-house, whether the services of market development and other work, for example, work that is done in preparation for trade missions, that sort of thing, are all done in-house, or whether there is a need to bring in outside services, whether there is any contracting out in this department?

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, allow me to welcome and introduce Ms. Dori Gingera, who is the director for this branch, to the table. She advises me that this kind of work that the member refers to is done in-house by government. Where possible and where the opportunity arises, we certainly avail ourselves of the services of Agriculture Canada, particularly in the offshore trade missions the member referred to.

Mr. Chairman, we have on different occasions included representatives of Agriculture Canada on some of these missions. For instance, it was of particular interest to us to have an understanding of the health and sanitation requirements of some of the countries that we are doing increasing business with, so on one of the trade missions we had Dr. Craddock, for instance, from Agriculture Canada, the chief inspector for Ag Canada, along on one of those trips. As you expect, under those situations, we do get support from Agriculture Canada.

The short answer is it is done either totally by ourselves or a combination of Agriculture Canada, the federal government, and the provincial government. I should indicate, the minister was just here, we, of course, utilize the support both in staff in kind and in dollars from time to time of different departments of government like Industry, Trade and Tourism, with Industry, Trade being a major player in the promotion of our trading relationships around the world.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** As regards the services that are provided to producers, the marketing clubs and various farm businesses that receive technical support, is all of this work done gratis to the people involved, or are there any fees charged to people who access services from this branch?

**Mr. Enns:** There is no revenue generated by the branch in this activity. Monies come to us through the support program again under the Canada-Manitoba Farm Management Program. There will be some costs associated from time to time that have to be spent in the holding of various producer meetings if it is deemed appropriate to have private or outside resource people help with the development of a sound program on any given subject matter, but they are not costs that we charge to participants in these various clubs.

\* (1530)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Is it accurate to assume, as well, that there are no outside agencies brought in in any of the programs that are offered? For example, in the training of farm families, there was a program, I am not sure if it comes under this area, a transition program for farmers transferring their farm from one partner to another. Is all of that work done by department staff? At no time are outside people brought in to help with those kinds of programs?

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, the particular program that the honourable member refers to again was kind of developed jointly with us and the federal government, ran initially by the Federal Business Development Bank, and I am aware, for instance, that for some period of time a former deputy minister of this department had a role. I believe Mr. Cormack was employed in that area for awhile.

I am advised that that program is no longer operating in that manner and is now run more directly by our branch, our provincial organization, in association with the Canadian Bankers' Association, so there is an outside agency in that event assisting us in coming up with some of the costs in providing this service to farm families who are in transition or who find it useful to avail themselves of the expertise that we can provide them with in making decisions.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** In that case, Mr. Chairman, would the Canadian Bankers' Association be there because they want to be there, or are they on contract with the government to carry out part of this program?

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, we are not contracting the Canadian Bankers' Association in a way. I am advised

that the levels of support may be restricted to perhaps providing coffee breaks or lunches at these seminars. I have to accept at face value their similar interest to ours in providing for orderly transfers from one generation to the next generation of farms. It is in their interests that these transfers are accompanied smoothly and, hopefully, for their continued opportunities to do business with different farm families, so it is an extension service that the association provides in conjunction with the provincial Department of Agriculture.

The program grew out of the regrettable understanding that transferring from one generation to the next generation has its own pitfalls, and all too often is not done successfully. That is not exclusive to agriculture. The same applies to small businesses and other endeavours in the province. We identified it as an area where we could provide some help as we recognize—you know, we look at the average age of our farm families and a number of transitions are taking place and, tax laws tending to grow in complexity, it is the kind of operation, the kind of how to make that transfer and still at the same time provide reasonable security for the retiring family head that is passing on his or her operation to the next operation, let it be done in the smartest possible way, both fiscally and socially.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Can the minister indicate whether this is the branch of his department that would have worked on the Working for Value Task Force meetings? Can the minister indicate whether he has the figure available as to what was the cost to the Department of Agriculture?

**Mr. Enns:** Honourable members should be aware, and I think we have certainly made every effort to make it very public, that the Working for Value Task Force, the rural group chaired by my three colleagues from Morris and from Emerson and from Turtle Mountain, was essentially a government caucus initiative. Certainly I am delighted that members of the Department of Agriculture, along with the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism and Rural Development assisted and participated in what I consider to be a highly successful series of meetings throughout Manitoba. We visited some 26 communities. We had within the three sponsoring departments, that is, the three departments that I just mentioned, allocated in a proportionate share roughly around \$200,000 for the complete costs associated. Those monies have not been totally spent,

and of course the work of the task force is not quite completed.

The final report is under compilation and consideration at this time. A draft report, which I believe the member would have received a copy of, was issued. I commend the task force. They made specific efforts to get back to the communities that they visited to indicate to them what it was that we had heard during our day long sessions. So that is how that initiative was carried out and funded. There is no specific line under the department's Estimates. A portion of it, our share of it might have come out of our communications budget. But I will ask my deputy minister.

I am advised that we have identified a cost item of around \$39,000 or \$40,000 that was expended from this department in the '95 Estimates and because it was not, as I mentioned, closed off, there is another roughly speaking \$5,800 that will be charged against the Department of Agriculture to conclude the working of that group.

\* (1540)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** The department also provides support to the Women's Institute and indicates other farm women's organizations. Can the minister indicate whether it is financial support that is provided to the Women's Institute, whether it remains the same as it has been in the past? Can he please indicate what the other farm women's organizations are that this department provides support to?

**Mr. Enns:** I am advised that the only ongoing and financial support provided by the department is to the Women's Institute. It is somewhat reduced, although not much this year, by \$500 or \$600. It was at the \$36,000 level; it is \$35,000-something now. I do not fully understand the reason for that slight reduction. We also, of course, provide additional support in staff resources in helping to provide services during their meetings.

There are other farm women's organizations, one particular group that has an annual meeting, a conference of farm women, but they receive no financial support. Again, our staff of people, particularly in our Home Economics branch, and other branches depending on what subject matter they are particularly interested in,

will provide support in personnel and resources. We will help and assist in the organization of the various meetings. There are some regional farm women's groups that meet on a fairly regular basis. Again, our department and this branch are often called upon to provide assistance, but I am advised that there is no financial assistance provided. The only financially budgeted regular support is to the Women's Institute at about \$35,000.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** When you say farm women's organizations, there are no other specific farmer organizations other than the rural Farm Women's Conference that is held on an annual basis in the fall, is that the only other organization?

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, that is the only other one that is, I think, can be identified as a formal organization that does as the member says, has been meeting or having a conference every fall. I am advised by my director that there are other smaller regional meetings, whether they are a kind of satellites of these different organizations or whether it is just—there are other farm women that get together from time to time in different parts of the province, but these are the two kinds of provincial where they host a one-day or two-day annual meeting.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Can the minister indicate, with the change to working for value or value-added jobs and the focus on more diversification, whether there has been any restructuring of this department and new people brought in or new responsibilities given to people?

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, I am advised that, to reflect the added emphasis that the department wishes to place on value-added and economic expansion of various agri-food initiatives, five existing staff people have been reassigned. If you like, their work descriptions have somewhat changed to reflect this new emphasis. There have been no additional people hired, perhaps with the exception of the one position that was filled. [interjection] I am advised, no, we are just working within the existing group of people.

By the way, the Department of Agriculture has—and I commend management and staff. We have shown, I believe, certainly in these last half a dozen years, where budget had not allowed for any significant increase in staff, a remarkable adaptability and resilience. They are

taking on new directions, new challenges. With existing staff, we provided that service to the Manitoba Crop Insurance when the major new safety net program like GRIP was introduced.

A lot of our people did not have in their work description originally that of being agents of the Manitoba Crop Insurance, but they, on short notice, pitched in to help introduce this major farm support program to the producers in Manitoba. It is no secret, we believe that we are facing, in fact, we are experiencing a very significant added increase in the livestock production, and I do not mind at all acknowledging that I intend to push or promote the fact that I want to see that reflected in the Department of Agriculture.

We have pulled people around. We have placed greater emphasis on such things as horses within the department. We are freeing up some of our staff time, our livestock specialists' time, to work more closely with the expanding pork and hog industry in the province.

We have a major undertaking in what we call the PRE-HACCP program of ensuring that that extension educational work is done right down at the farm level that will really underline the very important question of proper use of the feed additives and medication in all our livestock operations, if we hope to maintain and enhance our confidence in the safety of our food, not only for our own consumers here in Manitoba, in Canada, but, of course, particularly for the export markets.

This kind of realigning is taking place from time to time in the department, but we have managed, by and large, to do that from within the existing staff and the existing resource dollars.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Are there any vacancies in this department right now or are all positions filled?

**Mr. Enns:** We are on a direction from Treasury Board, and I am probably giving away a state secret here that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) would forever hold against me, but we are operating roughly around the 4 percent, 5 percent vacancy rate within the department. Seven percent, I am told. It grieves me.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** It grieves me as well, Mr. Minister. Could the minister indicate, is he saying that that is just

in this branch, or is it a 7 percent vacancy across the Department of Agriculture?

**Mr. Enns:** I was still grieving, Mr. Chairman, and I failed to get the full impact of the honourable member's question.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, I did not hear the minister and his answer. Is that across the department, 7 percent, or are you saying there is a 7 percent vacancy in this department?

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, it is across the department.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, we have a line in this department that is Grants and Transfer Payments, and I can see a decrease. I recognize that there is a decrease because of the final payment to the Keystone Centre, but that still leaves \$783,000 that is available for grants. We talked about one grant, and that goes to the Women's Institute. I would assume that there would also be money in here that would go for 4-H travel.

Can the minister indicate what the majority of the money that is available for grants is used for in this department?

\* (1550)

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, for the honourable member's information, we have the following grants that are provided, some \$40,000, to what we call the Asia Pacific Foundation. It is a Winnipeg-based office which helps in the co-ordination and information provision of the growing and continuing involvement with Asian countries in our trade initiatives.

One significant grant is of some \$332,500 to the Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute, PAMI, as it is referred to, our share, our portion of the prairie provinces' support for that institute, which as the member is well familiar with helps test and develop farm equipment, farm machinery, particularly adaptable to the prairie scene.

The member already alluded to \$35,300 to the Women's Institute. There would be under this, as well, the provisions to support the 4-H Council, Canadian 4-H Council, some \$7,000, \$12,600 to the various clubs.

Another major portion of this grant is to the fairs, some \$207,600, to assist with prize money for approved classes of fairs and exhibitions that are operated throughout the province of Manitoba. There are some specific grants that are made available to ensure that appropriate judges can be hired at these various fairs and exhibits. These are the kind of grants that are provided under this section of the Estimates.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, the minister indicated funds for the Asia Pacific Foundation. Is that money for staff? I understand there is a staffperson who is allocated to that, or is this in addition to staff money, promotional money?

**Mr. Enns:** This grant is comprised of in kind and direct financial support toward the administrative costs of the Asia Pacific Foundation's Winnipeg-based office. So this department shares with other departments the overall costs of operating the Canada Asia Foundation. I am aware, for instance, that I believe the Department of Education and the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism are also participatory supporters of the institute. We justify our participation because so much of our economic developments with Asia are in the agricultural sector, and so we are asked to participate in the running of this operation.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Have there been staff people that have been seconded from the Department of Agriculture to work at that office?

**Mr. Enns:** The answer is no.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Item 3.4. Agricultural Development and Marketing (e) Marketing and Farm Business Management (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,563,500—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$1,129,200—pass; (3) Agricultural Societies Grant Assistance \$368,400—pass; (5) Other Grant Assistance \$415,100—pass.

Item 3.4.(f) Irrigation Development \$500,000.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, we have the Irrigation Development section of this budget, which is a new section. I would like to ask the minister, what is the status of this new program, is it in operation, and what is required to qualify to access support from this fund?

**Mr. Enns:** This is a program very much in its developmental stage. This figure represents a contribution that the Department of Agriculture will provide to that program when it is off and running.

It is being developed jointly again with the Economic Development Committee of Cabinet and the sister departments of Rural Development and Industry, Trade and Tourism. It is in direct response to the knowledge that with the very significant expansion of potato processing capacity in the province, as announced by our two processors, McCain and Nestle-Simplot, that upwards of 30,000 additional acres of irrigable land for potato production will be required in the very near future. The initiative has still to be approved, I might add. It has not gone through all the hoops there, meetings being held with the industry people, with potato growers, with municipal officials.

