



Third Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

39-40 Elizabeth II

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Denis C. Rocan
Speaker*



VOL. XLI No. 81A - 1:30 p.m., MONDAY, JUNE 8, 1992



MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, June 8, 1992

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Roxanna Louise Randall, Auna Robins, Norma Stewart and others requesting the government consider reviewing the funding of the Brandon General Hospital to avoid layoffs and cutbacks to vital services.

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Jan Currie, Jackie Black, Mary McWilliams and others urging the government consider establishing an Office of the Children's Advocate independent of cabinet and reporting directly to the Assembly.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans), and it complies with the privileges and practices of the House and complies with the rules (by leave). Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba, humbly sheweth that:

The Brandon General Hospital is the major health care institution for southwestern Manitoba; and

The citizens of Brandon and southwestern Manitoba are deeply concerned and disturbed about the downsizing of the hospital and view it as a threat to the quality of health care in the region; and

The Manitoba government has chosen not to review the current budget to ensure that cutbacks to vital services do not occur; and

The administration of the hospital has been forced to take drastic measures including the elimination of the Palliative Care Unit and gynecological wards, along with the layoff of over 30 staff, mainly licensed

practical nurses, to cope with a funding shortfall of over \$1.3 million; and

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislature of the Province of Manitoba may be pleased to request that the government of Manitoba consider reviewing the funding of the Brandon General Hospital.

* * *

I have reviewed the petition of the honourable Leader of the Second Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs). It complies with the privileges and practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

The petition of the undersigned residents of the Province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS the Province of Manitoba announced that it would establish an Office of the Children's Advocate in its most recent throne speech and allocated funds for this Office in its March '92 budget; and

WHEREAS the Kimelman Report (1983), the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry (1991) and the Suche Report (1992) recommended that the province establish such an office reporting directly to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, in a manner similar to that of the Office of the Ombudsman; and

WHEREAS pursuant to the Child and Family Services Act Standards, the agency worker is to be the advocate for a child in care; and

WHEREAS there is a major concern that child welfare workers, due to their vested interest as employees within the service system, cannot perform an independent advocacy role; and

WHEREAS pure advocacy will only be obtained through an independent and external agency; and

WHEREAS the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) has unsatisfactorily dealt with complaints lodged against child welfare agencies; and now

THEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba strongly urge the provincial government to consider establishing an Office of the Children's Advocate which will be

independent of cabinet and report directly to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

* (1335)

* * *

I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), and it complies with the privileges and practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS the Dutch elm disease control program is of primary importance to the protection of the city's many elm trees; and

WHEREAS the Minister of Natural Resources himself stated that, "It is vital that we continue our active fight against Dutch elm disease in Manitoba," and

WHEREAS, despite that verbal commitment, the government of Manitoba has cut its funding to the city's DED control program by half of the 1990 level, a move that will jeopardize the survival of Winnipeg's elm trees.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the government of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) to consider restoring the full funding of the Dutch elm disease control program to the previous level of 1990.

As in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 98—The Manitoba Multiculturalism Act

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to move, seconded by the Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. Vodrey), that Bill 98, The Manitoba Multiculturalism Act (Loi sur le multiculturalisme au Manitoba), be introduced and that the same now be 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, and I would like to table the message.

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery, where we have with us this afternoon from the Immaculate Heart of Mary twenty-two Grade 5 students. They are under the direction of Debby Wittevrongel. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale).

Also this afternoon, from the Morden Collegiate, we have twenty-five Grade 11 students. They are under the direction of Mr. Ron Peters. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard).

Also, from the Robert H. Smith School, we have fifty Grade 5 students. They are under the direction of Miss Carlotta Kulpak. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Bill 70

Financial Impact Study Request

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, Manitobans' social assistance rates are skyrocketing in this province partially due to the recession and partially due to the change by the federal Conservative government and the provisions of the Unemployment Insurance Act. Thousands of Manitobans are faced with the prospect of being on social assistance and having to eke out an existence on those provisions.

Mr. Speaker, those people represent Manitoba's most vulnerable people, and estimates now include, in 1991, that some 70,000 people will unfortunately have to be part of that particular program.

Mr. Speaker, we have had debates and questions in this House for the last number of months on Bill 70. The government has said steadfastly that this is an enabling legislation, but that it has two fundamental purposes. One is equity in terms of standardizing the process, and the other purpose is fairness. Members of this Legislature have asked the government a number of times what the impact will be on the individual recipients and on the municipalities, and the government has not given us those provisions.

