



Third Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

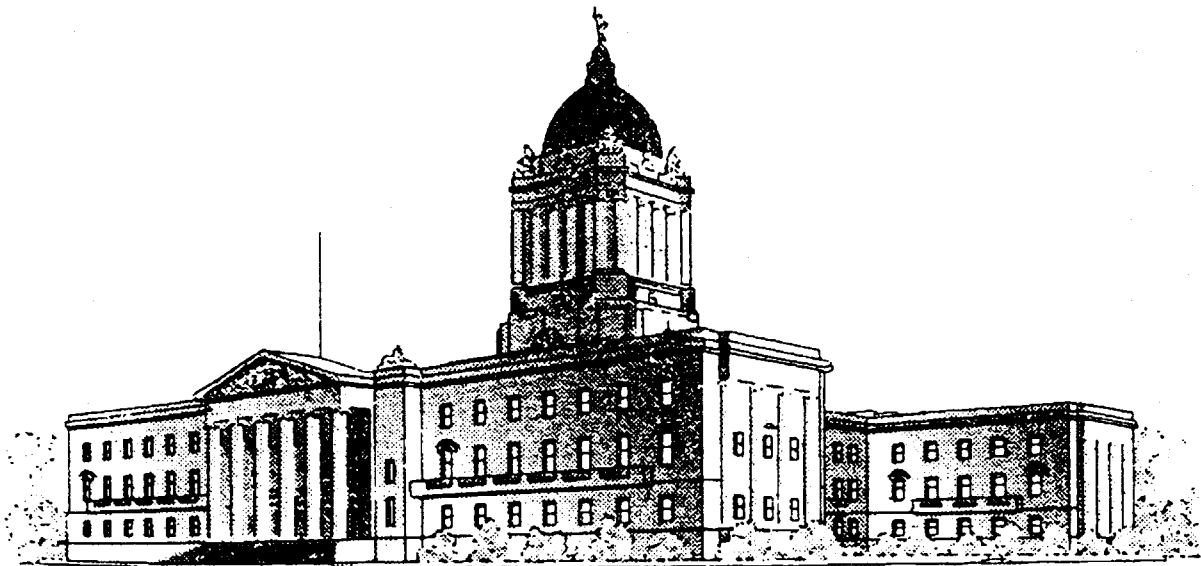
of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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The Honourable Louise M. Dacquay
Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise, Hon.	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary	Concordia	N.D.P.
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
DRIEDGER, Albert	Steinbach	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	P.C.
ERNST, Jim	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	Surgeon 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, Hon.	Riel	P.C.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PITURA, Frank, Hon.	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
RADCLIFFE, Mike, Hon.	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'sland	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.
Vacant	Portage la Prairie	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, May 7, 1997

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee of Supply

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Acting Chairperson of the Committee of Supply): Madam Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted certain resolutions, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

Flood Conditions Update

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Natural Resources): Madam Speaker, my report will be brief, but I must point out that this flood event is not over. There are still a lot of properties at risk behind the various dikes, both permanent and temporary, that are holding back the Red River.

We have seen the levels in the Red fall a quarter of a foot between Emerson and Ste. Agathe in the past 24 hours, half a foot at St. Adolphe and three-quarters of a foot at the floodway inlet. Levels are being maintained steady in the city of Winnipeg due to the floodway gates being lowered. At Selkirk the river fell about a quarter of a foot.

Environment Canada, however, indicates that there are 15 to 25 millimetres of rain that may have fallen in

the Red River Valley from Emerson to just south of Winnipeg. There is a chance of additional showers tonight when a cold front passes through. The rain will slow down the rate of decline in certain areas of the river levels but is not expected to produce any rises unless many areas in the valley receive in excess of 35 millimetres or more. More importantly, Madam Speaker, strong northerly winds are expected to develop late tonight and continue on Thursday. Serious wave action is expected in open areas of the Red River flood plain.

Levels in the Winnipeg area will begin to decline slowly in the next few days, and we hope to have a drop close to one foot by late on Saturday. The Grande Pointe area fell three-quarters of a foot since yesterday. Today's reading, however, was affected by wind, but we believe levels will continue to fall gradually. Near Netley Creek, the levels have fallen slightly, but they could see an expected rise of a foot or more due to strong northerly winds tomorrow.

We must put all of our help and understanding behind those who are manning the dikes and express our appreciation for all of the work that is being done by officials and volunteers alike.

Manitoba Emergency Management Organization Update

Hon. Frank Pitura (Minister of Government Services): Madam Speaker, in following my colleague the Minister of Natural Resources' statement, a brief update on the Manitoba Emergency Management Organization.

Right now MEMO is in a transitional stage, moving away from a flood mitigation works and maintenance stage to operations primarily involved with the re-entry and recovery process for all those that are affected by this disaster. They are working very hard on re-entry. Re-entry, I think, is a very vital process that has to take place, and we would like to see it expedited as quickly and efficiently as possible. So, to this end, the committee looking after re-entry has sent a guideline

for all residents affected by the flooding called After Flooding, and this is going to be distributed through municipal offices and through Canada Post at no cost.

It has also been talked about in recent days about the Roseau First Nations being able to re-enter their community. Now, in respect to the damage to the road which would give them access to their community, the kind of damage that was done to the road, the repair may not be as easily put into place as was first thought, so this could take a number of days before actual re-entry can take place, although the community is dry and ready.

* (1335)

There is also a co-ordination team that has been set up that will work along with the volunteer agencies with respect to the disposition of financial donations, and all municipal authorities will be consulted in all of these decisions by that committee as well as getting their input.

With respect to the armed forces, the joint forces operation of the army, navy, air force and reserves, the numbers of military personnel deployed in support of flood operations will be reduced by approximately 1,200 persons today or tomorrow, and that is to enable these 1,200 persons to—they are set to be deployed on another assignment, and so it gives them some time at home and also for additional training. However, the personnel that are here are still deployed and continue to assist in dike maintenance and surveillance, security of the flooded areas and as well in rescue-team operations as they were called upon.

In the area of the environment, the Department of Environment is now into discussion with municipal authorities on the issue of their disposal sites that may have been contaminated by flood waters and how to bring these sites back. The question of how to dispose of the sandbags is also being addressed with the municipal authorities so that the sandbags can be disposed of in an orderly fashion.

In the Department of Agriculture, the department is distributing information on stress to staff and farmers as and where required. The Manitoba Emergency

Management Organization is continuing to provide 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week service.

That is my report, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): I thank the ministers for making their statements to the House again today. Let us all hope that the wind and the rain do not do a lot of damage to the dikes that are placed in position to protect homes in the city today.

I think what we need to do though is make sure that we are absolutely vigilant in keeping our eye on what happens north of the city of Winnipeg from here on in. It is good news to hear that the levels are receding slightly. That is a good sign. Our hopes now are that the water that is moving north does not do a whole lot of damage, but I think we need to be absolutely vigilant in keeping an eye on that water flow that will be heading north into Lake Winnipeg and then spilling out from the lake in the rivers that flow from Lake Winnipeg, because they will have an effect on people living on those rivers in those communities in the northern part of our province.

I too, just briefly, in conclusion, want to congratulate and thank those who are staffing the dikes today as we speak, throughout the night. I think a big thank you needs to go out to those folks who are taking the time to staff the dikes and make sure that there are no breaches and finding the leaks before they become major events in different parts of our communities.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act): Madam Speaker, I am tabling the 1996 Annual Report for Manitoba Public Insurance.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 29—The Education Administration Amendment Act

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Environment): Madam Speaker, on behalf of the honourable Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. McIntosh), I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Family

Services (Mrs. Mitchelson), that leave be given to introduce Bill 29, The Education Administration Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'administration scolaire), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

* (1340)

**Bill 30—The Farm Practices Protection
Amendment Act**

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment (Mr. McCrae), that leave be given to introduce Bill 30, The Farm Practices Protection Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection des pratiques agricoles), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, having been advised of the contents of this bill, recommends it to the House. As well, I would like to table the message of His Honour.

Motion agreed to.

**Bill 31—The Livestock and Livestock Products and
Consequential Amendments Act**

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Findlay), that leave be given to introduce Bill 31, The Livestock and Livestock Products and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi sur les animaux de ferme et leurs produits et modifications corrélatives), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, having been advised of the contents of this bill, recommends it to the House. Again, I table His Honour's message.

Motion agreed to.

**Bill 32—The Workplace Safety and Health
Amendment Act (2)**

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Labour): I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Justice

(Mr. Toews), that leave be given to introduce Bill 32, The Workplace Safety and Health Amendment Act (2) (Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur la sécurité et l'hygiène du travail), and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Speaker's Statement

Madam Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to share two letters and two resolutions that I have received from neighbouring provinces, with all members of the House.

Dear Madam Speaker. On Thursday, April 24, 1997, members of the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly agreed to send a message to the people of Manitoba who have been experiencing the devastation caused by the flooding of the Red River. Enclosed is a copy of the resolution brought forward by Mrs. Lila O'Connor. Sincerely, the Honourable Wayne Gaudet, Speaker.

This is from the Nova Scotia House of Assembly.

WHEREAS people who live along the banks of the Red River in the province of Manitoba have to evacuate their homes because of flooding; and

WHEREAS in July 1996 several members of this House had the opportunity to attend the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference in Winnipeg; and

WHEREAS while attending that conference the members of this House visited many of the areas that are presently being evacuated, meeting many of the fine people who live there;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that all members of this House extend to the people who live along the shores of the Red River their expression of concern and caring during a most difficult time.

The motion was unanimously carried.

* (1345)

Additionally, I am in receipt of a letter from the Honourable Lloyd Snow, Speaker of the House of

Assembly of Newfoundland and Labrador: On Thursday, May 1, 1997, the Newfoundland House of Assembly gave unanimous consent to a resolution acknowledging the difficulties presently encountered by the people of your province who live along the banks of the Red River. Through the resolution, members of the House of Assembly wish to convey to the people of Manitoba their concern for the challenges that your citizens are facing. We want them to know that our prayers and thoughts are with them. We trust that the efforts that have been made in the last few weeks to protect lives and property will be sufficient and that, as the flood reaches its crest, the dikes will hold.

This resolution was also passed unanimously.

This is to certify that the following resolution was approved and adopted by the honourable House of Assembly of the Province of Newfoundland on the 1st day of May, 1997:

WHEREAS the people of Manitoba who live in the Red River Valley are facing a monumental challenge brought on by natural causes; and

WHEREAS all Canadians share in the struggle of the people of Manitoba and of the Premier and government, the mayors and municipal councils, relief organizations, water control management authorities and all other emergency teams to minimize the life-threatening challenges and the property damages thrust upon them by the unusually high levels of the spring runoff in the flood ravaged areas of southern Manitoba;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Assembly of Newfoundland and Labrador express our concern and, as members of the Canadian family, want them to know of our prayers, thoughts and best wishes as they struggle to control the harsh realities that nature has unleashed.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Flooding Water Levels—Grande Pointe

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

On Monday I asked the Premier some questions dealing with the information we had received from the people of the Grande Pointe area and relatives of the people from Grande Pointe. Consistently throughout the discussions we had, the people were saying to us that all along they were given forecasts that would indicate that they would not receive the amount of water that they eventually received on Friday.

Again last night, in a town hall meeting for the people of Ritchot, people were speaking at that meeting, and people were raising the fact that they were assured by the Department of Natural Resources and the Water Services branch and the people working for the provincial government that the water levels would not be as high as eventually happened in the Friday flooding that took place with many of the homes in the Grande Pointe area. They had been very concerned when they were raising it with us, they were very concerned at the meeting last night and I would like to ask the Premier: What happened to the forecasts for the Grande Pointe area? It is something I asked him on Monday. What has been the evaluation of the forecasting that has been conducted at Grande Pointe, and why were we wrong, regrettably, in that situation?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Natural Resources): Madam Speaker, the concern and the angst of the people who were living in Grande Pointe, we certainly can feel for their problems and want to do everything we can to make sure that they know that we are examining and reviewing what may have caused the water levels that they saw. I want to put it clearly on the record that almost every forecast that the department brought forward has proven to be right on the—almost within the inch of where the predicted levels were. That does not help the people in Grande Pointe when they look out the window or look back at their properties.

The fact is, when we saw phenomena in the movement of water in the valley on the west side—and let me use the west side of the valley as an example—where there were observations of water running north over a road and then going east over the next road and then going north and then going east and then turning around and going south again depending on the elevations of the road, that has caused some very unusual patterns of water when we have seen such an

enormous amount of water coming through the valley that has given some unpredictability to the direction that water would flow.

Mr. Doer: People again were asking—and they had been phoning the Water Resources branch and the Water Services branch and the provincial government, and they felt that these assurances from their department really put back, if not totally delayed, any preparation when they were told not to worry about the water levels in terms of the predicted crest in that area. Of course, I have quoted the projections from the press releases previously on Monday in this Chamber.

had been built up, by a road that can become breached. In fact, again to use the other side of the lake as an example, the water today has reached the Brunkild dike in all parts of the dike, and it had been sitting with four feet of a head two and a half miles or two miles south of that dike. That is an indication of the enormity of what they are dealing with.

Mr. Doer: We will continue to pursue the issue of cutbacks of staff and its impact on forecasts when we hear more definitive answers of what happened in terms of the Grande Pointe situation and other situations in the province.

* (1350)

Department of Natural Resources Staffing—Impact on Flood Forecasting

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): I would like to ask the minister: What has been the impact of the reduction of some 40 percent in the staff in the department of Water Resources? What has been the impact on forecasts and the ability to analyze water flow? At the meeting last night people talked about a 6-foot culvert that was not identified. The staff of the minister also said that they were not aware of that situation. What has been the impact of government cutbacks on forecasting capacity for water flow in the province of Manitoba?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Natural Resources): The ability of the department to assemble and forecast on the information that they have available has continued at the same high level that we have always expected, but remember, in the event that we are facing right now and we are still facing, this is a flood event that is larger than anything that has been in recent recorded documentation.

As you get to the outside edges of what is now Lake Morris, the direction of flow and the levels to the outside edges that may redirect some water is very difficult to model. The direction that the department has always provided to individuals is that this is the level and please build with an additional 2 feet of freeboard. None of that can entirely preclude the possibility—and we saw two events where this occurred—of the water being redirected by a road that

Disaster Assistance Deductible

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): I would like to ask the First Minister—he mentioned yesterday that no province in Canada had no deductible in terms of the compensation package, and we cited the Province of Alberta, which had, in our information, dropped the deductible from the 20 percent. We also cited Quebec which he answered yesterday in the Chamber. Last night at the meeting his own member of the Legislature the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson) said he did not know what the government was going to do with the 20 percent deductible. Further to that, the federal member of Parliament said that they were willing to compensate and look at a reduction of the 20 percent deductible.

Has the Premier got an update on the analysis of Alberta, and what definitive answers can they give to the people who attended a town hall meeting last night in Ritchot in terms of not knowing what the status of that would be?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Indeed the member for La Verendrye has been out there working with his constituents to fight the flood every day now for a period of a couple of weeks. My recollection of the response I gave yesterday was specific to the question about Quebec. I do not believe that I said that no province did not have a deductible, because I know from the information I had in front of me yesterday that it clearly says that Newfoundland has no deductible and Alberta has no deductible in their disaster financial assistance.

Getting back to the question of the member opposite, it has certainly been apparent, during all of the matters that we have had to encounter and all of the decisions that we as a government have had to take, that we are facing unprecedented circumstances, that we are facing unprecedented times. On the other hand, with respect to the way in which we have attempted to treat people, we have always indicated that we want to do what is reasonable and fair under the circumstances. Those kinds of principles have been applied in many disasters, even since we have been in office—in 1989 when we had unprecedented forest fires in northern Manitoba; 1995, when we had one of the largest flooding circumstances certainly this century on the Assiniboine River; last year when we had some very large flooding circumstances on the Red River. It will turn out to be the fourth largest flood this century as it was in 1996.

* (1355)

In every case—and we have made some decisions along the way, going from \$30,000 maximum to \$100,000 maximum in recognition of what is fair, reasonable and meets the test of a broadly applicable assessment. We certainly are looking at all of these elements with respect to this particular disaster. We want to acknowledge certainly the burden that people are bearing, the trauma that they have faced and will continue to face. But, in so doing, we also want to create circumstances that would be applicable in any other circumstance that we faced in the future and not just do this in recognition of a federal election that is ongoing, not just do it in recognition of this being greater than any other circumstance that we have faced.

So I will say to him that all of the issues that he has raised will not just be considered by us, as a government, but we will take advice, his advice, the advice of the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) and others who have urged us to take a different view of this. We will take the advice of the people who have put together a financial support package and knowing that already those who have looked at these funds that have been raised for flood relief in Manitoba, that certainly many of them have indicated that they are prepared to look at the circumstances of those who might face a deductible and not be able to manage that. So the need as well as the circumstances of individuals can be taken care of, we believe, by an appeal

mechanism that exists in our disaster financial assistance program as well as by the funds that are being collected for special flood relief and administered by a nonpartisan group that is outside of government.

In addition to all of those things, of course, there will also be the obvious backstop that always exists, and that is the government itself taking a look at circumstances and again addressing whether or not what policies are in place, what circumstances are in place are fair and equitable and reasonable in the circumstances, and we will be judged on that by people right across this province, I am sure.

Mr. Doer: New question to the First Minister: I asked yesterday for the government to look at the policy and the changes in the policy that have resulted in Alberta. The Premier looked at the policies that had changed in Quebec. We recognize some other provinces have not dropped the deductible. I would like to further ask in terms of this issue—and I recognize some money towards that deductible could be utilized from the great support we have had from other people in other provinces, and I recognize also that we have to take a long-term view of this situation, notwithstanding the federal situation.

Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the Premier: Would he look at the policy of the deductible with the great losses due to this flood disaster and look at it also in light of the fact that not all items are covered by the existing policy? Secondly—and we support the fact that only the depreciated value of items is covered. We are not suggesting the government change that, but that obviously also mitigates against the great disaster that people have. Will he look at the deductible policy in light of those other factors that are part of the present policy that is circulated by the government?

Mr. Filmon: We will take all of those things into account, as the Leader of the Opposition has recommended. We also will take into account the fact that people do not pay any premiums for this kind of coverage. It is given basically without having had to pay premiums, which other people would have had to do in order to get this kind of coverage, and also that insurance normally does carry a deductible. So we will have to take all of those circumstances into account and

try and ensure that at the end of the day we have a balanced and fair approach.

* (1400)

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, I think we welcome the new flexibility being shown by the First Minister opposite.

Disaster Assistance Deductible

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): The municipalities serving areas like Ste. Agathe, Grande Pointe, Aubigny and other areas did not have the opportunity, not because of any particular failure but because of the reasons that the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Cummings) has pointed out, that simply the unpredictability of this flood was such that preparation was not always undertaken in areas that were subsequently flooded, not because people did not want to prepare but because events overtook them—they, therefore, were not able to mitigate damages to their own municipal infrastructures. They are faced, therefore, with enormous costs in relation to their ability to pay. What steps is the province now prepared to take to deal with the ability-to-pay principle in regard to municipalities, particularly the ones most hard hit in the areas that I have mentioned?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, I think the first thing we have to recognize is that we do not have any quantifiable bills at the moment. We do not have any bills submitted. We do not have any real—we have ballparks, we have estimates, but that may not be accurate. I do not think that you set firm policy change based on speculation, and that is what we are dealing with at the moment. Just as we could have speculated about worst-case scenarios for Winnipeg, we would have been wrong to set policy based on that. We would have been wrong to take actions other than back-up systems in place. So I do not think that now is the time for us to be dealing with those circumstances until we have much more definitive information at our disposal.

Mr. Sale: Will the Premier, who must know by now that some municipalities do in fact know that even their flood-prevention costs have greatly exceeded their

annual budget in revenue terms—those bills are already known—will he not simply reinstate the flexible provision found in the disaster relief guidelines, Disaster Assistance Board guidelines which were in place until January of 1997, the guidelines that were in place through all of the previous incidents which made it possible, depending on the good judgment and necessity of the situation, to waive or reduce or amend the deductible or the co-payment levels of municipalities, businesses or individuals? Simply restore the previous policy.

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, I have indicated that we have a lot of thinking to do, we have a lot of evaluation to do and we will take the time necessary to get all the information that should be put on the table when we make those judgments.

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, will the Minister of Northern Affairs confirm that it is the policy of the federal government to waive deductibles in the case of the municipal and local authorities under federal jurisdiction and that they did so in 1989, 1993 and 1996 in regard to lands, roads, infrastructure located in lands under the responsibility of the federal government?

Hon. David Newman (Minister of Northern Affairs): I do not have the answer to that question, but I will take that as notice and get the answer for my friend.

Disaster Assistance Food Allowance

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Madam Speaker, according to the government's news bulletin as of Sunday, May 4, more than 17,000 Manitobans evacuated from their homes have had to rely on assistance for food and lodging through Emergency Measures Organization. Of course, many of these Manitobans have not been able to work or have lost their access to their regular income while being forced out of their homes.

I want to ask the minister responsible for Emergency Measures: What has been the rate of allowance for food per day for people who have had either to have their own accommodations arranged or have had to have accommodations arranged through Emergency Measures and the Red Cross?

Hon. Frank Pitura (Minister of Government Services): Madam Speaker, those people that had to evacuate their premises and consequently move into one of the reception centres, either in rural Manitoba or in Winnipeg, once they registered with the emergency social services group with regard to the accommodation that they had, they were allowed to have—and I do not have the numbers in front of me, so I hope the member will forgive me if I am out a dollar or two, but I believe it is around the \$20 to \$22 per diem for those people that were lodged in a hotel setting and had to use a restaurant facility for food. I believe those families that had accommodation within an apartment block-type setting where they could cook their own meals were allowed \$7.40 a day, I believe, for groceries per person in the family.

Shelter Allowance

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): I would appreciate it if the minister would provide me the accurate dollar figures since he has said he does not have them available. I want to ask him then to clarify: What was the rate for lodging with hotels, the residences, the different colleges and universities that have been arranged through Emergency Measures operations?

Hon. Frank Pitura (Minister of Government Services): Madam Speaker, I do not have an answer to that. I will take that question as notice and get the information for my honourable friend.

Rate Changes

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Can the minister tell us when this policy for these rates was set, and have there been any changes recently in this policy for the rates through Emergency Measures operations?

Hon. Frank Pitura (Minister of Government Services): Again, Madam Speaker, I do not have the specific information for that question. I will take it as notice and get the information for the member.

Disaster Assistance Deductible

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Earlier today the

Premier indicated that what he wants is something that is reasonable, he wants something that is fair. The government's ability to forecast flood levels many would argue was impacted because of some of the cutbacks that this government had enacted in previous years.

The question that I have for the Premier: Given the special circumstances, the false sense of security that residents in the Grande Pointe area, for example, were given, should they have to be additionally penalized by having to pay a deductible? Will the Premier acknowledge that in fact special consideration should be given to these area residents?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, I will resist the temptation to talk about the federal reductions that are planned and perhaps some that have already taken place by the member's colleagues in Ottawa with respect to water resources monitoring in the Manitoba watershed area.

I am informed, and I have the details—I could go through position by position—where any reductions took place in the area of Water Resources. They were in the area of construction workforce; they were in the area of design workforce, because those matters are being contracted out. It makes little sense to have people on staff to do design and construction where you are paying them for 365 days of the year where it could be done on a job basis at lesser cost to the taxpayer. I am sure that the member opposite would agree with that, that we do not want to be having people paid to do a full year's work when perhaps the time of their work is less than half of the year and you can do it at less cost.

All of the positions, as I went through them one by one, did not involve people who were doing monitoring for water levels and measuring for water levels. Add to that the fact that we now have computerization of much of this; we have in fact better information available to us than we have ever had in our history.

What all of these things cannot do, of course, is predict nature. If I adopted the attitude that is being portrayed by the member opposite and others, it would say that today we should be able to, if there is any damage due to sewer backups or water problems because of the precipitation, sue Environment Canada

because they were only predicting 15 millimetres and we now look as though we are going to get 50 millimetres. Every time something like that happens—and we had sewer backups massively in 1993—you cannot sue Environment Canada because they cannot accurately predict a power much greater than us. I know that sometimes those of us in this Chamber think that we are pretty powerful, but there is a power much greater than we are that controls the weather, that controls the environment, that controls all of those circumstances, and this massive flow of water that has been visited upon us this year is not something that any of us either can control or predict to the kind of accuracy that some people are suggesting should be done. I think, under the circumstances, the Water Resources engineers were remarkably accurate in most areas.

* (1410)

I can tell the member opposite that I visited six different locations on Friday, speaking to municipal officials in Emerson, in Letellier, in Dominion City, in St. Jean Baptiste, in Morris, in the R.M. of Morris and in St. Adolphe, and people were saying compliments, nothing but compliments for the accuracy of the predictions, given all of the variables that they faced. So I will not accept the premise of his argument that somehow we can hold responsible the Water Resources engineers for what appears to be an anomaly in the Grande Pointe area that nobody seemed to be able to predict.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, what we are asking the government to do, and particularly the Premier, is to remove the deductible for flood damages where the homeowner can in fact prove that incorrect information was provided. Whatever the Premier might say, he must surely to goodness acknowledge the fact that many of the residents did have a false sense of security in an area. The vast majority of Manitoba, the accuracy was absolutely amazing how accurate the bureaucrats were. In one area, to no fault of their own, individuals did not anticipate. They were told, in some cases, that they were not going to—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, firstly, I understand the trauma that people are facing and the tremendous

emotionalism that surrounds this issue, but Water Resources engineers do not go to individual properties and say this is where you should do it. They put out figures daily at different points along the Red River system, and they leave it to others to extrapolate and interpret among those different levels where their houses are and what their level of protection ought to be. Local authorities oftentimes transmit and transfer the data to the individuals or attempt to assist them, but at the end of the day the individuals who decide that this is where they want to locate their properties in a flood-prone area, on a flood plain have to take some responsibility. We, I think, want to do everything that we think is humanly possible to support them in their efforts, but I do not think it is reasonable to suggest that it is the Water Resources engineers who have to be held responsible for an individual decision or interpretation of information and data that is made available.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, as my second supplementary question to the Premier: Will the Premier or this government commit that those individuals for whatever reasons of limited financial means will in fact be allowed to use up to the full \$100,000 if need be, that they are not going to be fearful of not being able to come up with the deductible portion that might be difficult for some people? Will he guarantee that the deductible in one way or another, whether it is through low-interest loans, no-interest loans, a reduction of the deductible, that those individuals will be able to get their work done?

Mr. Filmon: I believe that everybody in this House and indeed all Manitobans want to act with a good deal of compassion as they face the circumstances along with their fellow Manitoba citizens who are in difficulty right now. That being said, I think that there have to be some principles that have to be applied of fairness, of balance and of reasonableness. That is what is behind our desire to try and look at this on a broader basis as opposed to doing something in the middle of an election campaign or under great stress to try and achieve some purpose.

So we are certainly aware that there will be a number of opportunities for people to address what they believe is inadequate support if they believe there is inadequate support for their flood relief requirements and their damage payments, and that includes an appeal process

to the disaster financial assistance program. That includes a committee that is being set up now. I even heard on the radio this morning people from public service organizations, service clubs, who are suggesting that, if there are people in hardship who cannot afford to pay the deductible, they will be looking at those kinds of issues. The people who have been collecting money—and there have been generous donations from right across this country—will be looking at these kinds of issues and try to address them again out of a sense of understanding people's needs and people's abilities to pay. I think that is the way that we should look at it and say there is a whole series of potential applications for these issues of hardship and that there will be people looking at them.

ManGlobe Research and Development Project

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): My question is to the Deputy Premier. The Deputy Premier continually refers to the ManGlobe project as an R and D project when he knows full well that it is a failed Internet mall. Madam Speaker, if it is an R and D project, then why does page 3 of his ManGlobe Virtual Corporation status report of July 11, '95, say the following? Under provincial government it says: Funds from the Canada-Manitoba Communications Agreement will be used mostly for human resources along with other operation expenses.

If this is an R and D project, then why did he not use the money for R and D?

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): It certainly is important that the human element be very much involved in this type of activity in doing the research and development that does in fact lead to job creation, to new technology that can be applied and the broader context as it relates to the Internet activity. I can assure the member and assure all members of this House that the intent of the project, the support that was given will in fact continue to be used as it was intended to do and that is to create employment and new activities.

Mr. Maloway: The minister knows that there was no R and D developed here. I do not know why he keeps insisting that there is. Mr. Fred Holder from SHL at a

steering committee meeting July 14, 1995, was noted as saying that the likelihood providing an off-the-shelf solution through the initial pilot and port to a blueprint model, architecture already developed by SHL, clearly indicating that there was no R and D in this project.

Will the minister admit that this is not an R and D project but a failed Internet shopping mall?

Mr. Downey: No, Madam Speaker.