The concept is that we do not envisage at this stage any dramatic building of major water retention dams or reservoirs but, in fact, to utilize wherever possible surface waters in relatively modest-sized capacities, bringing together groups of four or five, six producers to form an association who would then be in a position to access water from such kind of a surface water retention pond, would be able to access credit through the increased strength of this association to get some of the necessary capital that is required.

It is a costly venture to get into potato production in this day and age. Some estimates range as much as about \$3,000 per acre, or \$3,000 or \$4,000 per acre that is required in equipment and land development, and part of it is, of course, the requirement that the processors are placing on us that these be essentially all irrigable potatoes that this program is being designed in lockstep with the announced expansions of the potato industry in the province.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Does the minister anticipate then when the program is off and running that there will be also funds that will be available from Industry, Trade and Tourism and Rural Development to create a larger pool of money that will be available?

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, I need to be somewhat cautious because the program, as I indicated, has yet to be fully developed, but we are talking about a program

that has as some achievable target some 18 millions of dollars, much of it to be financed by the private sector through payback arrangements by the producers who directly benefit from this investment.

The actual flow of provincial or governmental dollars is not that—every amount is significant but not significant in the overall cost of the project. The support from government will be largely to help organize, to help work with municipal authorities to get the authorization to where a particular area of impoundment lends itself. There may be some planning or local municipal officials who have to be dealt with. It is always a tricky matter when you are dealing with the impoundment of water, even on a modest scale.

\* (1600)

The direct beneficiaries, that would be new potato producers and those who are expanding, will be expected to take on most of the financial responsibility themselves through a 10-year kind of amortization loan arrangements. Quite frankly, we will take this capital needs package out to various lending institutions, including credit unions and private banks, to see whether they will underwrite or provide the monies for that project.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Does the minister anticipate that this program will be fully developed and operational within this year or is it at still an infant stage where you do not expect it will be ready to go this year?

**Mr. Enns:** Well, Mr. Chairman, we certainly are working diligently to try, and I appreciate that the year is advancing, but certainly to have us be in a position to have the program capable of being started by this fall.

This is the kind of work that lends itself—usually some earth work has to be done, usually best in the fall to then be in a position to capture and to retain some of the spring runoffs where this is advisable. We are intending to spend, this is our commitment, \$500,000, to be matched by the federal government with a further \$500,000. So there will be upwards to \$1 million that we are hoping can be spent on this initiative in this year to begin this process.

As I say, we have met with different existing potato producers. We are looking at different parts of the

province, Portage area, Carberry plains area, the Winkler area, the southwest areas for potential utilization of this program, but we are not putting any parameters on it. Where it will put farmers, four or five farmers, who in this post-Crow era want to take advantage of some of the expanded potato acreages that will be called for by the processors and enter into contract arrangements, they can utilize this program to help them succeed.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Can the minister indicate, would there not have been money available through MACC for projects such as this, or is there a restriction on lending money to potato growers? Why was it necessary to set up a new program if we already have a lending institute that can lend money to producers?

**Mr. Enns:** I certainly have indicated to the management at MACC that potatoes are a growth sector within the agricultural community.

Firstly, through their normal lending program, I am positive, I know that they are very interested in supporting this program. I think we talked briefly about it when we had MACC before us, that the two areas of that new—although it is part of the \$10 million diversification program, the emphasis is probably placed on hogs and potatoes, so in that area MACC will be involved.

Also, MACC's role in this may be again as a guarantor in some instances. If a project calls for \$2 million or \$3 million, they are not going to get it all from us. The four or five farmers or producers that are coming together in the association need to make a financial commitment, get a loan from the bank or the credit union. As we develop the program, we may find that to make it doable is to provide a 15, 20 percent government guarantee to help make the program fly, so the monies flow more easily and the project gets off the ground.

So there will be certainly a role for the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation to play.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** If I understand correctly then, this money that is here will not be used for capital expenditures. It will be used to help organizations get set up. It will be used to offer as guarantees on loans that people go for to the bank, so if that is what it is going to be used for, the question that I still ask is, why was it

necessary to set up a separate program? Could these people have not just gone through the diversification loan program the minister spoke about or through MACC? I am just trying to clarify why it was necessary to set up another program and the role the minister sees here because I understand you to be saying, Mr. Minister, that this is not for capital. It is set-up money to get people organized. Could you clarify what the money will be used for?

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, one of the other reasons of course for treating this in a somewhat separate manner is to hopefully involve the federal government through an agency like PFRA who, quite frankly, have shown a great deal of interest and are wanting to get involved in some of this kind of work which fits very precisely within their mandate. To help agriculture through water development projects has been their role since their creation.

The honourable member is right, these governmental monies, the actual capital project monies will have to be stand-alone loans that these associations have to borrow. We have set aside monies to provide the area management to buy some of the initial investigation and planning. This is, in some cases, technical and engineering advice. It gives us some indication of what the potential of a specific site has in terms of acre or feet that could be impounded, professional services that would be provided. There is considerable importance being laid on monitoring the whole program.

Irrigation is a valuable asset, particularly in this area of agriculture production, but it has to be done right. Again, the members and those who have reservations about irrigation per se they have a point to be made when irrigation is handled in an irresponsible manner. Water is a valuable resource. Irrigation, particularly in Manitoba where we need not huge amounts of irrigation which sometimes is envisioned when that word is used—California Imperial Valley and places like that—we, because of our normal rainfall patterns, rely very often on just a very supplemental increase in water that is applied to the crop at the appropriate time and in the appropriate manner.

Our soil scientists, our soil people, we expect to learn a lot and gain valuable data for our own future management of soils in the province and to position the department to provide the best of possible advice.

There is also a provision here, which I already indicated, for losses. For instance, a loan guarantee, it costs money. This is where MACC would come in. Now, we do not know what that figure will be.

I just want to conclude by saying that I am not describing a program that is already in place. This has received approval from cabinet to be vetted through Treasury Board and then taken out into the field to see whether or not, over the course of the summer months, we cannot finalize the program. Hopefully, it is my hope that we have several associations in a position to utilize the program when the construction season is appropriate in the fall.

\* (1610)

I am advised by my assistant deputy minister that we have yet to receive an indication that the federal government is, in fact, prepared to associate themselves with this program. It is my hope that they will be. The federal government, it should always be reminded, receives the greatest benefit from the economic activity by a Nestle or by a McCain. The province is second in line; the municipality is third.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** If the federal government does not decide to participate in this project, does that mean that the province will not go ahead with it?

**Mr. Enns:** I am sorry.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, if the federal government decides or does not agree to fund this project, does the minister anticipate that that will be the end of this project?

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, I, when one lives, would like to move optimistically in this direction, but, in the final analysis, the expansion is taking place in Manitoba. The demand for additional potato acreages is going to be realized, and the Department of Agriculture and the Manitoba government will have to respond to that need.

If the federal government does not participate, the kind of program that I described may be altered or may be scaled back to something that we believe is affordable by the province, but I, at this point, would not want to speculate that we will not get some federal involvement

through some of their programs. I mentioned the agency which I believe, and I know, are anxious to be involved, and that is the PFRA organization.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Well, I hope that the minister's department will continue to pursue. We have seen a dramatic decrease in the support for agriculture from the federal government and the reduction in supports to the farming community with the change to the Crow benefit.

The federal government does have a responsibility. They have always played a role in the development of water supply in rural Manitoba. I would hope that they would continue to live up to that and that we can get the money from the federal government which is duly due to us.

**Mr. Enns:** I could not have said it better.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Item 3.4.(e)(4) Keystone Centre Grant Assistance nil-pass.

3.4.(f) Irrigation Development \$500,000-pass.

3.4.(g) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations nil-pass.

Resolution 3.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$11,576,300 for Agriculture, Agricultural Development and Marketing, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1997.

Item 3.5. Regional Agricultural Services (a) Northwest Region (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,943,100.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** The regional offices play a very important role. They are the closest contact of the Department of Agriculture to the farming community and provide services. There has been, however, frustration on the part of some sectors of the agriculture community when in particular we heard from the people in livestock industry during the time of the implementation of GRIP, around that time, frustration that the regional offices did not have the staff to provide the services that were normally there because so many people had been seconded out to do other jobs. That program is finished.

Earlier on, the minister indicated that most of the staff was back to doing their normal jobs. Can the minister



give an indication of the regions in general as to what the status is, whether there are a lot of vacancies in staff or whether in each of the regions staffing is up to its full complement?

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, my Assistant Deputy Minister Mr. Les Basaraba, who is in charge of the regional services, informs me that as a policy we do place a special emphasis on filling what we call kind of our front line people who are active out in the field directed by the regional offices that we are now talking about, so that the vacancy level for instance which I spoke of would not be as high in that area.

We have and continue to have from time to time difficulties in filling certain positions. Right now, there are several home economist positions that are vacant and being sought for replacement, but, in general, as a policy we attempt to make sure that our field officers staff are more or less kept in place.

In a general way, certainly the member would be aware that we have reduced our overall core staffing over the past half dozen years, from what probably was in the order of 670, close to 700 department staff six years ago, to some 580 or thereabouts. So a significant downsizing of departmental staff has, in fact, taken place over these past half dozen years, but that is not unique to the Department of Agriculture. Other departments of government, as the member is fully aware of, have experienced similar reductions in staff.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** The minister mentioned the home economists. The minister has had letters as we have had letters about one particular home economist. That is the one in the Boissevain area who has been seconded to work in another area and has not been replaced. The Women's Institute has expressed concern about the lack of services that are being provided in that office. They are also very concerned with the impact this is going to have on 4-H. We heard the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) in her Estimates talk about the importance of the 4-H clubs and 4-H clubs offering many of the things that are not offered through the home ec programs and the other programs in the school.

Has the minister's staff addressed that situation, and when does he anticipate that home ec position will be filled?

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, the member's information is correct, that we have reassigned that particular person, who is now taking on some additional responsibilities here in Winnipeg and, to that extent, that position is not vacant as such. But we have also reassigned the workload for the home economist within that region, and it is my understanding that the essential work carried out in that region by the home economist service branch is continuing. That situation will prevail likely for the remainder of this year.

I, like the member, am certainly receiving letters from that part of Manitoba, that community, and I will challenge the department, the managers, to monitor and review the situation as to whether or not a change needs to be made or whether or not the existing arrangement that has been worked out can adequately provide the level of service that we are capable of providing, commensurate with our resources.

\* (1620)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, the information that I have been given is that the service that is there right now is not adequate. There seems to be a rotation of people who are coming in. One home economist will come in for awhile, or they are coming in from another area, and there is not a continuity of services, and, as a result, programs get started, and then there is not any follow-up. Hopefully, the minister would recognize that home economists do a very important job in providing services for the people in the rural community, and there must be a way to resolve this situation and put a home economist—if this person has been seconded to do another job here in Winnipeg, there must be another home economist that can be brought in, whether it is short term until this secondment is completed, but there is a problem that has been identified.

The people of the area feel that they are not getting the service, they are not getting the supports that are normally there from the Department of Agriculture, and I would ask the minister to look at other possibilities. Is that a possibility, that someone could be brought in on a term position until such time as the person who has been seconded can be brought back to her regular job?

**Mr. Enns:** Well, Mr. Chairman, I can appreciate that certainly the preference for any region and community

that would like to have the continuity of a full-time person within their community providing this service, and I have often said both publicly and privately that I regard this aspect of the department's responsibilities to rural Manitoba as extremely important.

The Department of Agriculture is not simply about producing tonnes of wheat and pork and beef and eggs and dairy and chickens. We play a significant role in rural life, and when somebody like a home economist leaves an area, this minister and the office gets forcefully reminded of that.

I consider the programming for this area of the department, the 4-H work that we do, the community work that often is associated with the services these agricultural staff members bring to the local fairs, the local activities within a given region as extremely important to making what we like to generally describe as one of the reasons why it is worthwhile to live in rural Manitoba.

So I take the member's advice to heart. Staff is here to listen to that. I might suggest to her that she should perhaps just lean on her colleague the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) a little bit and see if she cannot get her to propose a resolution that we would just take some of the crumbs off the table of the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) in the running of that large department and expenditure of public money. Then we would find the dollars to provide and ensure that the level of service was here.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Although the minister may pressure the member for Wellington, I think that the minister should recognize that as Minister of Agriculture, it is his responsibility to pressure his members of cabinet to recognize how important the agriculture industry is in rural Manitoba. He should also recognize that rural Manitoba has been suffering tremendously with cutbacks in budgets from departments, and we have not the services that we need in rural Manitoba.

A good example is this lack of will on the part of this minister to insist that all home economic positions are filled. All of those positions that provide services for people in rural Manitoba in the agricultural industry within his department, he should be insisting that those positions are filled so that people who are making great

adjustments to the changes that we are facing because of the cutbacks we have had from the federal government, there should be support.