Given the fact that a government must provide a financial impact study, so it would know fully what the financial options are available to it in passing this legislation, I would like to know from the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) what is the specific government intention on funding pursuant to Bill 70 in terms of the people of this province who unfortunately are on welfare.

* (1340)

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is correct in his analysis of the bill, that the bill has two purposes and that is to standardize the rates that are offered to social allowance recipients across this province and also to make access equal to that service for those vulnerable Manitobans who require social assistance.

The department is currently working with the SARC committee which is made up of councillors from the rural municipalities and the urban municipalities and the City of Winnipeg, to review the SARC committee report which was brought to this government a number of months ago and are working on the details of the implementation of Bill 70 when it passes the House.

There have been figures put forward, particularly by members of the City of Winnipeg Council indicating some cost that the city may incur. Those numbers are very speculative and ones that we do not agree with. I would point out to the Leader of the Opposition that the rate setting will be part of this process with the SARC committee that is ongoing. It will be a number of months yet before we make that determination.

Mr. Doer: Again to the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey), because I cannot imagine any government dealing with a \$337-million expenditure and dealing with a piece of legislation without fully analyzing the financial implications for the people who are receiving those provisions and for the province of Manitoba.

I am asking this question to the Deputy Premier. They have surely done the financial impact study of Bill 70. They are not studying the implementation after we pass the bill. Surely, any government would be fully knowledgeable of the implications of this bill before they bring the bill to this Legislature.

Given the fact that there are a potential three scenarios of payment now in the province of Manitoba and given the fact that this bill now goes

to one possible scenario for standardized rates, can the Deputy Premier please tell us whether they will be going to a standardized rate based on the over 90 percent of people who receive welfare benefits in this province, or will they be going to a standardized rate on the basis of the 10 percent or less who do not receive that 90 percent rate?

Mr. Gilleshammer: The rates vary considerably from one municipality to another, and there are many aspects of those rates that are different as well. This is currently what is under discussion with the SARC committee and officials from Family Services, to look at some of those many differences.

It will be a number of months yet before these meetings conclude, and in fact members of the urban municipalities and the rural municipalities indicate that they want to go back to their membership to review with reeves and councillors some of the details that the SARC committee has been working on.

So I say to you, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is looking for hard figures that are based on decisions that have not been made yet.

Bill 70

Financial Impact Study Request

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): I know that the government has not performed a financial impact study. They are incompetent, or they have done it and they are failing to give it to Manitobans. It is one of two things, Mr. Speaker.

I am asking the Deputy Premier: Given the fact that Treasury Board would analyze all the financial implications of a bill of this nature with this kind of magnitude, can we please have the hidden agenda of the government put to the public? Can you please let us know what financial option the government is proceeding with on Bill 70? Is it the financial option dealing with over 90 percent of welfare recipients of the province of Manitoba, to go to that standardized rate in terms of the funding for Manitobans? Is it that financial option, or is the financial option that the government is looking at a \$337-million expenditure to go to the lowest common denominator in terms of the systems of welfare payments?

Can the Deputy Premier please advise us that, yes, they have a Treasury Board analysis? Can he please make that public and tell us what option they are looking at? It is only fair for the members of this Legislature to know what we are dealing with in Bill

70 and to stop the obfuscation and come public with the actual implications of a very important bill.

Hon. James Downey (Deputy Premier): Mr. Speaker, the member has heard the response from the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) that we are in a full consultative process with the municipal people who work in partnership with the province as it relates to the delivery of supports to the people who are on social assistance.

It might have been some good advice, Mr. Speaker, for the members opposite, when they were in government, to have taken some advice from the locally elected people, as well, in discussion. The \$27 million that was frittered away in Saudi Arabia may not have been lost if they had paid attention to the people of Manitoba. So he is not prepared to consult with the people of Manitoba; we are.

* (1345)

Employment Training Government Strategy

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): We are pleased on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, to see some recognition by Ottawa of the effects of their economic policies on unemployment levels in this province, and in particular, we note the increased allocation of \$10 million from unemployment insurance funds for training in Manitoba.

My question is for the Minister of Education.