Salaries

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Madam Speaker, my final supplementary to the same minister is this: Why does the minister continue to hide the salary figure for the president when the project figures clearly show that the salary was \$240,000? If this is not the figure, then what was the actual figure?

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): I have been informed that part of the agreement by which financing was made available to the individual, that the salary would be no more than \$90,000 a year. I made reference in the House last week to 18 months of something like \$130,000-some. I think that is comparable to what I said the other day.

* (1420)

Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation No-Fault Insurance

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, the Minister responsible for MPIC just released the 1996 annual report for MPIC, and there is clear indication that rather than take the concept of no-fault, which was intended to make sure that claimants received the full amount of claims, we are now seeing evidence in a report of what has happened under the no-fault system brought in by this government, which ignored 35 recommendations, amendments brought in by the NDP, that the injury costs going to Manitobans under MPIC have dropped from \$194 million prior to no-fault to \$103 million. I am wondering if the Minister responsible for MPIC can confirm that this is partly due to the fact that the number of claims now filed under this new system has been cut by nearly one-half.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act): Madam Speaker, thanks to the good work of the Manitoba Public Insurance in sponsoring RoadWise projects and getting people involved, part of the answer to the honourable member's question may have to do with the fact that at least 39 fewer Manitobans lost their lives in 1996, and there were almost 4,500 fewer Manitobans injured in collisions. That would account for some of the numbers the honourable member referred to, but the important thing that Manitoba Public Insurance does is it plays a role as a key partner in bringing about a safer Manitoba, which is one of the things that MPIC can do and is doing as reflected in these numbers.

Mr. Ashton: I am wondering if the minister would care to read his own report. Will he confirm that his own report which he just tabled a few minutes ago indicates that the no-fault system is, quote, performing even better than anticipated, resulting in a lower-cost per-injury claim?

Will he confirm the fact that the way they have implemented no-fault has ensured that Manitobans who get injured as a result of automobile accidents are now receiving far less benefits than they did under the previous system, because this government ignored 35 amendments brought in by the New Democrats?

Mr. McCrae: The honourable member cannot have it both ways. He and his colleagues support the no-fault aspect of Autopac insurance coverage on the one hand, and then they come along and complain about it when it appears to be working to the benefit of Manitobans. The fact is that the honourable member forgets a very significant feature of all of this: 35 percent or so of the costs of these kinds of claims in the past had to do with legal costs. The honourable member for Thompson wants to go back to that system; well, let him say so.

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, I want to make sure that Manitobans injured as a result of automobile accidents receive what they are entitled to.

I would like the minister to explain—because obviously he either has not read this report or does not want to listen to the facts—can he explain again why the number of claims has dropped from \$194 million to

\$103 million, when in fact his own report indicates it is not because of declines in legal costs; it is not because of declines in number of accidents; it is because under the new system Manitobans who get injured receive far less benefits, something that is confirmed in this report.

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, again, the honourable member ignores altogether the wonderful results that Manitobans are achieving for themselves simply by being better drivers and paying more attention to the rules of the road and going along with the concepts embodied in the whole RoadWise program. So, again, I cannot understand the honourable member not supporting the results being achieved under the no-fault insurance aspect of MPI when what is required is to see that people are appropriately compensated for legitimate claims that they are making, and every indication suggests that is exactly what is happening. Indeed, we have in place a review of the no-fault, which was part of the legislation brought forward about four years ago, and that review under the stewardship of Mr. Sam Uskiw is underway right now.

Fishing Industry Regulations—Consultations

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): Madam Speaker, the day before yesterday the Minister of Natural Resources announced some regulations regarding fishing on Lake Winnipeg. The minister in one meeting with the north basin fishermen promised that, before he would introduce any further regulations, he would meet with them again and get their input on the regulations that he was considering before he made them law.

Why did the minister not consult with these fishermen before he announced these regulations on Monday?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Natural Resources): Well, Madam Speaker, the nature of the changes that we made were such that I think the majority of the fishermen in all basins of Lake Winnipeg should feel comfortable that they fall well within the parameters of advice that they were providing to me. We did not make any radical deviations from the recommendations that they made. In fact, I suspected that the criticism might have been that we did not make enough radical changes.

Nevertheless, the most significant aspect of this is to contain the opening of the fishing season until the appropriate number of pickerel and sauger have spawned. I am sure that the member for Dauphin and every fisherman on the lake would concur that we need to make sure that we have an adequate spawn in order to rehabilitate the stocks in the lake.

Whitefish—Net Mesh Size

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): Madam Speaker, if the minister was worried about conserving fish stocks, why did he then reduce the mesh size from 5 inches to 4 and a quarter inches for the whitefish fleet in the north part of Lake Winnipeg?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Natural Resources): Madam Speaker, that change is quite in line with the other areas of that lake. Remember—and I am sure the member is well aware—that there is a significant volume of whitefish available, but there is a significant restriction on the whitefish fleet so that they may only capture 20 percent of their take in pickerel and sauger. That change in mesh size really only allows for the capture or the harvest to proceed without changing the type of fish that is being taken or the volume that is being taken in the two species about which we are concerned. It does, in fact, harmonize the mesh size with most of the other areas in the lake.

Madam Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mrs. Vodrey), 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.

Madam Speaker: Due to the unavailability of the Deputy Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau), the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) will Chair the Committee of Supply in the Chamber, and the

honourable member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck) will Chair the Committee of Supply in Room 255.

* (1430)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

CONSUMER AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Dyck): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This afternoon this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255 will resume consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. When the committee last sat, it had been considering item 5.3. Corporate Affairs (h) Companies Office on page 26 of the Estimates book. Shall the item pass?

* (1440)

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Perhaps before we begin today, I would like to ask the minister whether he was able to make arrangements for us to have the people from the Insurance branch attend—so he did receive that message then—and the Cooperative and Credit Union Regulation people—we want to ask questions about co-ops.

Hon. Mike Radcliffe (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Yes, Mr. Chairman, I am told that both those individual directors will be scheduled and present in the committee room today. We at the present time have Mr. Rick Wilson, who is the senior officer from the Land Titles Office, here and is ready to assist with any questions that my honourable colleague may have. We have scheduled the other individuals for reasonable intervals throughout the afternoon.

Mr. Maloway: Well, I guess I would like to begin by asking virtually the same questions of this SOA as I have of the other SOAs, and that is for a list of the fees that they charged before it became an SOA and the current list of fees and any schedule of increases that have occurred between the time it became an SOA and the current fees?

Mr. Radcliffe: Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to be able to tell my honourable friend that in fact the only

increase in fees that has been occasioned at the Land Titles Office in Manitoba is a \$10 rise for the registration of mortgages and transfers, and that is the only fee increase there has been since 1988.

As my honourable colleague no doubt is aware, there is a land transfer tax now on transfers of land which is on a graduated basis depending on the value of the real estate that is being transferred or the mortgage, the face value of the mortgage, that is being registered, and so therefore—[interjection] I stand corrected. I did recollect, but I was not sure of myself. The mortgage is a flat \$60 charge right now. So this represents on an \$80,000 house an increase of 2.8 percent, and on a \$100,000, it would be a 2 percent increase.

The reason for this is in order to make the service a cost-recovery service in order that we are able to supply nothing but the best of service to Manitobans and to be able to employ high-quality employees and to support the work that is involved with the registrations of the documentation and to keep up with the technology in the Land Titles Office.

Mr. Maloway: Then could the minister tell us what the profitability of this SOA was for the last 12 months? Was it better or worse than projected?

Mr. Radcliffe: I am pleased to be able to tell my honourable colleague that, in fact, in the past year, LTO was running at a small deficit. It was not making money for the province of Manitoba. The \$10 fee increase was an attempt by the administration to bring the Land Titles section of the registry office to a break-even position.

Mr. Maloway: That was the case this past year, but what is it projected to show for the next year and the year after? I am looking for the lead-up to the run up to the 1999 election, of course.

Mr. Radcliffe: Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to be able to advise my honourable colleague that the Land Titles Office, the Personal Property Security Registry have been combined into a special operating agency to be known as the registry office for the province of Manitoba. Now, the Personal Property Security Registry has always run at a significant profit, and there the fees, as you are no doubt aware, are determined by

the value of the security that is being registered. This coming year the registry will be paying a dividend under the business plan of \$1.8 million to the Consolidated Revenue of the Province of Manitoba. That will be increased. The following year the registry office will pay a \$2-million dividend for the year '99-2000.

* (1450)

Mr. Maloway: The \$2 million projected in 1998-99, now that money from the SOAs—I am trying to get at the financial arrangements that you have with the Consolidated Fund. If you produce a deficit in any given year, then how is the deficit offset? By money flowing from the Consolidated Fund? You know, you had a deficit some years. When you work on a profitability, you are turning your profits year by year to the Consolidated Fund. You are not allowed to keep them in your fund.

Mr. Radcliffe: I would challenge my honourable colleague on that. My understanding at least of an SOA is that the SOA files a business plan with government and there are all the attributes, of course, of an activity which has the ability to stand alone, is self-contained, et cetera. The SOA will be assigned and agrees to payment of a dividend to the Consolidated Revenue branch and then anything over, anything earned in addition to that dividend by way of revenue to that SOA remains at the SOA level to be used as the administration of that SOA sees fit. They cannot, obviously, take trips or go to consumer living or anything like that—it goes to proper administration of the department—but that is the incentive there so that it gives them the freedom to manage their affairs in such a fashion as they think fit and gives them a little more independence.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Chairman, when the election time comes though, it is quite conceivable that a political decision can be made and the user fees can be lowered at that time. The minister cannot deny that.

Mr. Radcliffe: Well, I think that my honourable colleague's question is speculative at best. Anything is possible, Mr. Chair, but I would say with great sincerity that I would have a great difficulty with that sort of governance at this point in time unless, of course, there

was a vast reduction in staff or a significant diminution in the collective agreement or wage rates of the civil servants of the province of Manitoba. But from what I know of the MGEU, I do not know that that is a realistic possibility.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Chairman, has the minister or anybody in his department been approached regarding privatization of this SOA or has interest been shown in the privatization in any quarter at this point?

Mr. Radcliffe: Absolutely not.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Chairman, I wanted to deal with the computer situation with regard to this SOA. Could the minister give us an update as to what sort of system is in place right now, and what sorts of functions this computer system is currently performing and supposed to perform for the department?

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Dyck): Before the minister gives his answer, just a question regarding the Insurance branch as to when they would be here. Could the minister advise us of that approximate time?

Mr. Radcliffe: Yes, I think 3:30.

My honourable colleague asked me the status of the computer system in the registry office of the Personal Property Security Registry and the Land Titles. I can tell him that at the present time Winnipeg, Portage and Brandon Land Titles Offices are all fully computerized. They are on a provincial mainframe and this enables individual law firms or people who are hooked up to Manitoba Online to access preliminary searches through their own computer network. It is proposed that ultimately all the remaining rural Land Titles Offices, namely Dauphin, Neepawa and Morden, will be fully automated within the next number of years. These are some of the smaller offices in the province of Manitoba.

The Manitoba Land Titles Office does not have a year 2000 compliant problem. That is not, in fact, a feature with their land title registry system and with their environment.

The Personal Property Security Registry will be moving to a client-server system with a PC-based,

personal computer-based, environment. It has a year 2000 problem, compliance problem, and the Better Systems Initiative is at this point in time looking at the PSR computer system with a view to getting this updated and on line and corrected, so that we have software that will adapt to the year 2000.

Mr. Maloway: What is involved and what is it going to cost to get this compliant?

Mr. Radcliffe: Mr. Chairman, the cost for the PSR to become 2000 compliant apparently is inextricably tied up in the whole system of BSI, and those are not figures to which we are privy. In fact, I think probably the most appropriate place to ask that question would be in Finance.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Chairman, in one of the other SOAs that we discussed earlier this week, we were told that once the computer system was in place that the profitability of the SOA would be further enhanced by virtue of the fact that six staff members would not be required anymore and would be phased out over time. What is the projection regarding this SOA on that score?

* (1500)

Mr. Radcliffe: Mr. Chair, I believe in the previous SO we were talking about the remark that was made, and the emphasis that was put upon this was that there would be six staff individuals who would no longer be performing the present function that they are under the current paper system or the current technology system that the SOA was functioning under, and in fact there would be an introduction of vacancy management, there would be skill enhancement and there might be sidetracking of these individuals into other functions within that SOA.

Likewise in Land Titles, we do not anticipate at this point in time that there will be any diminution in staff in Land Titles Office. The change in the computerese may have some impact in PSR, but we do not have any read on that at this point in time.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Chairman, my colleague the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) I believe has several questions on this topic, so I will turn it over to her.

Mr. Radcliffe: Fine. I would welcome the honourable member for Wolseley with her questions.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): I am interested in the Land Titles documents which have been framed and put on the walls of the Land Titles Office in Winnipeg, I gather. We have raised some questions about this in Question Period, and I want to take this a little further. First of all, I wonder if the minister could tell me on what basis the documents were selected. There is a specific list of documents. They were chosen as documents important in the history of Manitoba, and I wonder if the minister has a full list of the documents that are available for this particular kind of treatment.

Mr. Radcliffe: Mr. Chairman, in response to my honourable colleague's question, apparently all the documents, individual documents in the Land Titles Office now, with the aging of the paper, are being committed to microfilm and being preserved on microfilm. The process that the management of Land Titles noted was that these documents were then sent to the Archives of the Province of Manitoba either for retention or destruction and largely for destruction. Land Titles felt that there would be a significant loss to the ongoing chronicle or history of the province of Manitoba if in fact a number of documents that were currently in the possession of Land Titles were actually physically destroyed.

Therefore, there was a staff at Land Titles themselves, through their own appreciation of history, either the history of the chronicle of the people of Manitoba generally or of the Land Titles system—those were the two perspectives that were applied to the inspection of the documents. A list of documents was culled and sent to the Archivist for the express purpose of preserving them in perpetuity and to solicit funds from the law firms to have them mounted in an appropriate fashion so that they could be preserved and appreciated in the future.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, does the minister have the list of the documents that were so dealt with?

Mr. Radcliffe: Yes, we have the list. We do not have it here today, but we certainly would be more than willing to provide it to my honourable colleague.

Ms. Friesen: How many documents are on that list?

Mr. Radcliffe: Mr. Chairman, I am told that apparently there are 24 documents that have received this sort of treatment. The period of time covers from 1870 to the present. I am told that in the normal course of handling documents that a great number of documents have gone to the Archives and have been destroyed, the actual physical paper, and that this list of 24, in fact, was chosen to be representative of the types of documentation that would have been handled by the Manitoba Land Titles system through the course of its history. I would add for the benefit of my honourable colleague, that in the LT locations outside the city of Winnipeg, a great number of the actual physical documents are still on deposit in the Land Titles offices in either the other cities in Manitoba or the smaller towns.

As my honourable colleague is no doubt aware, these documents are deteriorating quickly and every time they are handled they become more and more fragile. I have had occasion to see some of the early titles and the early documentation and work with them, even some of the early registries. When we were on a registry system of land, the abstract of title book for titles, which has the original spidery handwriting of the original registrar's is becoming more and more fragile. However, these still do exist. Many of them exist in the Land Titles offices outside the city of Winnipeg, and these abstracts covered the land-holding system before the imposition of the Torrens title system which we now currently enjoy in Manitoba.

Ms. Friesen: I wondered if the minister could tell me whether these documents which are, as I understand it now, not necessarily significant historical documents in themselves but representative of types of documents, representation of a type of collection. When you selected those 24, could the minister tell me whether this was done in conjunction with the Archives? The sense I am getting—and it may not be the one that you want to leave on the record—is that these documents were selected in order to preserve them from the destruction of the Archives. That does not make sense to me. If they are significant documents, the Archives would preserve them. If they are not, then they would be subject to the normal procedures. So I am not sure what the minister wants to leave on the record there.

* (1510)

Mr. Radcliffe: I will try to be a little more specific for my honourable colleague, and I am learning more myself as we go along on this. There are two streams or channels of land title documents. Documents under The Real Property Act, which is the present Torrens system, are currently and have been for a number of years in the Winnipeg Land Titles Office committed to microfilm, and then those documents have been sent to the Archivist and indicated to be destroyed in the normal course of business by the Archivists themselves.

Then there is a second category of documents, and this is the grouping from which these 24 representative documents have been culled. These refer to the registry system and the deed system of our history of land title holding, and those were for inspection and perusal by the Archivist to select. The Land Titles people would have made their nomination or selection, and then that would be submitted to the Archivist. The balance of the documents in that category would be subject to the legislation under which the Archivist functions, which our understanding is generally these documents are committed for destruction.

Ms. Friesen: I think the minister might want to say that they are committed for selection rather than destruction. That is not automatic and there are certain principles which any archivist would follow. My guess is that is what is meant and that is the ultimate disposition that the Archivist makes.

My concern for the ones that have been selected is their preservation, not just as a representative collection, but in the case, for example, and I am only picking one because I only know the names of four of them, the one which is the transfer of the St. Peters Reserve in 1906. This is a significant document in itself, I think, probably nationally as well as in terms of Manitoba history. So its selection for matting, framing and display in an area outside of a gallery, outside of the normal conditions of humidity and protection from, well, the public, in many cases is unusual. So I am concerned about the survival of these documents.

When an Archives puts documents on display or when a museum puts documents on display, there are very strict international standards, in fact, which are

followed. When Canada sends documents to other jurisdictions for display, as it has done recently, for example, in a big international exhibition on Captain Cook, they must follow the international standards for the circulation and display and preservation of those documents.

In many cases, the older documents, say even the 18th Century ones, are actually better able to stand up to modern conditions than those of the early 20th Century, so it is not necessarily age which determines the future preservation, but it is the composition of the paper and the conditions under which they are displayed. So the matting and display and the conditions of that are important, and I wondered how that has been handled. Has it been handled by the Archives according to Archive standards? Has it been handled by the Land Titles Office according to perhaps more domestic standards of display?

Mr. Radcliffe: Mr. Chair, I am told that the Land Titles Office does work with the Archivist at the present time. I am told that there were six documents, out of this list of 24, that have been framed. They were framed by the Birchwood Gallery, which was at the choice and on the behest of the Land Titles Office. This is not the regular matter and framer that the Archivist chooses and works with, and types of documents that have been mounted in this fashion by this particular gallery are a number of blank titles, forms of certificates of title, and notices of sale.

In addition to those, the second transfer of land in the province of Manitoba has been treated in this fashion as well, and the Land Titles is considering, at this point in time, taking this particular document out of circulation, submitting it to the framer that is the framer of choice by the Archivist in order that it can be inspected and, if necessary, rematted and reframed. I concur with my honourable colleague with the aspect of the deterioration of the documents of which she speaks. In fact, I had the occasion to sit on the board at the Museum of Man and Nature when the archives of the Hudson's Bay Company were turned over to the museum, and a great number of those early documents were still in incredibly good shape. Even though they had been sitting up in the Lower Fort for the last number of years, there had been some archival activity on them.

In any event, to go back to Land Titles, Land Titles does circulate and proposes to, in the future, circulate these documents and only leaving them out for stated periods of time because the light will cause deterioration as well. So this is another issue that Land Titles is sensitive to. There are approximately, I guess, 18 documents that are yet to be treated in this fashion, and these documents are on deposit still in the Land Titles Office where they had remained up until this point in time. They are earmarked for future care in the fashion which we have outlined.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, I think that would give much greater comfort if we could be assured that the documents which are framed are kept in places where they can be protected, where the light conditions and the matting conditions are of archival standards and, first of all, the archival standards of the province of Manitoba, which I assume are certainly moving towards international standards. So I would leave that with the minister. I think he may be on the right track. It sounds as though a mistake was made, and I certainly hope that can be rectified.

* (1520)

The second issue I have again relates to the documents, and my understanding is that they are being offered essentially, like, for sponsorship just as one can sponsor an animal at the zoo or one can sponsor a variety of things. Am I right in my understanding of that, and could you tell me the kinds of conditions of sponsorship which you are offering? Is it, you know, X number of dollars for so many years? Are there only one-year terms? Do they turn over every five years? What are the conditions of sponsorship?

Mr. Radcliffe: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that the sponsorship is to cover the cost of framing. The solicitation was done to the law firms in the city of Winnipeg, those whom I presume, and this is just my wording at this point, that Land Titles probably thought would be appropriate, who would be interested in such a sponsorship. The length of time of the sponsorship is in fact, in essence, determined by the Archivist, because there is a little acknowledgement plaque that would be on the face of the document or on the face of the framing, and so the Archivist would determine how long that document can be left out in the light, and then

once that period of time has transpired, the document is removed and secured so that publicity or sponsorship would then be removed from the eyes of the public until it could be recirculated again.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chair, so that company or corporation which wanted continuing sponsorship would presumably sponsor three or four so that one would be out of circulation while the other one or two were left. So the price of framing, my guess, is probably in the region of \$300 to \$500. Is that the price that the—

Mr. Radcliffe: Yes, my honourable colleague is correct that it is in the \$300 to \$500 range.

Ms. Friesen: I just wanted to make sure also that the documents remain on display in the Land Titles Office not in lawyers' offices.

Mr. Radcliffe: Absolutely correct. I made this quite abundantly clear on the floor of the House one day, and that in fact Mr. Brown, who is a practicing solicitor in town, had made a misstatement in Headnotes and Footnotes. There was a subsequent retraction published, and I did spot it and I forwarded that to Ms. McGifford for her knowledge and edification as well. But my honourable colleague is absolutely correct, these documents are displayed in the environs of the Land Titles Office.

Ms. Friesen: Is it the intention of the minister to limit sponsorship to legal firms? How else has it been advertised? I guess that is one aspect that certainly concerned me and other members of our caucus. The sponsorship that was offered appeared to be only offered to legal firms for the document, for example, of the 1906 transfer of St. Peters Reserve.

Mr. Chairman, can I add another question at the same time, and that is if the minister can advise me whether or not such sponsorship and the listing of legal firms constitutes advertising within the Land Titles Office.

Mr. Radcliffe: As a point of clarification, does my honourable colleague mean advertising as regulated by The Law Society Act, or is there some other parameter that my honourable colleague is referring to? I am not sure I understand the ambit of her question.

Ms. Friesen: It probably should have been a separate question. Yes, there are two subspects of that. One is advertising within the constraints of legal discipline, and, secondly, of course, the issue of general advertising within a government services office.

Mr. Radcliffe: Mr. Chairman, in response to my honourable colleague's question, Land Titles does not intend to limit the solicitation to the law firms in the city of Winnipeg at all, and, in fact, the process that was followed was that there was an approach to the Manitoba Bar Real Property Subsection. They were consulted. They canvassed their membership, and they were in charge of the solicitation of the different law firms involved. Issues such as privacy and the whole issue of the archival input was also considered, because the preservation issue is obviously a matter of some sensitivity as well.

My department is not really in a position to say whether this is or is not advertising per se pursuant to The Law Society Act. I would perhaps refer my honourable colleague to Ms. McCawley at the Law Society for determination of that issue.

I guess, further along that line, that there has been no determination by Land Titles either whether this is, in fact, commercial advertising within a government building. This is perhaps more of an acknowledgment that an individual entity has covered the costs for the particular mounting and preservation of a document. I would be loath to condone banner headlines in the Land Titles Office saying shop at Aikins MacAulay for your legal needs, in glowing lights in the basement of the Woodsworth Building.

I do not think that is appropriate, and I do not think that is the way we are going. I think it is a very significant question, and acknowledgments have been restricted to the form of acknowledgment only in order to not get involved in that sort of disputation or consideration of advertising in government buildings.

* (1530)

Ms. Friesen: It may well be more properly a question for the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Pitura). The principle that the minister suggested there of an acknowledgment of the covering of the cost, I mean,

looking around here at a certain number of premiers, one wonders if the cost of reframing or the cost of painting, for example, might well be acknowledged. As I look around, I can suggest some interesting sponsors for some of these portraits, but I will refrain from doing so.

That principle I think is an interesting one, and, of course, it is not the issue of having neon lights in the Land Titles building. It is an issue of clients, customers, the general public in the land titles business for the purpose of a certain type of business and their eye happening to catch upon the name of a particular type of lawyer or particular legal firm.

So I think it is one that I will pose to Government Services to see what kind of policy directives they and other governments have on this, and I take the minister's response on the issue of the Law Society being the appropriate person for the other aspect of my question.

I would like to ask the minister how he proposes to broaden the offer of sponsorship. Who else has he spoken to? Who else has it been advertised to? What plans does he have for that kind of broadening? How many of these documents of the original list of 24 have already been taken up in sponsorship?

Mr. Radcliffe: I can tell my honourable colleague that, in fact, there has been a canvass of the law firms as I had indicated previously. There has been some interest in the law firms, but I am told that there has been no uptake at this point in time. There has been some interest shown by a number of law firms in town.

The Land Titles administration is considering next moving, once the whole milieu of the law firms has been researched, to the large client groups that deal with Land Titles. This would include mortgage lenders, credit unions. Members of the general public would not be excluded.

In fact, I may hear and I would pass on to Land Titles my honourable colleague's name as, in fact, somebody who may be interested in promoting and sponsoring such an activity.

I would also note, as I think my honourable colleague is aware, that this practice has been publicized in

Headnotes and Footnotes. So any of the recipients of Headnotes and Footnotes, which is a legal journal which I believe is where our honourable colleague Ms. McGifford picked up the information initially, anyone who reads that is aware of what is going on in Land Titles Office. So if they have any interest, Land Titles would obviously be open to being approached if there were general interest in the general public.

Ms. Friesen: Well, I thank the honourable minister for his offer to me of sponsorship. It is not one I think I will take up at this point, but we were discussing on this side of the table that perhaps the former Premier Sterling Lyon—there might be a number of people interested in sponsoring that portrait. I wonder if the minister sees this as an expanding element of government fundraising.

Mr. Radcliffe: Well, I am sure that the creative juices of the party brass are always at work to look for more innovative ways to create fundraising schemes for support of good government in Manitoba and to perpetuate the ongoing existence of the Filmon government in perpetuity to the horizon, but short of that I would take my honourable colleague's suggestion and place it in the appropriate receptacle and consider it passed on.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): I would like to ask the minister—

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Dyck): Excuse me. Could you pull your mike in, please.

Mr. Reid: Could the minister tell me: Is the Land Titles department responsible for the survey monuments throughout the province?

Mr. Radcliffe: My honourable colleague has raised a very interesting problem with regard to Land Titles. Initially, when the whole province was surveyed, there were monuments placed across the province of Manitoba. This was done as the basic support system for our current Torrens Land Titles system. I believe that in each section of land across the country there are three monuments or wooden stakes that were placed in each section. I disremember specifically where they are. I know there are three stakes, wooden stakes, yes, that is right, that were placed by the original surveyors

when they went across the countryside in 1870 and shortly thereafter, and I am sure my honourable colleague is aware of all the rebellion and angst that was raised with that initial survey.

As you can appreciate, over the passage of time a number of these monuments have deteriorated and also with the passage of time, with farmers farming fields, where there has been tillage of the land right up to the access roads or sometimes the road allowance where the access roads do not exist, or where there is plowing of the roads and grading by the local municipalities, a number of these monuments have been displaced.

So I have become aware of the fact that there is an ongoing concern by the rural municipalities right now as to promoting a scheme for replacement of the monuments in Manitoba. If we were to embark at this point in time and this is sort of the worst possible case scenario, if we were to resurvey the province of Manitoba with the current technology that we have right now to replace all the wooden monuments and in many cases to try to relocate the monuments that have deteriorated and disappeared, we are looking at a cost of somewhere in excess of \$750 million. So at this point in time this is something which I would respectfully submit is probably out of the reach of the Land Titles system as we are practicing it in Manitoba.

However, the only legislation which touches on responsibility for displacement of the survey monument rests in The Surveys Act, which I think is Section 4 of The Surveys Act, which states that if a rural municipality has displaced or destroyed a monument, then the responsibility and the cost of replacement rests with the rural municipality—which is not rocket scientist. It seems appropriate that the responsibility would be there if they were, in fact, in charge of grading the roads or moving it.

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

I have taken some advice on this, as well, from a number of surveyors in the system, and I am told, and I think this is a matter of opinion and may yet be speculative, that a surveyor is able to discern—if the monument has not been disturbed, a surveyor is able to discern from perhaps almost some research, dusting the

land and digging and trowelling, et cetera, where the monument did exist even if it has disappeared. This is a matter of opinion and there is perhaps some controversy amongst surveyors at this point in time.

* (1540)

The next thing I can tell my honourable colleague is that the major areas of concern right now for this issue of monumenting the survey system in Manitoba is restricted largely to the south end of the province where the majority of people are found and where there is more intensive use of the land. The rural municipalities are estimating—and all the figures that I am giving, I want to caution my honourable colleague, are only guesstimates at this point in time, and therefore they do tend to perhaps be exaggerated, and we could be open to comment and criticism that they may be too high or too low. But the best available knowledge we have right now is that it is approximately a \$35,000-a-year problem to the existing municipalities. I have been approached by my colleagues in Rural Development with a number of ideas as to how to finance a replacing of the monuments, and I am personally of a mind that it is desirable to replace the monuments, especially in rural Manitoba. It should be done sooner than later because, of course, the system that we have is a failing system.