I would urge this minister to insist that all of these positions be filled and there be the best possible service for people in rural Manitoba as they make adjustments to the transitions that are necessary. As the minister has indicated many times, rural Manitoba, particularly Manitobans, are going to face tremendous challenges as they adjust to the post-Crow era. We are going to have to diversify into livestock, and we are going to have to have the necessary people in the department to help make those adjustments. We are going to have to have the resources.

I do not accept the argument from the minister that it is money being drained off from other departments. It is his responsibility to take the challenge and ensure that the department that he is responsible for has the best possible staff so that people in rural Manitoba can make the adjustments, and we can have the flourish of the growth in the rural community that will result in lots of tax revenue for the government.

The minister has to have faith in that rural community, that the rural community is going to grow, we are going to have economic development, it will increase, and he will not have to worry that it has been a bad choice to put in place the funds to fill those positions.

**Mr. Enns:** Well, Mr. Chairman, I accept the honourable member's advice and admonishment. I take no issue with it. I simply point out that the task that the person who is undertaking it, the former home economist from Boissevain, is working on a very important initiative in terms of developing ag curriculum for the Department of Education. As long as the member knows that it is extremely important that our ever-increasing urbanized society has a better understanding of agriculture. My deputy minister acknowledges to me that we are certainly sensitive to the fact that we have a situation there that needs to be monitored very carefully, and we will attempt to see whether we cannot resolve it in a manner that is acceptable to the people of that community.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I wonder if the minister could indicate, if we look at the Northwest Region, for example, are there positions there that are budgeted for that are vacant?

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

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, staff advise me that in that region we are operating with just a single vacancy, one vacancy.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** What would that vacancy be?

**Mr. Enns:** The position that is currently vacant is a grassland specialist.

I am sure this has not escaped the honourable member's attention that in essence the Estimates that I am seeking approval of are virtually the same as the ones presented last year so that reflects a virtual status quo, if you like, in terms of staffing and resources available through the different Estimates.

The only significant change in these Estimates is, of course, the \$10 million, \$11 million, no longer required for the GRIP program. If you look singly at the items staff finds us, aside from some very small minor dollar adjustments, they pretty well reflect the same budget line as the year '94-95.

\* (1630)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I recognize that, but the minister earlier indicated that there were some home economist positions, some positions that were not filled. I know there is one position that is not filled in the southwest region. I am looking for whether there are other positions where there are home economists or ag reps that are vacant in the same status as the one in the southwest region who has been seconded and not being replaced.

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, staff underline the point that it is not a question of deliberately keeping a particular position vacant. Out of the sizable staff we have in the Department of Agriculture, there is a constant number of retirements that take place. There is an early retirement incentive program for which we have to maintain the dollars to pay that incentive, 40 weeks in some instances. Of that kind of nature there are about 15 of the vacancies across the department that fall into that category.

Certainly, as I indicated when we started discussion on the regions, we make every attempt to ensure that the service providers at the field level, in the regional levels,

livestock specialists, grassland specialists, home economists, are, in fact, filled with all due dispatch. We will continue to try to ensure that is the case.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, I indicated yesterday that we would not have very many questions under Agricultural Crown Lands and there was no need to bring in additional staff, but my colleague from the Interlake, as I had indicated earlier, had a few questions and I will defer to him to put his questions to the minister.

**Mr. Cliff Evans (Interlake):** Mr. Chair, I would appreciate responses from the minister, and I would like to clarify a few things when it comes to leasing and/or sale of agricultural Crown land. I would like the minister to sort of put me through the steps. If I was one that wanted to lease Crown land, let us say, a section of Crown land, what procedure would I have to go through, and what would be the criteria for me to obtain a lease on four quarters of Crown land?

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, Crown land has been designated by the Department of Natural Resources, within whose shop the overall management of all Crown lands resides, but there has been, as a result of land classification and practice, a significant amount, I believe some five to six million acres in total, of land as owned by the Crown that has been designated as appropriate for agricultural use. Most of it is grazing land, land that the honourable member for Interlake is quite familiar with, although there are other sections of land that is cropped, although it represents a relatively small portion of that.

The criteria for eligibility are relatively straightforward. It requires that the proposed lessee be actively engaged in farming and qualify under the various criteria to acquire a Crown land lease. Now, there are a number of different kinds of leases available. There are forage leases, of which for instance there are some 2,394 in the province this year encompassing some 1,600,000 acres.

Then we have straight cash rental agricultural leases. These are about 162, or 155 in 1995, have leases of that kind involving some 26,000 acres. This would be cultivated acres of land for crop production. Then we have a significant number of people, about 844, that get renewable hay permits. Then we have people that get casual hay permits, and then we have people with simply grazing permits.

So there is a fairly wide range of leases available. The branch assesses the carrying capacity of the leases. Rental rates are based on a per animal unit per month carrying capacity of that particular land. Upwards of 75 percent of the cost of administering the forestry programs is recovered through the fees charged.

For the honourable member's information, our rates are certainly comparable to neighbouring provinces like Saskatchewan and Alberta, and we offer an important support program through the agricultural leases to particularly our livestock industry, although it is in difficulty right now but has shown very significant and sustained growth for the last four or five years.

It is my hope as Minister of Agriculture that when a price recovery is made that that growth will continue in the livestock industry. There are those within my department, and I share their view that we can continue to expand our beef herds in terms of the capacity that we have on our landscape.

**Mr. Cliff Evans:** Mr. Chair, some of the criteria that would be required of me to apply for leasing of, let us say, forage would be a certain requirement of livestock, and, of course, certain ongoing production as such to be able to maintain that lease land, and if for some reason I did not continue under their criteria, what would occur with my lease land? Is there a time limit that is required for a producer to maintain the criteria of the lease?

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, the various different levels of leases, of course, in some instances are self-explanatory, the cash rental ones, the annual ones. They are renewable every year or every several years under the specific guidelines that Crown Lands administration operates with. The long-term lessee, that eligibility again is spelled out in the regulations, is somebody that first of all to be eligible for a long-term lease, you have to be an existing farmer. You have to have livestock, and you have to have farmed in that area, I believe, for at least two years before you can apply.

I think the member earlier asked how can he apply for a section of lease land today or tomorrow. You have to be actively involved in farming for a period of two years, and there are points in the original allocation. Over the years, a relatively sophisticated allocation system developed that takes into account the need. It takes into

account proximity, it takes into account age, it takes into account—and the member may say some of these are arbitrary, but that is a system that has not been really altered or changed much, certainly not in the last half dozen years or certainly not during the period of my involvement coming back to the Department of Agriculture.

\* (1640)

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

Back in 1977 or thereabouts, '75-77, it was adopted as a government policy to allow and to indeed actively facilitate the sale of some of the Crown lands to the holders of the long-term leases. It was done in the belief by the government of the day that this helped solidify or provide a strengthened economic base to the operations, that there would be a greater willingness on the part of ranchers and livestock producers to make additional capital improvements not just to the land but to the whole operation and would generally benefit the livestock production.

That policy has been in place, I believe, since about '76-77. It has been carried on by successive governments, I might say, both of differing political persuasion, and is still in effect today. That enables a long-term lessee of land to have first option to purchase the land, and the criteria for how that is managed is set out in a registration manual.

I believe it is Natural Resources that make the assessment of the land, and that land then is made, if otherwise not required, that is if the Department of Natural Resources, for instance, does not raise objections, say, for wildlife reasons—I know that there are lands that are leased for agricultural purposes that are within wildlife management areas. These lands are seldom, at least not to my experience, offered up for sale because of the prior interest of wildlife on these lands.

Other lands, another parcel of land, may or may not be offered up for sale if the Department of Highways has information that leads it to believe that there are significant or important aggregate gravel deposits under that piece of land, and that land is not to be put up for sale because Highways has kind of put a caveat on it for future road or construction purposes, but failing all of

this, if there are no objections, the land is offered for sale to the long-term lessor.

**Mr. Clif Evans:** Mr. Chairman, getting back to what the minister said as far as some of the criteria, that I as an existing farmer in the area, producer, have to be around for a certain amount of years before I can apply, make sure I am well on my way to continuing my operation. It has to be maintained at a certain level, and age comes into play. But if I have four quarters that I am leasing, I am 60 or 65, I want to purchase that land, I have cattle, and I have been a producer for 25-30 years, I am eligible to purchase that Crown land if I so want to apply for it. If I decide not to continue and get rid of my livestock, then how long am I able to carry on that lease?

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, that is at the call of the director of the Crown Lands branch. I know that there are now specific time lines indicated. We have situations where a farmer, a livestock producer, no fault of his own, finds himself without any livestock on his premises, and these situations have arrived, serious disease outbreak, he has been advised by the Veterinary branch to remove his cattle, to start afresh if you like.

Indeed, there have been other occasions, different cattle cycles where for different reasons, management reasons, not all of the requirements that are normally in place, you know, are in existence. We do not rush out and cancel leases at the drop of the hat. There is certainly a period of time allowed for where a producer can make different and more suitable arrangements to indeed fulfill and carry out the obligations of the lease.

**Mr. Clif Evans:** Mr. Chairman, but if I decide to sell off my livestock and not renew the herd as such but sell it off, I have a couple of years to perhaps get back into it if I so wish. There is a little bit of leeway, but in the meantime, while there is leeway, if I do not do some of the necessary work, fencing, et cetera, that is in the criteria when I have gotten the lease for that particular four quarters, then I am also subject to losing my lease at that point too as one of the criteria that would say to me that, unless I stay within the limits and the boundaries of the lease agreement, there is a chance that I would lose my leaseholding on that.

Now, I know that there have been issues and cases where that has occurred where some of the producers,

after leasing two or three or four quarters for a specific reason have not done what the criteria stipulated that they had to do within a certain period of time, were subject to losing their leases. If I decide all that is done though and I have sold off my livestock, I have four quarters of Crown land, can I as a producer who still has a lease on this, can I rent the four quarters to my neighbour? Is that under the criteria?

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, there is provision made with the original leasing documents for subleasing of land. It is a requirement, I believe, under the regulations that the branch be informed of that arrangement. Indeed, under those circumstances the branch may alter the lease, may demand a somewhat different payment clause within the lease, but it has happened.

I am aware of some circumstances where a lessor for some reason or other has not been himself able to operate with cattle on the lease and has subleased portions or part of his lease. Travelling along with one of the rights and conditions of the long-term lease is some greater security, security which involves also the opportunity for the purchase of the lease.

**Mr. Clif Evans:** So if I want to rent the four quarters of land to my neighbour, I have had a hundred head, I do not have them anymore, I have not been using that Crown land, that lease land, for a couple of years, and if I do not let your department know, then I am in breach of the contract, am I not, breach of the lease? If I am renting out Crown land to others that I am leasing, and I rent it out without the department knowing, that is a breach of the contract, is it not?

**Mr. Enns:** Well, Mr. Chairman, I am not a lawyer, and I am not privy to precise interpretation of any portion of a regulatory requirement. The department may well—and I do not know, I am going from memory, I happen to be a long-term lessee of Crown lands so I have some direct information with respect to various provisions in it. I do not know whether or not, and I do not know what constitutes the degree of noncompliance with the lease. I know, for instance, that the lease may well say that calls for X number of animal units to be held on this lease, but the department, one would hope, is understanding and understands agriculture that if in a given year or for other reasons that I already mentioned that perhaps for a period of a year or two years or three years that the land is, in

fact, undergrazed, so technically may be not in compliance with the lease, that would not be reason to cancel the lease.

There are, in other words, different levels of what you call compliance. I know for instance that my leasing of agriculture Crown lands does not permit me to log it. I have run into that personally where I have had a neighbour, somebody else wanting to cut down trees just for firewood, mind you, on a leased quarter. I indicated to him, well, I did not really feel comfortable, certainly I could not give him that authority or permission to do that.

I asked him to make inquiries. I asked him to make inquiries of the branch as to whether or not that would be permitted. I understand that permission was granted, the person did, in fact, cut down firewood on a leased quarter or mine. But now if that happens, and I assumed that the person was going to contact the branch, I would like to think that if that permission was called for and was not given, that, for instance, would not necessarily cause a cancellation of my lease when I was not involved. In other words, there are different levels of compliance is what I am suggesting.

**Mr. Clif Evans:** I appreciate what the minister is saying about different levels of compliance. However, he did indicate prior to the last question that I asked that basically what I am hearing and what I heard from the minister is that if I want to rent out some lease land to my neighbour, I have to let the department know for it to be within the compliance of the agreement.