Could the minister tell us, could she explain to the House, in the absence of a public economic strategy for this province, in the absence of a provincial labour force planning strategy, what direction is she giving to our training institutions for the most effective use of this extended money?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): We have had the Skills Training Advisory Committee which has reported and provided some input to government as we look at developing our provincial strategy. The member knows also that we are in the process of negotiating, at the moment, a Canada-Manitoba labour force development agreement. The member also knows that we are moving towards college governance which will make the training within this province more regionally responsive to the needs of specific areas of Manitoba.

Ms. Friesen: I do not know what that does for an institution which is looking to decide whether it is

going to train more barbers or whether it is going to train more teachers or what. There is no direction.

I want to ask the minister: Will she tell the House what the impact of these additional training dollars will be on provincial job training for those thousands of Manitobans, many of them young people, who have never had access to a permanent job? They have never had access to unemployment insurance, and they do not have access to job training in Manitoba.

Mrs. Vodrey: The member is referencing an initiative which we have also read about today by the federal government, and my department is looking into the exact details of that initiative and the proposed five programs that this initiative may effect for Manitobans, and in particular, what this province is doing in the area of skills training. I have spoken to the member about—quite frequently, I have referenced the provincial initiative of Workforce 2000 in which we have almost over 17,000 employees in Manitoba receiving additional training, and I have also spoken to the member about the market-driven skills within our community colleges.

So we are looking very carefully in this province for the needs and the interests of Manitobans and our ability to provide the skills training.

Ms. Friesen: The minister has no plan.

Will the minister tell us what immediate steps she is taking to bring to this House, as a matter of urgency for those more than 50,000 unemployed Manitobans and their families, both the provincial labour force strategy which she has promised for some time, and the federal-provincial agreement for labour force development boards, already in place in most provinces?

Mrs. Vodrey: Certainly the member must then know that there are at least five jurisdictions who have not signed an agreement with the federal government regarding a provincial and federal labour force agreement.

Manitoba has been looking at that very specifically. We want to be very clear that the terms of that agreement will be of benefit to Manitobans, and that it outlines clearly what is the role of the federal government and the provincial government. I have referenced that to the member. I have made it very clear that we are in the process of that negotiation and will be moving forward when we are completely satisfied the needs of Manitobans will be met.

Department of Natural Resources Waste Dumping - Winnipeg Floodway

Mr. Nell Gaudry (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, approximately 50 loads of garbage have been dumped on the south bank of the Winnipeg Floodway near Highway 59. Last week, I raised this problem with the government and asked them for a cleanup and an investigation into who was responsible. According to government officials, these truckloads of garbage were dumped by the Department of Natural Resources because they ran out of money last year and could not afford the fees of a landfill site.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Environment.

Can he tell this House today why the Department of Natural Resources is responsible for illegally dumping more than 50 loads of waste on the banks of the floodway?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, the material that was located in the floodway was material that the department had apparently cleaned up out of the floodway. They are presently under a direction of my department not to burn and to clean it up.

* (1350)

Mr. Gaudry: My question is to the Minister of Environment.

Will he clearly demonstrate that government is not above environmental laws and prosecute the Department of Natural Resources and their responsible officials in the same manner a private citizen would be prosecuted?

Mr. Cummings: The answer to the first part is of course, but secondly, I remind you that the material apparently was cleaned up out of the floodway itself and collected at that one site which has been a practice for quite some time.

Mr. Gaudry: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Environment tell the House how the mess will be cleaned up and what action he is taking to prevent this from happening again?

Mr. Cummings: It will be cleaned up in the appropriate manner between hand and backhoe and front-end loader. I assume that is the practical aspect of it. In terms of future practices, it is a practice that I do not condone.

Workers Compensation Board Public Inquiry

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, on April 23, 1992, a very tragic and preventable death occurred where a claimant of the Workers Compensation Board took his own life. Many individuals with similar case histories have come forward with horror stories of how the Workers Compensation Board has handled their individual cases.

Since there is such widespread concern among WCB claimants and their families and in light of the recent suicide, will the Minister responsible for the Workers Compensation Board announce today that a full public inquiry is in order?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister responsible for and charged with the administration of The Workers Compensation Act): Mr. Speaker, I am not quite sure what type of public inquiry the member for Transcona is suggesting, whether it is in relation to the specific incident at the Workers Compensation Board or a more general inquiry, and I would appreciate in his next question if he would further define his request.