The issue then remains as to how it is going to be paid for, and I do not believe that the Province of Manitoba is in a position to write a cheque to have this all done at once with a ticket for \$750 million, if, in fact, that should be the case. That figure, I must tell my honourable friend, is an extrapolation forward from the minutiae, from the micro to the macrocosm.

There have been a number of suggestions that have been brought forward, one of which was to add on an additional levy for all registration of all documents in the Land Titles Office, and I personally did not favour that scheme because, in fact, I felt that there were a number of individuals who would benefit from the remonumentation who, in fact, would not be paying for it because they are not necessarily transferring land. They would be the passive recipients.

If you hold a particular title for 60-70 years, being your active lifespan perhaps of owning land, and never

sell it, never mortgage it, never have any transactions on it, but your monuments have disappeared, you then would be receiving a benefit from a selected group of the public who had been mortgaging or who had been trading in land, transferring land, so, therefore, you are selecting an exclusive grouping of our citizens to pay for a benefit to all of Manitobans, not necessarily who are supporting it themselves. So from a philosophical point of view, I had problems with that sort of approach and concept.

The other approach which I advanced was that the municipalities raise the local levies to pay for this. I am told that this has not met with general accord in the municipalities. So we are very much in the negotiating period, at this point in time, between the Land Titles people and Rural Development, the municipality people, to find some way to pay for this renovation which must be done.

I personally acknowledge, and I think that all my staff and the Land Titles people acknowledge, that it must be done, and it must be done soon. It is a deteriorating system, because, of course, the original surveyors who put this system in place did not address their minds, I guess, at that point in time, to the fact that wooden stakes buried in the land will rot and disappear over a very short length of time, plus these monuments do form the very basis for our Land Titles system because there is no point in having a theoretical Torrens system, a paper system or a computerized electronic system if you do not know where you are out on the actual land.

So these are some of the ramifications that we have been working with, debating. I am pleased to be able to share this with my honourable colleague, and this brings you more or less up to date as to where we are at this point in the whole search for an answer. Perhaps, it was more than he wanted to know and was afraid to ask but—

Mr. Reid: No, Mr. Chairperson, the minister gave a fairly detailed explanation there, and I appreciate that. There has been some concern that we are lagging behind in the province and our monuments and markers are disappearing through various activities in the province, including nature, and that if we do not take steps now to correct the problem and have some type of

a plan in place to restore those markers, of course, your cost is going to only increase in the future.

Can the minister tell me, because he says he does not agree with the levying of a fee for those that register land transfers through the Land Titles branch, what other proposals that he has in place, you know, to address it outside of the one that the municipalities themselves are now balking at? Are there other options that you have available that you are considering at this point in time? Perhaps some of the ones that maybe some of your colleagues may have raised as well.

Mr. Radcliffe: Well, I believe this has been an issue of some debate amongst a number of my colleagues. I would suggest to my honourable colleague that we are open to suggestions on this. One possibility may be to create a fund within the Land Titles system which could be devoted periodically to this renovation. I think that the answer is probably to approach it on an incremental basis, and to go to the areas where there is a dearth of monuments and then fan out from there across the province.

I concur with my honourable colleague in his remarks that, in fact, this is something that needs to be addressed, and needs to be addressed, as I had said, sooner than later. We are very concerned about it. The issue, as I have touched on, of just writing a cheque out of consolidated revenue, I do not think is on. I think that raising fees in the Land Titles Office is something which we are sensitive to at this point in time, not only from a philosophical basis that I had just pointed out, but as well there has just been, as you have heard, a rise in fees, effective May 1, of \$10 on the registrations for mortgages. So I do not think that the timing is appropriate, at this point in time, to layer another rise in fees on the consuming public, as well, so that goes against that argument.

We propose, in the very near future, to be sitting down with a number of the reeves and councillors from the municipalities in Manitoba to canvass in a workshop or a more extended discussion group some of the potential solutions that there may well be out there for this issue.

Mr. Reid: So when the minister says he is sitting down with the reeves of the various municipalities, are these

negotiations being undertaken in conjunction with UMM representatives? Is that who the negotiating body is going to be for the various municipalities throughout the province?

Mr. Radcliffe: I do not want to raise a false apprehension of activity here with my honourable colleague. I had an appointment scheduled with the UMM people, and it had to be cancelled partially I think because of the floods. These people were unable to come into the city of Winnipeg and also because of the onset of Estimates. But I can say that I have met several times with the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) on this issue, and we look forward in the immediate future to meeting with the representatives from UMM.

Mr. Reid: The minister talked about a \$750-million worst-case scenario to put in place all the survey markers throughout the province. That is an extensive amount of money. What type of a time frame do you have in mind that you would like to see this process start to restore the markers in the province? Are we going to let negotiations drag on for years and years, or do you have a time frame in mind that you would like to see some step developed, the first step of the process to putting in place the necessary funds?

Also, where do you anticipate starting this type of work? Are you going to have a plan in place where you are going to have several survey crews in the province start to do that surveying work, that re-monumentation work throughout the province, taking into mind the importance of where the bulk of the population is but not to ignore other areas, you know, central and northern Manitoba where we also have a significant number of Manitobans who would also need to have that accuracy of title of property as well with respect to the survey monuments?

* (1550)

Mr. Radcliffe: Mr. Chairman, I concur with my honourable colleague's remarks that in fact there is a need for this monumentation to be addressed in central Manitoba, in northern Manitoba, in fact any places where there are concentrations of population and landholdings of Manitobans. I would also want to advise my honourable colleague that in fact 30 percent

of the problem rests within the boundaries of the city of Winnipeg as well. There has got to be a remonumentation in the city of Winnipeg because of the same reasons, that these monuments have deteriorated. I did not want to leave the impression with him that this was uniquely or peculiarly a rural problem. I chose to talk about a rural problem for point of illustration of destruction and removal of the monuments, but in fact it also exists as an urban problem as well.

One of the proposals that has been suggested, to readdress another issue that my honourable colleague had raised, was a sharing of the expense for this remonumentation with the municipalities, be they rural or urban municipalities, across the province.

The Land Titles is anticipating that this process will be engaged and underway within the next year, so we are looking at a reasonably quick uptake on it. We would do it on a priority basis. For example, if a landowner or a surveyor were to come to Land Titles and say, basically on a complaint-driven process, I cannot give an adequate survey to a particular township or a particular quarter section because I cannot find a monument; I have to go 10 miles down the road, or if there were a particular subdivision being conducted within an urban environment and there were difficulties there, that would be where the surveying teams would first address their attention.

Then again, it would be on an incremental basis, slowly, year by year. One of the areas, where there possibly, and this again is blue-skying, is that the Personal Property Security Registry might be an appropriate area where funds could be collected and held. The Personal Property Security Registry is an area that shows a profit from year to year in the exercise of its activity, so if there were funds that were to be—excuse me, I stand corrected, because one of my initial suggestions on this to address this was that we anticipate or hope that there will be excess funds generated over the next year to two to three to four and into the future on the whole Property Registry system, be it personal property or real property registry, that are not required by the Consolidated Fund for government purposes.

I had indicated to my honourable colleague before, I think it was \$2 million, \$1.8 million this year and then

\$2 million thereafter that could be devoted to building up this fund to cover the costs in the future, and that would be, perhaps, the Land Titles component for raising this money.

Now this again is a suggestion that has been voiced about within the confines of Land Titles staff at this point and our colleagues within this room, and I do not think it has gone much further than that. It is something that we think may be feasible, and I see my honourable colleague, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) raising his eyebrows at this. This is coming as news to him. This is one other idea of where funds could be raised and a repository formed in order to expend to try and cure this issue.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): I am delighted to join my colleague's Estimates at this particular time on this particular issue. Regrettably, it is one of those issues that does not have a great deal of profile, it is not politically sexy, but it is an extremely important one, and I acknowledge I think that governments have to take, past governments, governments that I have been a part of, considerable responsibility, and not in a measured way, trying to restore the survey monuments in the province.

It really acts very inequitably. I am not that familiar with how it works in an urban setting where you have, as a rule, land divisions, land lots, you know, acquired if they are new through development agencies, and the established ones, of course, are there. In rural Manitoba, and within one municipality, because the difference can be for somebody like myself if I want to subdivide a bit of land for my son or daughter, I can face a nominal \$500, \$600, \$700 surveyor's fee or a \$10,000 surveyor's fee within the same municipality, depending entirely on if he has to trace, as you said, he has to go back eight or nine miles to find markers, the clock is ticking on the surveyor's clock. So it is a real issue in rural Manitoba. I would encourage you, Mr. Minister, to resist the temptation of putting costs on a small grouping which might be convenient for people who are attaching it to Land Titles for instances, people in a land titles draw transfer.

That is, as you said earlier, just transferring it to a relatively small, select group of people, that in my opinion would not be fair. Quite frankly, I believe this

is a government responsibility. I think initially it was a federal government responsibility. Were they not federal surveyors that marched across this landscape and met one Louis Riel in Fort Garry? This an appropriate time to raise it. But, no, I am not making jest of this. I just think that this ought to be able to—I really encourage you to use all the new vigour that you bring to this department, your influence that you have on Treasury Board. Look at Jules Benson squarely in the eye and Eric Stefanson in the eye and demand a fair appropriation for this amount. You would have the Ministry of Agriculture's support for this.

Mr. Radcliffe: I would thank the honourable Minister of Agriculture for those well-seasoned remarks. I would only take issue with one aspect of his address to the assembly here today when he says that this does not have a high profile. I want to assure the Minister of Agriculture that in the environs of the Land Titles Office and the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, which of course is responsible for Land Titles, as I indicated earlier, the issue of restoration of monumentation in Manitoba forms the very basis for our land titles holding system, our real property holding system. Therefore, this assumes a very high proportion of consequence and need. I want to reassure the honourable Minister of Agriculture that this will not go unmentioned in the halls of government. I thank him for his support, and I will look forward to calling on that support from time to time as may be required for this issue.

* (1600)

Mr. Reid: The Minister of Agriculture did raise a good point with respect to problems in the rural area. I can say that there is definitely a need from what I can see, an imbalance or an inequity that is in the system currently.

The minister mentioned in his comments—and reflecting on them—I believe that some 30 percent of the work that is needed to be done with respect to remonumentation is within the confines of the city of Winnipeg. What negotiations have you undertaken with the City of Winnipeg, which is obviously the largest municipality in the province, to work towards—are you looking at establishing a partnership

arrangement to undertake that type of work? What steps have been taken to commence those negotiations with the City of Winnipeg?

Mr. Radcliffe: I can advise my honourable colleague that, in fact, there has been no discussion with the City of Winnipeg to date with regard to asking them to participate on a partnership basis to support funding of this issue yet, but I can tell him that is something that we will anticipate very shortly. There has been discussion with the City of Winnipeg through Land Titles Office to define and describe the extent of the problem within the city of Winnipeg. The municipality of the City of Winnipeg is aware that it exists; they have addressed it with their survey department. The discussions had centred around establishing a committee to address the prioritization of the remonumentation in the city of Winnipeg and the implementation of the restoration itself.

The other side of the ledger sheet, the debit side, has not been addressed with the city fathers or the city mothers at this point, but that is something that I will look forward to with anticipation.

Mr. Reid: I may have missed this, and I apologize if I did not catch the minister's comments. I am not sure if he reflected or responded to my question earlier with respect to whether or not he is going to have, once the agreement is reached, hopefully soon with the reeves of the various municipalities or the mayors of the municipalities, teams of surveyors go throughout the province working in several areas to undertake the type of work so that we are not just concentrating the efforts on one particular small section of the province. Are we going to have teams of people go out and do the restoration of those survey monuments?

Mr. Radcliffe: I did address that question, albeit maybe perhaps somewhat obliquely, in one of my previous answers, and the response and intention of Land Titles, to keep this within a manageable ambit at this point in time, is to respond basically on a complaint-driven process. So, for example, if the Honourable Mr. Enns were to do a yardsite subdivide and were to notify Land Titles that he had to run a line some 10 miles or five miles before he could get a monument and the survey bill was going to be significant, we would immediately respond into that

area of Lakeside. If it were something within the city of Winnipeg—

An Honourable Member: No, that would not work. They would nail me for political favouritism.

Mr. Radcliffe: Well, I only use the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns), you know, as representational of an individual who might be in a rural setting, or if the honourable colleague for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway)—[interjection]

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Tweed): The honourable minister, to complete his comments.

Mr. Radcliffe: So basically it would be complaint driven, it would be intermittent ad hoc, yes, at this point in time so that the worst areas, the areas of greatest need would be addressed first.

I believe that after that had been addressed, there would be some sort of consistency where Land Titles would identify, they would have to survey the need itself and describe the need and then address that on a consistent basis after the initial ad hoc requirements were satisfied.

Mr. Reid: I guess my concern here is that the ad hoc issues will never fade away until the whole province has been resurveyed. So essentially what you are going to be doing is going along, from what I understand the minister's comments to be, putting out fires in different areas of the province, and it is going to take years. It does not seem to me that you are going to have an orderly plan in place to try to re-establish.

So if you go into the Lakeside area and you address the concerns of the Minister of Agriculture's neighbours, not necessarily his own holdings out there, but his neighbour's, for example, and then you may not go back into that area for some period of time, maybe years, to address problems in there, then you are going to be doing it in such an ad hoc fashion you are not going to have a uniform plan to address the problems in those areas.

But if you have got teams of people that can go into a region and address the problems of those regions, and eventually over that period of time you can solve those problems, I think, by having those teams in place. So

if you got a team into the Interlake area and it addresses the problems immediately that they need, it can continue to work within that area. If it is somebody in southern Manitoba, you can have another team down there and another team in northern Manitoba or several teams in each of those zones, if you want to call it that. Then you would have the opportunity to have an orderly remonumentation of the surveys within the province. So I throw that out as a suggestion.

Another question I have to ask the minister here: Is there not a process that we have in place? It is my understanding that Linnet was doing, through its land-based information systems I think is the appropriate term, aerial surveying of the province. Now I am not sure. Do we have a process in place where they would have a particular type of a detectable item in the ground for surveying that you may have already done that could be detected from the air so you can have the appropriate surveying done, whether it be some metal rod that would give off a certain signal or something that can be done to assist in the process and continuation of determination of the accurate boundaries? Is there a process that you have in place that may involve Linnet when they were still partner with the province?

Mr. Radcliffe: Mr. Chairman, I smiled when my honourable colleague was asking this question because I, too, asked that same identical question. The general response that I was given, as I give now, is that our technology is not yet precise enough with the Linnet aerial imaging to be able to delineate boundaries with the specificity that we require for survey. In fact, in addition, there is a real need for landowners to be able to have something tangible on the ground. So, for example, you know, to put it on a very pedestrian basis, if you are building a fence, running a line, you need to know specifically where that line goes, what is yours, what is mine. The Linnet technology that we have right now lends itself, and I have actually used this in some cases for crop spray damage cases—it can give you the imaging of a particular crop in a field or images of a general nature, but it does not yet possess the specificity required for Land Titles needs, for the monumentation needs.

Mr. Reid: Can the minister explain then what role Linnet played in their activities in the contract they had

with the province? Were they not involved in a contract that would involve recording all the land-based information that would be required doing aerial photography, surveys, mapping, et cetera, for the province? Is that not the role that they played and maybe perhaps other activities involved with the minister's department?

* (1610)

Mr. Radcliffe: Yes, in fact, I think there are many, many purposes for which you do aerial cartography. You do it not only to look at the terrain, but the course of rivers, swamps, the elevation, these sorts of things. I believe a lot of their work went to this particular function. But the actual location of a monument is something very precise and mathematical. I am told it is beyond their technical expertise. It was not used for the location of boundaries. It would show perhaps the site of buildings, but in fact I would not want to determine a boundary based on a general snap from the air—

An Honourable Member: If you can have smart card, why can you not have a smart monument?

Mr. Radcliffe: That is right—of a Linnet photograph.

Mr. Reid: I am not an engineer, so I am going to give you my thoughts here with respect to the flood, and I do not know if there is an opportunity here for you to share resources or whether or not this type of work has already been done, but if you are going to be doing survey work throughout the province and perhaps some of it may be also in the Red River Valley, because my understanding is that part of the survey work also deals with elevations, is it possible, if we do not already have the information relating to the various elevations that would lead the Water Resources branch to be able to determine water flow patterns, that some of that work could be done in conjunction with the Water Resources department—

An Honourable Member: Do it under the emergency program. You get the feds to pay 90 percent.

Mr. Reid: It is possible perhaps to get federal participation through this process to look at doing the elevation work for the land in the Red River Valley. If

we can have the federal government play a role in that as a preventative measure at the same time, we would have future mapping showing elevations and we could do our monumentation at the same time, and it would perhaps solve several problems at the same time.

So I throw that out for the minister. I do not know if he has any comment that he wants to place on that.

Mr. Radcliffe: Mr. Chairman, I would thank my honourable colleague for that. I have made a note of that, and that is a potential for research which we will follow up.

Mr. Reid: Can the minister tell me, is the Land Titles or is anywhere in his department still involved with Linnet? Is Linnet finished in its contract with the provincial government?

Mr. Radcliffe: Mr. Chairman, I am told by my director that, in fact, there was never any relationship between Land Titles or the Property Registry office and the Linnet corporation. In fact, the nexus, we believe, was through Natural Resources. There was a sharing of information and a sharing of data upon request from Land Titles Office to the Linnet people. They were compiling records for the Natural Resources people as to land use. There is nothing current going on between Land Titles and Linnet by way of a sharing of any information at this point in time.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Chairman, the minister made reference earlier that this problem could be solved with approximately \$700 million, I believe he said, and I just wondered how he determined that. What went into determining the cost of \$700 million, and how long a period would that be over?

Mr. Radcliffe: Well, as I indicated to the honourable member for Transcona, this was an extrapolation, moving from the amount of service that would be required, assessing the cost, the hourly rates of surveyors' fees and forecasting and broadcasting that across the province of Manitoba. I cautioned and I caution my honourable colleague again that this was, in fact, at best only a forecast of the nature and extent of the problem. So what we have done is, for example, take the need in one particular township and assess the

nature of the number of missing monuments in that particular area, then extrapolate that across the province.

So I caution that these are not hard figures by any means. These are only to give an idea that, in fact, it is a very, very large ticket item. That is all we can say.

Mr. Maloway: Well, would the minister table for us today any documentation he has to prove that figure of \$700 million?

Mr. Radcliffe: Mr. Chairman, I believe that what was done was the sampling was taken of a particular area of the province, as I have indicated, and then that was applied across the province. That is what I meant, for the edification of the honourable colleague at the table, to extrapolate or extend, move from microcosm to macrocosm.

We do not have that document with us, and I undertake that if it is within our possession and we are free and at liberty to disclose it, I will share that with my honourable colleague.

Mr. Maloway: I thank the minister for that promise that he will provide us with that documentation. I would like to ask him whether he has approached the federal government for contributions.

Mr. Radcliffe: Not yet.

Mr. Maloway: Well, Mr. Chairman, we are in the middle of a federal election. I do not think that there is any better time than a federal election to find more co-operative and pliable, receptive federal politicians with chequebooks. They are very close. They are not hard to find at this particular period. The minister has known about this problem for a long, long time, and he is telling me that he has not at this point made any overtures to the federal government for support on this.

Mr. Radcliffe: Mr. Chairman, I would like to advise my honourable colleague that I do sit here corrected, that, in fact, there was an application made by the department for an infrastructure grant and it was turned down. It was declined by those nefarious federal individuals.

However, that is not to say that assiduity will not reap its own reward, and I wanted to advise my honourable colleague that, in fact, I would concur with the proximity of our federal politicians at this point in time because I had the pleasure to be approached by the Honourable Mr. Axworthy very, very recently to attend at a local community informational evening in our community of River Heights which is a community which we both share, and I was able to bring to that meeting of citizens some of the particulars of our flood control and the information skills which our people were exercising in the province of Manitoba at that point in time.

So I think that those remarks are very appropriate at this point, and perhaps with the spreading of largess which our federal associates seem to be bent upon at this point which we read about in the media, that this could be something in which we could inveigle their attention.

Mr. Maloway: Well, when did the minister make this request for an infrastructure grant from the federal government, and when was it declined, and how much was the request for?

* (1620)

Mr. Radcliffe: Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to advise my honourable colleague that it was approximately two to three years ago this request was made. The present staff who are with me today do not have a recollection of the amount that was requested, however I am advised that these records do exist, and we will undertake to search for them. If we are capable of recovering that figure, we will certainly share that with my honourable colleague.

Mr. Maloway: Will the minister then make a commitment to reapply to the federal government as quickly as possible and use the opportunities provided by the federal election to try to get money from them for this project?

Mr. Radcliffe: Mr. Chair, immediately upon our exiting from the Estimates process, I will address my mind to this and will set in motion a process which will result in the appropriate approach to Mr. Axworthy for consideration of this problem, being that he is the

senior minister for the province of Manitoba. So that process would be determinative by our exiting from Estimates.

Mr. Maloway: I accept that the minister will do what he says, and I am hoping that he will keep us informed on the progress of such overtures to the federal minister.

Mr. Chairman, before we move into the Insurance Branch for questioning, I wanted to ask the minister a few more questions on the SOAs just to round out the SOAs. On the previous SOAs, the Companies Office, I did ask questions about the computerization and the fee structure, but I neglected to ask about its projected revenues up to the year 1999, and perhaps the minister could answer those questions now.

Mr. Radcliffe: I am sorry, Mr. Chair, I want to readdress that question. My honourable colleague is asking for projections for income from the Corporations Branch?

Mr. Maloway: For the minister, the Companies Office which we dealt with, with Myron Pawlowsky in attendance last evening.

Mr. Radcliffe: We have limited documentation here at the table at this point in time, but I can certainly undertake to give that information to my honourable colleague.

Mr. Maloway: I appreciate that commitment from the minister. I would like to ask the minister about the criteria that goes into the selection of an area of the government for an SOA. The minister has three such SOAs. I would like to know what was the master plan here. What was the blueprint? Who selected these areas for SOAs? Who selected these particular areas over others?

I asked the other day whether the minister planned on spinning out any more SOAs in this particular department. He was unable to tell me whether or not there were any more prospects. Well, I invite the minister to re-respond then.

Mr. Radcliffe: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that government has sent out an invitation to different

branches and areas of government and that the branches themselves have responded to the call to present a feasibility proposal. The feasibility proposal is presented to the Department of Finance. The process there is that it is studied in Finance. It is reviewed rigorously, I might add, by the Treasury Board to see that the proposal for financial or fiscal stability an area of commonality of interest or function would exist. Then if it clears that threshold, then the business plan is put in place such as has just been done.

I would for the record repeat for my honourable colleague's edification that there is no intention for any further SOA activity within the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs at this point in time. There are no proposals that we are aware of coming from the branch, any of the departments.

I would point out for my honourable colleague that Vital Statistics which is one of the SOAs was formerly attached to Child and Family Services. Land Titles and PSR were attached to Justice. They were then determined to be fulfilling a registry function, which is what those offices, in fact, essentially do, so they were included into the Consumer and Corporate Affairs department which is the essential function, I guess, of being a regulatory and registry department.

Mr. Maloway: Would the minister provide us a copy then of the application for SOAs and a list of the criteria that accompanies such application?

Mr. Radcliffe: I do not know that there is a list of criteria per se. I think this is something that probably is handled, well I know is handled through Finance. So perhaps that is something that probably rests more properly in the purview of Finance, that they would have an overview of what the requirements are for SOAs.

Mr. Maloway: Seeing that Finance Estimates are now concluded for this year, would the minister on our behalf endeavour to get this information from Finance and forward it on?

Mr. Radcliffe: I certainly have no problem approaching the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) and requesting an overview of that, to set

out the parameters of what is an SOA and why and how they are formed. I certainly would be pleased to make that request.

* (1630)

Mr. Maloway: Yes, we want some specificity in that because it seems to me there has to be some sort of guidelines and rules for this because one could see little departments within departments asking for SOA status if guidelines were not established. So my assumption is, and I think the minister has already agreed, there is some amalgamating going on within these SOAs. We have one or two previous sections of a department currently being amalgamated together into an SOA so clearly there is some sort of criteria here at work that I am certainly not familiar with, and it obviously makes sense to the people setting up the SOA.

I guess what I would like to know is: Who has the master plan? You know, is there some sort of a neocon bible out there somewhere that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) has or Jules Benson has, or somebody?

Somebody has got to have the game plan here, you know. Clearly, I have not seen it. I do not know where it is. No one on this side of the House has seen it, but we see pieces of the quilt. You know, every once in a while, we see a little piece here hanging out and a little piece over there. Then when we show some attention to it, they kind of pull in the edges and hide it a little bit from us. But there is an overall plan here.

The Crown Corporations Council has the master plan for the Crowns and their future. For example, Crown Corporations Council, as the minister probably knows, has a criteria in which they assess each of the Crown corporations as to their current viability, long-term viability and any sort of volatility, and that is part of the rationale that they use, for example, in privatization of the telephone system, that its long-term viability and volatility was such that they felt it was ready for privatization. So we know that these decisions are not being made by individuals. They are being made by somebody with this central blueprint here, this central plan, and who is controlling this. So we would like to find out who is in charge of this thing and who has a copy of the plan.

Now having said that, and the minister has indicated that he will endeavour to get us these criteria, in order to implement the plan, there has to be a two-way street and there has to be some sort of co-operation on the part of the departments to show some initiative and to offer themselves up for this exercise. So in keeping with some of the plans, I think, of the federal government over the past few years about offering incentives and so on, is there any sort of financial or other kind of incentive program that this government has developed or offers to people who come up with these sorts of money-saving ideas?

Mr. Radcliffe: Mr. Chairman, there is no monetary advantage that is awarded. There is no actual reward by an increase in monthly salary or dividend paid or anything like that falls—[interjection] No, there is nothing like that. What it does do is, and why branches are being responsive to this call is that it gives the branch a certain degree of autonomy, a certain degree of independence. They can measure their activities and see the actual benefit, I guess, of their labours by the reward within their own department.

So that is the advantage of autonomy, flexibility of local management, and yet there is also a business plan which sets out goals and objectives by which they measure the service that they provide to the public of Manitoba, and so this gives greater incentive to the individual employees, the managers and the superintendents in different areas of government to achieve these levels.

So there is nothing tangible in the way of actual money but rather better service, a better way of doing business, a better way of fulfilling the government needs to the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Maloway: Has there been any representations or efforts made by individuals or groups of individuals to the minister or other members of the government or department regarding the privatization of this SOA or the Companies Office SOA? For example, when I asked the question regarding Vital Statistics, there were good reasons why that could never become a privatized function or should never become a privatized function.

Clearly, in some of the other instances where there are no confidentiality problems, the guidelines are less

obvious, and so it seems to me that it is only a matter of time, when there is profitability being shown with these SOAs, until private interests will start putting pressure on the government to privatize and divest themselves of this particular or that particular SOA.

If the minister has not had representations, I mean, I can tell him it is only a matter of time before he will, because that is what happened in England and other areas where privatization has occurred on any sort of mass scale. So I will let the minister answer that question, I guess.

Mr. Radcliffe: I can tell my honourable colleague categorically, unequivocally, that there has been no such solicitation of this minister, and, in fact, I think what my honourable colleague must be confusing is his familiarity with a number of the American institutions which he has often cited with favour during the course of these Estimates, that he is probably looking to the escrow houses that exist in the United States, but I would suggest that that is a wholly different system of land registry based on a completely different theoretical base.

If my honourable colleague has some experience or some knowledge of Torrens systems which have been privatized in Australia from whence this process originated, then I would appreciate his information on that. I can tell him that, in fact, the Torrens system originated by virtue, originally, of ships' registry which came out of Australia in about the 1860s, I think. This was then modified to replace the deed system which was, in fact, a very cumbersome and ponderous system of holding land whereby if you did not have the deed to the property, you, in fact, could have title defeated.

In fact, one of the prime elements of our land title system is the guarantee that the Crown puts behind the indefeasibility of the title. So, therefore, when Land Titles speaks and says that the meets and bounds of a particular holding are vested in one particular individual, that is, in fact, the Majesty of the Crown speaking, the voice of the state.

So it is not an insurance policy. It is not an estimation of actuarial losses, and, in fact, our Land Titles Office backs up the indefeasibility of title, so that

one can look at the face of a certificate of title or the priority of registrations which do appear by way of documentation of mortgages, or caveats, or interests expressed in land—[interjection] I just did not want to miss it. The whole essence of the land titles system is based on the fact that it is backed by the Consolidated Fund of the Province of Manitoba and perhaps even the violence of the Crown.