Now, I would think, and I am not a lawyer, that would have to be in writing and also not only in writing between the person renting and the person who is going to rent the land out, so what is the minister telling me? Are there certain situations that you do not have to go to the department to let them know, or do they have to let them know regardless of what the compliance or what the situation is?

I would certainly think that if from what I have been told many, many times over, and I have not seen it, but that you cannot rent, as a person who is leasing Crown land, that land to another producer. The minister is saying he can under certain situations, but no matter what, he has to let the department know. Is that what I am hearing?

\* (1650)

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, I am aware that there have been arrangements, indications—although it is not encouraged and not certainly part and parcel of the lease, but where subletting of land has, in fact, occurred. Now, I would have to double-check with the Agricultural Crown Lands branch, and possibly there is an appeal board that tends to supervise disputes and differences of opinion as to when a lease is being properly managed or not. I must indicate to you and to the committee it is of course partly because of the expansion that has occurred in the livestock industry.

We are for the first time this year exceeding all previous records in terms of beef cows on the range. There is an increased demand and competition for lease land throughout the province, not just for agricultural purposes but from other potential users including recreational users. That has brought this into greater focus, I suppose, but I want to make it very clear that the policy, it is certainly a discriminatory policy but one that was deliberately put in that way, and this government has not seen fit to change it.

I might say that the government of Howard Pawley, the New Democrats, in six years had not seen fit to change it when it was introduced back in the mid-'70s, that favoured, the long-term lessee, somebody who had a long-term lease, 10, 15, 20, 30 years, that he was given every opportunity to purchase that land in preference to anybody else.

**Mr. Clif Evans:** Mr. Chairman, I can agree with the minister on that point. The point is, is the producer who has been leasing it for 10 or 15 years wanting to purchase those four quarters—let us say myself wanting, after 15 years, to purchase that to make sure that I have a long-term viability for my farm or for my production and continue for my children's sake.

But if I do not have any of that and I decide to retire, why would I have the eligibility to purchase those four quarters when I want to retire and not use the land for anything at all? If there is, and the minister said that there is, certain competition for lease land, for Crown land, then why would I want to maintain or purchase my leaseholdings if I am not in the livestock production? I have decided to retire. I have no family that wants to take

over the operation. Why would I want to do that even though the option is there for me? Why would I want to do that if I want to get out?

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, I cannot presume to plumb people's minds why they want to do something. I am just pointing out that under established policy that long-term lessee has this right.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I acknowledge and I am prepared to indicate that every policy, every program, should be subject to some review for a period of time. I think that the whole policy with respect to the administration of Crown lands, specifically those that involve this department, it may indeed be appropriate that we review our policies that are currently in existence, that we review the regulations that are in place.

I continue to believe that despite the current setback that the beef industry is suffering that there will be nonetheless a recovery. My hope is that it will be sooner rather than later and that the demand on them and the call on the greater utilization of our land base, in this case agricultural Crown land, will increase and not decrease, so perhaps it is timely that we constitute and we take a hard look at the policies currently in effect with respect to the administration of agricultural Crown lands.

**Mr. Clif Evans:** I will have that opportunity to purchase after 15 or 20 years of leasing, and I have the opportunity of purchasing it now.

As I said earlier, I may not want to or have any reason as far as production goes, but I may want to maintain it as an asset for my grandchildren perhaps or whatever, but if I in a period of time wanted to continue, then I can understand that, but if I did not want to continue, and over a period of time I made it well aware that I was retiring, sold my machinery off, put my land up for sale and the four quarters that I am leasing, publicly put it up for sale and in the meantime also, as the minister said, I would have to let the department know that I am renting out lease land to my neighbour, why would the department allow me to apply and purchase that land?

**Mr. Enns:** Quite simply, because he is eligible to do that. The practice, tradition of the eligibility for a long-term lessee to have first opportunity to purchase his lease then has been established somewhere, sometime in the

mid-'70s, carried on by successive governments certainly for the last 25, 24 years.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Item 3.5. Regional Agricultural Services (a) Northwest Region (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,943,100—pass; 5.(a)(2) Other Expenditures \$628,400—pass.

Item 3.5.(b) Southwest Region (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,072,600—pass; 5.(b)(2) Other Expenditures \$538,000—pass.

Item 3.5.(c) Central Region (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,045,300—pass; 5.(c)(2) Other Expenditures \$556,900—pass.

Item 3.5.(d) Eastern/Interlake Region (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$2,952,400—pass; 5.(d)(2) Other Expenditures \$940,000—pass.

Item 3.5.(e) Agricultural Crown Lands (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$573,700—pass; 5.(e)(2) Other Expenditures \$269,200—pass.

Item 3.5.(f) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$100,000)—pass.

Resolution 3.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$12,419,600 for Agriculture, Regional Agricultural Services, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1997.

Item 3.6. Policy and Economics (a) Administration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$125,500.

\* (1700)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, it is in this section that we deal with the economics of the department, and I am looking for some information. I want to ask whether it is in this section, where there is any tracking or analysis done of how much fees are collected from the various departments of the government.

I am looking particularly at a line in the revenues of the department, where I see that there are agriculture fees and then sundries that come as revenue. I have been trying to find out through the Department of Finance clarification of what those monies mean or where they come from.

So I am looking to see whether it is in this department that there is any tracking or analysis or bookkeeping done on how fees are collected and what these other costs are. Can the minister tell me whether this is an appropriate place to ask these kinds of questions, or do I have to find this kind of information from the Department of Finance?

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, I apologize for the delay in answering this question. The principal amount is from the fees, the lease money we receive from the agricultural Crown lands. That is \$1,900,000, just about \$2 million. The other \$692,000 composed of all the other fees that we get, again, of that group, the principal amount coming from our diagnostic lab facilities, a lot of it coming from not nonagriculture but the companion animals, as we call them, the pet animals, for which we have a full recovery charge, a fee-for-service arrangement.

The agricultural diagnoses that are carried out, the recovery is only about at the 20 percent level, I believe, but it includes such items, some publication that we have a charge for, a seed guide book that we sell for \$3 or \$5, all of that amalgam of little revenues that the department gets. I have listed the two important revenue generators, Crown land fees, lease monies, and the diagnostic lab.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, has the minister or the department projected that there will be an increase? Is there any area in particular that the department is anticipating increased revenues in the upcoming year?

**Mr. Enns:** I am advised that, for instance, if we proceed with the elk initiative—and that accounts for that rather significant difference from last year's print to this year's print. We anticipate getting revenue from the sale of the elk that will be used in turn to operate the program.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** So the minister, I believe, earlier indicated that there would be a sharing of the revenue. Half would go to the Department of Natural Resources, half would go to the Department of Agriculture. So the minister is anticipating that there would be somewhere well over a million dollars in revenue from the sale of elk in this year?

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, again, and I do not wish to mislead the honourable member, because it is a moving figure, because I am advised that the elk that we have in captivity—you remember where it is, at my colleague's

friend's farm close to Grunthal there—that they are now multiplying. Babies are arriving, and these little babies are worth money.

We do not know, of course, how many cows will actually be calving, but there are some 114-115 elk currently there, saleable elk. There could be another 30 or 40 or 20 or 25, you know, calves born in the next month, at different values, and I must say it has yet to be determined. Of course, the bill has yet to be passed, but certainly at market values of \$10,000 an adult animal or \$8,000 an adult animal you very quickly get to a million dollars.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, when you have amounts of fees that are over a million dollars that are billed to consumers in the province, is there difficulty in collecting these fees, and has the department had to use any collection agencies to follow up on collection of these fees? Has any specific collection agency been used to collect fees?

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, I am advised that the department does not use any collection agencies. It is my understanding that the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation has on occasion used an outside collection agency.

We have, you know, the only significant amounts—I do not know whether that is even the right word, but we have had some uncollectable accounts on our books from Crown land lessees that have simply left the province and have not paid them from time to time, not unlike other departments of government, you know. The Department of Finance sometimes has to write off certain uncollectable accounts from businesses that no longer are in existence or have disappeared, have gone bankrupt perhaps owing the province some sales tax revenues.

I know that in my previous department, Natural Resources, we regrettably used to have a difficulty with the thing like hunting and fishing licences. Often there would be considerable turnover or change of retail outlets that were supplying these and, from time to time, we simply had to write off an account that was proven to be uncollectable. But our incidence is not high. The area that we do have some call, some uncollectable accounts from time to time, would be in the Crown land lessee program.



\* (1710)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, there are many questions that we could ask in this area, but considering the time, I would like to move along. I still have a few more questions that I would like to ask about the role of this area.

One of the areas I want to ask some questions about is the role of the Farm Lands Ownership Board. That board was put in place to insure that lands were maintained in the province for Manitoba farmers, and it restricted the ability for an out-of-country person to purchase land. I understand that that board, that act, is not being carried through very diligently, and, in fact, there are many, many pieces of land that are being sold to outside the province.

Can the minister give me some information on that as to the number of applications we have had under that board, the number of applications that have been denied and the number that have been approved?

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, just in responding, I should indicate to the honourable member that she is aware of course that there are amendments being proposed to the Farm Lands Ownership Board, and that act is currently in the House at second reading. The board has dealt with some 254 applications for exemption in the year '95 as compared to 234 last year, 263 the year before, so it seems to run in that area. Most of the applications were approved, 249. Exemptions in four of them, when the full information was established, were not required. Application for another one was simply tabled for some further information.

What the exemptions usually call for are where we provide—we have assurances that landed immigrant status is going to be achieved by the party purchasing the farmland. Quite frankly, we welcome that kind of addition to our farming community.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, in the last year the minister made some changes to the Manitoba Pork status. It changed from single desk selling to orderly marketing.

There are other farm groups that come under supply management commodities, and I would ask the minister whether his department is doing any review of the other marketing boards such as the Turkey Marketing Board

and the Egg Producers' Marketing Board, Manitoba Milk, whether any review is being done of these and whether he has any anticipation of changing the role of the marketing boards?

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, I want to indicate very strongly that the answer is no, but I do want to, in saying that, indicate to you that the Manitoba Marketing Council, chaired by Mr. Howard Motheral, and the group that is primarily responsible for the supervision, if you like, of the supply-managed marketing boards in the province is currently undertaking a review of the Manitoba Vegetable Marketing Board at the request of a number of vegetable producers that made a direct request to the Manitoba Marketing Council to do that.

The Manitoba Marketing Council has met with the directors of the Vegetable Board and some of the producers who wish to see some changes. They have agreed to the hiring of an outside consultant to do an overview of the operations of the board specifically as it relates to the sale of table potatoes and the opportunities of export markets outside of the province.

Now, that was an initiative not undertaken by myself or the department but one, in the normal course of carrying out their responsibilities, the Manitoba Marketing Council has responded to. That investigation or that review of the Manitoba Vegetable Board is underway at this time, it is my understanding.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** If the producers request a review, then I guess it warrants the request, but I guess I refer back to Manitoba Pork. In that case, the pork producers did not request a review, but the minister initiated one on his own and made changes to the organization against the will of the producers.

He is indicating, then, that is the only one that is being reviewed right now, is the vegetable growers, and that would be Peak Vegetable Sales. Would that be what is considered the vegetable growers association?

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, to the honourable member for Swan River, ministers are moved to act in wondrous and strange ways from time to time, and what particularly impels a minister to make a decision this way or that way has yet to be divined by those who make a habit of studying ministers, but I can assure the honourable

member that it is the Peak Vegetable board that is being looked at, as I repeat, not at my initiation but by the action of the Manitoba Marketing Council.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** During the last year, we had a lot of discussion about the funding for agricultural organizations, and the minister brought legislation which would result in compulsory checkoff to farm organizations.

The main farm organization that would benefit from that funding checkoff is the Keystone Agricultural Producers, and although I disagree with that and we put those comments on the record that we disagreed with the steps that the minister was taking to put this legislation in place, it is in place.

We have not seen regulations for the checkoff. Can the minister indicate, does he anticipate bringing in those regulations soon or are there problems with the regulations that the minister can share with us?

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, let me first of all indicate that I am very pleased to indicate to the committee that the canola growers of Manitoba have successfully produced the required regulations that the amended act enables them to do, and my understanding is that was indeed approved by cabinet not so long ago, a few weeks ago, and that checkoff is operating. My understanding is that the forage seed growers are moving along the same path utilizing that act, and I want to indicate that they are extremely pleased that the new legislation makes this avenue of supporting their respective associations viewed in a very positive, very supportive way.