Mr. Reid: It can take many forms, and I am sure the minister is fully aware of the public inquiry that is required in this situation and that he is required to investigate this matter.

This, Mr. Speaker, is important, because the mandate of an inquest is much different from that of a public inquiry, and we think it is important that a public inquiry be held to deal with the matters in question.

Will the minister agree to hold a public inquiry because the mandate of an inquest is not sufficient to thoroughly determine the facts that are surrounding this case and to deal with all matters that may be raised, that could be raised, at a public inquiry?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, I am still not quite sure what the member for Transcona is suggesting. Obviously relating out of the very tragic incident of the 23rd, there is a responsibility in the office of the Coroner to make a determination as to what type of inquiry will take place.

Mr. Speaker, I am not sure whether the member for Transcona is suggesting that there be a specific inquiry on the part of the board of directors related to that incident in addition to a Coroner's inquest or a more broad-based inquiry on the operation of the

WCB. I wish he would just indicate clearly what he is requesting.

Mr. Reid: We want a broad-based public inquiry to determine what the facts are and to deal with the conclusions that come about as a result of that.

I want to ask the minister, Mr. Speaker, since he does not give his commitment to a full public inquiry: Will this minister agree that the mandate of an inquest would not be able to cover the facts, as have been indicated here, where at a meeting that took place on February 28, 1992, involving the deceased claimant and his spouse, that the minutes from that meeting have been destroyed, and that only a full public inquiry will be able to determine the relevant facts of that matter?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the member for Transcona, he still has not been very clear as to the terms of reference that he is speaking about. [interjection] No, members opposite—he talks about a full inquiry on all aspects of WCB or matters relating specifically to the incident, the 23rd.

The member for Transcona has brought some information forward to this House. I would appreciate some further detail from the member for Transcona on that particular matter before I would consider this particular issue. There are a host of factors, obviously one of which the member for Transcona has now raised, and I would appreciate if he would provide me with details on the accusation that he is making today.

* (1355)

Policing Services Agreement User Fees

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Rural Development.

People in rural Manitoba are very concerned with the offloading of costs of this government, the lack of decision on policing costs provincially, and now, they are going to be faced with additional costs.

Last week, we asked the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) about details of the policing contract between the province and the federal government, and we are very disappointed to learn that he had no idea whether user fees are included in the 20-year agreement.

I want to ask the Minister of Rural Development: Did the Minister of Justice consult with him on the contents of the agreement, or has he read through

it? Can he confirm that hundreds of thousands of dollars are expected to be collected from towns and municipalities in user fees?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, the responsibility of the Department of Rural Development lies in the area of determining the policing costs of rural municipalities relative to that paid by the urban municipalities in rural Manitoba.

In terms of the negotiated agreement between the Minister of Justice and the federal minister, that is a matter that is the responsibility of the Minister of Justice. To that extent, I will take that question as notice and ensure the Minister of Justice returns with a complete answer to the member.

Ms. Wowchuk: I want to ask the minister: Has he seen the agreement, and is he willing to table that agreement today so municipalities across the province can be assured that they will not have to bear the brunt of the fee-for-service costs?

Mr. Derkach: Well, Mr. Speaker, I am not sure which agreement she speaks about, but if this is the agreement that was negotiated between the federal government and the Minister of Justice for this government, that is a matter that she should be posing to the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae).

As I said, I will take that question as notice on his behalf and ensure that he gets the information back to her.

User Fees - Impact Rural Manitoba

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised that the Minister of Rural Development would not know about the costs that rural municipalities have to pick up.

I want to ask the Minister: Does he have any idea of what the ramifications will be on the rural communities? What are the ramifications on policing costs for rural Manitobans because of this agreement?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Mr. Speaker, I have indicated that from my discussions with rural municipalities, both through the MAUM and the UMM, there was indeed a positive tone from the municipalities about the fact that we finally did arrive at an agreement, because for some time, there was not an agreement. Indeed there was some speculation that the offloading from the federal government would be significant.

It was through the efforts of our Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) that we were able to arrive at a 20-year agreement, which indeed limited the exposure of this province dramatically from what it might have been had we gone the former course. To that extent, municipalities had indicated their support for what the Minister of Justice had done.

Seven Oaks Youth Centre Length of Stay

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Family Services.