* (1640)

I think we had touched upon earlier that in other jurisdictions, namely, I had cited India, where you have different concepts or philosophy of landholding, where you can have individuals living on the land who have no right to alienate the land, but they have the right to reap the benefit of the land. The local landowner has not the right to sell that land but must take those individual residents who live on the land who have a sharing of the bundle of rights which I had touched upon earlier. These tillers of the soil go with the land, almost like an indentured serfdom. This is something that we do not have in this country. We, in fact, have a fee simple which is an indefeasible title. Therefore, I would suggest with the greatest of respect that the land titles system as we know it here in Manitoba, and in fact across western Canada, lends itself particularly to operating under the auspices of the Crown.

I do invite my honourable colleague, if he has any particular knowledge as to a privatization of a particular land titles system, and peculiarly a Torrens land title system, that he would share that with me, because I am not aware of any such progress, or developed progress, meaning movement.

An Honourable Member: Not Whiggish progress.

Mr. Radcliffe: Not Whiggish progress, not at all. No, there are no Whigs allowed in this.

Mr. Maloway: I will take that as a no, that the minister is not planning to privatize this SOA at this time. However, the second SOA that we dealt with was the Companies Office. Now I could be wrong, but something tells me that in Alberta there is something—that the companies branch there is privatized, but perhaps I am wrong about that.

Nevertheless, I am looking for the assurance from the minister that there are no plans to privatize the Companies Office, and that there have been no representations made by individuals or groups of individuals to the minister, the government or members of his department regarding privatization.

Mr. Radcliffe: I am told that in Alberta the corporations branch still performed the registry function. In fact, what has developed in the Alberta jurisdiction is that there have sprung up a number of search agents. I would point my honourable colleague to—in fact, if one wants to do a search of a corporation in Washington, D.C., of a federal corporation, or if in fact one wants to do some registrations of a federal nature in Ottawa, one contacts an agent. In some cases they may be solicitors, they may be individuals who specialize in registry work. In fact, the elemental function of creating and maintaining a registry is a Crown function, and in Alberta, as it will in Manitoba, it will remain with the Crown, and we have no plans to privatize nor derogate from the function of the Crown in this function.

Mr. Maloway: My colleague the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) has been quite anxious to ask some questions of the Insurance branch, and I know they have been waiting patiently for some time now so perhaps we could begin questioning them.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Tweed): Would it be the will of the committee to sign off on these?

Mr. Maloway: We should do that when we finish.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Tweed): You are going to do that today?

Mr. Radcliffe: Alright, and is it appropriate then to excuse the director of Land Titles who is here at the table with us? Thank you very much, Mr. Wilson, for being here and providing assistance to answer the questions.

I would invite Ms. Couture to the table. Mr. Chairman, I would like to take this opportunity to present Ms. Lucy Couture, who is the Deputy Superintendent of Insurance in the Province of Manitoba.

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

Mr. Chairman, I would invite you to invite the honourable member for Elmwood to commence the questioning. I believe he had indicated that the honourable member for Wolseley, who is at the table, may have a few questions and so we are prepared to proceed.

Mr. Maloway: I indeed did suggest that we call the Insurance branch and that the member for Wolseley was anxious to ask some questions.

Ms. Friesen: Yes, I do want to ask some questions about a practice that is known popularly as redlining, and the minister and his staff, I am sure, are aware of a number of articles that have appeared in the Free Press and other newspapers from time to time over the past number of years, but certainly within the past year, on the issue of redlining in the residential areas of the inner city, part of which I represent.

The concerns of the residents of those areas, whether it is Wolseley or whether it is west Broadway or whether it is the area north of Portage, all of them have faced an increase in insurance costs in the last year, as they have in the past number of years. Many of them, particularly businesses, are finding it increasingly difficult to get any insurance at all and that is a serious concern.

The issues that we face as communities and as neighbourhoods is of course the inability for businesses to get insurance and the inability for both present homeowners and absentee landlords to get the kind of insurance that is necessary. It means that the neighbourhoods increasingly begin to deteriorate and that the real estate values, and I would say this is particularly true in the areas north of Portage of my riding, which are the areas from the University of Winnipeg to about Toronto Street, that the real estate values in that area have seen some deterioration and, I think, neighbours and the people in the community are very concerned about it.

Much of this is attributed to the inability to get insurance. We hear about insurance companies who simply do drive-bys. We hear about insurance companies who never inspect a property. We hear

about people who have never had a single claim in their life, finding that their insurance is increasing by two and three times over a very short period of time.

Many of the people in that community north of Portage that I am talking about are long-term residents who are now senior citizens and on fixed incomes, very concerned about maintaining their homes. Through no fault of their own, they see that their neighbourhood becomes increasingly transient and that businesses cannot be maintained. Articles in the Free Press may or may not carry all of the material required, and the issue of redlining is often, in fact frequently, denied by the insurance industry as a whole.

I have written to the minister, not this minister but the previous minister, about this and really have not had a very satisfactory reply. The sense I get from the ministry is it is not their problem. The sense I get when I have called agents of the industry myself, and I have called meetings of them to meet with constituents who have brought this to my attention, is that it does not exist. It is not done. People are not redlined by their location rather than by their claims' history. I am hearing, for example, of people in apartments, and this is in apartments that are well kept up, where there is security, but students moving into those apartments, for example, are having to pay a thousand dollars a year for insurance for the contents of a student apartment. That simply really makes it very difficult for students to play a part in the community, to continue to be part of that community. You know the University of Winnipeg is in this area. They are an important part of the neighbourhood.

* (1650)

So I would like, first of all, to ask the minister to respond on what he sees as the role of his ministry in this, and what steps have been taken in the past to deal with this issue. I know that it has been brought to the minister's attention in Question Period, not this minister, I believe, but the previous minister, and so there will be departmental policies on this and departmental responses. So I wonder if we could begin there.

Mr. Radcliffe: Mr. Chairman, the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) does raise some very real issues of what is going on in our financial world at this point

in time. I think she is very much aware of how an insurance company works, that, in fact, the risk is actuarially based and that the issue of insurance coverage is a private contract. Basically, it is a gamble where the homeowner is betting the insurer that a loss is going to occur and the insurance company is betting the resident that the loss will not occur, and the homeowner pays the insurance company a premium dollar based upon the exigencies of that risk. So it is, in fact, truly a measurement of risk.

I am very sympathetic to individuals who find themselves residing in deteriorating neighbourhoods. I, too, live in an older section of the city, and in my area of Winnipeg, at different points in time, the nature and characteristic of the neighbourhood has ebbed and flowed with the growth of young families and then the passage of families and the growth of senior citizens. The maintenance and nature and quality, the safety of the neighbourhood, the element of vandalism plays a very real role. Those are some of the elements that contribute to insurance rates. As well, as I am sure my honourable colleague is aware, the age of buildings, the components, the materials that go into the construction of buildings, the updating of electrical systems, the availability of fire halls, first-alert systems, all of these components are, in fact, attributes which can participate in the assessment and measurement of risk.

I can tell my honourable colleague that about approximately a year ago, when these articles were in the newspaper, I had occasion, with another one of my colleagues from our party, to call upon Mr. Hanson, who is the president of the Wawanesa Insurance Company. We posed to him and asked him the question very specifically: Is there redlining going on in the city of Winnipeg? By way of explaining redlining, are there areas of the city that are designated as uninsurable or as highly undesirable business? The answer that we got from the head of the Wawanesa Insurance Company, which is a very credible and well-run insurance company in Winnipeg and Manitoba, was that there are areas of the city where risk is assessed and at different levels, and based on the components that I had indicated to my honourable colleague a moment ago—

An Honourable Member: It should not be based on . . . it should be based on claims.

Mr. Radcliffe: My honourable colleague from Elmwood is saying that it should be based on claims history. I am told that that is, in fact, the basis upon which the insurance companies do ultimately base their actuarial statistics, and the whole issue is funded and fuelled and driven by actuarial data.

There is no magic to insurance. Insurance companies take our premium dollars, they pool them, and they then gamble basically that they are not going to have to pay out on the risks which they have committed to.

That is all it is, really. When you strip away all the surface material, documentation, that is the fundamental issue that has been going on. In fact, I can tell my honourable colleague that I used to act as the solicitor for a group of people that started up a reinsurance company in Manitoba, a mutual insurance—[interjection] This was the Hutterian Brethren Mutual Insurance Corporation.

What they did was they gathered together as a co-operative movement all the Hutterite colonies in Manitoba. At that point, there were approximately 80 of them that were in concert with one another. They decided that they would insure the first \$50,000 of loss. They all contributed a pool of funds which ultimately built up to a fund of approximately \$3 million of reserves which were held and invested against that loss. Then, any loss over that initial \$50,000 threshold was contracted out to other underwriters, principally Lloyd's of London, I believe, although I stand to be corrected on that.

Basically, again, when you get into Lloyd's—I have a cousin who is an underwriter in Lloyd's and I have walked about Lloyd's—all that is is an aggregation of individuals who privately contract blocks of risk. They have to post large amounts of capital, and I am sure my honourable colleague is aware that this was an outgrowth originally of a coffee shop environment, where insurance underwriters would gather to have coffee and discuss the commerce of the British Empire.

An Honourable Member: It is called Lloyd's now, not Lloyd's of London anymore.

Mr. Radcliffe: Is it just Lloyd's?

An Honourable Member: As of a couple weeks ago.

Mr. Radcliffe: Ah, well, that is good to know. Again, it is all statistically driven. I am told that, yes, there is some element of truth to the complaint that my honourable colleague brings to the table, that there are areas of the city where there is more violence on the street, there is more vandalism, there are aging buildings and there is a higher rate of loss. Therefore, in order to show a profit, the insurance companies are raising premiums.

I am aware, Mr. Chair, that when I look back, because I chart my insurance premiums every year and have done so over the course of the number of years that I have owned a home, I can see a steady increase in the insurance premiums with regard to what I pay for home insurance myself.

* (1700)

I take into account the fact that I have fire alarms built into the house. I have a security system in the house. I am a nonsmoker. We do not have any tobacco products in the house. We have an up-to-date furnace system. These are all issues that tend to diminish the amount of premium, but with the rise in the cost of materials for replacement, the cost of labour in the community, these are all countervailing issues that tend to raise the cost of insurance premiums.

So it is not a simple answer. Now, my honourable colleague had asked what is the role of the department in discussing this and in ensuring that there is reasonable equity between the insurance industry in Manitoba and the citizens who have a need. Well, first of all, as to the role of the department, I am advised that my superintendent has arranged a meeting for me to meet with a number of the managers of some of the leading insurers in Manitoba over the course of the next several weeks, within two weeks, I am told, as soon as I get out of Estimates. [interjection]

At the rate we are going, this may be a long-time experience, but nonetheless to discuss the whole issue of insurability, because I have demonstrated some concern about that, they want to share with me their concerns so that we can reach some consensus. We have looked at the issue of imposing regulation, and we

feel as a department that if we were to do that we would hear nothing but the slamming of trunks and the slamming of doors and people would leave the province because they are unwilling to assume the risks if we were to enter into the environment with a heavy-handed regulation. So therefore we feel that consensus building is in fact a superior form of process to undergo.

I would further add for my honourable colleague that there was a specialty market for high-risk insurance that was introduced to the province of Manitoba, and I think a number of insurance agents were made aware of this recently. It is about a year old this process, this market, and I am told by the superintendent there has not been one person do any uptake on this. So that is an interesting attribute. Now that may be a function of lack of publicity or it may be a function of the cost of this insurance. I do not know. One of my concerns, I must advise my honourable colleague, is the issue of uninsurability, and so I want to satisfy myself that the department goes to reasonable ends to make sure that contractual facility is extended to all members of the community. As to whether we impose mathematical limits and skew the actuarial returns I think is something that I am very reticent to become involved with, because I think that once government enters into that fray you get very unexpected and unpleasant returns from that.

The other thing of which I think that there is perhaps a potential for expansion or investigation is the whole reinsurance market, which I touched on earlier, which my clients, the Hutterian Brethren had looked upon much to their benefit. They found because they had very expensive wooden structures with a lot of heavy equipment in them, electrical equipment, livestock, and they were found in remote rural locations that they were unable to get insurance in some cases if they were poor risks or running their operations poorly or that the premiums were very high. Once they set up this mutual insurance corporation with a reinsurance component where the higher risk for total loss was laid off to other insurers that the rates came down, that there was in fact a universal application. Now I do not want to make too glowing a picture of this, because I am told that a recent devolution of this industry is that there has been some reticence in the insurance market in Canada to continue

being involved with this type of farm insurance. When I last was involved with it, it was in fact a highly successful endeavour. So I think that extending that type of application to the private insurance world, in an urban setting, that there may be a market for that as well. So there are other alternatives, I think, creative alternatives which can be—

An Honourable Member: Self-insurance.

Mr. Radcliffe: The honourable colleague from Elmwood has raised the issue of self-insurance, and I believe the federal government is a self-insurer. [interjection] No, I am not proposing that the core of Winnipeg become self-insurers. But, in fact, I think that is what my honourable colleague has raised that if you are unable to get commercial insurance you do by virtue of that fact become self-insured. I do not suppose for a moment that these individuals to whom my honourable colleague is making reference actually set aside an amount comparable to premium dollars to create a fund to insulate them against potential loss. But that is the function of self-insurance.

Another possible area of activity for exploration may be—another area which may lend itself to some potential research is communities of interest getting together and establishing reciprocal insurance, where a group of individuals each basically bet one another that there will not be a loss and that if there is a loss occasioned that a group of citizens would then share in the particular loss. So this points to creation of establishments of communities of interest.

Now to go back for a moment to what Mr. Hanson explained to us from the Wawanesa, he said that if communities were prepared to get together to minimize particular conditions which insurance companies find offensive, such as vandalism, by virtue of Neighbourhood Watch or community activities to employ the children or the young people who might be the authors of some of this damage, property damage, that that would tend to ameliorate some of the impact of the premium rise. So I think what my honourable colleague is referring to—and I think is very real and I do not deprecate that for a moment—of rising insurance rates and deteriorating neighbourhoods and aging neighbourhoods, I think one is the function of the other.

As the neighbourhood ages and as the quality of life deteriorates by virtue of the social conditions arising out of poverty or marginalization and many other issues that I know my honourable colleague has touched upon and I have listened to in the Chamber, that rising insurance rates are a result of these social conditions and not in fact essentially a cause of those conditions, albeit I do not think it is a pleasant result. There may be some things that we can do on a creative basis, either she as a leader in her community, to learn about different alternatives of insurance and not just to fight the traditional battle of saying, oh, those evil insurance companies, the big business ogre, et cetera, but rather that there are other creative alternatives which people themselves, if they address their mind to, can come up with solutions on a community basis because, in fact, when you analyze what the real function of an insurance company is, it is a number of investors who get together, create a pool of cash which then forms a reserve in order to fulfill the insurance function. So this can be done on many alternatives. It is a matter I think that would form the source of many future interesting discussions and arrangements and schemes, perhaps, in our communities.

* (1710)

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, well, I wanted to point out to the minister a number of issues that arise from what he said, and one of the most important things I think is that he should understand—and I want to use this opportunity to express to him the extreme frustration of people who live in my community, that no matter what they do, no matter the fire alarms that they put in, no matter the fact that they have a guard dog, no matter the fact that they have an alert system, no matter the fact that they have had no record of robberies, no matter how their property is kept up, it does not make a difference because redlining does not apply to the individual. It applies to a postal code and it applies to very large postal codes. R3G is a big postal code. It includes areas where there has been an enormous amount of upgrading. Most of that area is in fact covered by Neighbourhood Watch. Most of that area has programs for young children, as the minister mentioned, to keep them employed. We have a number of those in west Broadway and in the Ellice area. We have community policemen on the beat, but we do have, also, a deteriorating infrastructure in parts of that area as well.

So the first thing I want to have the minister understand is the frustration of people who have done everything they absolutely can and yet still their rates go up and up. Because the rates are going up, they find it very difficult to sell their property so that they are caught, and this seems to be the unfair trap of all.

So it is not the fact that the individuals have done nothing or are unable to do anything because of income. They have, and that is their frustration, and I find that in all parts of the community.

I think a second thing I would like the minister to understand is that it is not—he suggested it is an effect rather than a cause, but in fact it is not that simple. The inability of a business to have access to insurance that it can afford, the inability of people in the community who are prepared to create Neighbourhood Watches, who are prepared to develop these community programs and to keep their property in a secure manner, their inability to have access to insurance is also a cause. It is a cause of the continuing deterioration of parts of the inner city. It is not just simply an effect. It is a circular event I think, and I think the government and the minister should understand that as well.

Thirdly, I think the minister has expressed very clearly the market-based philosophy of this government. Insurance is, he says, an actuarially based private contract which is a gamble and is an issue of risk, and it is a private contract between individuals and the insurance companies and, yes, that is true. But there is also, it seems to me, a community responsibility and an aspect of government which is being abandoned by this government.

When we had, for example—and I will just suggest the most recent memory is the Core Area Agreement—those teams of people who were going door to door, who were taking the social worker and the carpenter and the building evaluator and the health inspector and the public health nurse in parts of the community, we saw improvement. We did not see these rising interest rates. We saw, in fact, communities where we had no boarded-up houses. You go down a number of the streets in my community, and I am told most recently of one particular street where there are 19 houses boarded up. Well, the very rapid deterioration that occurs in those conditions is considerable, and it is very difficult to stop that kind of deterioration as much as people are

trying to, as much as I would say the City of Winnipeg is doing a good job with its community policing and with the social worker extensions that they have in parts of the community, who are finding the employment, who are creating different kinds of community centres, both at Magnus Eliason and at Broadway Community Club that are very much involved in things which go beyond the normal elements of community club activities.

Yet, what has happened is the federal government, I would say to some extent but increasingly the provincial government, has abandoned the inner city, and we see one element of that is the issue of insurance. It is a much broader problem, I would say, than simply insurance, but that cause and effect is very much a part of it. There is a role for government, not just for this ministry, but for the Department of Urban Affairs and for the Department of Family Services, as well as for the Department of Education. You simply cannot continue to abandon the inner city of Winnipeg in the way that you are doing.

It is an issue which will have an impact upon every aspect of Manitoba's industry and Manitoba's sense of community, Manitoba's ability to present itself to the outside world as a place of investment. The rapid deterioration and the exodus from the city generally is something which I think is just beginning to spiral. Our attention has perhaps been taken away from it for the moment by the flood, but it is certainly continuing, and we see no attempt by this government in any of the areas where they could act to begin to stem that change.

When I say spiral, I probably should almost say ripple because it is not— you know, today it is the boundaries of parts of my constituency, but it is also moving into St. James, it is moving into parts of St. Boniface. It is expanding. The minister has heard, I am sure, of the doughnut effect, and I want to use this opportunity, again, to impress upon the government the importance of maintaining conditions of life in the inner city which are tolerable, which are hopeful in all aspects of people's lives, because some of the conditions are increasingly becoming absolutely intolerant. It is not just the inner city of Winnipeg which suffers in this case, it is everybody.

What people do not see from this government is, first of all, a recognition of that. They do not see any

attempt to halt it, and they do not see any hope that this government is going to put any money into any aspect of the inner city, whether it is in education or whether it is in material conditions of living or whether it is in programs for youth. I do not need to go into the, I suppose, extreme disappointment, despair that many people are feeling about the Youth Secretariat, something which offered some hope, which has produced studies which clearly understand the problems that are being faced by people in the inner city but which simply result in announcement after announcement of nonexistent government programs. Again, the cynicism and the despair that comes out of that kind of, what is it now, three-year process of the Youth Secretariat without any kind of measurable result—adds to the problem. It adds to the psychological despair that people are feeling in the inner city.

I cannot stress enough for this government which does not have representation in the inner city—it is very much of a suburban and rural government—that you have to come to grips with that. Nothing is more significant, it seems to me, than that. It is a problem that the government has allowed to deteriorate over the last 10 years, and I think any government is going to find it extremely difficult, very, very difficult to reverse what is happening.

We use now the occasion of redlining to draw the attention of the government to that issue. It seems to me that a government which has a concern for Manitoba, for Winnipeg, for our presence in that global economy, has to come to grips with that. One of the ways in which you can do it is to begin to rebuild physically the inner city. You can begin to rebuild some of the hope for the young families who are there. Redlining is one aspect of it. It is both cause and effect. I am glad to hear that the minister is meeting with insurance agents. I am glad to see that he is prepared to discuss this with them. I know that other ministers have tried this.

I am not, frankly, convinced that a government which is philosophically based upon the supremacy of the market is actually prepared to do anything, and the minister himself alluded to the fact that one option is self-insurance. I mean, somebody on \$12,000 a year, and, you know, children to feed and a life to try and hold together in some communities which are

increasingly physically violent, simply is not able to begin to conceive of that in the same way that he mentioned that the Crown is able to self-insure.

* (1720)

The issue of co-op reinsurance that the minister mentioned, again, it seems to me that the kind of capital which the Hutterite communities can bring together for these kinds of self-insurances, good for them. That is a very good use of the co-operative power that is there in those kinds of community-based rural societies, but I just simply do not think that is feasible in the way that the minister described for people in the inner city where there is a high level of migration, partly because of the conditions of urban life and partly because of the intense poverty and increasing poverty.

Do not forget that many of the people in parts of the community I am representing here are people who live for the most part on versions of transfer payments, whether it is on pensions, whether it is on welfare, whether it is on disability, and most of those have been cut. We are seeing people now who are living on 20 percent less, as a result of this government's actions, than they were last year.

One of the increasingly most difficult conversations I have with my constituents is to explain to them that, yes, this is not a mistake, the government actually did intend to make you poorer. It actually did intend to cut not your landlord's income, but to cut you, not just by 20 percent, as the government said, but by 40 percent, not just in the way that Harris did it in Ontario where he allowed the cut to welfare to be passed through to the landlords, but in Manitoba that cut was not passed through to the landlords, it came off the table. It came from food, it came from clothing, and it came from an inability for families to manage the many, many crises that they face everyday.

When you only have \$200 a month to deal with your daily living and a family to feed, you simply face a crisis every day. Getting to the doctor becomes a crisis. Going for a test when the doctor orders a test becomes a crisis. When your telephone is cut off, that is a crisis because you cannot reach the doctor anymore. So the manner of daily living becomes a crisis and to suggest that there is the possibility for reciprocal insurance

there or co-op reinsurance, I think the minister is well aware that that is not a possibility.

The minister also talked about reciprocal insurance. That is a community getting together and reinsuring itself against risk which sounded an awful lot to me like what government insurance used to do. The government of Manitoba used to be, as a community, involved in reinsuring or insuring each other. That is what we do with hail insurance. That is what we do with crop insurance. It is what we used to do before this government abandoned general insurance. It was a form of that kind of reciprocal insurance that the minister talked about.

So I offer my support to the minister in meeting with the insurance agents. I also want to ensure that he carries forward with him that sense of desperation, that sense of the significance of this issue not just for the inner city of Winnipeg, but for all Manitoba as well, and the extreme sense of frustration that many of my constituents have, that no matter what they do, their insurance goes up. No matter what they do as a community, no matter what they do as an individual, those rates continue to increase, and they are simply by virtue of the postal code where they live colloquially redlined.

Mr. Radcliffe: I would like to thank my honourable colleague for that overview of certainly a very real aspect of our community. I think that in analyzing the remarks of my honourable colleague and in analyzing the problems that we face with this issue, there are two components to the question. The first component is availability of insurance. The second component is the price or the cost of doing business, and I think I have outlined the cost of doing business already.

I think that one of the roles of government is to make sure that should people be so inclined, that there is the availability of this service to the community. I would suggest, as well, to my honourable colleague—and I do not for a minute want to diminish the advocacy that my honourable colleague brings to the table. I am well aware of the sense of frustration, despair of many of our marginalized citizens.

As my honourable colleague knows, I had occasion to chair a committee on Child and Family Services on

a revision of the legislation over the course of the last year. I travelled to many different communities in the province of Manitoba, not just the west end of Broadway or north Portage. I talked to individuals in the bush. I talked to individuals in mining towns. I talked to individuals in small rural towns and many, many people in the city of Winnipeg. I saw on a very real basis some of the elements with which they must live and face and contend on a daily basis. I do not mean to detract from that for a moment, and none of my remarks should be interpreted as such.

One of the issues that I think plays a real part in the price of insurance is the cost of reproducing the property which is at stake. Therefore, if we are taking a typical house on Simcoe Street which may be a two-and-a-half storey, 1,200- or 1,500-square-foot home on a 50-foot lot, if that were to burn, today the costs of reproducing that dwelling are very, very significant and probably worth more than what you could fetch for that property where it sits today.

I think that this is a product of an aging infrastructure. I do not know what the price of real estate is on Simcoe Street today, but I would hazard a guess that it is probably \$50,000, \$60,000 for such a home that I have described. To reproduce that on a running board foot basis—and I believe the costs of reproduction is close to \$95 a square foot plus finishing—you are looking at a significant problem there that the insurance company is facing as well. I am not an apologist, I am just explaining some of the realities with which the insurance companies have to deal today, and depending upon the finishing that you put in, you are facing a significantly costly experience on a mathematical basis.

*(1730)

Whether government foots that or whether it is commercially driven, if it is not economically feasible, then some other alternative must be addressed.

My honourable colleague has suggested, Mr. Chairman, that the panacea of all is that, oh, well, government will ride to the rescue on a white horse and dispense largess. Well, I think that all that would do would be to enhance the cynicism of our citizens. In fact, I think that has been described quite adequately in

our Chamber of recent date with some of our Liberal colleagues of the federal persuasion right now, and I know it is being voiced about in the community.

I think that what we have got to do on a philosophical basis—and I am not diminishing for a moment the real need. I know it exists; I know that it is a very complex issue, and I invite my colleague to be aware, and I respond to her in that vein, that it is not just a simple fix of commanding or legislating or a provident government riding to the rescue of improvident or bereft citizens and saying, oh, well, let us give you something.

I think it must go a step further because, quite honestly, we tried that. We had a government insurance company. We had a lot of very expensive social programs. You know what, Mr. Chair, we were unable to change the reality of poverty. All we did was band-aid it. In fact, I would suggest to my honourable colleagues at the table that what we should be doing is truly going a step further. I believe in putting money into education, and I think that is probably one of the priorities that our government will be addressing even further.

I know my honourable colleague would be very responsive as to the dearth of funds that she sees have gone into education from her perspective right now, but I would say that as my honourable colleague the Minister of Child and Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) has so often said, the best form of support is a job. So, therefore, if we can help these individuals change how they perceive themselves, so that they are no longer perceiving themselves as the despairing, as the people who are left out, the people who are bereft, then I think that we will have formed a far greater social service than just a handout.

I can recite—and this not to trivialize the whole experience, but my wife was a member of a women's group at one point in time in her career, and there was a group of individuals who came to town from Boston, known as the Boston Trainers. They had these individuals perform a game, an interactive game. Very quickly, all the women in the room realized that if you were a green circle, you were programmed for failure. If you were a red square, you were programmed by virtue of the counting to where they succeeded. If you

were a green triangle, you could not break out of a particular strata in the counting and assessment of reward in this particular game.

Then all of a sudden, the convener, the facilitator, said, whoops, I fooled you. All the rules are changed, and, in fact, the initial group that were the losers now become the winners, and the people who thought they were winning are now losing. The relationships between those individual women at that particular meeting became so intense and so acrimonious that a number of them had to go back to their colleagues a day or two later and apologize because of the emotions that this evoked.

So it analogizes, I guess, the feelings which I know are very real. I think that government is not unmindful of those feelings and the skill sets that are required to bring people out of this morass of poverty, of ill health, of marginalization and of real despair.

I know that we have an element in our city right now of 60,000 to 70,000 aboriginal people, and that in many, many cases these people are refugees from a repressive system that they lived amongst in their own home communities, and they have fled to the city of Winnipeg. They have been subject to poverty, violence and lack of opportunity.

They are in a process of evolving, and, in fact, I think rather than just giving them a blind, patronizing, hierarchial handout is to create an opportunity so that those people can succeed. This will take time. This is an incremental issue and it will not be something that will happen overnight, but I think that the real assistance we can give to many, many of these people is to assess their real needs and to create the opportunity so that they can help themselves.

I think that is probably—we have come a long way from redlining, but I think that from the philosophical aspect that is the real issue that is at stake. I think I had mentioned before the Andrews Street station, which is a particular community organization that I have had occasion to attend and admire significantly. This is where a group of citizens got together, established what their real needs were in a particular community, which was firstly a safe and hygienic place to do their laundry and that grew then to a community kitchen and that grew then to communal enterprises in the city.