There is a difficulty that I am prepared to acknowledge with respect to the funding mechanism that is being considered for the Keystone Agricultural Producers organization. I can report to you that just this morning I had discussions with the chairman of the certifying agency that is spelled out under The Agricultural Producers' Organizations Funding Act, Mr. Dean Elliot, the Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture who is the chair of that group.

There is a difficulty in the means or the process that involves the checkoff being proposed for the major farm group from grain sales. The grain companies are concerned about the mechanics, costs, the administration

of it. I have a concern about that, and I have asked both those parties to sit down together in the same room and see whether they cannot resolve the issues and come to some understanding.

I am pleased that that is taking place right now. My senior marketing person, Mr. Gordon MacKenzie, whom I am pleased to invite to the table, indicates to me that that committee is, in fact, taking place this Friday, so I acknowledge that there has been no movement, and certainly no regulations have been in place for the cap checkoff.

\* (1720)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Can the minister indicate whether in other provinces where there is a checkoff such as this, the grain companies who do the work are offered anything for their services? As I remember the committee hearings, the people that made their presentations here said that they did not think that they should be doing this work, that they should be compensated for their effort. I am looking for some comparison as to other provinces.

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, staff advises me that, no, there is no mechanism for compensation to grain companies taking the various checkoffs in different jurisdictions, but I am also advised that there is no umbrella general farm organization that is asking for the kind of more complicated checkoff that is being asked for here in Manitoba.

The grain companies, I take it, whether they are particularly—I suppose no organization likes additional work or additional paperwork, but, for instance, the checkoff on the canola is quite straightforward and fairly simple to administer. It is 50 cents a tonne, and there is no worrying about when you reach a certain dollar figure. If you sell 50,000 tonnes of canola, you pay 50,000 times 50 cents. What makes it complicated with the KAP proposal is because they are not looking to increase their fee, their \$100 farm membership fee, but farmers deliver grains to all kinds of different outlets and different companies and it gets to be a complicated system then of monitoring and ensuring that, when you have paid beyond your \$100 fee, the monies are properly returned.

I acknowledge that is a difficulty. I think we all acknowledge that. I read about it in the farm press. I am

hearing from my farm colleagues and certainly in my caucus that there is a concern being expressed about how that is supposed to work. The companies at this point in juncture are saying, it is a costly administrative procedure, and whether I accept that at face value is another issue.

My inclination, quite frankly, is to say that—I look to my staff here whether or not my recollection is correct—any reference to the possibility of remuneration or compensation for the collection of a levy is couched in the language “may”; it is not a direct assertion in the act. My inclination is to say there that there shall not be any compensation paid and that perhaps that will drive both forces to work out a simpler—or to find a simpler solution. I do not know whether that is possible or not, but we are having some difficulty with that coming to a workable, acceptable means of collecting that levy.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I guess I would like to close by saying the simpler solution would have been to leave it alone and let the organization collect their fees the way they were collecting and you would not have had all of these problems because clearly it is not, again, something that farmers support.

Many farmers feel that they should not be forced into joining an organization. It should be their choice, and it is a negative option checkoff that is there. I guess the minister could clearly have avoided this problem had he listened to the producers and not brought in this legislation. If it is not going to work out, maybe it will be the minister who will have to rescind the legislation.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Item 3.6. Policy and Economics (a) Administration (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$125,500—pass. (2) Other Expenditures \$30,900—pass.

Item 3.6.(b) Economics (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$895,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$212,800—pass.

Item 3.6.(c) Boards and Commissions Support Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$354,000—pass; 6.(c)(2) Other Expenditures \$524,500—pass.

Item 3.6.(d) Agricultural Research - Grant to the University of Manitoba \$768,300—pass.

Item 3.6.(e) Less: Recoverable from other appropriations (\$90,000)—pass.

Resolution 3.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,821,200 for Agriculture, Policy and Economics, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1997.

Item 3.7. Canada-Manitoba Agreement on Agricultural Sustainability \$1,040,000—pass.

Resolution 3.7: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,040,000 for Agriculture, Canada-Manitoba Agreement on Agricultural Sustainability, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1997.

Item 3.8. Income Insurance and Support Program (a) Tripartite Cattle Stabilization Plan.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, I know we are going to pass these Estimates today, but I have a few questions that I would like to ask with respect to the Stabilization Plan.

I wonder whether the minister will avail his staff at some other time where I can have a discussion with them to discuss where the funds are going, particularly in the Cattle Stabilization fund and some of the NISA funds. Rather than extend the Estimates, I would like to discuss that at a later time.

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Chairman, I would be more than willing to arrange for a visitation to my office with the honourable member or any other members that wish to join us and to have a specific explanation and the dollar amounts that are being requested in this Estimates.

I would suggest doing that prior to the session ending, which would mean probably early next week.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Item 8. Income Insurance and Support Program (a) Tripartite Cattle Stabilization Plan \$202,300—pass; 8.(b) Tripartite Sugar Beet Stabilization Plan \$674,700—pass; 8.(c) Net Income Stabilization Account \$15,000,000—pass.

Resolution 3.8: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$15,877,000 for

Agriculture, Income Insurance and Support Program, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1997.

The last item to be considered for the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture is item 1. Administration and Finance (a) Minister's Salary.

At this point, we request the minister's staff leave the table for the consideration of this item. The honourable member for St. Boniface, with about half a minute.

**Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface):** I would like to increase the Minister's Salary for supporting Schneider's in St. Boniface.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Can we just ignore the clock for a couple of minutes as we finish this up?

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** I am sorry, we cannot.

Item 1. Administration and Finance (a) Minister's Salary \$25,200.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Chairman, I would just like to take this opportunity to thank the minister for his offer to have his staff sit down to discuss any of the issues that we have not had the time to do in these Estimates. I indicated there was a section under the stabilization funds, but there are also a few other areas. I have to say that we would encourage the minister to take a stronger stand on some of the issues that we have talked about, particularly research and other areas, to ensure that agriculture in Manitoba gets the support that it needs.

**Mr. Enns:** I thank honourable members, particularly the member for Swan River, for the diligent perusal of the departmental Estimates. I look forward to hopefully presiding over the affairs of agriculture now that the sun is shining, good cropping conditions around the corner, and hopefully when next we meet we can report that 1996 was a good year for agriculture.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** 3.1. Administration and Finance (a) Minister's Salary \$25,200—pass.

Resolution 3.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,578,900 for Agriculture, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1997.

This completes the Estimates for the Department of Agriculture.

The hour being 5:30 p.m., committee rise.

\* (1510)

## JUSTICE

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Mike Radcliffe):** Would the Committee of Supply come to order, please. This section of the Committee of Supply has been dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Justice.

Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

**Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Mr. Chair, just to follow up on some business, I have some information to table.

First of all, to the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski), I would like to table the answer to a question taken in last year's Estimates undertaken to be given back, given this year, and also for the member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford), my undertakings from last year, also for the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), undertakings from last year, and also for the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh). I am pleased to table those, to provide those, on the record to the members. Thank you.

Mr. Chair, I just wondered if, and I am not sure whether this is something that I would ask on the record or whether it should be done otherwise, but wondering if the member would like to proceed through Prosecutions and then go to Corrections or what he would like to do.

I have made the offer today, earlier in Question Period, that I am prepared to move to Corrections, if that is the member's will. I am not sure in what order he might like to do that, and the critic from the Liberal Party, so I would ask your advice on that.

**Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns):** If the minister is prepared to go to Corrections, at this point now, on the agreement that we will then return to item 4.(2)(a) Public Prosecutions and up to Corrections on the completion of Corrections, then we certainly would support that.

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Mr. Chairman, yes, I am actually doing this at the request of the member who had been anxious to move ahead to Corrections, and I am able to accommodate that with staff this afternoon, if that would be helpful, so that would be fine.

I just have one further answer that I agreed to yesterday. I took on notice and agreed to bring back to the House today, and I would like to provide that information now. There was a question yesterday regarding the employment of Mr. Larry Krockner, who was formerly the superintendent at Headingley Correctional Institution, and I undertook to find out exactly what his position is at the moment.

Subsequent to the riot at Headingley Correctional Institution, Mr. Krockner requested that he be relieved of his duties. The department agreed to Mr. Krockner's request. He is currently working on a temporary basis within Corrections Division performing the following duties, I am informed by the department: compiling background information and documentation for Mr. Hughes's review and, secondly, preparing a report that has been requested by Mr. Hughes on management's perspective on the operation of Headingley Correctional Institution. I am also informed that further placement options are actively being pursued between Corrections Division and the Civil Service Commission. I believe that covers the issues I undertook for today.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe):** It has been moved by the honourable member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) that debate during this committee shall move—

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Mr. Chair, I am sorry, I did have two other items which I agreed to bring back to the House today and, if the member wishes, I could speak about those items now.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Sure.

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Mr. Chair, there was also a question yesterday regarding aboriginal representation in the Department of Justice by division according to the main appropriation. I can tell the member the number of aboriginal employees in the Administration line, 4.1, is three; in Public Prosecutions is five; in Justice, line 4.3, is 12; in Corrections, 4.4, is 105; and in Courts, 4.5, the

number is 40, for a departmental total of 165. That is the information that I received. It was compiled as of April 3, 1996, by the department.

Also, there was a question about some of the work that is being done by Policy and Planning. I am told that on a routine basis preparation of executive management committee agenda, record of decisions, tracking of departmental multidivision initiatives, ministerial and deputy ministerial briefing books for the federal-provincial meetings, one of which we have just attended, liaison with the Canadian Centre for Justice statistics, including co-ordinating review of about 35 centre publications reviewed annually and then assisting in analyzing that information when it comes to Manitoba. Policy and Planning also sits on a number of committees.

As I said yesterday, the Family division case management project statistical analysis is part of the evaluation subcommittee in addition to the steering committee. They also took a lead in our development of our parental responsibility legislation. They also sit on a committee for Bill C-41 implementation. They sit on victims' rights review committee; sit on committee for review of the Law Reform Commission report on professions and occupations, in fact, chair that committee; committee on integrated response to street gang; and a federal-provincial working group reporting to the Centre for Justice statistics on developing meaningful statistical measures of costs of the justice system, and Manitoba is the chair of that; and a pilot educational program for parents who have separated. They are initially gathering materials and evaluations of pilot projects elsewhere and are now on the steering committee.

Now, I believe, Mr. Chair, that does clear up the issues that were outstanding from yesterday.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe):** Is there leave of the committee to set aside Resolutions 4.2 and 4.3 and deal with Resolution 4.4? [agreed]

\* (1520)

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Are we in that line now?

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe):** We are in that line now.

Will the minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

**Mrs. Vodrey:** I would just like to take the opportunity to introduce the representatives of Corrections Division who are here this afternoon: the Assistant Deputy Minister of Corrections, Mr. Ben Thiessen; the Executive Director of Adult Corrections, Mr. Jim Wolfe; and the Executive Director of Winnipeg Courts, who is on assignment with Corrections at the moment, Mr. Greg Graceffo. Those are the staff people who are here today.

Mr. Chair, because there have been a number of questions and a number of issues raised, I have a statement which I would like to begin by presenting to introduce the area of Corrections.

I would like to provide an update on the use of temporary absences during and after the riot at Headingley. During the past week and a half or so, Corrections staff has conducted a review which has examined the circumstances in which decisions were made as well as the rationale for the decisions themselves. The review will continue until the Headingley Correctional Institution is reopened.

I start by stating the obvious. A riot took place at the Headingley Correctional Institution on the 26th of April. It took 24 hours to bring that situation under control. A number of correctional officers were injured, an even larger number of inmates were injured during the riot. As the RCMP and correctional authorities regained control of the institution, there was an immediate need to place approximately 300 inmates throughout the correctional system in Manitoba.

Virtually all inmates except those in one annex to the institution had to be removed and transported elsewhere. Some were taken to hospital and held in custody there; some were taken to Stony Mountain Penitentiary; some were taken to Dauphin; some were taken to Portage; some were taken to Brandon; and, in fact, some were taken out of the province thanks to the co-operation of the Province of Saskatchewan.

Yesterday, Mr. Chair, I received an update from correctional staff. Their information describes the inmates granted temporary absences for the entire adult provincial correctional system from the date of the riot, April 26, until May 21, 1996. They examine temporary

absences that occurred during and after the riot, whether connected to the riot or not. The effects of the riot were felt system-wide, and their advice reflects that reality.

Temporary absences with conditions are tools used by institutional superintendents to set expectations for the inmates' behaviour in the community and to allow for proper management of the sentences in their community. Conditions imposed upon inmates must be respected if the inmate does not want the temporary absence privilege cancelled. Conditions are specific, and they are unique to the requirements of each case. Conditions could include such things as not driving, agreeing to random urinalysis and abstaining from all intoxicants.