In a report commissioned by the minister, the independent review of the reporting procedures in children's residential care facilities, also known as the Suche report, Ms. Suche and her associates said, as a receiving facility, the Seven Oaks Centre placements are intended to be short term. Child and Family Services standards specify that placements in a receiving facility should not exceed 30 days.

In the Estimates process, the minister indicated that they were making great strides in reducing the amount of time that young people were asked to spend in this locked facility. Will the Minister then explain to this House why a young man who was admitted to the Seven Oaks Centre on the 8th of February with an assessment which indicated he needed Level 4 placement is still in that facility as of today?

* (1400)

Hon. Harold Gillieshammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, we did indicate during Estimates that some substantial changes have taken place at the Seven Oaks Centre. We have downsized the centre from some 60 to 70 residents during the mid to late-'80s to the point where, I believe, we are housing 24 children there at this time. Also, the amount of time that children are spending there is somewhere in the area of an average of 20 days.

I would point out to the member that Seven Oaks is the facility that some very, very troubled children are brought to when there are no other facilities within the province that will take them. We have been talking about this as a children's mental health issue. We have been talking to some of the treatment facilities that do have treatment for some

of these very difficult children, and often there are problems in placing them in appropriate treatment.

I think that we are prepared to say at this time that there are treatment centres that we have to strengthen so that there are treatment facilities for all children in this province. In some of the more difficult cases, we are also prepared to look at a placement outside the province if we cannot find an appropriate place in Manitoba.

Mrs. Carstairs: In this particular case, the Manitoba Adolescent Treatment Centre was prepared to release this youngster back into the care of his mother. Unfortunately, she was too ill to take him. So it would appear that if he could have been released back into his family, there must be an appropriate placing for this child.

This mother wrote to the minister on the 12th of May. Since that time, the frustration of being kept in a locked facility has led this young man to do what so many do. He started going AWOL—five times in the last two and a half weeks.

Can the minister tell this House what he is doing to ensure that this young man and the other men and women living in this facility get appropriate treatment?

Mr. Gillieshammer: I have indicated to the House before that it is difficult to solve individual cases on the floor of the Legislature. Sometimes members who bring that information to the House are not aware of all of the details of specific cases.

I would say, Mr. Speaker, that we have quite a number of institutions within the province that provide treatment for individuals, but there still are some that are very, very difficult, and we have not been able to find the most appropriate treatment, but the department is charged again with stabilizing individuals and having them take treatment in the centres in Manitoba, and the option of sending them out of province is still there.

I am prepared to look at this specific case, and if there is further information regarding it, I would be pleased to share it with the member.

Mrs. Carstairs: The minister says that he does not like these cases on the floor of the Legislature. That is exactly why I did not raise it from the time that he received a letter from this mother on the 12th of May. It is now the 8th of June. This child's condition and his frustration has now escalated to the point where he is going AWOL. I think it is important that I put on the record exactly what his mother has to say.

She says: Apparently this is what most of the kids at Seven Oaks do, is go AWOL over and over again. Us parents are not supposed to worry too much because this happens all the time. They sooner or later show up. Well, I am very worried when my son is on the streets. I want help, not to make things worse.

Can this mother be assured today she is going to get some help?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I would assure the member that I will raise the issue with the department. I would offer the member an alternative, and that is that we can speak privately about some of these cases.

I may be able to indicate some details that would give her a better understanding of specific cases. I will raise the issue with the department, and if there is further information, I am prepared to share it with the member.

St. Boniface Hospital Bed Closure Proposal

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health has received a detailed proposal from St. Boniface Hospital for the closure of 115 beds, its target from the government.

That proposal confirms the numbers we have been raising in this House and confirms that there are 24 psychiatric beds to be cut. It directly contradicts the minister's own Urban Hospital Council report which recommended 20 beds at Misericordia, and it comes before the much touted, long-awaited mental health reform plans from the Mental Health division, the minister's advisory committee and now a steering committee.

I would like to know from the minister, what is the response of the Minister of Health to the St. Boniface proposal that 24 psychiatric beds be cut which is in addition to 20 beds at Misericordia, bringing a total of about a 20 per cent reduction in the psychiatric system before any sign of community alternatives are in place?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): I might remind my honourable friend of the language she chose to use in presenting the question—a proposal.

Mental Health Care Facilities Bed Closure Policy

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): I think, given the minister's statements in the past about mental health care reform and his laudatory praises about the Urban Hospital Council, it is only fair to expect an answer from the Minister of Health to the question.