The issue that I touched upon previously, Mr. Chairman, of the example of our Hutterian Brethren, I think should give us great pause for thought because here is an aggregation of individuals that if you divvied up the communal holdings that these people have on a particular parcel of land, their net income which actually has to be notionally done from year to year, is probably \$16,000, \$17,000. That is all they earn, at least that was where they were at when I left the practice of law about two or three years ago. You pool those assets and you create an economic engine. You create a community force which is far, far, more effective than the sum of all the component parts.

These people have the ability, the motivation, the theological underlay which enables them to work together, and I had seen over 20 years of practising law in serving these communities how they can move onto a piece of bare land, and this was to me astounding, and within the course of three to four years they could transform that piece of property by the stint of hard work and not just tons of cash. I mean they would start out very humbly with a rented trailer for a dining room. They would live in very humble dwellings; they would bunk together and over the course of three to four years they could transform that piece of property into a show place.

I could take my honourable colleagues out to, for example, just north of Starbuck to a particular colony which today is something that agriculturists come from near and far to admire, to look at, to study, and again it is not just because they had a wealthy mother colony that dumped a plethora of cash onto them. It was more a thought pattern, a thought process which enabled these people to succeed. I think that we as government, we as community leaders, we as educators, we as people in our communities have got to try and share and transmit that sense of ability to succeed, that ability to solve problems, that ability to act as community and when we are able to do that, we then will be able to say we have succeeded.

It is an ability to cause people to think differently about themselves, and I am sure that every one of us in this room today think that we are winners, that we are leaders, that we have succeeded in a number of great endeavours, as has my honourable colleague who is

well educated and a successful educator herself. She thinks well of herself. I was a practicing lawyer. I attained validation in my community by achieving areas of course of study and received the appropriate acknowledgment from that. That went to a perception of self, and if we are able to somehow reach out to aboriginals who come from our reserves, people who, through lack of opportunity have not been able to achieve education levels, people who come from Third World nations and give them the opportunity and the ability and the motivation to think well of themselves, then we will have succeeded.

We look at our Chinese community in Manitoba, and this is a burgeoning entrepreneurial group of people. They have a pride and a sense of being, because they come of a 4,000-year-old history. I had the opportunity to do a minimal bit of travelling in China, and it was explained to me that the most humble and lowly of Chinese think themselves more superior to what they called gwai-lo [phonetic] or westerner essentially because they are Chinese. The word "China," when translated from their script, means "centre of the universe." So that bespeaks a sense of perception of self, and I think that is truly what this Filmon government is trying to do for the people of Manitoba. I get a note of derisive evocation from my honourable colleague from Wolseley, but, in fact and in truth, if you think well of yourself, if you think that you have the ability to succeed, then you become self-fulfilling.

* (1740)

An Honourable Member: What does that have to do with postal codes?

Mr. Radcliffe: Well, this was a springboard from redlining and postal coding to a broader philosophical base, which I am being responsive to my honourable colleague, and I am well aware of the awful results of ill health and of lack of education and lack of opportunity and general frustration and real despair. So, Mr. Chair, I could perhaps talk, you know, for hours on this topic.

An Honourable Member: Thirty minutes.

Mr. Radcliffe: Thirty minutes. Yes, I can count, but I do not want to monopolize the Estimate time, and I

would bow to my honourable colleague for a further question.

Ms. Friesen: Well, it was an interesting circuit from the virtues of individualism to the virtues of collectivism to the intentions of the Filmon government and, without accepting what the minister said of his and my self-evaluation, I would point out to him that both of us were educated considerably at the public expense, something which and opportunities which are now considerably diminished for the people whom we both represent. It is worth, I think, remembering that the kind of community action that we are talking about here is something that cannot be achieved by individuals. I mean, what education does, what our health system does, is enable us to do together what none of us can do individually, and that is certainly the kind of thing that I am looking for from this government and from the minister.

I do not believe I did talk about white horses or black dogs or whatever. What I was suggesting to the minister is that there is much that cannot be done by individuals within these communities, that there is a great deal that can be done with the collective power of both community and government. I made reference to the core area program which did stem some of the deterioration in Winnipeg. Other ones that the minister, I am sure, is well aware of are community credit institutions, the lending circles, that are more prevalent in other countries but certainly have been tried in Canada, and which are collective ways of meeting some of the needs of communities. Other ways that he mentioned are, of course, the Andrews Street Family Centre, and similar kinds of community-based organizations. But many of those also need a collective, and you can call it government, government in some cases but not necessarily government, but certainly collective ways of organization and expression.

The Hutterite community that he made reference to, of course, has the advantage, not necessarily of extreme wealth of mother colonies, but it has the advantage of a community of language and of religion as well as of kinship networks, and those are not necessarily there in the inner city of Winnipeg. In fact, I would say that in many cases they are not. There are certainly small communities that are linked by family. There are small

communities which are linked by a common language. But one of the major ways in which Hutterites have been able to accomplish what they have been able to accomplish is, first of all, their co-operative ethos and, secondly, their commonality of language, religion and kinship, so that the conditions that the member suggested perhaps ought to be not necessarily—he should not necessarily think that those are transferable to the inner city of Winnipeg.

Interestingly, if we were to comment in a philosophical way—well, perhaps I will not get into that. I was going to go into his version of the Chinese sense of confidence.

If the minister were to read, and I will give him some of the examples, the early European explorers in Manitoba in the 18th Century, La Vérendrye, Alexander Henry, Alexander Henry's associates, one of the common messages that they came back with was, never believe that an aboriginal person whom you meet thinks you superior to him. You are but slaves to him—the same sense of self-confidence, of knowledge, of superiority of knowledge, of superiority of adaptability to the land, superiority in the fur trade. In fact it was the consumer and the labourer that aboriginal people represented in the fur trade that gave them, until 1821, a tremendous sense of self-confidence and superiority, much the same as the minister expresses about the Chinese that he was told about.

Mr. Radcliffe: And witnessed.

Ms. Friesen: And witnessed, he says. From the 18th Century to the 20th Century that has changed. The self-confidence, the sense of superiority, the sense of ability to control their own future has changed dramatically, and that is what communities in Winnipeg are coping with.

It has changed partly as a result of government policy. One of the arguments that is often used is that aboriginal people are culturally not adapted to farming, but that is a complete and erroneous misunderstanding of what happened in Canada, and particularly in Manitoba. In the early years of the treaty system and the reserve system in the 1870s and 1880s, the most advanced farmers, for example, in the Virden area, were the aboriginal people, the Oak River Dakota.

They had the largest crops. They were the ones who supported the elevators in that area. They did so because they had experience as farmers. Many of them had worked in the 1860s as farmers, and therefore nonaboriginal farmers in the Portage region, and when they took their own reserve, small as it was, they adapted very quickly to the incoming commercial agriculture of Manitoba.

When the government found this out in the 1880s, when they began to send Indian agents to the Oak River Dakota, they were appalled. They were horrified. They said this is not what we meant by Indian improvement. What we meant, in fact, was that Indians should become peasant farmers, and they instituted a policy of essentially taking away from the Oak River Dakota their ability to sell their crop. They had to move to a permit system which meant that the Indian agent was the only one who could sell their crop for them, whereas they had for 10 years been selling their crops widely and successfully in Manitoba because they were essentially in advance of the European civilization or, quotes, civilization.

At the same time, they said that Indians should not be allowed to own machinery. They must be farming the land of Manitoba only with the tools which they can make with their own hands, only with the wooden plow, only with the scythe that they can make with their own hands, and only with the wooden implements, stone implements and metal implements, indeed by the 1880s, that they can make by themselves.

Why was this? It was because the Government of Canada was on a moral crusade to change the very nature of aboriginal society. They were not to be commercial farmers. They were to be limited in what they could sell and limited in what they produce, and it was because the government required, not commercially successful Indian farmers, but they required a moral change amongst Indians. What they argued for was that the Indian must, first of all, become a peasant before he can become a commercial farmer. No matter that the evidence was very clear that the Oak River Dakota had done much more. Indeed, the European people within the Virden area were some of the greatest supporters of the aboriginal farmers. They were the ones who were filling the elevator. They were the ones who were, in fact, providing the early cash in

that area, and they went to Ottawa with the Oak River Dakota to protest this policy.

* (1750)

So, as the minister looks at the aboriginal people in Manitoba and their increasing migration to parts of the city of Winnipeg, that policy of less than a hundred years ago—and, in fact, which remained as an aspect of federal government policy until the 1930s—is one I think that should be borne in mind, that government policy has changed those people of 150 years ago from ones who were confident, secure in their sense of their ability to determine their own futures, to ones who have lost that ability. It is often laid, I think, by many Canadians—I will not just say Manitobans—at the door of aboriginal people themselves, because they are unaware of the nature of government policy and the details of government policy as it has affected people. It is a difficult one to explain today with people who believe in sort of the inevitability of progress, but it is one that is very, very clearly there, and if only this government were not about to drop Canadian history from the requirements for graduation of students in Manitoba, we might have the opportunity to explain such elements of government policy and such social issues in Manitoba today to our young people.

So perhaps I am becoming a little more successful in ensuring that the government does maintain Canadian history as a requirement for graduation in Manitoba. I certainly hope so, and I know that the minister has yet again delayed that change in curriculum. I have applauded her for that and look forward, in fact, to a complete rethinking of that on the part of the government, and I welcome the support from the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) since I know he does have an interest in history and in the philosophical bases of it.

But this has taken us a long way from redlining, and may I come back to my question, which is—and it is both a question and an urging of the minister. The issue is the very broad regions that are defined by the insurance companies and which, to my knowledge, they continue to deny. Yet, to every citizen who has faced this, the evidence seems very clear. It is not the individual, it is the region, and it is the community which is suffering as well as individuals. So I want to

ask the minister, when he goes to meet with those insurance agents, will he take that concern, will he take that question, and will he come back with an answer from them, either in the House or in writing, as to their response to that?

Mr. Radcliffe: Mr. Chairman, I would advise the honourable member for Wolseley that I have her argument and I thank her for it. I do undertake to share with her the results of my discussions with the members of the insurance industry with whom I will be meeting. I would just reflect and extend a little further and make common cause with the honourable member for Wolseley of government policy, because one of the things that I had been aware of as a young person in Canada growing up, because I used to summer on Lake of the Woods and had an opportunity to attend at a residential Indian school and then subsequently on my reading and then on my perambulations about the province of Manitoba with regard to this small committee that I was on, I had explained to me the devastating influence of the whole residential school policy of our federal government and of our churches. This was a group of people who thought at the time that they were trying to do good to what they considered a savage element of our society. I am told that what would happen is that the Mounted Police would actually go into aboriginal communities, apprehend young children. These children would be taken some two to three days often, travel away from their families, away from their environment. They would be placed in residential schools at the hands of clergy, well-meaning clergy, but people who would then refuse to permit these young people to communicate in their own language.

They were prevented from associating with siblings in these schools. They were indoctrinated with a classical European education. I can remember attending religious services at some of these residential schools and in the spring of the year listening to the local priest starting to prepare these children for their return to the reserves and explaining some of the social conditions they were meeting and reflecting, at that time, what was the relevance of educating these people to a basically European or urban environment with all the skills of an urban education, and then expecting these people to go back to living on the rim of what was our society in the bush, trapping or gathering or living

in a very fundamentally different environment and expect that those skills that we had imparted to them would be relevant to their subsequent existence. I remember reflecting even at the ages of 12 and 13 that this did not seem to be a fit.

What has been explained to me as well by a number of elders and aboriginal community leaders is the disassociative influence that being almost confined to a residential school has on people, that you forget or you lose the opportunity for the transmission of passed-down culture. Much of our learning, as I am sure my honourable colleague will acknowledge, is the sharing of communal lore, of the knowledge of who you are, which is done at your parent's knee or around the dining room table or when you are doing familial tasks together. If you are in fact institutionalized at a young age, then there is a gap in your experience and in your knowledge base.

I am told that that is what a lot of our aboriginal people today suffer from. We have compounded that by virtue of again a well-meaning policy which was of adopting out a number of children who were in care, in foster care in the '70s. They were apprehended by Child and Family Services and adopted out to urban families, the families in the northern United States. These were young people who were apprehended from their parents, from their communities, from everything that they related to and put into a totally foreign environment. I am told that many, many of these people became disassociated from the environment in which they found themselves. Despite the fact the best of intentions of the individuals who placed them, the best of intentions and the real love that was showered upon them, they did not become successful because they were out of pace with the environment in which they found themselves.

Again, this was a colonization or an assimilation that the aboriginal people felt was being imposed upon them by our European or Caucasian society. Again, another communal force that I think we must be very mindful of is the whole apprehension of children today and putting them into group and foster homes which are—there is not the adoption process which is a European legal fiction—nonetheless an alternative care giving and imposing standards of behaviour and standards of community on these people which are not normally or

necessarily ones to which they adhere. So there is still, I would suggest, today, even in our society, based on the most altruistic of motives, of an intention, a still continuing suppression and alienation of these people from their roots.

I think that one of the things—and I touch on my previous remarks of saying that I think that we should be focusing on and I have advocated, and I think that my honourable colleagues will see some manifestation of this—is to empower some of the aboriginal leaders themselves to take responsibility for their children and to try to undo what is a generational problem.

I have become quite an ardent advocate for some of these aboriginal issues, and I would welcome the opportunity of sharing my views with the honourable colleague for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) at a future time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Dyck): Order, please. The hour being 6 p.m., committee rise.

CULTURE, HERITAGE AND CITIZENSHIP

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Gerry McAlpine): Order, please. Would the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply has been dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship. Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

We are on Resolution 14.1 Administration and Finance (d) Manitoba Film Classification Board (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$108,000. Shall the item pass?

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): I understand the minister has made an arrangement with one of my colleagues, the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hicke), to entertain his sections today. I will just be here for a short time.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Yes, I understand that was a request and I have no problem with that at all. I have the appropriate staff available and will proceed according to what you need.

Ms. McGifford: Then I did want to ask some more questions about the Film Classification Board. We began talking about it yesterday. Yesterday we were discussing the Film Classification Board and its work, and I just wanted to take a moment to summarize and then ask some new questions.

I know that the minister told me yesterday that she was new to the ministry and therefore some of the questions were not necessarily ones that she knew the ins and outs of, but I know she does have the advantage of expert staff. I would like to pursue the questions since Estimates really are the opportunity to do this kind of work, so if I could just proceed with the questions then.

I understand from what the minister said yesterday that there are two inspectors who do annual inspections of cinemas and licensed video stores. At least not each and every one, but I presume have a pattern whereby one year they do some and another year they do others. Though more often, I understand, that these inspectors respond to complaints. I understand, furthermore, that the complaints are nearly always related to so-called adult video stores. I suppose I should call them adult video outlets. Is that accurate?

Mrs. Vodrey: I appreciate the member's comments and just to clarify for her, I think it is important that we pursue the factual line of questioning. The issues that I had mentioned, I was fairly new about, were if there would be any further policy changes. In those I believe it would only be appropriate to give reasonable thought and thinking to about the issues raised by the member and also issues which now come to me in my new portfolio.

So on the policy development issues I will be taking some time to think about the issues. However, in the factual areas, I have staff and am more than happy to try and answer the questions. In terms of the inspectors, as the member outlined, that is, I am informed, the majority of the issues that they deal with; however, I also am informed that they deal with complaints at regular video outlet stores in which there is a complaint where a product has been rented to an underage person, for instance, a restricted movie being rented to someone under 18. So the complaints and investigations are not strictly focused on the adult video

outlets, as we have been calling them, but also can affect other video outlets as well.

Ms. McGifford: So the complaints are usually made directly to the Film Classification Board.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am informed that is correct. That is the process.

Ms. McGifford: Now I understand that the Film Classification Board classifies but does not censor, so that material that could ultimately be judged obscene could very well turn up in a local cinema or a local video outlet. I suppose showing the film or renting the video then becomes the responsibility of the owner, and if a complaint is made, would the owner then be responsible?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, the member is right in that the board does classify the films and this is an area where it does become a kind of crossover between Film Classification Board and Justice, but to her specific question, I am informed that, yes, then under any charges that might be laid under the Criminal Code, it would be the owner of the video store.

Ms. McGifford: Does that explain why on the video update that goes out from the Film Classification Board, there is a kind of, I suppose, a warning that reads, the board assigns classifications to film and video for the information of the public? The board does not censor. It does not interpret the Criminal Code which only the courts can do. As such, video retailers and distributors should not consider a classification assigned by the board as an implied endorsement of a film or a video's legal status under the Criminal Code.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am informed that is correct and that is the Film Classification's effort to clearly define their role and the onus also on the vendor or the store owner.

Ms. McGifford: It seems to me a very delicate position for members of the Film Classification Board to be in, to perhaps classify a film or a video as a plus-18 and it be distributed and then the owner perhaps being implicated for showing obscene or renting obscene material.

* (1440)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I understand in the theoretical sense the issue that the member has raised. However, I am informed that the material is screened at the outset by the distributor in terms of trying to ensure that it meets what would fall into community standards, that step already having been taken. I am informed that this, in general, has not been a problem to this point.

Ms. McGifford: I do not know if this is a fair question, but I wonder if the minister could give me any information about how other jurisdictions in Canada operate as far as film classification. Do they also classify or do they, at times, not allow material? In other words, do most equivalents in other jurisdictions merely classify, or do they, at times, also act as, I suppose the correct word would be censors?

Mrs. Vodrey: I am informed that in the two larger provinces, B.C. and Ontario, the boards do have a censorship ability in those provinces, and that, by and large, because their markets are so much larger, there has generally been an opportunity to determine, based, I presume, under the Criminal Code in those markets, whether or not a film would be obscene. I believe I am correct in describing it this way. So, in Manitoba, which has been a smaller market—and I am also informed in Alberta and Saskatchewan, though Alberta and Saskatchewan, under their legislation, have an ability to censor, in fact have not really been required to, nor have we, simply by virtue of the larger markets and their roles.

Ms. McGifford: Is that censorship ability something that the minister might consider looking at?

Mrs. Vodrey: Just to follow up on the last question. I am informed that B.C. and Ontario will then, because of their larger markets, reject films. Because they are rejected, then there is an effect in other jurisdictions.

In terms of changing our legislation, again, I am fairly new to the issue. What I have been informed of at the moment is that our legislation, which, I understand, is newer than most legislation across the country, we have been given legal advice or opinion that it would not withstand a challenge. In fact, my understanding is that the censorship on the advice that we have been given

would not stand up. I am informed that it has not been tested in the other provinces and basically has not been used in Alberta, for instance, or in Saskatchewan.

Ms. McGifford: Yes, I was just going to ask the minister how B.C. and Ontario were able to withstand challenges; perhaps I could just put that out.

Mrs. Vodrey: The information that I have at the moment is that we do not believe that they have been challenged on that matter, but I would have to confirm that with the information that our own Film Classification Board would have on the roles in other provinces.

Ms. McGifford: So I guess my logic is that, if these two provinces have been able to have the ability to censor in their acts operating in their provinces, and they have not been challenged or appear not to have been challenged, it may also be a possibility in Manitoba.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, the information that I have received says that fairly recently, and the member probably knows, because it has happened within the past few years, that the Supreme Court, in the Butler case, clarified for the Criminal Code, for the application of those sections, quite carefully what in fact would be obscene and what is not. So my understanding is that British Columbia and Ontario, in the rejecting of any films, are very careful that they follow very explicitly what has now been clarified and what previously was not clarified. That really was a watershed case in terms of the Justice and the federal government's responsibility in clarification. So at this point I see the question of why British Columbia and Ontario and perhaps why not Manitoba, but I think we now have further information on the Justice side which will assist us here in Manitoba.

Ms. McGifford: Yesterday I asked the minister if she was planning a review of The Amusement Act, on the 10th anniversary of The Amusement Act, just as the former minister told us that he planned to review The Heritage Act for the reason that it was the 10th anniversary. The minister now tells me that our legislation is new legislation as compared to other provinces. I was not aware of that. I ask this question because I have concerns about the kind of material that

is available in Manitoba and especially on videos and especially the plus-18s. I just wanted to read a couple of examples into the record from the video update of the week of April 7 to 18. Here are some examples of the plus-18 videos: Bulletin Board Buddies, Butt Sluts in Leather, Decadence, Eurosnatch, Eurotica. I mean, I could go on.

I do not think this kind of material serves the best interests of Manitobans. I think the majority of Manitobans probably would object to the presence of this material. As I told the minister outside the House yesterday where we had a short discussion, I know I have an advisory group of women who are really disturbed by the presence of this kind of material in our province. They believe that it is pornography, and they believe that pornography is violence against women, or as some feminists have put it, pornography is the theory and rape is the practice.

* (1450)

I do not expect the minister to respond to what I have been saying, but she might want to. I did want to suggest that the minister might be interested in legislation from Australia, or perhaps her staff are familiar with legislation from Australia where the massacre at, I think it was Port Arthur—I think I have the name of the town right—was so disturbing to Australians especially when the criminal in that case was found to have hoards and hoards of pornography that there was a movement on classification of film, video and I believe, also video games. What happens there, as I understand it, is the equivalent of the Film Classification Board, simply refuses to classify certain videos, movies, and perhaps video games, and therefore they cannot be shown, because in order to be shown something has to be classified. So I do not know whether the minister wants to comment on that.

Mrs. Vodrey: I would just start by saying, first of all, and in our other conversations, I am Minister for the Status of Women as well, I find what the member has put forward distasteful, no question, and I think that she is in fact quite right that most Manitobans would find that to be the case also. The difficulty for us is that the Criminal Code is really the main document and its interpretation by the courts. So this is really the only case where there is a code, a codified document. You

know in Canadian law, the Criminal Code is really one of the only ones and then the courts have to interpret. So it is difficult, I think, to find a role specifically for our Film Classification Board with the onus being a Criminal Code responsibility. However, I take your point quite seriously.

I have not seen that Australian legislation. I certainly am prepared to look at it, but if it is a national kind of legislation—or is it a localized legislation affecting only a small part? I would need to find out a little bit more about it and how it was applied. In many ways it is quite worth looking at, because I think that there are a lot of concerns in that way. I would have to find the way to look at that and then to work with Justice to see if there was in fact a way to deal with that issue in Manitoba. However, based on some of our discussions, I think that this is an area worth pursuing, and so I am prepared to at least look into this over the next while and see what we can find out and what is possible for us in Manitoba.

I would just add very quickly as well to say it is very difficult legally to in some ways control everything. There is an issue of personal responsibility where controls can be put in place either by parents, or as I explained yesterday, in the justice system, we have put certain controls in place in relation to our correctional institutions even in terms of what TV channels they can watch now. So that where there is an actual opportunity to exert that control, which does not come from the classification, it comes right down to a more localized area. I think that is also an important way to look at things and to not rest entirely on what we might be able to put together in a legal framework but also to work with institutions and with families and with groups such as Corrections to look at seeing what we can do in that way. If we cannot make a major change federally to the law, then what else can we do in our province?

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, I certainly understand as the minister has said and indicated that there are a lot of limitations on what the Film Classification Board can do because of the Criminal Code. Yesterday the minister actually brought up the question of films and videos shown in prisons. I wonder if she could tell me if the classifications of the Film Classification Board apply in prisons or how that works.

Mrs. Vodrey: I want to answer that question, but I would just like to go back as well to our more general discussion and make sure that I have also left on the record that where citizens do feel offended by certain material that they should in fact make a complaint to the police; they should allow an investigation; they should let the challenge take place. That third option should also be made known to people. I think as we go about our work with a lot of the groups that the member and I both associate with, that is an important point to make as well so people do feel they have a place to go.

In terms of the specifics in prisons, my understanding is that the classifications apply to the films wherever publicly exhibited. The details of what happens in Corrections—she might like to get an update during the Justice Estimates on that in terms of how that material is being dealt with, but it was certainly an issue which had been recognized in that system, that being a group of people which may be particularly vulnerable to certain types of either books or movies or things that are on TV which generally come into our homes but might not be appropriate in that situation.

Ms. McGifford: I thank the minister for making the point that the public does have recourse and that the public does have the opportunity to lay a complaint with the police. I think that the public does not necessarily know that. I know I get calls from the public. Actually, I usually phone the Film Classification Board myself and then get back to the complaine, but the minister's suggestion is an excellent one and perhaps a stronger one and an avenue that I think I might take.

I also wanted to tell the minister that I agree with the whole concept of personal responsibility and encouraging as parents being personally responsible and encouraging our children to be personally responsible and encouraging discretion and judgment in our children. Certainly there is nothing that can replace those qualities but my concern, of course, and I know it is one the minister shares from what she said, that persons who are probably—my concern and my suspicion is that persons who are probably viewing the material that we have been discussing have not developed those capacities and probably are not going to, so I just wanted to say that.

I have two other things that I wanted to just check in or ask briefly about related to the Film Classification Board. I have a letter from one of my constituents, a man named Matthew Lawrence which I seem to have lost. No, I have it here. Matthew Lawrence and his wife took their young daughter who was a babe in arms, I think three months or four months, to a movie, the movie being *The People vs. Larry Flynt*, and they were denied access to this movie because the child was under whatever—I guess, it is 18 and this constituent was quite cross about it.

He may be more offended than I am by the decision, but I wanted to ask the minister: Is the policy that no child, whatever the age of that child, should be allowed in a restricted movie and that once we start letting in four months—now I am interpreting, once we start letting in children of four months, then where is the cut-off line? I wonder if the minister wanted to respond.

* (1500)

Mrs. Vodrey: I understand that perhaps even more powerful than the policy is in fact the law which says that persons under 18 must be refused entrance to a theatre where the film is designated as restricted. So I understand the chair of the Film Classification Board replied to your constituent stating what the obligation of the owner is. The question is really, I think, as the member herself said: So where do we draw the line?

I understand for parents it is very comfortable and great to take our children with us, but at what point are we not able to do that or where do we draw the line? Though it might have been a difficult decision at the time, and I think certainly one that your constituent was right to explore in terms of why did this happen, the Film Classification Board chair did write back stating the law, so it is more than policy.

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Chair, if the movie operator had allowed this constituent into the movie, along with partner and baby, and the inspector had visited the movie that night, would the movie owner have been prosecuted for allowing a minor into the theatre or censored or whatever the correct term is?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, it is very difficult dealing with so many hypotheticals, but my understanding, and

as I have been informed, what may have happened is that if it is a first-time offence that the inspector discovers, it is usually a warning and the law is explained to the operator so that they fully understand what the issue is, in an effort to not have it happen again.

Ms. McGifford: There is no room for maneuvering as far as the age? "Restricted" means absolutely what it says, nobody under 18?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I understand that is the case.

Ms. McGifford: To change topics, I wanted to ask the minister if her government has ever considered the classification of video games. She may or may not have noticed that I have a private member's resolution in this year's mix on the classification of video games, and I wonder if the minister has any opinions or if her department has developed any policy on the classification of video games.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, I am informed that at the moment it is our understanding that no other province does classify video games, but I am also informed that there is a meeting going on at the moment in Ottawa. We do have a representative attending that meeting in which we are asking that our representative find out from other jurisdictions clearly whether or not they do classify video games. If so, what do they do, and if not, what kinds of issues are showing themselves in their jurisdictions? So we are looking into the matter, but we do not really have, to my knowledge, any other reference points from across the country on that issue yet.

Ms. McGifford: Yes, my understanding is that there is not another jurisdiction in Canada that classifies video games, that there is some classification within the industry, and I suppose another way of expressing it is that the industry is self-regulating in a sense. However, it seems to me that when those who stand to benefit the most by number of sales are the ones who are classifying the video games, then I do not really have a lot of faith in those classifications, and having taken some time to explore video games, I am more convinced than ever that classification should not remain in the hands of the industry.

I am sure the minister is aware—because she is the Minister of Culture and Heritage, and because it is very hard for all of us not to be, living in the age that we do—that video games are increasingly popular especially with young men, and I suppose with young people generally, but especially with young men. I am sure we have all passed arcades where we hear all kinds of noise and see all kinds of young people intently glued to the screen. From the research I have done and from the hands-on research as well as from the printed material I have read, video games appear to be increasingly realistic; that is to say, some of them actually have real actors in them. They are increasingly graphic—that is to say, very realistic in what they portray; also pornographic, and I do not think I need to qualify that, sexist, violent.

What I find really disturbing is they are very interactive and increasingly interactive. I know the minister and I have shared our concerns about some of the video materials that are available. That at least is a kind of passive viewing; the video game is active because you are pulling switches and what not. I understand the video game is moving towards virtual reality. So I think it is something, and I am glad to hear that the minister and her staff are beginning to look into this matter.

Mrs. Vodrey: I would say that the increase in interest in video games is really evident. There are the arcades which the member has referenced. Then there are also single source video games, things like the Game Boy and so on which lots of kids have in their home. There is also the kinds that you play on TV and on computers, Nintendo and so on. There is a wide range of video game opportunities for all ages of people and many of them very focused on young people.

So I will be very interested in hearing back from our representative at this national meeting to see if there is any thinking going on in other provinces and would suggest that I think it would be useful to put our minds to some thinking on this way.