I would like to stress one thing. Because of their nature, the number of temporary absences given in a correctional facility fluctuates daily, even hourly. During the course of any given day, inmates return from temporary absence and others will start theirs. In the past, I have referred to the number of temporary absences at a specific point in time which was based on information then available from my department. However, because of the fact that the numbers change so quickly, any figure that I could give you for today would almost certainly not be valid tomorrow. Things change that quickly.

With those thoughts in mind, Mr. Chair, I would like to describe the most recent information that I have available to me at the moment from the department. As I mentioned before, it covers the period from the date of the riot until Friday last. The figures I am about to give you describe the situation concerning temporary absences during that four-week period, information received from the department. To be absolutely clear and accurate, I should add that these figures do not concern inmates serving weekend sentences.

Mr. Chair, since the day of the riot until May 21, 172 temporary absences have been issued to inmates. Less than one-half were given at the time of the riot. The balance of the inmates were issued absences after the riot. Some inmates were given more than one temporary absence for a variety of reasons at differing points during the four-week period. The number of inmates that were issued temporary absences is therefore somewhat less than 172. During the course of this four-week period, 80 of the inmates in question have completed their

sentences, so the temporary absences have lapsed in those cases. During this four-week period, the temporary absence situation has been monitored and reviewed by correctional staff on an ongoing basis. Where conditions of release were breached, the temporary absence has been cancelled, and the inmate has been returned to custody.

Similarly, risk assessments have been reviewed to ensure that the safety of the public is not compromised through the temporary release process. I think it is important just to repeat that, in case there is any question, risk assessments have been reviewed to ensure that the safety of the public is not compromised through the temporary release process. Where there was any doubt as to the appropriateness of an original temporary release, the release has been cancelled. As a result of this process, nine of the original 172 temporary absences or the number of persons released on temporary absence, had their privileges cancelled. Three of those nine occurred as a result of a review I instructed shortly after the riot. Six have been cancelled over the past several days as a result of the review.

I would like to make a few comments on the circumstances in which these types of decisions had to be made at the time of the riot and shortly afterwards. It will be readily apparent to all that decisions concerning temporary absences had to be taken in very difficult circumstances. A riot was taking place. I am not prepared today to second-guess the decisions that were made by correctional professionals at that time, and I do not think members on the other side are in a position to second-guess those decisions either. Difficult decisions were made under exceptional circumstances.

I recognize there has been some public debate about the decisions that were made. For the most part, the debate has been fanned by political interests. As I said before, I do not believe that the decisions that were made by professional correctional staff should now be second-guessed.

But, given the serious nature of this issue, I have referred the entire matter to Mr. Hughes who has conducted a number of these types of reviews with integrity and fairness. I will look to him for the definitive statement on whether the decisions were reasonable. His report, which will be made public, should provide a measure of comfort to Manitobans that the matter of

public safety has been addressed. If Mr. Hughes points to weaknesses, we will do something about them as quickly as possible.

That, Mr. Chair, is the update that I can provide for the House. It is information which I said has come to me. It is the most up-to-date information that is available by the Department of Justice, and I hope that will assist members and the public.

\* (1530)

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I first want to deal with the minister's information that Mr. Krockner is—and I believe the characterization from the minister was—providing support to Mr. Hughes or providing information or putting together documents for Mr. Hughes. Can the minister just expand on what his role is in that regard?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** I am told that Mr. Hughes requires a submission from the management of Headingley at the time of the riot, and that is the submission that Mr. Krockner is currently working on.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I believe the minister said, though, that in addition to that responsibility he was also providing documentation for Mr. Hughes. Is that correct?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** I am informed again that he is compiling background information on the operation of the institution, as directed by Mr. Hughes, according to the mandate that Mr. Hughes is using, as the reference point for his review.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Is Mr. Krockner compiling his background information at the instruction or request of Mr. Hughes?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Mr. Chair, I am informed the answer is yes.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Is that because the minister offered Mr. Krockner's resources to Mr. Hughes?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** He is not doing this at my request, as the member I am sure knows. I am told that Mr. Hughes requested a submission from the management at the time of the Headingley riot, and so Mr. Krockner was the

person who was the superintendent at the time of the riot. So he is the person who is preparing that information.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Is Mr. Krocker working at the instance of Mr. Hughes, in other words, will he be receiving some direction from Mr. Hughes from time to time?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** We have told Mr. Hughes that he has access to all employees and all documents which he requires, so he is certainly not limited to what Mr. Krocker may be providing. But he is not working as Mr. Hughes's assistant if that is what the member is asking, no, but he is working on a task which was requested to be done by Mr. Hughes and as he was the superintendent at the time he is the individual who is doing that.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I ask the minister to clarify whether Mr. Krocker is preparing a submission to Mr. Hughes on behalf of the management of Headingley, or is he providing background information in a less directed sense to Mr. Hughes?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** I am told that the term used by Mr. Hughes was "submission," and so the information that I have is that Mr. Krocker is preparing a submission. However, as I have said, Mr. Hughes is free to talk with any individuals who he would like to. We have made all staff available to Mr. Hughes to provide whatever information is required by him.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I hope the minister appreciates my concern because I recall, I believe, she characterized his role not only in terms of providing a submission but providing support or indeed some assistance for Mr. Hughes, and if indeed the latter is any part of Mr. Krocker's role we would have some very grave concern.

This would be not dissimilar from a Crown attorney preparing the evidence in the event of an inquest into the death of a person in the custody or under the control of the government, but I have very serious concerns that Mr. Krocker have no control, if you will, over the data, the information, the background documents that Mr. Hughes would have access to. That would taint the investigation simply by appearance. I wonder if the minister would respond to that.

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Mr. Chair, yes, I understand the concern raised by the member opposite and so just let me clarify again. First of all, he is not an assistant. He is not the gatekeeper in any way of information or the only kind of information. I am informed, Mr. Hughes asked for a submission from Mr. Krocker. However, his is not, I understand, the only information that Mr. Hughes is seeking. As I describe the work that Mr. Krocker is doing, perhaps the member misheard me, so I will just repeat it to clarify in case there was any mistake on the record.

First of all, he is compiling background information and documentation for Mr. Hughes' review. He is also preparing a report, and perhaps that is the word that was misheard as support. He is preparing a report, which Mr. Hughes has called a submission that has been requested by Mr. Hughes, on management's perspective on the operation of Headingley Institution. I am told that it is one of many submissions.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** While I recognize that Mr. Krocker, given his experience at Headingley, will be an important witness, if you will, I use that term generically, for Mr. Hughes, I stress my concern that if this individual who I understand is responsible to a certain extent for the policies and practices at the institution that were in place at the time of the riot, when he is compiling background information and documentation for Mr. Hughes, is there not a very serious issue, of appearance at least, of bias? Is Mr. Krocker indeed the right one to be doing this? I question, should Mr. Krocker's role ever extend beyond providing opinions in answering questions from Mr. Hughes?

\* (1540)

**Mrs. Vodrey:** As I said, I have understood the concerns. I am doing my best to reply to those as I understand the information has been requested by Mr. Hughes and where he wants to start in his thinking. If the member is concerned that Mr. Krocker is the only person who may speak for management during this process, I am told that is not the case and that deputy superintendents will speak, executive director of Adult Corrections, the assistant deputy minister, that there is full access and that many, many others will be submissions which are made as well.



**Mr. Mackintosh:** Earlier I asked whether Mr. Krocker was available at the minister's offering to Mr. Hughes. Would the minister confirm that someone, whether Mr. Perozzo or someone in her department, made this offering to Mr. Hughes of Mr. Krocker?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** I am not informed that anyone, and the member mentions Mr. Perozzo specifically, identified him for this task. However, what I am told is, again, that Mr. Hughes asked for a report about management's perspective at the time of the riot, and it was determined that, because he was superintendent at the time of the riot, then he will work with others in the management team to prepare this submission.

However, others in the management team still fully expect to be interviewed by Mr. Hughes to be able to provide information, and this is, I am told, a starting place. You cannot get away from it; he was the superintendent at the time, how did he see it?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I think this minister has got herself another issue here now. This has got to be independent in every way, and if we have information going to Mr. Hughes which is controlled by the superintendent at the time, we are going to have an appearance of bias.

We are aware of the volumes of documentation, standing orders, in Adult Corrections. We are aware of how those changed over time. We are aware of how there are procedures on so many different areas. We are aware of how the many procedures were not written down, and those changed from time to time.

The information that will be going to Mr. Hughes will be not only complex but critical to his task to give Manitobans truly an independent view. It never reflects on the presiding judge of an inquest or on a commissioner of inquiry or indeed on someone making an independent inquiry themselves, but does reflect on the process itself when one of the main people providing the evidence has a perceived interest in the outcome.

I request that the minister reconsider the role of Mr. Krocker with this independent review, out of an abundance of caution.

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Mr. Chair, I am told by senior Corrections officials that, when they met with Mr.

Hughes, they asked Mr. Hughes, did he want to hear from Mr. Krocker, and Mr. Hughes said that, to their recollection, that would be relevant and that he did want to hear from Mr. Krocker who was superintendent at the time. The task was given to him to work with other senior managers to put together what the management structure and management's perspective on the operation of Headingley Institution was at the time of the riot.

I have made it clear in everything that I have said that Mr. Hughes has made it clear that he will be consulting widely. We as a department and I as minister have made it clear that we are entirely open to Mr. Hughes and that whomever Mr. Hughes would like to speak with, interview, get information from, whatever documents Mr. Hughes requires, that will be open to him.

So, though Mr. Krocker is working on an assignment now, which is seen by Mr. Hughes as relevant to his work, it is only a part of all of the information that Mr. Hughes will be seeking. Now, if the member wants to take issue with Mr. Hughes and Mr. Hughes requiring this information and believing that Mr. Krocker is relevant, then the member is free to do so and may do so. I certainly have found that he makes his positions known.

I can tell you that our government made a very strong commitment to have an independent review and to have this review conducted by Mr. Hughes. I will not fall into the trap that the member would like of reaching in and saying, no, no, you cannot talk to this one, or no, no, that one should not do that work for you, Mr. Hughes; I will tell you who should do the work. Mr. Chair, I will not fall into that mode that the member has set. Perhaps that is what he would do.

I have understood the issue raised. I have responded to the issue raised by clearly explaining why Mr. Krocker was asked to do a certain piece of work and that there is significant other work, to my knowledge, that Mr. Hughes has said that he will undertake. He has met with senior Corrections officials; he has had preliminary meetings with them and also with the deputy. So, if the member at the end of this feels that things have not been appropriately done, then he will have to make his point then, but let us give Mr. Hughes a chance to get on with the job.

\* (1550)

**Mr. Mackintosh:** In her opening statement, the minister said that 172 TAs had been granted from April 26 to May 21. Just to clarify, is the minister saying that 172 TAs were issued due to the space pressures on the correctional system throughout Manitoba?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Mr. Chair, I am told that, of 172 temporary absences issued, they were issued for a wide variety of reasons. Some of the reasons include medical reasons, programming reasons, and, yes, some were issued as a result of the pressures of space, which is something that we have always acknowledged, that there has been some space pressure in our institutions.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Would the minister tell the committee how many were released due to the pressures of space?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Mr. Chair, I always find it difficult to get into the numbers issue with the member opposite. As minister, it is a very, very complex issue in which the member, I have found, has sought to simplify many, many times.

I can also tell the member that we have tried to look at the numbers in any number of different ways, and I do not have the exact number listed as a result of the riot. I gather that that is very difficult to determine. The member is trying, it seems to me, to lead to what he can point as a single point, and this is a province-wide, system-wide report for a four-week period.

This has been the difficulty, that the member has a sense that things can be simplified down to a single number at a single point, and every time we have tried to answer that question, it seems to be a moving number and has been very, very difficult to isolate and to say, as a result of the riot specifically, how many of those went to another place, how many were medical and so on. I could speak forever on this.

I think it is best, Mr. Chair, to give the member a breakdown as I have it reported from the Department of Justice. It is effective for a four-week period. Therefore, it is cumulative over four weeks. It involves some inmates released at the time of the riot, inmates released also since that time. Whenever I have tried to give a number, the member has said, oh, well, that number is not right because it is not the same number as today or yesterday or whatever day.

I can only stress to the House, to the people of Manitoba through the record of this Legislature, that this is a very, very complex issue to be defined, and I am providing the best information available to me in the most timely time frame, but extremely difficult to always anticipate or to sometimes actually determine why people, or when people, receive their temporary absences.