Who is in charge? Are the hospitals free to shut down any beds they choose in order to meet cost-reduction targets, or is there actually a central plan where all these pieces fit together?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, for the first time in the history of this province, there is a centrally presented, well-researched, well-understood plan of reform, not only in the acute care delivery system, as presented some four weeks ago, but indeed, Sir, in terms of reform of the mental health system.

Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend poses the question as to where some of the proposals fit exactly within the planning mechanisms put in place in the ministry in co-operation with the facilities and the community to assure that when proposals are made they have replacement services available, that they fit with the overall strategic agenda in mental health of a five-year change and a definitive move away from institutional care to community care, and in terms of acute care, over a two-year period of time for that same option of change and reform to take place.

I will put those mechanisms before any Legislature in Canada, and they would be applauded, Sir.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that answer. The minister has before him a proposal from St. Boniface Hospital for 24 beds to be cut in psychiatric services.

I want to ask the Minister of Health: Does this proposal, now before the minister, fit into his overall mental health care reform plan or not? Is he going to approve this bed reduction or not?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, one would make those kinds of approvals if checks and balances and replacement of services have a reasonable assurance of successful replacement of the care provided within the institution.

But, Sir, let me give my honourable friend a small reminder of what her and her party believe is appropriate in terms of the reform of the mental

health system, and that is to move away from institutional-based care, which consumes close to 90 percent of our budget, and move towards community-based, supportive care. Mr. Speaker, have they abandoned that belief in what is deemed to be proper?

Thicket Portage, Manitoba Train Derailment Report

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Highways and Transportation.

Thicket Portage is one of the most isolated communities in Manitoba with no all-weather road service and no scheduled airline service, but its one connection to the outside world, its main connection, was cut this past weekend with the rail derailment. This creates many problems for people stranded both in and outside of the community, with concerns amongst fishermen who may potentially lose their unemployment insurance eligibility. It creates a whole series of problems.

I would like to ask the Minister of Highways if he can give an update on the current status of the derailment, and more specifically, if he can indicate, as his office has this morning, what arrangements will be made for particularly those residents of the community who were stranded currently in Thompson and are unable to get into the community.

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I want to confirm the fact that there was a derailment at Thicket Portage. I have limited information at this time. I am asking for a full report.

However, I want to indicate that there were no injuries involved, and I know that people have been inconvenienced because of the derailment. CN is making every effort that they can, financially and otherwise, in terms of trying to accommodate people who are stranded there.

CN Rail Bayline Upgrade

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I understand the Department of Northern Affairs has also been working on this, and I would like to thank the minister's office and our own critic the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) for trying to get some direct answers from CN.

I would like to ask as a supplementary, Mr. Speaker, whether the minister, in conjunction with the federal minister, will be looking at the question of safety on the line, and in particular, whether there is the need as we have been saying—many people along the bayline—for a further upgrading of the bayline to bring it up to the kinds of standards that are necessary to avoid repetition of this kind of incident?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, we have continually promoted the idea of upgrading the Churchill line. We have a difference of opinion in terms of the figures that CN is using and the figures that basically we are developing.

I want to indicate that once I have the full report—if it has been a matter of the line not being safe, certainly it will add to the argument that we have been putting forward to have the line upgraded. We will put forward every effort we can in terms of making sure that this happens.

I want to indicate again that once I have further information details, I will share it with my colleagues.

* (1410)

Thicket Portage, Manitoba All-Weather Road

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate it.

As a final supplementary, I would like to ask the Minister of Highways whether he will now consider putting in an all-weather road so that residents of communities such as Thicket Portage, Pikwitonei and Ilford, along the bayline, will not have to be subject to this kind of situation in the future, so they will have alternate travel? Will the minister now agree to put an all-weather road into those communities?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, there is a certain responsibility that lies with the federal government, as well, in terms of providing access to these communities.

I want to indicate that we have ongoing discussions and arrangements that we are making with the federal government in terms of getting access to some of these communities. At the present time, I have to indicate that we have no specific plans in terms of putting an all-weather road in there.

Selkirk School of Psychiatric Nursing Closure Postponement

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, the last class of the Selkirk School of Psychiatric Nursing will soon be graduating in a few weeks. The Minister of Health has always claimed that the job losses associated with the closure will be replaced with a new forensic lab in Selkirk. Last week the minister in the House here admitted that he failed to get federal support for that facility.