But I would say as I did when we were speaking about the video classifications that I also believe that there are perhaps two other ways. Self-regulation is one. That is going on, and we would want to know if or not that was in fact successful. The other part is the

parental responsibility, the individual responsibility again where a parent was aware of the content of the game so that parents in fact are also in some way informed consumers when they go out and purchase games or are able to help their young person in the kinds of games they are bringing in or how they are spending their time.

So I do think that the parental responsibility aspect is an important one. I take the member's point from our previous discussion in that not all parents are able to be that involved or wish to be that involved, so some other type of reference may in fact be useful as well.

There would be then—and I guess this is the important point of our discussion so far—possibly three ways to look at this. One, is there any classification occurring or possibility of that? We will find out a little more about that following the meeting. The effectiveness of the self-regulation which I think in fact some responsibility should be put on the industry. Then thirdly, the role of parents or other people in terms of monitoring what in fact particularly young people have available to them.

Ms. McGifford: I agree with the minister with regard to parental responsibility. Yet I point out that parents cannot be with their kids 24 hours a day or however many hours a day their children are awake and out and about. This would not be good for either parents or children. You know parental responsibility is very important. The minister has already recognized that some parents either cannot or are not willing to be what we might consider “responsible parents.”

Furthermore, I am not only concerned about children but about individuals and some individuals who may also be involved in these games who are not children, the adverse effects on those individuals, and the antisocial possibilities.

* (1510)

I wanted to suggest to the minister that I do know that there is some legislation, again in Australia, that she may want to look at. I understand as well that there has been some legislation vis-a-vis video games in Britain.

One other sector that I think has some responsibility when it comes to video games is the seller, the person

who markets these. There are ways as consumers we can put pressure on those people. I do not know whether the minister wants to respond to anything I have said.

Mrs. Vodrey: First of all, I would like to thank the member for the references to the other jurisdictions, and we will follow up in terms of both Australia and Britain in the two areas that she has referenced. In terms of the sellers, we were able to do some things as a result of parents' pressure and concerns in terms of where certain videos or magazines were placed, and that might be something which sellers may be willing to look at. This seems to be a new field, though, a new area, and so it will take I think some opportunity to consider and to look at the options and see what others have done.

But I do know the member has a resolution, and I have said, as well, that with the Classification Board I will follow up with them on these two areas.

Ms. McGifford: This is not about video games, but yesterday when I was asking the minister about Culture, Heritage and Citizenship's measures, the measures that have been taken to enhance and co-ordinate the level of service and quality of training as set out in the memo that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) sent to deputy ministers, I think that the minister said I should bring up this question again on line 14.(d).

Maybe I misheard because I have been looking through the Estimates book trying to find line 14.(d), and I know that the Film Classification Board is 14.1.(d). I think I must have misheard.

Mrs. Vodrey: The line would be 14.3.(d) under the Archives.

Ms. McGifford: I have no more questions on the Film Classification Board, and I think that the minister has agreed to hear questions from my colleague from Point Douglas.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. McAlpine): Item 14.1.(d) Manitoba Film Classification Board (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$108,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$188,400—pass. Item 14.2.

Mrs. Vodrey: By agreement, and if it is possible through the Chair, I understand my critics for the appropriation 14.4 Citizenship would like to have that considered now and then come back to appropriations 14.2 and 14.3.

So if that is agreeable to the Chair, it is certainly agreeable to me as minister. I wondered if we could move ahead to 14.4 to consider this afternoon the Citizenship and Multiculturalism lines.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. McAlpine): Is there agreement within the committee to move to 14.4. Citizenship and Multiculturalism and then revert back at the completion to 14.2. and 14.3.? Is there agreement of the committee? [agreed]

Mrs. Vodrey: I would just like to take this opportunity to introduce to the table Mr. Gerry Clement, who is the assistant deputy minister of the Citizenship branch.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. McAlpine): Before we proceed on with the committee, I just wonder for the benefit of the committee if there is leave to allow the honourable member for Point Douglas to sit other than in his own chair in the Chamber for the purpose of this committee. Is there agreement by this committee? [agreed]

Item 14.4. Citizenship and Multiculturalism (a) Citizenship (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,368,400.

Mr. George Hicketts (Point Douglas): I would like to, first of all, thank the minister for agreeing to this change. With all that is happening, we have different situations arising. I would just like to state a few things on record. I made a little speech a couple weeks ago pertaining to immigration and what is happening. What I am hearing out in the community, it really bothers me. It seems like we are getting away further and further from family reunification. We hear all governments and individuals that I speak to on a daily basis stating their concerns and the importance of being with family, having family around, and the support and commitments of families.

It seems we are getting further and further away from that. It seems to be just words. The action part of it is

missing. I have to look at the whole cost of bringing relatives over. I have said it many, many times, and I will continue saying it until, hopefully, it is changed. That is the whole structure of landing fees of \$975, the processing fees. Now, what we see is a decrease of point systems for individuals that are sponsored by their families; where they used to get bonus points, now that has been taken away.

I know that the federal Liberal government had brought in a change of policy where individuals that are now accepted into Canada would pay that \$975 upon being accepted. That is fine. I think the real measure should have been to eliminate the \$975 in total, just take it right off the books. If you look at the past, it brought in about \$200 million, generated revenues for the federal government. What has happened? Where have they used those dollars? Have they used it to help the new immigrants coming to our great country and, hopefully, to our great province? If that is the case, why are we seeing transfer payments being cut at the same time? We see cuts to our English as a Second Language programs. We see other cuts from the federal government to our province.

I would like to ask the minister to maybe just jot this down. I would like her to address it a little bit later. The whole agreement of federal transfer payments, if I understand correctly, a lot of it is based on our population in the province. If we have a decrease in our population, then we will have a decrease in our transfer payments. So I think that, if the government would just look at the whole process of immigration, it should enhance the money coming from the federal government to our province.

* (1520)

You hear a lot of individuals, or some people, talk about some of the measures. I would like to put on record some of the comments that were made by individuals that do a lot of work with new individuals coming to Manitoba, and how they view some of these policies that are being changed.

For instance, in a Winnipeg Sun article, dated March 31, 1997, I would like to read some quotes from Tom Denton, who is the executive director of the International Centre, and I would like to see someone,

if they disagree with his comments, to seek him out and get a better understanding, because Tom Denton is, from the individuals that I speak to, extremely respected in the multicultural community and the ethnic community.

What he says here, it says, "Local immigration advocates have dubbed a 'cruel' change in federal policy on family sponsorship the 'anti-granny' rule." I think that is a very harsh and true statement, "anti-granny' rule," because we know—you look in the aboriginal community; we highly respect our elders. That is because of their wisdom and their teachings that they pass on to family members, members in the community, and members as a whole. If we stop the possibility of grandparents and even elders and seniors from other countries, we will lose that.

I do not understand why that should be. We should be encouraging grandparents and family members to come to a new country that a member of that family has chosen. If you just try to isolate yourselves individually from your family members and your family supports, you could imagine how extremely difficult and hard that would be. If we were here or in another country, or even wherever, totally on our own, I do not know how we would function as a person. I think it would be extremely, extremely difficult, but we are fortunate enough that when we are in crises or difficulties, or even just for companionship and friendship and spending time, we can always turn to our families. A lot of these individuals cannot, and that is why I totally, totally disagree with what I am seeing being as policies.

I do not care what government is in power. If it was even my own party that was in power, and if they were taking these measures, I would question very strongly and disagree with those kinds of measures.

It goes on to say: "Tom Denton, executive director of the International Centre, said last week's announcement of a 'slight' hike in the income minimums for new Canadians to sponsor family-class immigrants will only hurt the poor.

"The minimums, which vary by size of family and city of residence, have a middle-class bias and end up applying only to grandparents as the others in family-class—minor children, parents, spouses, fiancés—either

aren't subject to or can get around a financial requirement.

"This is an anti-grandma and grandpa rule,' Denton said. 'I disagree with the increase of the financial requirement for sponsorship, but it really effects a very narrow group.

"It is one more step in a relentless tightening of immigration policies in this country that we have seen going on for a number of years.

"All of these things have an essential cruelty or meanness about them."

I have to say I totally agree with his statements, because of what I just mentioned to you, from my own experience. When we were little children growing up, we had our own sort of a little village. I grew up in Churchill and we lived down in the flats. We were the only Inuit family that resided in Churchill at that time. We lived in our own little village. We had about eight houses there, and there were my uncles and aunts and grandparents. There are 12 children in my family; there are 11 boys and one girl. I know we would not have learned a whole bunch about who we are or what is our culture or values if we were isolated on our own, because we just would not have had that time. Our parents would have been too busy trying to eke out a living to feed us, just to try and get food on the table for us. That was all done through hunting and fishing because you could not go to the store and buy pork, roast beef and everything with the prices the way they are. So I understand why the individuals are saddened by these changes or saddened by the lack of the federal government to eliminate those measures.

Yes, like I said earlier, they said only ones that are accepted will have to pay. The ones that are not accepted will not have to pay the money. But that still is no consequence if you live in a country where \$975 might even be more than your yearly earnings for the 365 days out of that year, because on top of that, that is what you have to save. Plus you have to look after your family, feed your family and continue on.

When we talk about the restricting of family class reunification, there is a great danger here, and I hope the minister will address it when she has the

opportunity, or if she has not yet, with her federal counterpart whenever they have a meeting. The danger of this is that more of the emphasis is going to what they call business class immigration. If you have the dollars, I think it is around \$200,000, somewhere around there, to immigrate to Canada, then you are accepted almost immediately if you have the funds.

That is fine when you are sure those individuals hopefully will come here, start businesses, create jobs, and employment opportunities. If we are only going to depend on that or greatly depend on that for our immigration policies, because Manitoba and Canada was built on immigration, if we do not increase our immigration from other countries, our population is going to decline. If you look at stats that are coming out on a daily basis, you will see that families are having less children than they used to in the past.

As I just mentioned to you earlier, I was raised with 12 children. Now, if you met a young family and they said they had 12 children, you would almost be in shock because nowadays a lot of couples will have two, maybe three, children and that is it. So for us to increase or keep our population as is in Canada, we have to increase immigration. If we try to depend solely on the business class, I fear what will happen is once they are here for a couple of years and they say, hey, my mother and father or my uncle and aunt and my grandparents, I really wish they were close here because they could really help out the family, and I really miss them, and we love them dearly, and we should be with them in their elder years.

What we will see is then, when they try to bring their parents over, they will have a difficult time, or they will not, and word will get across. So other countries that have less strict measures for family reunification will probably start getting more of the business class immigration that we try to bring to Canada now, because I know if I had a choice personally, if I wanted to move to another country and if I knew that there was less chance if I wished some day to bring my mother or my family over, or go to another country where I had the same employment opportunities where I knew I had a much better chance to bring my parents or my extended family to be with me at a later date, I would not have to think twice where I would go because family, as we all state, is very valuable.

That is why it bothers me when I hear comments once in a while from individuals where, like, well, the people will have the money to pay. Some people will not have the money to pay, and those individuals should have the same opportunity, if they choose to come to another country and if they choose Canada, to start their own careers and not just because they have the dollars to buy their way in. I totally disagree with that because everybody has different situations and different needs.

* (1530)

The other thing I would like to get into a little bit later is we talked a lot about certification and people who are choosing Canada to be their new home, where you hear stories and you speak to individuals who were working in their chosen careers in their own home country, and all of a sudden, whatever their reasons in choosing Canada to be their new home, come here and are now employed in another field, not the one that they have chosen. You take some individuals who have come here as even auto mechanics or engineers or lawyers and what have you, but when they come to Canada, their degrees and certification diplomas are not accepted. We have standards in Canada, and that is fine, but we also have to look at ways of assisting individuals who choose Canada as their new home to fulfill their dreams and to fulfill employment in their chosen careers.

If we just took ourselves, for example, if we were forced to be employed in an occupation that was not our choosing or an occupation that we viewed in our own minds as less than what we may be able to do, I do not think we would live a complete life of fulfilment. There would be an emptiness there, and I understand that because if I am a plumber and I am very skilled at it in my own mind and I do a good job wherever I have worked, and if I move elsewhere and someone says, well, sorry, but your certificate, your diploma, we cannot accept it, so we cannot even hire you. We cannot even give you a chance to be what you are.

There are ways of doing that, a lot of ways of doing that. All we have to do is look at evaluating certification compared to Manitoba or Canadian standards and look at what is missing. Say for an individual who comes from India or the Philippines,

you do a task analysis, and you look at what is required, and then you do an evaluation of the courses that the individual has taken to get their degree in their country and compare it to ours. If there is, for example, five, and they meet, say, three, then what is wrong with developing a specialized course where the individual has only to take the two and then challenges the examination, say, if it is six months or a year or whatever have you, a special designed course.

That way, if an individual passes it, then they would meet our standards and be employed in their chosen careers, and they would be much happier and more than likely would have a better chance of a better lifestyle for their families. You hear of individuals that have come here that are driving taxis, washing dishes, or working in a restaurant. Some of these people are highly skilled. Some of them are even engineers in their own country; they come here, and they have to work as something else. I cannot see how they would feel fulfilled in their own minds, in their own self.

Then, when you look at some individuals, because of the lack of money, they would not be able to go into, say, a full four-year course or two-year course. I have said this before, and I have said it many times. The minister heard me say it not too long ago, and I will state it again: we should have a fund in place to assist individuals when they are training. That way the individual is not trying to hold down two or three jobs, raise a family, and study at the same time, because that is a pretty impossible task. I give all the credit to individuals who have succeeded doing it that way.

But to be fair to people, to show individuals that choose Manitoba to be their home that we are a loving and caring province, I think we have to look at doing things a little bit differently. Yes, it is going to cost money, but there are ways of revolving that funding. For instance, if an individual gets the full funding—which, I hope, the minister will seriously consider—to adequately feed their family, pay their tuition, upon graduation the individual would have a choice where they can now start repaying the loan, because they should be in a good income bracket or decent income bracket to pay that loan down. Or, if an individual chooses to move to a high-skills needs area, for instance, you look at rural communities and northern communities, a lot of times it is hard to get

individuals out into the rural or northern communities. You talk about doctors, lawyers, engineers, even plumbers, electricians for the mines and stuff. There is always a shortage in northern Manitoba. If they choose to live up there, say, for three or five years, or whatever is reasonable, then upon fulfilment, the loan is forgiven. That way you help assist the individual; you help assist the rural and northern communities that are in need and have a shortage of skilled workers.

I think that is how we have to start looking at addressing the needs of individuals that choose not only our great country, but our great province. You hear and you read things, and it is easy to make excuses on anyone's behalf. Even on my own behalf I can make excuses until the cows come home on anything if you like, but it is much harder and much more of a commitment on our behalf as individuals to really try and put in place programs and assist individuals to benefit the family, the individual, but also our own province of Manitoba.

If you look at doing some of those things, I think we will only make Manitoba a stronger province. We all have to have a common respect for all citizens of the province, no matter if you are aboriginal, if you are Jewish, or if you are Filipino. We are all human beings. We all should care about one another. That is what this province is made of.

When you hear individuals make comments about, yes, well, an immigrant will take our jobs away from our children or us, how uncaring of a comment is that? If you remove the aboriginal people from Manitoba, did not all the rest of the people come through immigration at one time or another? That is how most people came to Canada, through immigration, if you removed the First Nations people.

That is why the whole aspect of education is another area that I hope the minister will look at addressing with the Minister of Education to ensure that multiculturalism, immigration is part of our whole history lessons and taught at every school in this province. That way when people are educated and have a better understanding, hopefully, that will eliminate some of the racism, or racism that we view from time to time in very extreme cases in some cases.

I wanted to go on some more. I do not know how much time you allow for each question. Thirty minutes? Okay.

* (1540)

So I just wanted to go back a little bit to immigration sponsor rules. I wanted to especially read two articles that I came across in the paper. They were written by a lawyer who, obviously, must do some immigration work, because he seems to have a very good understanding of what is happening with our immigration policies. I really hope, and I am confident, that you as minister will address some of our concerns and our issues and take them to Ottawa and ask for some of those changes to be changed, because we have too many good people here, just as they have in the rest of Canada, but you cannot make policies based on situations in big cities like Toronto and implement them here in Winnipeg.

For instance, when you have comments of individuals that they had to make changes to the sponsorship programs because of the abuse of social assistance, and yet in Manitoba I think it is even less than 1 percent of individuals that come to Winnipeg that abuse our social assistance program, so why should we be penalized because of whatever happens in another province? Yet, as a province, we can request more immigration to come to our province.

I want to read these letters a little bit later, but I came across a very interesting article here where one of the biggest drawbacks that we are going to see in the whole family-class policy and the reunification of families—and it is an article that was in *The Globe and Mail*. I do not know why this policy could be brought forward, because if we talk about families and we really believe in families, and we believe in supporting and helping families, when this policy came about, a lot of individuals could not believe it. The policy I am talking about is the sponsorship of families where, before, families could pool their resources, where if you had two or three or four families, you could pool your resources and your income and meet that level of sponsorship. But now, according to this article from *The Globe and Mail*, that has been changed, where now siblings can no longer pool their incomes to meet the income requirement when sponsoring parents or grandparents.

Well, I do not understand that, because the grandparents or parents are not the grandparents or the parents of only one individual child. If there are two or three or four children in Winnipeg and they choose to pool their resources to sponsor their parents or grandparents, that should be a responsibility of all members of that family, and not only have to be the responsibility of one individual, because the other family members will want to share that responsibility, as they will want to share the love, comfort, education, and everything that goes along with being near your parents and your grandparents.

So I do not understand the reasoning behind that change of policy. To me, it does not make any sense. I know in my own mother's case, if something happened to my mother where she was in need of funds immediately, if she called, we would all immediately help. We would not say, well, only you help; there are 12 of us, but only you help it. The rest will just—we will keep it here and do not worry about it; you look after it. Well, that is not how families function. So, if governments talk about families, how can they make that kind of a change? I do not understand, and I hope, when you meet with the minister, you will ask the Minister for Immigration the reason for that because that is beyond my belief.

The other thing that I wanted to touch upon, I want to ask the minister to just mark this down, because there is a skills shortage of workers in the garment industry in Manitoba. We as a province went to recruit 200 skilled workers and their families to work in Manitoba. I read an article. I kept it just to ask the minister what happened because it said: Under the provincial nominee class the province sought to recruit 200 skilled workers and their families to work in Manitoba's garment industry. However, because of imposed deadlines by the federal government, the recruitment effort came up short. Provincial officials expressed great frustration at the constant stonewalling from federal officials. Provincial officials have also complained Ottawa has thwarted other proposals for similar movements involving extended family of Ukrainians and southeast Asians living in Manitoba.

I would like to get a response from the minister. You probably have to check back from the previous minister to find out what happened here. What happened here?

When we saw that Manitoba was going to be recruiting 200 garment workers and bringing in new families, there was a lot of happiness, because we were going to get 200 additional families to move here. When you get 200 additional families, you have the increase of spending power. People have to have homes; people need transportation, whether they use the bus or purchase a car. People have to eat; people have to clothe their kids. So it stimulates the economy. By bringing in more numbers of immigration, we increase the benefits to all Manitobans, because there are now more things being sold and more things being bought. That really troubled me. I do not know what happened there.

Also, I want to get into what is happening with our point system, because in the same article it said, the elimination of assisted relative class where applicants were awarded up to 15 additional points towards their final total if they were sponsored by extended family already living in Canada. That was eliminated a few years back, but I would like the minister—if she or her party has addressed this concern to the federal government to see if it could be reinstated where additional points should be, I feel anyway, put back on for individuals wishing to bring their extended families or their parents or grandparents to Manitoba.

I know I only have a few seconds, so I will wait for a response. Then I would like to get into some more information here. I will leave you with those questions.

Mrs. Vodrey: The member has given a number of very important points forward, and I know that he has really a very strong interest known by the community in this whole citizenship area. So I take his questions very seriously, because I believe that they are founded upon experiences, experiences that people have brought forward.

I will give some general answers to the comments that I believe you wanted to put on the record, and then what I will do is I will leave the time, whatever time you need, for you to ask specific questions which may be the best way to do it.

* (1550)

Just in a general sense to start with, I have written to the federal minister and I have in that letter focused

again on Manitoba's interest in family reunification and family reunification classes. Manitoba is not supportive of steps which interfere with that, and Manitoba will be scrutinizing any effect on our province of changes that the federal government is making that may interfere with family reunification.

In a general sense, we are very interested in Manitoba in increasing our proportion of immigration, that in fact it had declined for some years. I understand now that it is increasing slightly. We have been very, very aggressive in terms of our participation and trying to attract immigration to Manitoba. In my opening statements yesterday, I spoke about the co-operation that my department has had with Industry, Trade and Tourism so that we can put together a broad, a real presence for our province at the immigration centres across the world, and I actually named a number of them.

So I am happy to talk about that a little bit more and also our presence on the Internet, which I am sure the member knows about and the increased access that people have made to the information that we have put on the Internet. I just wanted to assure him that I have not waited for a ministerial meeting to raise some of the concerns that he has put forward today, because I share them, our government shares them. So I have already addressed that in a letter to the federal minister.

I have some statistics and I am not sure if the member would like those now. I have some that are actually positive ones in terms of—and I believe that this reflects our really aggressive position as a province—attempting to attract immigration because, for the reasons that have been discussed, it is important to our province. I understand that in the past year, overall immigration to Manitoba has increased by 29 percent from—these are the figures that I have: 3,515, 3-1-3-5 arrivals in 1995 to 4,525 arrivals in 1996, 4-5-2-5 is the number there.

In 1996, I understand that Manitoba received 2.4 percent of all immigrant arrivals to Canada. However, we believe that our proportional share is 3.85 percent, so we have had an increase. It is obvious that on one side, we do not want the federal government enacting changes which will discourage our opportunity to encourage immigration to our province, and on the other active side, we as a province have taken

responsibility to co-operate and make ourselves known with the Manitoba Advantage to people across the world so that they will choose Manitoba.

I am not sure whether this is more than the member wants to know, but I understand that the top five source countries of immigration to Manitoba in 1996 include the Philippines, China, India, Bosnia-Herzegovina and England. So it is a fairly representative group.

I also understand that the family-class arrivals in Manitoba increased 12 percent, and the figures that I have been given, the arrivals in 1995 were 1,326 in '95 to 1,485 in 1996 and that refugee arrivals in Manitoba increased 32 percent from 646 in 1995 to 852 in 1996.

So I think that we have had some success on our side and in our efforts, but that we have to be absolutely vigilant in monitoring steps taken by the federal government to make sure that that does not have an opposite effect on the efforts of our province.

In the area of credentials, we can get into that in more detail in terms of the questions that you want to ask, but I will just say in a general sense that I have been quite interested in this, have met with a number of groups and individuals making an effort on the credentialing side. Personal experience, when I was in law school, one of my classmates in my same year, an adult who was a Chilean lawyer, obviously a different system, a civil system and a different language, Spanish, he did have the experience that the member spoke about. He came here, he worked in one of the hospitals, he worked in the laundry in the hospital, as did his wife, to gain language experience and then was able to come into law school, graduated and has now done very well. But it was a real effort, a real family effort.

On the dentistry side, we have been assisting two other families, both refugees in terms of their credentialing, and I understand, and we can talk further about this, that the credentialing issue is also part of what professional associations require, and that it requires work with these associations to determine what kind of remediation, if any, is necessary and what the requirements might be.

I know we have been working with those, but I am aware, on a very personal basis, of some of the efforts

of some of those individuals to gain their credentials. The member probably knows, too, we face this sometimes even province to province and when I moved here from Ontario had to deal with my own credentials as a school psychologist in order to practice here in Manitoba, so it is not a particularly easy system, and it is one that does require some effort. So if the member wants to pose some more detailed questions on that, I will certainly be happy to provide the information that I have.

The third area that he spoke about is the initiatives that might be undertaken with the Minister of Education dealing with the valuing of the multicultural community and the efforts also to deal with antiracism activities, and that certainly is something that makes sense and that my department, where possible, has been very happy to assist other areas. When we get into the questioning, I am sure we have, or if we do not have with us today can make available to you tomorrow, the initiatives that we have been participating with other departments in terms of the antiracism and multicultural curriculum. The member referenced history as a specific, and I understand that there are some curriculum opportunities.

Just to very quickly say, I had the real pleasure of being at Selkirk high school, their regional comprehensive school for their own multiculturalism that they held, and it is almost like a mini Folklorama but they work on it for a whole year, and they were absolutely incredible in terms of their appreciation of the countries that they had chosen in that year—and they change every year—to represent. So there are a number of things which are going on in education, both through the curriculum and also through activities within the school, that I think are very worth noting.

The member then wanted to speak a little bit about the effects of the new immigration rules and to make sure that our province does not in fact come to some disadvantage, that are the rules made perhaps for Ontario, and that in Manitoba we have a much better record of meeting obligations, or that people who immigrate have a much better record. In fact, in my letter to the federal minister I pointed that fact out to her. I raise that only to say I have done that now by letter and look forward to having the opportunity of taking these issues to the federal-provincial conference

and raising them in person and having a sense of what the response would be, because I have not yet met the federal minister, and now we are in an election, who knows who that may be after June 2.

Then the details of questions in terms of garment workers and a point system, I will be happy to try and answer those very specifics, but I wanted to just respond to your opening remarks with some general comments.

* (1600)

Mr. Hickes: I thank the minister for some of her comments, and I am very pleased that you have written to the federal minister, and you have stated some of those concerns that I have raised. It is reassuring to me, and it should be reassuring to citizens of our province that you are taking your role very seriously, and that you will be addressing some of the concerns that are brought forward in the Chamber and also some concerns that I am sure will be brought to your attention outside of the Chamber by citizens of the province.

I am glad to hear that you have responded, and I can assure you that when you mentioned taking some of these issues to the federal minister that those are concerns that you will be raising on behalf of the citizens. I will assure you as I am sitting here today, a pair for that trip. We will pair you for that trip, for sure.

An Honourable Member: Using your authority as the Whip here.

Mr. Hickes: Using my authority as the Whip.

But, anyway, to get more back to the serious matters—

Mrs. Vodrey: Sorry, I hate to interrupt, but I know you are getting down to some detailed questioning. I now made the mistake of mentioning one school that specifically had culturama and had taken a great effort. I must raise the two others that I am aware of, because I think it would be unfair on the record to not mention those schools. College Louis Riel had an incredible day which I was very fortunate to attend, and they had such tremendous participation of people from all areas.

It was a wonderful opportunity. Then the Maples Collegiate also had a day in which they recognized particularly the issue of antiracism. I believe they held theirs on the antiracism day, the UN day recognizing this issue.

So I just felt for the record and also for the efforts of those schools that I wanted to recognize those on the record as well.

Mr. Hickes: I am sure any other school or organization that assisted throughout the province, because that is the kind of education measure, I think, that is very educational but very valuable to all citizens.

When we talk about Folklorama music and dance, you know, like they are great to see, great to participate, but that is only a very small slice of the pie, if you may, because we see a lot of the happiness; and the cultural activities are usually very happy occasions. But the other side when we experience or see racism or negative activities onto people, I think it not only hurts the individual, it hurts all of us as citizens of this province.

I wanted to say that again I am pleased that you are taking some action, because there are a lot of our community leaders that have expressed their disappointment on the activities of the federal government, very negative activities.

I wanted to read this letter. I found it in the paper, and I mentioned earlier that I was going to read it on record. I would like you to respond to this letter. I will just do one at a time. It says here: Changes to immigration sponsorship rules—this is written by Kenneth Zaifman, who is a lawyer—on March 18, 1997, Lucienne Robillard, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, announced final regulatory changes to sponsorship. The regulations are set for publication in the Canada Gazette on April 2, 1997, and the changes have gone into effect on April 1, 1997. Currently, individuals who sponsor must meet the low-income cutoff, LICO, and provide the required financial data at the time they sponsor. The requirements, to take effect on April 1, 1997, will require the sponsor to meet the LICO for 12 months before sponsoring. The consequences of this provision are extremely

prejudicial to individuals who during the 12-month period fall below LICO notwithstanding that they may have exceeded that requirement within that period.

Obvious examples where this provision will impose hardship will be cases of maternity leave, temporary medical disabilities or interruption of income due to layoffs or strikes. Given the requirements that the sponsor sign an agreement confirming their responsibilities as a sponsor, there is no need for this requirement. In any event, the enforcement of a sponsorship undertaking occurs after the undertaking has been approved, and, in most cases, many years after. In addition, a sponsor may be asset-rich, choosing to put savings into a home or business. Immigration has never taken a sponsor's assets into consideration when evaluating the ability to meet the financial requirements of a sponsorship.