I can break the number 172 temporary absences down this way for the four-week period: 80 of those have completed their sentences, and, therefore, their temporary absences elapsed; 51 inmates are continuing on temporary absences; 11 inmates have been returned; 17 inmates are released on medical; five inmates have failed to report; and eight inmates were reported as temporary absences who were really on day parole. Now that is the way, for the four-week period cumulatively, that I can account for the number of temporary absences.

This is the result of very, very significant, intensive work done by the department over a period of several days as they reviewed vast amounts of information in attempts to provide the most timely and complete information to the Legislature and through them to the people of Manitoba, and so I am open, with Correction officials here, to answer questions as we are able. I will tell the member some questions may have to be taken as notice because of the complexity of the issue and because of the number of ways that this issue can be seen, but this is now the updated information that we have available.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Can the minister tell us the number of persons on TA between April 26 and May 21, rather than talk about the number of TAs?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** I am told that we do not have that exact number at the moment, because some inmates appear in the data base more than once, because that single inmate may have received a temporary absence more than once—and this is purely hypothetical—but by way of example, may have been granted a temporary absence for medical leave, then may have been granted a temporary absence to work or may have been granted another, a second temporary absence for medical. That is why I am saying it has been so very difficult to actually determine numbers of persons versus temporary absences. This is why the numbers appear to sometimes differ, and they do differ, because temporary absences, as I said, can change within a matter of hours. Someone may be given a temporary

absence for a three-hour medical appointment and then returned, and that temporary absence is then over. So, in looking at providing the most complete information, the department has this time recommended that we look at the number of temporary absences granted, the number of times that individuals then would have to have met the criteria, had been assessed and so on, so this is the most up-to-date information that I have at the moment.

\* (1600)

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I want to know how the minister reconciles then her number, from a number of days ago, of 63—I believe she was talking then about persons released on TA—versus the number 172 today.

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Mr. Chair, again, I would state to the member, this is always the difficulty in trying to rely on a specific number and why I have spoken about the matter in a more general sense, because it is so difficult to tie down. I was given to understand, 63 inmates were on temporary absence. What is the case now, that information appears to have been incomplete. What is the case was, that number of 63 reflects the number of inmates who are on temporary absences in Winnipeg and in the surrounding area.

They were inmates who were released on temporary absences in the time frame April 26 through May 15. That is about a two-week period, two-and-a-half week period. So that would be a cumulative number but reflecting the Winnipeg area, I am told. That is where I am told Corrections retrieved that information and presented it to me on that day, because I have to actually think about what day. That was the information to the 15th of May, and I would have to check exactly what day that information was given to me. I want to be so careful because members opposite are attempting to find, I believe, mischievously, inconsistencies which there is clearly absolutely no intention to have there.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Can the minister tell the committee how many individuals released on TA in the period April 26 to May 21 have now been incarcerated?

When she said that 11 returned, is that a full and complete number and would that include, for example, individuals like Mr. Rouire or people who had been charged on other offences?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Mr. Chair, of the 11 returned, I am informed by the department, there were nine cancellations, one person charged—that was Mr. Rouire—and there is one other individual. The 11th individual, I do not have information on whether or not there was a charge related to that individual or not.

Now, I am also told that of the nine cancellations, among those nine cancellations are three who have not yet been picked up on their cancellations. So of the nine cancellations, six are in custody and three have not yet been picked up. I believe that accounts for the 11 and a breakdown within the 11 of current status.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** The number 63 used by the minister, just to be certain, is she referring to persons there or TAs?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** I am told that the 63 was persons, not temporary absences. That information was given to me as persons.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Can the minister tell the committee whether temporary absences were granted in excess of 15-day maximum periods?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** I am informed, yes, that some inmates were released on what is called back-to-back temporary absences, which is the ability to grant, I am told, 15-day temporary absences and another back to back, and that is consistent with correctional practices actually within our province and across Canada.

I understand, and I am told, that there was a court ruling in Saskatchewan which validated that process from 1988.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I ask the minister whether the temporary absence policy that is now in effect is known as policy 80-10.

**Mrs. Vodrey:** I am informed that staff is not able to confirm that and so we will have to take that as notice.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I ask the minister if, in the next 24 hours, her staff through her office through her could provide to me the temporary absence policy for Adult Corrections, which I understand is not a lengthy document.

**Mrs. Vodrey:** I will undertake to provide that as quickly as possible. It may not be, however, within 24 hours, and it may be as close to the next sitting of Estimates or shortly after, but I will undertake to provide that for the member. I cannot guarantee a time frame.

As I said, Corrections is not able to confirm the number of the policy. Their question is, if 80 refers to the year of the policy document. I would just like to point out to the member that the regulations were amended in 1995 and those are the regulations which govern temporary absences.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I am not searching for the regulations but rather the policy which sets out the criteria that must be assessed before a temporary absence is granted, which is quite a different document. I would like to look at the issue of the granting of temporary absences. It is our understanding or it has been alleged that an emergency TA list, as I think it has been referred to, had been prepared by correctional staff in the event of a strike that was pending or was possible certainly in April.

Can the minister, through her staff, now confirm that such a list, such a contingency plan had been either in the works or completed?

\* (1610)

**Mrs. Vodrey:** I am told that the senior Corrections officials who are here are not aware of such a list being drawn up. However, as heads of institutions are in the position to grant those temporary absences, it may have been in their plan to do so, but we would have to find out from those superintendents.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Can the minister confirm that two Annex B supervisors reviewed inmates to determine who could be discharged early in the event of a strike?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** I am not able to confirm that that list was prepared in the way that the member has put forward. We will have to check and see from the institutions. I am told by senior Corrections officials here that they were not aware of such a list, and so I understand there may be authority for the development of such a list. As I have said before, temporary absences are granted within the institution, but I am not aware and cannot confirm at this time that such a list was developed.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Will the minister confirm whether my understanding is correct, that before one in usual circumstances is granted a TA, one must apply and then have that application considered by what is known as a TA Board?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** I am told that normally there would be a board, but the regulations allow for a time when there may not be a board, or for the superintendent to make a decision without the board, and also the superintendent may make decisions about inmates who have not formally applied.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** My question was in the usual instance, is my understanding correct of the process, or is she saying that the superintendent will generally from time to time make such decisions, or is she only referring to the event of the strike where the superintendent makes such a decision—the riot or the strike?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Yes, I am informed that normally, under normal circumstances, there is a board. However, in a situation, for instance, of a medical temporary absence, then the superintendent has the authority, without going to the board under some circumstances such as medical, to not go through the board. The regulation does allow for that.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Can the staff, through the minister, advise of the date of release of Mr. Rouire?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Mr. Chair, this is again a question about an inmate or an individual who is currently facing charges before the court. Obviously, any information which I give or any comment that I make could in fact influence the process which is before the court.

I am attempting to provide for the member opposite as much information as we can have available, as we have available in the most up-to-date form, but there are some rules which just do not change.

The rule that just is not changing is the one that we spent an extensive period of time talking about yesterday, and that is the role of the Attorney General and whether or not the Attorney General can comment about individuals or cases which are currently before the court.

\* (1620)

I have made it my practice not to make any comment. As I understand my role as Attorney General of Manitoba, I will not be able to make a comment on the member's question. That is consistent with my practice at all times. He can reflect back over my almost three-year term as Attorney General, in which case I do not believe that I have spoken about a case which is before the court or where an individual faces charges.

In this case, I am following the usual practice. I am following the practice and the standard that has been set, that I not comment. I will be continuing that practice and am not able to comment on that individual.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I wonder what advice the minister is receiving on that. This does not go to the guilt or innocence of Mr. Rouire. It does not go to any of the issues that will touch on his trial.

I simply want to know, when was he released from Headingley? That is irrelevant to the charges that are pending.

**Mrs. Vodrey:** I have sought advice on this. Again, the information I have received, and again consistent with all my past practices, that any facts that are discussed can be placed in issue at the time of the trial. Any facts that I bring forward may be placed in issue at the time of the trial, and it is because of that—it is not whether this goes to his guilt or innocence, but whether or not any information or facts then may be used and placed in issue at the time of the trial. That is why I will not be answering that question, and I believe the member really does understand this. I have to say that I honestly believe he does. Members of his party have been Attorney General, a long time ago, when they happened to hold office, and it is simply not a practice that I intend to breach, certainly according to the standards set by this government.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Well, if this is the analysis of the minister, can she tell the House what will be her position at trial or sentencing on Mr. Rouire's release if in fact she believes that that will become relevant at that time?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Mr. Chair, I wonder if the member could repeat his question perhaps with a little bit of clarification.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** If the minister is of the opinion or of the view that the date of Mr. Rouire's release will be relevant either to sentencing or to trial, can she at least tell this House what her position will be as to the facts at that time?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Mr. Chair, the member tries to develop something from this, and my position all the time has been that all of our information is given in court, all of it. That is according to the practices of the way that I have managed the role of Attorney General and, I believe, others before me.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Can the minister tell the committee what is happening to the intermittent—I believe they are called intermittents—those who are serving sentences on weekends at Headingley? What has happened since the date of the riot to those individuals, and how are they serving their intermittence?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** As I have said from the beginning, one of our priorities is the reopening of Headingley, that the reopening of Headingley with its beds will be very important to all Manitobans. For those individuals serving intermittent sentences, I will just remind the member of my statement of the most up-to-date information that I have, intermittents were deliberately excluded while I dealt with other temporary absence inmates.

What I am informed, to the best of our information, to the best of the information coming to me at this time, is that the intermittent sentenced individuals are reporting to the Community Release Centre, that they are being assigned community work assignments or work projects and they are to the best of our knowledge completing those, working on those, and I am not sure if the member has other questions regarding those individuals.

\* (1630)

**Mr. Mackintosh:** In other words, would the minister confirm that the intermittents have been granted a TA?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** I am advised by the senior correctional officials who are here that it will be best for us to report back on whether those individuals are granted TAs. We need to have some clarification around that so, rather than

give a definitive answer, I will report back with that information to the House and to the member.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I will have to conclude for the moment at least, unless the minister provides me with other evidence, that these individuals can only be excused from serving their intermittent sentences by a temporary absence. Otherwise, they are required to report and serve their time. Would the minister respond to that?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** The member puts the question quite simply. It is in fact, I am told, quite a technical question depending upon CRC as a designated institution and how work is done and the reporting process. So I am told that Corrections officials have said that they will check. I believe that this is an important process. We have talked about this.

Where the information is not readily available, in the interests of being correct and information delivered and put on the record, that we be given the opportunity to report back. That is what I have asked for.

Now, in saying that I will report back, the member has drawn a conclusion. He says, well, then I can only conclude that such and such a thing must be the case.

What I am saying is I do not believe that you should draw any conclusions at this point because you have asked a question, and I have explained that it is a technical question and that we will get the information and will bring it back.

I believe that it is very premature for the member to draw a conclusion. This has been the practice in the past; however, I am asking him at this point in the interests of the people of Manitoba to have the correct information, to wait until I am able to deliver it to him.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Is there a will to break for five minutes?

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe):** Is it the will of the committee to recess for five minutes?

**An Honourable Member:** Agreed.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe):** So agreed. The committee will recess.

*The committee recessed at 4:34 p.m.*

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#### After Recess

*The committee resumed at 4:47 p.m.*

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe):** The committee will come to order.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Would the minister now tell the committee what arrangements were made with Saskatchewan to receive some overflow of inmates and, in that regard, would she tell the committee how many went to Saskatchewan?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Mr. Chair, just before the break, we were speaking about Community Release Centres so I will get to the member's question on Saskatchewan.

In Question Period the member put some information on the record which was again incorrect. I think it is important to clarify it also on the record as Corrections officials are here now and are able to provide some further information to figures the member put forward.

First of all, he indicated that according to his source or his information that approximately 10 percent of inmates were unlawfully at large. He assumes that that figure, he used a static prison figure, and then he uses a number of unlawfully at large. I just would like to clarify for him that that number is a cumulative number, cumulative from 1989. So it is not unlawfully at large this year, specifically that that many people became unlawfully at large. This is a cumulative figure. He puts that against this year's prison population. To be accurate in his ratio, he would need to then take the total prison population over the past seven years approximately and put that figure of 135 against that to come to his ratio. So again he has put forward information. He has tried to create something.

\* (1650)

When the media were here, I was careful to not accept any of his information without checking because it is important to clarify for the people of Manitoba the information that the member is attempting to put forward. So I believe that clarifies the issue.