Since the minister now admits that he has failed to replace the jobs in Selkirk, will he now admit that the closure of the school was a mistake and postpone the closure?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): No, no and no, Mr. Speaker.

Health Care System Forensic Services

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): What plans does the minister have for forensic patients in this province?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to terms of forensic patients, I will put again the record of this government and the commitment that we have made in terms of provision of care and facilities above and beyond any previous administration in the recorded history of this province.

My honourable friend might want to know that the often-criticized building by the New Democrats, namely the Psychiatric Health Centre on the Health Sciences Centre campus contains intermediate care forensic beds. That is the first time we have ever had that kind of construction available to provide service in the province of Manitoba, given by a Progressive Conservative government, not ne'er-do-wells in the New Democrats.

Mr. Dewar: My final question to the Minister of Health is: Will a long-term, high security forensic unit, provincially funded, be built in Selkirk?

Mr. Orchard: That issue is under discussion within the ministry.

North American Free Trade Agreement Withdrawal

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, repeatedly, over the past four years, this Conservative government, like their federal

Conservative counterparts, have made empty promises about jobs, jobs, jobs under the free trade deal, ignoring all evidence to the contrary, particularly in the food-processing industry. Last Friday, employees at the Nabisco plant got first-hand evidence of the results of the free trade deal.

Will this government now reverse their blind faith in trade deals and agree with the B.C. government, which announced on Friday that it is urging Canada to pull out of the North American free trade agreement negotiations?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, without accepting any of the preamble offered by the honourable member, I did have a discussion with Nabisco on Friday about the closing of their plant. While nobody is pleased to see the loss of 10 jobs in our community, clearly, there is no indication that this has anything to do with the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement.

In terms of our position on the North American free trade agreement, we have answered questions in this House on many occasions, put our position forward that we do not support a North American free trade agreement unless six very important conditions are met.

We continue to stand by that. We continue to work with the federal government to ensure that in fact those six conditions ultimately are met because without those six conditions, any agreement reached would not be in the best interests of Manitobans.

Child Guidance Clinic Funding Formula

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education.

On numerous occasions, we questioned in this House the government's new funding program and the effect it might have on the Child Guidance Clinic. The minister kept repeating that the funding program had no effect on the Child Guidance Clinic, et cetera, and that was not the reason why school divisions were pulling out.

Well, is the superintendent of the St. Vital School Division wrong in indicating in today's paper that this is one of the reasons they are pulling out of the Child Guidance Clinic, because of the government's funding model?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell the member again that the decision to remain a part of the Child Guidance Clinic does rest with the individual school divisions. However, this province, through its new educational funding formula, has in fact provided more money, made more money available for the kinds of services that are available. The ratio of clinician to student has been lowered from 1 to 900 to 1 to 700. In fact, the amount of the grant has been raised, and there has been more support to school divisions for the services provided by the Child Guidance Clinic.

Government Position

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, the minister knows full well the administrative costs have been cut back.

Will the province consider taking a position with respect to the Child Guidance Clinic to ensure that those much-needed services to children will continue to be offered to children in the city of Winnipeg?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, well, the member is wrong. The administrative costs, the administrative amount has not been cut back. What has happened is the grant has simply been globalized, and divisions may then spend money relating to clinician or to administration. It has not been tied to a specific function. The member is wrong.

Mr. Chomiak: Could the minister answer my question and indicate whether the province will take a position and try to act in a mediation service with divisions that are possibly pulling out and to ensure that whatever results will be the best for all the students in the city of Winnipeg?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, it is in the interests of the children of Manitoba, the students of Manitoba, that we have provided more funding, and we are particularly interested in making sure those services are delivered. But is the member now saying that he would prefer school divisions to not make those autonomous decisions, and in fact he would rather this government make those decisions for them?

Point of Order

Mr. Chomiak: Would the minister like me to answer that question?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member does not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

Mental Health Care System Reform Brandon, Manitoba

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

This year, in the early part of January, the minister released the package for mental health reform. It was promised at that time that within a few months we would have the real package in terms of mental health reform, specifically dealing with the Brandon area.