So that might be an interesting point to make to the federal Immigration minister. No one takes issue with making an undertaking to sponsor an enforceable contract, but it should not be more difficult to sponsor parents than obtaining a car loan or a mortgage. The amount of income required to sponsor for a resident of Winnipeg is the same as for a resident of Toronto, Vancouver or Montreal. It is clear the cost of living in Winnipeg is less than the largest Canadian cities, especially with respect to housing. Yet, no differentiation has been made for this fact. This is another barrier to encouraging the reunification of Canadian citizens and permanent residents with their close families from abroad.

The current situation enables sponsors who cannot meet the LICO on their own to combine their income with their siblings in order to sponsor their parents. This provision has been eliminated in the new measures. I cannot discern any public policy reason for the current situation to be altered. In fact, it strengthens the ability to enforce an undertaking. The current situation has enabled children who individually might not be in the position to meet the LICO to pool their income to sponsor their parents.

It goes on to say: The minister must reconsider these changes, as their intended effects are to discourage sponsorships and are contrary to the regulations of the Immigration Act.

I would like to ask the minister if she agrees or disagrees, or if she will undertake, on behalf of the province, to raise these issues, hopefully, when you have a meeting with the federal Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

Mrs. Vodrey: First of all, just on the new rules and regulations on this low income cutoff or the LICO formula, the member is quite right in that it has imposed a uniform income threshold for all cities over 500,000 population, and we believe that does have a negative impact on Manitoba. I have registered that point in my letter to the federal minister, and I will be taking that point to the federal-provincial meeting whenever that occurs.

In Manitoba, as the member notes, we do enjoy a higher standard of living at some significantly lower costs than some of the other provinces, and there was not a provision made within these LICO guidelines to accommodate any regional disparity.

Now I am informed that Manitoba participated in this federal-provincial working group on sponsorship, and Manitoba recommended various changes to the sponsorship regulations. I understand that in 1995 the working group presented a grid, which was, in fact, developed by Manitoba, on strategies for improving the sponsorship process. I am informed that some of the key ideas included more reliable indicators of financial capability to sponsor be developed and establishing a criterion that really does reflect the regional circumstances. Also, reviewing the reliability of LICO is another one of the key ideas.

* (1610)

So I am certainly very concerned about that and, as I have said, have noted that. The other areas which he spoke about, income interruptions, which now apply, that in fact really, I think, could be a very difficult problem. So in my letter, though I have been very specific on some areas, I have also said in a general sense that anything which we see on application that appears to affect immigration to Manitoba, that is something which we would not be supportive of and which I would raise specifically.

So I think at this point the member is, along with me, helping to develop a list of some of the concerns that, in the specific, Manitoba will want to raise at this conference.

Mr. Hickes: Well, Mr. Chair, I think that would be a very interesting letter to read because it would probably be one of the few letters that, as a socialist and NDPer, I could probably agree 100 percent to, by the sounds of it.

It seems like the minister's response to my questions gives me a lot of confidence. I know this is a new portfolio for you. I should have taken the time to congratulate you earlier, but we see each other in the House, and this is really the first time we have been in Estimates. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, your staff and new assistant deputy minister that I am aware of.

I look forward to continuing to work together with you on these, because from what I hear you are saying we do have a lot of work to do on some of the policies and changes that are being brought forward to our province and all provinces of Canada. I think if we feel that they are harmful to our province or to individuals of our province, we should stand up and say so. As I said earlier, it does not matter what government is in power. Sometimes they just have to step back and rethink; and, maybe yes, maybe we did make a mistake, and they would warrant some changes.

This other article that is by the same individual, Kenneth Zaifman, I have to read this in too, because I was not aware of this. I know a lot of individuals in our province—once I read it, I asked the individuals. They were not aware of these changes, so it was not made known to a lot of the public. I do not know if the federal government did a press release on it. I think these are very serious changes that are going to have a real negative impact on our ability to recruit individuals to our province.

It goes on to say: Proposed regulatory changes to the selection criteria for independent immigrants including the former assisted relative category. Amendments to the regulations to the immigration selection criteria were introduced on March 15, 1997, by the Department

of Citizenship and Immigration and are scheduled to go into effect on May 1, 1997. These changes were described as technical in nature and would not result in substantive changes to the selection criteria.

The changes are intended to take into account employment, training, and experience factors when determining the points awarded to a prospective immigrant. These are far-reaching proposals and will significantly affect the way in which the eligibility of immigrants is determined. It will result in a dramatic decrease in the number of immigrants eligible for admission to Canada as skilled workers. The proposed rule changes will affect three factors respecting selection. The current system in use is the Canadian Classification and Dictionary of Occupations, CCDO, which sets out the criteria used to determine the points for specific vocational preparation, SVP, experience and occupational demand. The CCDO will be replaced by the national occupational classification, and consequently SVP has been replaced by an education and training indicator, ETI. The proposed changes will reduce the number of individuals who can qualify for admission to Canada even if they have a close family member prepared to assist them.

Case studies indicate that a significant number of individuals who now qualify would be refused. Some estimates indicate that this would apply to 50 percent of applicants who currently qualify, 50 percent. In order to pass the selection criteria, an applicant must receive 70 points. For example, a secretary between 21 and 44 years of age with a high school education, completed one year post-secondary secretarial course, with three or more years of experience in the occupation, speaks, reads, writes English and who receives family bonus points will receive 70 points under the present system. Under the proposed system this secretary will receive 62 points and would be refused. Other examples are financial aids officer who scored 70 points would only receive 60 points. Under the NOC system, that person could not pass with a university degree or with family bonus points. A refrigerator repairer with a university degree and family bonus would pass under the current system but fail under the NOC. Cooks and chefs who scored 70 points would receive 60 points. Under the NOC, the applicant would not pass even with a university degree and a family bonus point.

These are merely examples; however, they demonstrate that the proposed system will make it more difficult for prospective immigrants to qualify. This is one of the most significant changes to Canada's immigration policy, and it has been done by regulation without public debate and without disclosure to any interested parties. I feel strongly that we should take the time to inform the public, because I think these are real negative measures that the public has to be aware of, and I hope that we will do that.

No press release was issued by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to announce the changes. I do not know why. Make no mistake about these changes. They are intended to make it more difficult for individuals to qualify and thereby be reunited with their family members in Canada. It goes on to say: I would urge that any individuals who are considering applying for permanent residence in Canada do so before May 1, 1997, which has already passed us.

* (1620)

So I think these kinds of things—it seems like they were done in the middle of the night, on a very cold Sunday. We have a responsibility, I think, as elected members, to inform the public of these drastic negative changes, because a lot of people will still be under the understanding that the same regulations and everything else applies as in the past. If they are looking at sponsoring their families and if there is no hope, they might think otherwise. Why go through the frustrations of making the application when you know you are going to be denied before you even start? So I think we do have a responsibility and I ask the minister if she—as the minister, were you aware of these changes? If you were or were not, will you do something about it to inform the public out there, as government has the media and the means to issue these kinds of notifications? I hope you will disagree with some of these changes, but do you agree or disagree? I would like to hear your response to that.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Chair, what I have understood about these changes, I am informed that although the intention of the change was a technical one, the practical effect of replacing the SVP with the ETF is a reduction in points for persons who are highly skilled,

but they are less formally educated. Those were some of the examples that the member has given.

The maximum number of points that can be obtained by some occupations will be reduced from six to four under this new ETF. I can tell the member that provincial consultation was not sought on this change or this development, and Manitoba has been promoting and recruiting internationally for skilled independent immigrants, and we have been very active with our own promotion and recruitment campaign. So we are concerned that the new policies may negatively impact on the selection of skilled independent immigrants to our province.

I can tell the member that consultation on these measures will be initiated under the terms of the Canada-Manitoba immigration agreement, so having signed that agreement, we do have the ability to then directly go to the federal government and to want to discuss any of these changes which impact on Manitoba.

Mr. Hickes: I thank the minister for her response because I know that the people that will be affected, or the families that are affected, will appreciate your commitment to seek some answers and to raise their concerns when you have the opportunity.

(Mr. Edward Helwer, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

I just wanted to touch a bit on the certification and training program. I do not know if the minister is aware of it, but my colleague for Broadway, the MLA for Broadway, Conrad Santos, has brought forward a private member's resolution on accreditation. I would like to put on record what my colleague's resolution reads. It reads:

“WHEREAS human beings, considered as any country's most important resource, are not merely a material factor of production, or are instrumental to achieving non-tangible values of fairness, freedom and individual self-actualization; and

“WHEREAS recent immigrants to Canada and to Manitoba tend to possess higher than average levels of education and skills that contribute to the enrichment of

the Canadian diversity essential in carrying a position of competitiveness in a global economy; and

“WHEREAS there are some new Canadians who settled in Manitoba, and elsewhere in Canada, who brought with them professional and technical education, skills and training which they are unable to use in Manitoba or elsewhere in Canada; and

“WHEREAS there are institutionalized social structures in Manitoba and in Canada, vested self-interested and self-governing groups of professional and technical persons who collectively are exercising almost absolute autonomy to the extent that the federal, provincial and municipal levels of government have practically abdicated their inherent public regulatory power of the Crown over the education, training, internship, admission, disciplining and other related processes connected with the creation, empowerment and operations of professional and technical associations, societies and organizations; and

“WHEREAS the utilization of the professional and technical education, skills and training of new Canadians would, without many social costs, be immediately beneficial to Canada in general and to the province of Manitoba in particular.

“THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Provincial Government to consider implementing an enlightened policy of formal recognition and accreditation in meritorious cases of the professional and technical education, skills and training brought into Canada by new Canadians; and

“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly ask the Provincial Government to consider holding public hearings to elicit the opinions and views of Manitobans, including new Canadians, on the desirability of forming formal Governmental Accreditation and Licencing Boards for each of the new self-governing professional and technical associations, societies and organizations; the Boards of which should have membership drawn from the respective and related professional and technical groupings, the Provincial Government and lay members of the general public to ensure that members of such Boards will be trustees of the general public interest of all, instead of

being privileged guardians of vested, self-governing groups.”

I wanted to read that into record because I think when we look at accreditation of new immigrants or people that are coming especially to Manitoba, that we should have the opportunity and the means to bring forward the possible changes and whatever measures that we need to take to ensure people have an opportunity to fulfill their chosen careers.

I know that we have not had a chance to vote on this, but I just hope that the minister will look at that, consider the value of such a resolution, and look at ways of taking out or using all or part of the body of the resolution to implement positive changes that will benefit our citizens of the province. I would like to ask the minister if she will look at the resolution seriously to see if there are some pieces of it, or all of it, that she would be looking at possibly implementing or making changes where it would benefit individuals to maybe get their Manitoba accreditation or also to some for meeting Canadian standards.

Mrs. Vodrey: I said to the member's colleague as well, I am still fairly new to this portfolio, and so on matters of major policy decision I really believe that it is important I have the opportunity to look at all the issues that are presented to me and to have the opportunity to look at all sides. I am unable to make a commitment on that specific set of things that have been brought forward. However, I did say in my remarks in response to the member's opening remarks that I see the issue of credentials as an important one and that we have to work with, in many cases, the self-regulating professions and also the trades in terms of getting those groups, who currently have the power over their professions, to determine how in fact they are willing to either open the doors or assist in terms of additional training which may be required.

* (1630)

As I said, I do have some personal experiences, partly in the field of dentistry, partly in the field of law where individuals have been required to retrain. Sometimes the retraining seems to be—what has been put forward seems to be so difficult that they, in fact, then try and enter a profession which is similar, if not the same.

So what I can do at this point is express my interest in the area, again partly by my own personal experiences and people which currently are known to us who are struggling to actually practise their professions and trying to meet what has been required of them. In terms of an overall policy, however, I will be honest to say that it is going to take a little bit of thinking and also an opportunity to perhaps meet with some of the professions and find out what some of the issues are. But I do take the issue seriously, and I think that is one thing the member wants to know today.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I appreciate the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes), who saw fit to allow me to put a few words on the record currently in order to accommodate another meeting that I have a little bit later.

Immigration is and always has been a very important issue to me personally as I have gone through numerous hours of debates and discussions, both inside this Chamber and actually outside this Chamber, where we have had discussions with the Minister of Immigration, different members of Parliament. In fact, at one time there was some consideration on my part to even looking at the possibility of running for member of Parliament, and one of the driving factors to that was health care and immigration. Immigration, as I indicate, is ultimately a very important issue for me personally because I see so much opportunity for not only the Province of Manitoba, but the country as a whole to keep its doors open and have immigrants, as we have in the past, build our country.

Mr. Chairperson, I wanted to talk on a few points in terms of opening remarks and then a very few questions that I have, specific questions that I have, for the minister. There have been some actions over the recent years that give me reason to believe that there is hope in Manitoba in terms of seeing immigration numbers increase. After years and years of decline, we have seen in most recent years the number of immigrants coming to the province of Manitoba increasing which is great. I am really pleased to see that.

I have always been somewhat miffed by what arguments the department and—some of the staff might recall this from previous Estimates—how the Province of Manitoba approaches the number of immigrants we

should be arguing for. To be specific, previous ministers and civil servants from within the department ultimately tried to give the impression that we want more immigrants coming to Manitoba, and it should be based on a percentage of immigrants that Canada gets in compared to the percentage of the population that we have. So, for example, Manitoba might make up somewhere in the neighbourhood of 3.7, 3.5 percent of Canada's population, so they would argue we should get 3.7 percent of the immigration that comes to Canada.

Well, Mr. Chairperson, I take a different approach. I look at it from the perspective of what can Manitoba sustain on an annual basis for immigrants and the different types of classifications that might enhance overall immigration to the province. So, for example, in the province of Manitoba depending on the immigration mix, I would think that we could get somewhere in the neighbourhood of 10,000 immigrants a year, give or take 1,200 to 1,500 and that is the starting point. That is when the minister sits down with her federal counterpart, the argument that I would like to see the government ultimately take. To date, I believe, that we are somewhere in and around 4,500 immigrants which is up considerably from a few years back, but that 4,500 demonstrates fairly clearly—if you compare it to the numbers that I just finished talking about—that Manitoba could sustain a great deal more immigrants coming to the province of Manitoba.

The people who criticize the number of immigrants that would come to the country, and particularly to the province of Manitoba, are not necessarily aware, as I would like to say, of the benefits of immigration. I heard the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) talk about the garment industry. There are industries today that if it were not for immigrants that we would not have those industries today, and there are jobs that are there today that could be filled by skills that we need to bring in through immigration or those jobs go left empty. When you leave those jobs empty, that has a negative impact on the overall provincial potential GNP and that then decreases the lifestyle for all Manitobans. So there is a valid argument that needs to be articulated, and to a certain degree, it is a question of education, for those that fear increase in immigration or immigration numbers. We look to the provincial government to address that particular issue.

You know, it is interesting, across Canada we have different provinces like British Columbia and Ontario where the provincial governments are not open to having as many immigrants or increases in immigrants as, let us say, the province of Manitoba, so what I like that the government did is they entered into a bilateral immigration agreement. For years the Filmon government, her government, attempted to get a bilateral agreement, and in the last couple of years we actually did get a bilateral agreement. I believe that is one of the reasons why we have seen an increase, and if we do our homework, I would ultimately argue that we could see us getting more immigrants coming to the province of Manitoba.

The importance of the bilateral agreement, as I was pointing out a minute ago, is that you have some provinces that do not necessarily want to have the huge increases in immigration for whatever reasons that they might have, and some of them might be valid. But strictly speaking, in the province of Manitoba there is no reason why we cannot be having more immigrants.

So we have a vehicle for the first time through the bilateral agreement which allows our Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mrs. Vodrey) to bring to the table issues with the Minister of Immigration on how we might be able to have more immigrants come to the province.

Now, having said that, I believe personally—and when I say personally, it is because after talking to many individuals from within the community which I represent and beyond that and also hearing from previous estimates from some of the civil servants—the most successful immigration program that we could have in the province of Manitoba is one that is based on family reunification. Family reunification has been the most successful aspect of immigration in the province of Manitoba, because what we have are individuals that will immigrate to the province of Manitoba, and they will stay in the province of Manitoba as opposed to going out to any other province.

So when the minister sits down and talks to the federal minister, when she talks about the numbers and she talks about the types of immigrants that we need in the province of Manitoba, I would put a special

emphasis on family reunification, the brothers and the sisters, the moms and the dads.

* (1640)

There have been some other positive signs. I indicated earlier the garment industry. You know, for the first time I had toured some facilities. I met with the Minister of Immigration in Toronto; I did a follow-up meeting in Ottawa to lobby on behalf of the government, ultimately, and Manitobans that we have to respect the fact that Manitoba needs garment industry workers, and it needs them today. There were some very significant blocks. I appreciate the efforts. The Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) got involved first-hand, so did the Minister of Culture, Heritage (Mrs. Vodrey), so did David Walker, so did Rey Pagtakhan. There was a good group of people that sat around the table in the committee room just out here dealing with that issue.

I believe what ultimately happened is that because of the push from the industry, people like Bob Silver, we were successful at clearing a lot of the red tape that was in place that would have prevented us from getting the garment workers. Now there still needs to be a lot more done in trying to rectify that particular problem, but we at least today—something that we did not have in the past—have a vehicle in which we can address that. It is not as high maybe as we would like to see, and that is the 100. We can sponsor, if you like, 100.

There are other things in some of the discussions that I had within the Department of Immigration that we might want to further look into, things such as how can the province play a role in co-sponsoring other types, other forms of immigration, because that is a concern that other provinces do have. When immigrants come to some provinces, they quickly will leave and go to other provinces. That has not been the case here in the province of Manitoba, especially because these are legitimate jobs that could be filled, that by the province giving some sort of security or providing some security, if you like, through sponsorship, we might be able to increase some of those numbers in a more direct fashion.

Mr. Chairperson, I think it is wonderful that the department has gotten its act on the Internet. I think it

is a wonderful opportunity. I think that there is a benefit with the department having some sort of a communication link with the different embassies. Not every embassy; I do not think that is practical. We should not be trying to duplicate what the federal government does, but there are some key countries which we should be focusing in on, the Philippines, China, the countries where today, the top three or the top four countries where we are receiving our immigrants today.

I know a couple of years ago we were getting a lot of immigrants coming in from Poland. We have the greatest potential. The Ukrainian community—you take a look at significant communication links we have today with the Ukraine. I looked at individuals like John Petryshyn, Myroslaw Tracz. We could go with members from all different types of political parties, of the connections that they have with some of these homelands. Maybe what we might want to consider doing, at least being more aggressive, is having a liaison of sorts with some of these embassies.

I get very frustrated because I get individuals, Mr. Chairperson, who will seek some assistance from me in trying to get visas. It is frustrating when I fax something to an embassy and the embassy does not even provide a courtesy in terms of returning something in a timely fashion, the visiting visa. These people have come to Manitoba to contribute, contribute handsomely, to the economy. Individuals are being harassed to a certain degree in not being able to come to the province of Manitoba.

I have challenged some officials to demonstrate where we have actually had people coming from visas where they have not returned back to their homeland, because that is ultimately the excuse that the immigration officials abroad will give. I bring it up because when the Minister of Immigration or Citizenship meets with the Immigration minister in Ottawa, one of the approaches or one of the strong stands that I believe she needs to take is to say, look, if you cannot demonstrate, clearly demonstrate that we are having visa visiting problems in the province of Manitoba, then if someone wants to visit this province he better be more open to it or at the very least respond and tell us why you are rejecting some of these visiting visas.

It is frustrating in the sense that I have known a lot of good people that I know should have been able to come to the province of Manitoba on a visiting visa. For some reasons, and I know some of those reasons, and quite frankly I think “balderdash” is a parliamentary word that might be acceptable. Some of the civil servants within the embassies have to become a little bit more sensitized to what it is that the people are requesting in those respective embassies and start respecting what it is, the family members in particular that want these visitors, and be a little bit more sensitive to some of the reasons why they want them to come to Canada. I say that in the fashion that I have because I believe that the minister does carry some clout when we go to these ministerial meetings. That is a point that has to be emphasized, because we will benefit tremendously if we have more people that are allowed to visit our province or at least justify it. I say that to the minister in the sense that if they try to indicate that that is not the case in the province of Manitoba, she can come back to me and I will give her some very clear cases and will, in fact, go to bat for a couple of these individuals that I have known first-hand.

Mr. Chairperson, the accreditation or credentials has always been an issue. The member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) talked about a resolution. I did not quite catch the beginning of the resolution, but I would assume it was a resolution that is introduced in this session. I have, on behalf of our party, introduced resolutions in the past dealing with credentials. If memory serves me correctly, it was regarding the establishing of a data bank. We have systemic barriers that are put into place in the province of Manitoba. Some of them are a little more obvious than others. Accreditation is something that really frustrates individuals who come to our province, in particular, but to Canada, in general, and they are not allowed or the talents that they bring are not recognized for what they are. That does happen, and I would point to areas in health care, in particular, engineering; there are professions, accounting. There are professions that are out there in which the Department of Citizenship should be at least investigating and seeing if there are things which we can do to alleviate that concern.

Having said that, I believe, to a certain degree or at least it would appear to a certain degree that it has been getting better. We have been moving forward, nowhere

near as fast as I would like to see it, Mr. Chairperson, but I understand that there has been some forward movement.

There is another issue which I have brought up in the past and I believe I even had a first reading on a bill—but we know how successful private member's bills have been in the past inside the Chamber—and that is dealing with immigration consultants. I deal with a number of immigration cases, and one of the things that frustrates me is that in many cases there is a need to go to a lawyer, but I would ultimately argue that there might be a role for the Citizenship or Consumer and Corporate Affairs or some sort of department or maybe it is even the Department of Education to look at some sort of a certification for immigration consultants.

* (1650)

Immigration consultants, if it is handled properly, can be of great assistance to the province, because what you could ultimately see—you have got to watch for unethical immigration consultations that could pose a problem, but if it is handled right and there is some sort of an official certification from within the government, the provincial government, then what you could see happen, Mr. Chairperson, and I emphasize that it has to be done very carefully, you could see individuals promoting the province of Manitoba abroad, because it is in their best economic interests to try to get more immigrants coming to the province of Manitoba. That is one of the things that, if done carefully, we could see some benefit.

The other real benefit, Mr. Chairperson, is that we have some very strong community-minded—and the minister has gone out to different ethnic events—individuals that do go out of their way to try to assist people with immigration matters. I know a number of them from several communities. I think there would be some merit for the department to look at the possibility of establishing some sort of certification for immigration consultants—which department, how it would actually work, needs to be talked about, but as we move more and more, and as a province, we move more towards wanting to realize the benefits of immigration to the province of Manitoba, that it is in our best interests to start investing some of the things today that maybe we would not have done five or 10

years ago. I believe that the immigration consultant is one of those areas.

Finally, Mr. Chairperson, I did want to comment on multiculturalism in the sense that it is something in which all members of this Chamber believe in multiculturalism. There is no one that I have heard, even the former member for Rossmere who was quoted as saying some things with respect to, and that would be Harold Neufeld—not the New Democrat—who was questioning the multicultural grants at one point in time. We all believe in a multicultural society, and I think there have been efforts from all political stripes to try to move towards it. We had the creation of the Manitoba Intercultural Council from the NDP.

An Honourable Member: Who created it?

Mr. Lamoureux: From the NDP. I gave you credit for it. We had the multicultural policy book from the Conservative government, and if we go back to the Trudeau era, we had the multiculturalism enacted in Ottawa and made part of the Constitution. So all political parties realize that today we live in a multicultural society. In fact, in the Charlottetown Accord we had the Canada clause. In the Canada clause we recognize the multicultural society. I take great pride in the fact that we are a very rich society today, and I am not talking monetarily. I am talking in terms of heritage because of the many different ethnic groups that make up Canadian society.

One of the most dramatic things that I experienced a number of years ago was when someone was trying to pose the question in the form of a play of sorts in which you had people of different ethnic origins walking onto a stage. In essence, what they were trying to say is that is what a Canadian is, many different cultures and heritage that are appreciated in one country as we know as Canada, and that is what makes us Canadian. Why it is that I will enjoy many different dishes that are out there, I like to believe that is a part of our Canadian heritage.

Along with multiculturalism, when we talk about multiculturalism a lot of people look at it as the food and the dance, i.e., Folklorama, but there are more—I should not say more serious—more issues than the food and the dance and the costumes, Mr. Chairperson. We

have the issues, such as the systemic barriers, the issues such as racism. We have issues such as settlement programs that need to be addressed.

I recall the Combatting Racism report from Manitoba Intercultural Council, and in there they came up with a number of recommendations on what we should be doing in order to combat racism. I do not know if it has been every session, but I do believe I have raised this question more than anyone else on behalf of our party is one of the recommendations was providing one-day cross-cultural lessons for MLAs and politicians. I remember when that report first came out, the then minister, now current Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) was the minister, I believe. I posed the question then, why not arrange to have that cross-cultural awareness day in one of the committee rooms? Now, that would have been back in 1990, I believe. To this date that has not occurred.

There is a list of recommendations, and instead of trying to go through each and every recommendation—because I want to be sensitive to what I mentioned to the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) in terms of the amount of time I would use—but I think that there are a number of recommendations in which at some point in time the current minister should refer back to that report and give us some sort of an update in terms of to what degree those have been implemented. I am not expecting it today. That would be quite unreasonable to a certain degree, because I know it is somewhat of an older report, but maybe when we go back into the Estimates next year, or through concurrence, or maybe through other speeches where she has some time in which she could give some good thought to this particular report.

In the interim between now and then, why not provide that cross-cultural awareness day for the MLAs? Set up Room 254, invite some people to come down and share with them some issues regarding racism. I can come up with a couple of real good examples.

An Honourable Member: You cannot use that; it is unparliamentary, Kevin.

Mr. Lamoureux: No, a lot depends in terms of the context in which you say it.

A couple of good examples that I have run across over the years, and I might even have referred to them in the past, is one day I was at an event over at the International Inn. I had a young black lady that was standing beside me. Someone walked up and started a conversation and asked her, well, how long have you been in Canada? If this person only knew how long the black community has been here—for many, many years. One has to question if it would have been someone from Europe standing beside me that just got off the plane, would they have asked that question? That is something which I would classify as being innocent, being somewhat naive. Then you get the more blatant stuff like the KKK hotline or some of these groups that really go out and preach hatred.

Mr. Chairperson, what I do know is that racism is something that is a learned behaviour. You go around to a preschool class and you see kids playing with each other no matter what their ethnicity might be. They are just having a good time. Something happens there. That is why, again, I would go back to the Combatting Racism report. In that report, it said that we need to incorporate into the curriculum some sort of educational process on cross-cultural awareness. Again, I would suggest to you that education is the key.

* (1700)

Realizing that I have about two or three minutes left, I wanted—[interjection] No, then my 30 minutes expires. I wanted to emphasize the fact that there is some serious work that needs to be done within our multicultural society, and racism is just one of those issues. There are other issues. That is where we are looking at having the government come forward with some very proactive ideas, thoughts and programs.

With those few words I would conclude. I am sure the minister could come up with a few questions that I would have posed in that little bit of a dialogue.

Mrs. Vodrey: I understand the member has some questions, so I will just take a couple of moments so you will see that I have given some thought to the issues you have raised now. First of all, you began with the issue of arguing for a greater share of immigration. I understand, I am told, your goal which you had said was about 10,000, we are not far off in our own goal.

Currently we have an increase. We have had an increase in immigration. We are at 2.04 percent. The real number, I am told, is about 4,525. Our target is 3.85 percent, and I am told in actual numbers that is 8,540. So I just wanted to raise that point with the member to say that even as the target exists now, we are fairly close to what his thinking, as he presented it, in terms of real numbers.

The member referenced the Canada-Manitoba immigration agreement which my colleague the former minister worked very hard on with the federal government to bring forward and was actually able to successfully sign on behalf of our government fairly recently.

The benefit that does provide for us is that it provides us with a forum, an agreement of a forum to raise our issues, and I think that is very important for Manitoba, this bilateral agreement which allows us and guarantees us an opportunity to discuss. In the Estimates so far I have raised some issues which, based on that agreement to discuss, I will be raising issues with the federal minister because I believe that there are some decisions which have been made. Our government believes that there are some decisions which have been made which may negatively impact on our immigration numbers.

Our government has been very consistent in terms of our desire to increase immigration and to have a focus on the family reunification area as well, so wherever there appears to be steps taken by the federal government, I will be looking to use our agreement so that I can raise the issues of concern on behalf of the people of Manitoba to the federal government. So I am very pleased the member referenced that agreement, and we are in the process now of really seeing how we can benefit from that agreement on all sides.

The member noted that he is very happy that we are on the Internet. I think that has just been a wonderful benefit and I just have a little bit of information to give him. I understand, as we know, we have had a number of campaigns in terms of immigration, and our department on behalf of our government has been very aggressive in looking at attracting further immigration to our province. I understand that campaign clients are contacted worldwide via the Internet, also regular e-mail correspondence, home page promotion and access

and also an international advertisement campaign. To date, I am told that there have been 34 information seminars abroad, and those seminars have attracted more than 2,140 people. That is the current number that I have, 2,140. The Manitoba home page has had 93,250 visits to date and that 6,472 Manitoba information kits have been distributed worldwide, so the number of visits or touches to the home page I believe has been significant. I think that we will see a benefit by using the new technology in attracting interest and contacts about our province and about the life in our province.