Now, to the Saskatchewan matter, there were a total of 29 inmates who have been transferred to Regina. There were 21 transferred originally, and there were eight transferred yesterday.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Has the minister been advised of the capacity of Saskatchewan to receive inmates from Manitoba?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Yes, we have been advised of the capacity in Saskatchewan.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** What is that capacity?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** I am advised the capacity is 31 inmates.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** What financial arrangements have been made with Saskatchewan then to facilitate this receiving of inmates?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** I am advised by Corrections that Manitoba has agreed to pay the cost of extra staffing required to accommodate the Manitoba inmates. The other costs will be determined when we have brought back all of our inmates from Saskatchewan into Manitoba.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Have arrangements also been made with the Province of Alberta for receiving inmates?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** I am informed that the potential to send inmates to Alberta exists, but we have not at this time made arrangements with that province to send inmates there. Obviously, the very best situation will be the reopening of Headingley Institution so inmates are here in Manitoba. It is in our movement towards the reopening of Headingley that Corrections is working diligently with the return-to-Headingley committee. We want to obviously work to opening our own institution as quickly as possible, but we are looking at opening it, working carefully with the return-to-work committee.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Has therefore Alberta offered to receive inmates?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Mr. Chair, I am told by the senior Corrections officials here that there were preliminary discussions about whether or not it may be possible to receive inmates, but a formal request has not gone from

us to receive inmates, nor has a formal answer been received back from Alberta about receiving inmates.

\* (1700)

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Were there discussions with Alberta at some level regarding the cost of the receipt of inmates in Alberta?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** I am informed that the answer is no, to the question of cost.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Is the minister aware whether there was a movement of inmates at the Milner Ridge Correctional institution following the riot in order to deal with the pressure on the correction system?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Mr. Chair, the question, I believe, was: Was there movement from Headingley to Milner? I am informed by Corrections officials that, yes, there was some movement from Headingley to Milner.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Is the minister aware of whether there was additional capacity at Milner in the days following the riot for the receipt of inmates?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Mr. Chair, I am told that Milner was at or near capacity at the time before the riot and that there were inmates that were transferred there which brought it to capacity, slightly over, following the riot. That is the best information that I have at the moment.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I want to deal with the staffing level at the Community Release Centre on Midland.

It is my understanding that there are currently three staff there, and, in addition to that, Bev Owens, who, I think, had been originally assigned to that centre, has been signed to work at Headingley and, since now, I think, has been transferred to Portage or elsewhere.

I was wondering if the minister can confirm my understanding that there are effectively, and currently, three SYs at the Community Release Centre?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Mr. Chair, the information that I have received from senior correctional officials, which is information dated today, the Community Release Centre staffing will continue to be adjusted upward and

downward as required, depending upon the workload fluctuation and demands. Since the riot and workload increases, the staffing was increased to six.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Would the minister confirm that the appropriation to the Community Release Centre is officially four and practically is three?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Mr. Chair, I am told that there is not an official appropriation to the CRC, that it is staffed out of Headingley and that the staffing is adjusted upward or downward depending upon the workload fluctuations.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** In 1993, there was an initiative known as the intensive supervision program for the CRC to supervise 130 individuals who would comprise the caseload and that the staffing would move from what I believe was about 10 or 10.5 SYs up to 14 SYs.

I am wondering if the minister can tell us what happened to those plans. Were the 14 SYs attained?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Mr. Chair, senior Corrections officials have provided me with some information which I think is important and shows that there is always more to it than what the member puts out at Question Period and attempts to draw some conclusions from. I am told that program audits and staffing reviews were conducted on the CRC in 1994, and they recommended reductions of staff pursuant to downward trends in workload and the following service changes. Services at the CRC were streamlined from multiprogrammatic, intermittent offender admission classification and transportation functions were realigned from the CRC to the Winnipeg Remand Centre and there were reductions in some community investigation functions and staffing levels have fluctuated from as low as two in the late '80s, which I mentioned earlier today, rising to 13 in '93-94, and that a total of seven positions were phased out as a result of the program audit and the staffing review and some of the changes in job function that I have spoken about. As I have said, I am informed that since the riot and because of the increasing workload the staffing has been increased to six presently.

\* (1710)

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Would the minister not recognize that a function of the number of cases at the CRC is a

function of commitment to transferring low-risk offenders to community alternatives? I ask the minister, what decisions have been made in that regard?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** The answers that I gave in Question Period to the member are still very much the answers now. I am informed and understand that the population of offenders became high risk and that the length of their sentence therefore increased. So there were fewer eligible for the CRC, and then following that we had rigorous confinement. Rigorous confinement also then lengthened the time for individuals to become eligible. First of all, we have always used halfway houses and because of the population we have moved to more halfway houses because of the greater amount of control that can be exercised in that setting.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Is the minister taking the position that inmates at Milner are high risk then?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Mr. Chair, I am not sure how the member draws that conclusion. I cannot quite see how he does that and, no, that is not what I am saying at all.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** It was planned under the intensive community supervision program to work at the CRC with Native Clan, and perhaps John Howard and Literacy Association to provide programming in addition to the 14 staff that was planned to be deployed there. I wonder if the minister could advise what happened to that plan?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** I am told that that programming function moved into the institutions and that is where inmates by and large took the programming and that it was seen as a duplication to offer some of the programming through the CRC.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Can the minister advise what staff had originally been responsible for the transportation function at the CRC? What staff positions?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** We are not able to provide the member with the information of the number of staff that were involved in the transportation at this time.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Aside from the number of staff or staff-years involved can the minister advise what staff position was responsible for transportation under the proposed intensive supervision program?



**Mrs. Vodrey:** Mr. Chair, I am told that staff do not have that detail available to them right now. I am wondering, the member is asking some questions where we do not have that information. Is there something that he is getting at? Is there something that he wants to know? Is there some underlying issue here that he would like us to comment on?

If there is, I wish he would say, because we had some information delivered by him today in Question Period, and it was incorrect, so I am obviously seeking to clear up any misperceptions which may be out there, to give the information. If there is something underlying the question of who the staff person is or that staff year, does he have some theory? Then I think it would be great if he would tell us so that we could then try and deal with his issue

He is asking questions which individuals here are not able to identify that specific person. I have to wonder what it is about that person he wants to know. If he would give us a little bit of information, then we would certainly be happy to check on it for him, or does he have some theory that he wants to talk about, in which case I will be able to give him again some further information on that theory?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Well, the position is, I think I laid out in Question Period clearly, that it appears that the CRC has gone from a planned 14 SYs in 1993 down to effectively three SYs now, although the minister now says that there were some additional people brought in following the riot. There obviously is an issue of concern.

She said, well, the staff was reduced because they did not have to perform the transportation function of inmates anymore. I want to know how many staff years were devoted to transportation, and if she cannot tell me that, if she can at least tell me the position descriptions. Was it the program co-ordinator, the community caseworkers, the correctional supervisors, was it the OCs? Who was responsible for transportation if that was such a critical reason for the reduction in staffing at the CRC?

\* (1720)

**Mrs. Vodrey:** I have said the number of staff working at the Community Release Centre is six, not three, which the member has continued to put on the record.

I have explained in Question Period, with some information have further explained here now in Estimates the reasons for the change. One of the issues that I raised as a reason for the change was that intermittent offender admission classification and transportation functions were realigned from the CRC to the Winnipeg Remand Centre. I explained that there was a realignment of function, and the member seems to be having trouble, saying, well, if you do not have to do that anymore, there still should be people there.

He speaks about the fact of his commitment to some number of 14, that, though the functions have changed, the programs may be offered within the institutions, which still hold fast, and it is just typical NDP, typical NDP, just go ahead and keep spending, keep the people there and do not really worry, no assessment whatsoever, just keep them going.

Mr. Chair, I have trouble understanding his point in that regard, and I think the people of Manitoba will have trouble understanding that point, too.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** It is my understanding, and the minister certainly has access to the information, that the intensive community supervision program staffing levels were not contingent on the transportation function. I wonder if the minister can comment on that.

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Mr. Chair, I spoke about services being streamlined from multiprogrammatic. I spoke about a review which was conducted because of the changes of where certain functions took place, including program functions. The member is focusing on transportation function. I am having trouble figuring out why he is hooked on that one word when I have spoken about it as multiprogrammatic. He might be able to enlighten the House on that.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** The other day we asked the question in addition to the TAs granted, and today the minister gave the time period April 26 to May 21. Can the minister also advise how many individuals were released outright and considered by the department at end of sentence during that same time period?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Mr. Chair, I am told that we do not have that number yet, that the focus of the staff's recent work, through the volumes of information and attempts to break it down

according to specific needs and placement and so on, focused on temporary absences, so I do not have the information today available on end of sentence.

I again would stress how careful we are wanting to be in terms of any numbers which we are giving, so it is clear that those numbers are numbers which have been checked against all other numbers, where a certain number is inclusive of another number, that we can explain that, so there is not faulty arithmetic being done, so there are not faulty conclusions being jumped to. So now the team which has been assisting in the review of temporary absences will be looking at other matters, and that will be among them.

I just want to say that one of our major efforts to provide all this information is, of course, for the people of Manitoba, but really we are wanting to make sure that this information is available in a readily available and understandable form for Mr. Hughes because Mr. Hughes will be beginning his very careful review this Friday. So our effort has been to accumulate for him and to be able to put forward to him the best information possible and to not have to have him—where he needs further clarification, then we will at least have a good base of information to provide that clarification.

We will be working to look at information in terms of releases. We have reviewed temporary absences. We have not yet done the intermittent sentences. We will be looking at that. Again, I would stress that our accountability in the interest of public safety has been to call this independent review, and that was done immediately. We are now at the time where that information is required, so that is what we are working towards within Corrections Division and with the staff that has been temporarily assigned to assist in putting those numbers together.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** They just acknowledge—it has been a rough four weeks certainly for individuals concerned with this and particularly for the staff of the department. I just want the staff to understand that we certainly fully recognize the pressures that they have had on them and how these extraordinary events have put pressures on both them and their families. We salute what they have had to deal with.

So just in the course of political debate and public dialogue, I think those who are involved often feel that that is not acknowledged. I guess this is a time to do that and just recognize the personal commitment that is required of people when they are in circumstances like this.

With those remarks, I have no further questions today, Mr. Chair, unless the time allows.

**Mrs. Vodrey:** I think it is important that the member has now finally recognized the efforts of Corrections Division and that it is people who work there and it is people who have families and who have put forward an extraordinary effort. I am very pleased to hear that he has acknowledged today too that the debate has been political. That is exactly what we have always said.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Radcliffe):** The hour being 5:30 p.m., committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

## IN SESSION

**The Acting Speaker (Mike Radcliffe):** The hour being 5:30 p.m., the House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 28, 1996

## CONTENTS

<b>ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS</b>			
		Public Accounts Sale; Stefanson	2785
<b>Presenting Petitions</b>		Acting Provincial Auditor L. Evans; Stefanson	2786
Home Care Services McGifford	2781	L. Evans; Stefanson	2787
<b>Reading and Receiving Petitions</b>		Balanced Budget Legislation L. Evans; Stefanson	2787
Home Care Services Struthers	2781	Community Release Centre Mackintosh; Vodrey	2788
Santos	2781	Louisiana-Pacific Wowchuk; Filmon	2789
Cerilli	2782	Wowchuk; Driedger	2790
<b>Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees</b>		Manitoba Hydro-Centra Gas Mihychuk; Praznik	2791
Committee of Supply Laurendeau	2782	<b>Speaker's Rulings</b> Dacquay	2792
<b>Tabling of Reports</b>		<b>Members' Statements</b> Rusalka Ukrainian Festival Helwer	2792
1995 Annual Report, Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund McIntosh	2782	Teaching Profession-Collective Bargaining Mihychuk	2793
<b>Introduction of Bills</b>		Tourism Summer Events Pitura	2793
Bill 58, Parental Responsibility Act Vodrey	2782	Maples Collegiate Racism Protest Kowalski	2794
Bill 300, Salvation Army Catherine Booth Bible College Incorporation Amendment Act Laurendeau	2782	Teaching Profession-Collective Bargaining Struthers	2794
<b>Oral Questions</b>			
Manitoba Telephone System Doer; Filmon	2783		
<b>Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation</b>			
Maloway; Cummings	2784		
Lamoureux; Cummings	2787		
Cummings	2788		
		<b>ORDERS OF THE DAY</b>	
		<b>Second Readings</b>	
		Bill 20, Highway Traffic Amendment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act Findlay	2795

Bill 40, Pension Benefits Amendment Act Toews	2796	Bill 48, University of Manitoba Amendment Act McIntosh	2799
Bill 44, City of Winnipeg Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act Reimer	2797	<b>Committee of Supply</b> Agriculture Justice	2801 2822