The member also referenced source countries as maybe being some areas in which there may be a focus. I am not able to respond to that, but what I can tell him is that I am informed of the top five source countries of immigrants to Manitoba in 1996, and I have five of them. Those include the Phillipines which the member referenced, China, India, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and England. So we have some statistics now, or concrete examples, of where some of our information is reaching and where we are able to attract immigrants.

The accreditation issues which the member raised, I have in Estimates made it clear that I see this as a very important issue for people when they come here to be able to work, but then it is an issue that we as a government can provide some assistance in. But we also have to work with some of the professional associations, particularly in the area of the self-regulating professions: medicine, dentistry, law, for instance, in order to have them assess and to determine either No. 1, how they may either open their doors or on the other hand assist people that they believe need for their standards to have some focus of training.

I think the member knows, so I will not go through today in terms of the work being done by our Credentials Recognition Program, although you may wish to question further. I am more than happy to share the information with you in terms of some of the assessment assistance, which is provided, some of the wage assistance, which has been provided, and perhaps a little bit more detail on some of the work that we have done with the professional organizations and also the trades to try and facilitate for people their ability to work in these areas. So I am quite interested in that

area. I am looking forward to having further opportunity to participate there.

The issue of immigration consultants is somewhat of a new issue for me, and I have said to our other colleagues in questioning that areas which are policy-related, I am asking to have a little bit of time before I provide any specific comments on, because some of the issues are in fact fairly new. So I am not able to provide you with anything further on that one.

Then your final area was to discuss the issue of multiculturalism and its importance to our province, and I agree. That is certainly the position of our government as we brought forward the act and as we really looked at providing some very concrete reference points for people when they look at our province to say, has this province something which really says, how do they feel about this issue? So I think that we have, in fact, tried to do some things which indicate that to people around the world and also to citizens within Manitoba.

I have been very interested, as the new minister, in some of the antiracism projects which have been offered through my department or where my department has participated with other departments of government and with the community. I participated in a number of events on the day that recognizes that issue as well. So I would agree that is very important, and with the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh), I think that it is important for us to make sure people know about what is available through our school system in terms of antiracism material and multiculturalism material.

I agree with you as well that multiculturalism is not only the celebratory events, but I have experienced lately some of those celebratory events where people have worked so hard on them that they have, in fact, really meant even more than just the day on which the event occurs. I reference three schools that I attended programs at. It was clear to me that in those schools, the day was often a day of celebration and recognition, but they had worked all year long on these issues. They have absorbed so many of the important issues that we wanted to make sure that as young people, in particular, they understood. So I agree that we have to have a significant place, and yet I also believe there has been

a lot of positive experiences through what may be seen as a celebratory event, but more goes into it than just the day specifically.

I am very interested in those issues and will look forward to having more opportunities as minister to participate with the communities, with the multicultural communities. Obviously, within my own community, I have participated with a number of the community groups and as a member of the Legislature. Now as minister, I am looking forward to learning more and knowing more about them.

* (1710)

Finally, Mr. Chair, I would say to the member that he gave quite an impassioned speech on the issues of immigration. It sounds as if he is willing to talk to his federal counterparts on some of the issues that may provide difficulty for Manitoba. Manitoba is monitoring the changes that have been made by the federal government. I have written to the federal minister on those issues. Where they negatively impact Manitoba, we are going to be very, very concerned as a government and believe that in some areas there is really another way to do things for our province.

So I am happy to hear what the member has put on the record today, and I look for his support when I approach the federal government on behalf of the people of Manitoba on some of these issues. Perhaps we can talk at another time about what he is willing to do in terms of assisting Manitoba in this very important area, because I think that there have been some things which we need to watch very carefully and in fact may already know may negatively impact our province. So I think that his assistance in that may be quite helpful given his connections with the federal Liberal government.

With that, Mr. Chair, I just wanted to give an overview of my sense of the issues the member has raised so you know I have taken them in. I am more than happy to try and answer questions.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Chairperson, what I would be interested in receiving at some point in time from the department is some sort of a statistical breakdown over the last, let us say, five to 10 years on the number of immigrants who have been coming to the province of

Manitoba and their classification. It would also be somewhat beneficial if you could even give to a certain degree, and I do not know if you have those sorts of numbers, but in terms of the locations in which they have come from or the homelands from which they have come from, that type of information would be beneficial for me in discussions that I do have with my federal counterparts, as I am sure that we all attempt to have some influence on this important issue.

There are a lot of questions that I could ask, and maybe what I will end up ultimately doing if time permits, maybe during concurrence, go into some of those questions in more detail, but I would in fact go as far as even to make myself available if the minister was wanting to get some kind of north end insights from a relatively rookie MLA on some of the immigration concerns from our area on a very informal basis if she believes that she would benefit by that. When it comes to immigration, I am always prepared to make myself available, because I do see the benefits of it. As I say, any further questions that I might have I will hold off until we get to concurrence, if I get the time during concurrence, because I have spent so much time in the past on this issue.

Mrs. Vodrey: I do have some information broken down from 1990 through '96. It is not actually year by year, it is '90, '94, '95, '96 and the classification breakdown. I do not have that by homeland, by country of origin, but rather than read it into the record I can just provide it to the member at our next sitting and that may be a start on the information that he wants.

Mr. Hickes: I just wanted to go back on some of the numbers where we or I stated a little earlier about the importance of immigration to stimulate the economy, to help our businesses and to help all of Canada grow. I just wanted to go through some of the numbers, immigration numbers to Canada since 1991, and I hope that the minister will address this. It seems to me a very serious decline right across Canada and to use those numbers and to also point out the much needed immigration that we need to balance off some of the out-migration that we have had in our province and to help stimulate our economy.

In 1991 immigration to Canada was 230,781. In 1992 it increased to 252,842, and in 1993 it was a peak

year, it was 255,893, and then we see a decrease. It started in 1994 down to 223,750, and then in 1995 we saw another decrease to 206,750. In the first six months of 1996, it was 88,000, so if you just double that, you are looking at less than 200,000 new immigrants coming to Canada.

So I think we have to look at those numbers and analyze those numbers, hopefully pointing out to the federal governments the negative impact that it is having on Canada and specifically what is happening to our province here, because you know we repeat over and over the importance of immigration to our province because of the decline in population and the decline of the number of children that families are having.

I read a letter that was written in the Winnipeg Sun, and it dealt specifically on—I think it gives a good reading of political parties and what maybe political parties should be a little bit wary of, and should be aware of and should be a little cautious at times.

An Honourable Member: What was the headline?

Mr. Hickes: The headline says, Liberals should be ashamed. It goes on and says—

An Honourable Member: The federal Liberals.

Mr. Hickes: They should have put federal Liberals here. It goes on and says:

Perhaps someone can explain to me why Immigration minister Lucienne Robillard finds it necessary to continually announce regulations and issue press releases which demean and defame immigrants. The latest of these, issued March 18, 1997, says Robillard is concerned about defaults by immigrants sponsoring their family members to come to Canada and is introducing stricter eligibility requirements and special administrative measures.

Noting Canadians do not want their generosity taken for granted, she quotes a study in Metropolitan Toronto which shows 86 percent of sponsors fulfill their undertaking, implying 14 percent do not. She states there is no reason to believe that the number would be lower in other parts of the country. The Immigration Act was amended in 1992 to eliminate the assisted

relatives programs where one could sponsor brothers, sisters, cousins, et cetera. Since then, one can only sponsor parents, minor children and/or fiances if one meets the financial requirements and signs a commitment document.

The Toronto study, whose data is questionable, was done about two or three years ago during the previous minister's regime and refers primarily to sponsored relatives who are no longer eligible for sponsorship.

(Mr. Gerry McAlpine, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

At the time of the previous minister's announcement of the study, the Winnipeg welfare department reported less, that is less, than one-tenth of 1 percent of welfare recipients were receiving assistance due to family sponsorship default. This was primarily due to the sponsors losing jobs, and when they became re-employed they renewed their commitments.

* (1720)

This is certainly less than 14 percent, but once again Manitobans get punished for perceived problems in Toronto. In the upcoming election, the Liberals appear to want the negative exclusionary vote and are prepared to defame new Canadians to show they are protecting, trusting and kindly Canadians—us, against the wiles and schemes of sleazy newcomers—them, who would take advantage of our generous social support system.

Not only does this policy not reflect the majority opinion of Canadians, it represents what is most base and bigoted in politics and should be rejected by all, by all political parties and politicians. Some votes are not worth having.

That appeared, this letter appeared in the Winnipeg Sun on Wednesday, March 26, 1997. I think it reflects a lot of what the majority—or I would say most, probably 99.99 percent of all citizens of Canada would probably put their signatures to this letter, because I think it identifies a few individuals that really are not committed or really see immigration as a negative and where we know it is a positive. It is the only way.

I just want to read that into the record because I am sure, and I am sure that the minister will agree with me,

that this letter—I personally would not be ashamed to put my name to it and I am sure the minister would feel the same way, because I am sure that your opinion would not be much different than what that letter says. That is why I think it is important, very important, when you meet with the federal Minister of Immigration that you point out some of these facts and some of the numbers and the decline in immigration right across Canada and especially the need for more immigration to Manitoba. We have businesses. You can walk down—just over here on Portage Avenue, you will see boarded-up businesses and buildings, and the reason is lack of business. If we increased the population and more individuals purchasing goods, I think we would see businesses thrive much stronger than what is happening today.

I want to hear your response to that and then I want to say a few words about another article that I came across, and I think you will be very interested in this one too.

Mrs. Vodrey: In the letter the member just read into the record, the letter summarizes again a number of the issues we have spoken about today, the impact of a number of changes which have been taken by the federal government which we believe, as well, may, in fact, negatively impact Manitoba's ability to attract additional immigration.

The other area that we would be concerned about is that these changes somehow thwart our own aggressive efforts at attracting immigration. Our government's position has been that there is a great benefit to our province with enhanced immigration. We were very concerned when the numbers went down and have very actively attempted to attract further immigration. I had just made a comment of how we believe our campaign around the world in a number of the countries where we have been able to visit has in fact impacted positively.

So when we are doing this work and attempting to create Manitoba's advantage and to show people around the world why they should come here, it is very frustrating to have the federal government make changes which may in fact negatively impact and, if not nullify, even completely make ineffective other efforts that we have done.

So I just want to respond quickly in two ways: first of all, again, to say in my letter to the federal government, I did point out to the federal government that defaults in terms of sponsorship have an occurrence rate of less than 1 percent in Manitoba. I did want to point out to the federal government that decisions made, based on Ontario and Toronto specifically, really cannot necessarily apply to Manitoba, and that that has to be considered and needs to be discussed.

I also commented to the federal minister on changes to the sponsorship provisions which now limit the signing of financial undertaking to the principal sponsor and his or her spouse, reducing the broader range of support which was available when sponsoring siblings could pool their resources. That was part of the discussion that the member and I had earlier. I just wanted you to know that was also included in my letter to the federal minister, that has been pointed out, and the limitations have raised concerns within Manitoba in our immigrant community, within our immigrant-serving agencies. We have actively promoted policies that support the immigration of all classes of immigrants to Manitoba. We do not want these changes to impact on us negatively; but, on a positive note, to say that our own efforts, we believe, have been successful to some degree, because there has been a slight increase, and we are aiming for a significantly greater increase.

I think it may be worth putting this on the record again in that we have conducted a campaign, that we are on the Internet, we do make contacts through the Internet, through regular e-mail, through home page promotion and access and an international advertisement campaign. What we have been making every effort to do is, to date there have been 34 informational seminars abroad to tell people about Manitoba, to attempt to attract them to our province. Apparently at those seminars it has attracted approximately 2,100 people, a little bit over 2,100 people. The home page has had 93,250 visits to date. That is really significant. I have had, even in the time since I have been minister, contacts from people in other parts of the world who have via the Internet, via the home page identified what we have talked about, how we have talked about Manitoba and expressed

their interest, wanting information, and 6,472 Manitoba information kits have been distributed worldwide.

So it is a two-pronged issue. We need to be aggressive and have a policy which allows us to promote ourselves as a province internationally to assist in increasing our immigration, and we need the co-operation of the federal government to not implement policies that hinder us but rather policies which will assist us in promoting ourselves.

Mr. Hickes: I would like to applaud the government for going on the Internet and promoting our great province. I hope the information that is being passed on to other potential citizens of Manitoba from other countries that are considering relocating elsewhere that when they look through the Internet that you have included through that Internet our vast diversity that we have through our farming, mining, forestry. Also, I am sure that you have covered some of our farming communities.

Also, I hope that there is something in there that shows the value and the diversity that we have in the North. We must value our aboriginal communities and the different programs, the different activities that happen on reserves and in aboriginal communities and also the attractiveness of the North. We have the great rivers and the potential for the hunting and the fishing. I would suggest that there be a little section there on the greatness of the community of Churchill. We have the fort. We have the rocket site. We have the beluga whales. We have the polar bear. It is very unique in itself, as are many nice towns. But I just wanted to put a plug in for my own home community while I was on the subject.

Mrs. Vodrey: Just to give the member a little bit more information, I am informed that our website has approximately 100 pages to access information on Manitoba. Information able to be accessed includes the economy, the quality of life, information on all regions. When the member asks specifically, do we have information on the North as well as simply major cities or whatever, the answer is yes. So I think it is quite comprehensive.

* (1730)

Mr. Hickes: I thank the minister for that response. I wanted to touch a little bit about, you know, we hear things about racism and different activities that happen. If you look at an article from the Winnipeg Free Press, and there was a survey that was done through Ottawa, and in 1997 it is hard to believe that it is still happening. The big headline screams at you. It says, Skin colour affects earnings. This is in 1997. That the colour of a person's skin still plays a role in employment and the ability to be promoted or the ability to gain advancements in one's career astonishes me in 1997. Sure we experienced a lot of that in the past, but I thought we had gone beyond that. So, when I read this, I think it warrants reading into the record, because I think it warrants people seeing the print of this article if they have not had the opportunity to have read this.

It says, for the first time, Canadian researchers are putting hard numbers on how the colour of a man's skin affects what he earns. Three studies obtained by The Citizen have found that racial minority men earn less than whites, even when they were born and raised in Canada. The latest studies are significant because they are the first to look at how Canadian-born minorities fare in the workforce. Earlier research looked at minority immigrants. They also earn less than whites, but that is more easily explained. Their foreign degrees may not be recognized here or they may be less fluent in English or French.

Two of the studies found visible minority men born here earn substantially less than the white men, while a third study by the federal government found a small wage gap. While the wages of all minority men lagged behind, some did better than others. According to one study by the University of Toronto, south Asians and blacks earned 20 percent and 16 percent less respectively than whites; Chinese men earned about 5 percent less, while southeast Asians took home about 2.3 percent less. Another study by an economist and a federal government sociologist found that on average visible minority men living in cities earned 8 percent less than whites.

Canada has one of the highest immigration rates in the world and the proportion of racial minorities is growing rapidly. In the 1991 census, 9 percent of adults in Canada were visible minorities, double the

number of 10 years before, but little is known about what happens to minorities in the workforce, especially people born in Canada. We did find a gap, and it is much more difficult to justify and much more difficult to understand why it would be there for some reason other than discrimination, says Ravi Pendakur, a sociologist with the federal Heritage department. He co-authored the study with his brother, Krishna, an economist at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver.

All three studies of men took into account factors that might cause wage differences, such as age, occupation, education, experience, and language ability. It says, it is possible that the gap is based on stuff we cannot measure. Says Ravi Pendakur, maybe all visible minorities are stupider. It is possible, but highly unlikely. Another option is, all visible minorities simply do not have the drive that all these white guys have. Also I am not sure that is a reasonable thing to say. There are not too many explanations left.

Only one of three studies looked at women. The Pendakurs were surprised to find that racial minority women born here earn about as much as white women. Their wages still lag behind men, but the finding challenges the theory that racial minority women are doubly disadvantaged and should be corrected.

The reason I wanted to read that is because I would like to encourage the minister that we have affirmative action policies in place in Manitoba, and I would encourage the minister to consult with her cabinet colleagues, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of the province to encourage the government to ensure that affirmative action guidelines are followed by all government hiring and to look at the ability to recommend to your government to make appointments to government-appointed boards, and then government-appointed boards, by your government, to reflect the true make-up of our province and to monitor it on a monthly or appointment-by-appointment basis, and also to look at the possibility of ensuring that affirmative action guidelines that we undertake as a provincial government that we are where we should be bound by to follow, that all government contracts that are awarded to contractors, they must follow the same stipulation of affirmative action guidelines that are imposed on the province. I think if we take those

measures, we should not have to read articles like this in this daily paper.

I would ask the minister to consider that, and I hope that she will recommend it to her cabinet and her colleagues.

Mrs. Vodrey: I am aware, and I am sure the member is aware, through the civil service, I believe, that there is monitoring in terms of hiring, and also I will have to find this out in the area of multiculturalism. I know certainly, as Minister for the Status of Women, that I have previously had some information which looked at how we might assist women if they needed to have encouragement sometimes to apply for certain positions. Sometimes that is the case that people do not necessarily see the pathway for themselves, and so they need to have some assistance in terms of pointing out, here is how you can continue to move ahead, and to take some of these positions.

Again, perhaps this is a very long-shot example, but for instance in the judiciary, one of the things we are finding is women simply were not applying. Now that is speaking for the women's side, which at the moment I have a little more background on, and it takes encouragement. It takes perhaps the pathway to be outlined for individuals and, of course, opportunities then to present themselves.

So I would say to the member that I would be interested in looking at making sure that those opportunities are there. Though I would say I believe our government does have quite a good record in terms of trying to make sure that everyone has opportunities for appointments both to boards—I know that there is a sensitivity to make sure that there is representation of all kinds of points of view as well as the balance of male and female, but also to reflect what our community really looks like.

I do not have numbers in front of me to be able to say to the member here is what our record is. I can just tell you through the process that that in fact has been one of the principles that I have seen in operation. We are probably not where we would want to be at this point already, but it is a process, and it does require not only the will to do it but then the encouragement and support as well.

* (1740)

I have a little information on how we have attempted to do executive development programming for women. I would need to find out a little bit more in terms of what we are doing in the multicultural area, but I would also just like to read him a little bit of information then which speaks about our branch's accomplishments for '96-97 in terms of our effort to deal with respectful workplace, because I think that is one of the other points that is implicit in the issues that you have raised. It has to be a respectful workplace so that an individual operating in it feels confident to look at moving ahead, look at taking advantage of opportunities which are there and recognizes that there is a place for that person within the workplace.

So without stepping into the territory of the civil servants or another area, I can just tell you that in 1996-97, our department and this branch delivered respectful workplace training to the Department of Justice for probation officers, specifically working out of Brandon and also Small Claims Court hearing officers. They also worked with the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission to train liquor control inspectors in the cross-cultural issues that they would encounter in the various businesses that they go in and out of across our province.

Participated in the Holocaust Remembrance Project with B'nai Brith, conducted staff awareness project in recognition of International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination with a focus on hate and racism, those issues, on the Internet. Also participated in a training project with the federal government, developing a civil service package, training package, entitled Diversity Works. We also conducted, as the member knows, two citizenship courts, one in co-operation with the United Nations Day and the other to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Canadian Citizenship Act and the 50th anniversary of the first Citizenship Court held in Manitoba, that was in this Legislature.

We have done some other things which I think are important to recognize. Developed and implemented a training program for the civil service, the Respectful Workplace program offered by the Civil Service Commission as a corporate service. In co-operation

with Community Legal Education Association developed a brochure, Racism and Your Rights, and I do not have one to table, but I can sort of show you across the room. Glad to pass one of these on to you though at a later time. This is to identify legal ramifications of racism and discrimination and it is really quite specific.

In addition, as I said, I mentioned the Citizenship Court. Established a departmental antiracism committee to develop staff awareness projects culminating with the recognition of March 21 as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination throughout government, and I know all members received information on that. Developed promotional material for the division's promotion and recruitment campaign to attract skilled, independent immigrants to Manitoba.

So those are some of the projects which we, as a department and a branch, are currently undertaking to assist across government and also those who will work with us or would be interested to work with us, our Crown corporations and other groups. I think that it is a process and there are some initiatives in other departments.

So just to say there are initiatives in other departments which I am happy to share with the member if he would just like a little bit more detailed information. I will not take the time to read them into the record now, but there is work that we have done with other departments, including Agriculture, Family Services, Consumer and Corporate Affairs, Education and Training.

Mr. Hickes: I thank the minister for her response. I just want to make it clear that I was not questioning the lack of or the effort of the government. The reason I raised it is, as the minister I am sure you will be, but I hope that you will be on top of all appointments and have some influence. If it warrants some action on your part to ensure that affirmative action guidelines are followed, that you would pick up the challenge and ensure that it is always enforced. That is the reason I raised it. I was not questioning the government's lack of, or whatever. I just wanted to raise it to ensure that, if need be, you would step in to make sure that policies are followed.

I just wanted to touch on one more area. Like I said, I want to try and wrap this up by six o'clock, this Citizenship part, and we are getting close to there, because tomorrow I presume that you would probably, as agreed, go back to Heritage.

I raised this before, the Manitoba Intercultural Council. I keep in touch with the members, I have seen their work and I see how they operate. It is an organization that is made up of all different cultural organizations, and they pretty well have representation from almost every ethnic group that is out there. What they do is they belong to the council where they have elected members that represent all organizations. So instead of having to deal, say, with 50 or 100 Filipino organizations, if need be, you would have one representative on the council.

Also dealing with issues pertaining to the community concerns, whether it be duplication of services or duplication of programs or racism, or whatever have you, they have input from all organizations, and also the Manitoba Intercultural Council had the capacity to give direction and advice to governments so that they would be representative of the ethnic community as a whole, and also they used to look after allocating grants to organizations. So that would be a real arm's length away from government.

I am not sure if the possibility of reinstating the funding or not is possible, but I would like to hope the minister will look at the possibility and look at the pros and cons and maybe see if it warrants reinstatement, because I personally feel it does, but I am one member of 57 here, and I am not part of the government. I hope the minister will look at the operations of MIC and the valuable contributions they make to all the groups that are involved and the community as a whole.

Would the minister look at or consider looking at the MIC program as a whole and maybe seeing where they could be of assistance to her or the government?

* (1750)

Mrs. Vodrey: Our government is very, very committed to supporting distribution of grants and supports to Manitoba's multicultural organizations. The vehicle that we have in place now is the Multicultural

Grants Advisory Council. It has seemed, I am informed, that over the past while there has been more interest in what has been referred to as bilateral agreements between certain multicultural groups and the government. So that seems to be at the moment really quite functional. MIC in itself, as the member knows, has received some support from MGAC, or the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council, over the past few years, and I understand that they did not submit an application for funding in '96-97. So I am interested in the fact that they provide a function in terms of, I am informed, leaders, but that the communities themselves are in fact finding in very practical terms that they are relating bilaterally to the government. So at the moment I do not see the benefit in terms of reinstating the act.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I want to put some remarks on the record in regard to immigration issues.

I do want to indicate my disappointment that the government once again is not reviewing the issue of core funding for the Manitoba Intercultural Council. I had the opportunity to attend many of the meetings of the MIC. My wife was a representative on the MIC, and I want to indicate, there were a lot more benefits from MIC than can be gained from mere contact between governments and community groups on a bilateral basis. I would hope that would happen no matter what, but I am very concerned that the MIC for the last number of years basically has been operating on a voluntary basis with no support from the government. I say that because I would hope that the critic who earlier talked about the fact that we are all in favour of multiculturalism, and I know the Liberal member talked about that. Sometimes you have to put your money where your mouth is. MIC did not receive a significant amount of funding, to my mind, relative to the overall picture, and I know there was a meeting just recently, in fact just over a week ago, at which there was a very good turnout. Many communities were represented.

The thing I want to stress is that what the MIC did was, it put groups in a position of working together, and that is what multiculturalism is all about. I believe it is important to recognize too that you had MIC involving many groups who had up until that time worked strictly on a bilateral basis. Some of them were French-Canadian groups, for example, Francophone groups.

You had First Nations who did co-operative work with the MIC. You had many groups representing cultures that have been present in Manitoba for generations, others where you have much newer make-up. So I do want to put that on the record.

I want to indicate, our critic said that he certainly supports reinstating funding. We do, and I think it is not much surprise, Mr. Chairperson, to anyone in this House to say that one of the first things that the New Democratic Party government would do would be to reinstate funding for the MIC, and I believe that would be the kind of statement of support that would be appreciated by the multicultural community in this province.

This leads me to my second point, and this is an area where perhaps the government and us are perhaps on a more of a closer wavelength, and that is in terms of immigration. I think what we need to do, Mr. Chairperson, is have a new vision for immigration in this province. I am very concerned about some of the trends we have seen in recent years. I am very concerned about the federal government's policies, and a lot of attention has been put on the head tax. I know people who have been affected by that. I have family members who are potentially affected by that, and I noticed that there was a rather convenient conversion of the federal Liberals just before the election now saying that, well, they are only going to charge you the head tax if you get into this country. I would just like to remind the federal government that I believe this country was built by many people, First Nations, obviously, but generations of immigrants who came afterwards with nothing more than a dedication to hard work, not much more than that. When my dad came to this country, he came without a job, in 1967. He ended up in Thompson, Manitoba, found a job there, and between our family and extended family, there are now probably 27 or 28 people who, through family sponsorship, are now proud Canadians. I want to stress that is the story of many, many families.

What particularly concerns me is not just the head tax, but the fact that we have not seen the reinstatement of the family sponsorship system that worked so well before. I believe that this was the perfect balance because you ended up with communities being able to, through families and communities themselves, sponsor

people, provide the kind of social safety network that you need.

I am absolutely flabbergasted that the Liberal government did not reinstate that, but I am wondering—and I realize we only have two minutes to go here and I wanted to ask the minister, and I know she has been critical of the federal government on the immigration issues. What I wanted to suggest is perhaps, I do not think we need to bring the staff back, if she would just want to respond on the record. I am not trying to, you know, block it off, but I am wondering if there is any way in which we cannot see the provincial government adopt the family sponsorship mechanism as a provincial class of immigration, because the provinces have some significant say on this.

The reason I want to stress that is because if you look at say the city of Winnipeg right now, and I do not want to exclude the rest of Manitoba, there are immigrants in other areas, but if it was not for two factors, the city of Winnipeg would be declining in population, would have declined the last number of years. One is the migration of aboriginal people to Winnipeg, the second is in terms of immigration. It has to be, I think, recognized that it was not that long ago that Winnipeg was the third largest destination for immigrants in Canada, behind Toronto and Vancouver for a while. They shifted between Vancouver and Montreal, but we were the third largest destination for many years. That has slipped. If you look at where we are now, I believe we have slipped. I believe we are either seventh or eighth in terms of population with our capital city, eighth now. We have slipped now below Quebec City. I am very concerned about that trend. I know there has been some fluctuation up and down, and once again I am not blaming the provincial government on this score. A lot of it has been provincial policies, but it strikes me that the solution to this is by reinstatement of the family sponsorship program.

I want to give just a quick example of what I think is indicative of the demand out there, the recent federal-provincial program for the garment industry. If you look at the retention rate of those in the garment industry, it is not the percentage that obviously was hoped for, but, you know, what has happened is many

of the people who have come, the mechanism that is being used is what would have been used at other times through the family sponsorship program. I know families who are desperate to get family members to Canada. I know sectors they could work in. I know in my own community. These are families that would guarantee the sponsorship of these individuals, and, of course, given the current shift in the system that we have seen and the elimination of that particular category and the more difficult situation now facing people through the normal process, it is difficult.

So I want to suggest to the minister, and I look forward to her comments on this tomorrow, that perhaps we not only lobby for this but if we can see if it cannot be adopted as a provincial class of immigration, a separate provincial class. I really believe that we would benefit greatly in this province by having immigration return to its previous level. Particularly here in the city of Winnipeg, I believe, a lot of the national immigration policies of the last few years have been biased towards the larger urban centres, and I think that has got to stop. I think our survival as a province is going to be based on some level of orderly population growth. Just in terms of demographics, we need the workforce, we need the consumption, we need that dynamic energy that can be brought by an increased level of immigration.

I want to finish off by saying that I also think this is one of our advantages as a province. We have the most diverse ethnocultural mix in Canada. We combine Pacific Rim connections with eastern Europe, with Africa, the Caribbean. I believe we can use the enhanced immigration to position ourselves internationally, because I think that is one of our strengths as a province.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. McAlpine): Order, please. The hour being 6 p.m., committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

The Acting Speaker (Mr. McAlpine): The hour being after 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning (Thursday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, May 7, 1997

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