Can the minister tell us—it is the first week of June—why we have not seen the final print?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I missed the first part of my honourable friend's question, but I presume it was on the mental health reform process.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that we expect, towards the end of June, to receive the western region plan. That involves the Parkland Regional Mental Health Council, the Brandon-Westman Mental Health Council and the western participants of the Central Region to be presenting their plan, which we will hopefully have a response for later this year. [interjection] Now, I hear my honourable friend the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) saying, very convenient. Maybe my honourable friend should contact the chair of that board and ask why the report is not in, because my honourable friend is trying to cast some innuendo—

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

Nonpolitical Statements

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister responsible for Multiculturalism): Might I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [Agreed]

It is my pleasure to invite all members of the House to join with me in extending best wishes to the Filipino community in celebrating Philippine Heritage Week from June 6 to June 14. I know we all thoroughly enjoy celebrations of our cultural heritages, offering all Manitobans wonderful opportunities to share in activities of our ethnocultural communities, thus learning and understanding more about each other.

Mr. Speaker, we must remember these celebrations do not just happen. One of the most often overlooked factors in the success of the outstanding events and observances within the community are the volunteers who make them a reality. Volunteers provide the energy, commitment and dedication which keeps the multicultural mosaic of Manitoba active and exciting. I wish to commend the volunteers who give so much to keep the Filipino culture a strong participant within our multicultural framework.

Events such as Philippine Heritage Week help us to value the many dimensions of diversity and citizenship. They serve to foster understanding, mutual respect and harmony among ethnocultural communities, factors essential for the stability and strength of our province.

Please join me in extending best wishes to the Filipino community for a very successful Philippine Heritage Week. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): May I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [Agreed]

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the honourable minister's statement about the Philippine Heritage Week. It is very important that in a country like Canada where the majority of its population comes from other countries, we should remember that people should know where they came from and should remember that, because those people who forget where they came from will have no idea where they are going.

In a multicultural society like Canada, these various immigrant groups should be able to learn how to live together through mutual understanding and mutual acknowledgment of one another's differences. To be different does not mean that one has to be inferior. Everybody has equal rights and equal opportunities, only that they are different. They may have different cultures, different ways of belief, different value systems, yet they are all valid values. What we can do is to pick up all the good ones and discard the bad ones. Then we will come with a consolidated system which will be constantly evolving as we live through our life in our modern society.

The Philippine community is very grateful for being in Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (1420)

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for Inkster have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [Agreed]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to stand up and to give my accolades and compliments to the organizing individuals of the Philippine Heritage Week. I know I have had numerous opportunities to attend a number of different functions both in the past regarding the Philippine Heritage Week and the numerous events that actually occur during the year. It is definitely one of the more active ethnic groups where we see invitations coming on a regular ongoing basis. One of the things I have felt is the warmth and hospitality that has always been there for me from the Filipino community.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of events throughout the week. It formally got started yesterday at the flag-raising ceremony. There are other events such as the Independence Ball which is June 12. They have the picnic. The Filipino seniors groups are having organizations—there is literally a number of different organizations that are sponsoring events everyday through the week in recognition of the 94th proclamation of the Philippine Independence.

So I encourage all of the colleagues inside this Chamber to take a look in terms of what is going to be coming up in the next week, and if they have a chance, to go out and see what wonderful things are being done in the Filipino community.

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, may I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [Agreed]

I would also like to join the minister and the member for Inkster for Philippine Heritage Week. Along with the other members of this House, I participated at Sunday morning's opening ceremony. As I have met this year personally, myself, with the Filipino and other groups in my area, since they are quite an important part of the constituency and also a very important part of the Winnipeg community, which is about 40,000 now, I think they are one of the strongest communities which is growing in number, as well as in many aspects of their lives. They are really contributing in a very major way in all aspects of life, and all of us are learning from them the many aspects of their cultural activities.

Mr. Speaker, I must say that I have enjoyed my association with them, and I would encourage that

all members come and participate in their Heritage Week, learn other cultures and part of the cultural programs and see what others have to offer in this particular area. Thank you.

* * *

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): May I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [Agreed]

Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer the congratulations of this side of the House to the Manitoba magazine, *Border Crossings*, which was named magazine of the year yet again at the 10th annual Western Magazine Awards in Vancouver. It deserves congratulations, I think, not just for its content but also for its design, for its layout, for the number of Manitobans who contribute to the magazine, and in fact for its longevity in a field where so many publications have had great difficulties.

It has been publishing since the fall of 1985, continuing an earlier magazine called *Arts Manitoba*, and in fact I believe on more than four occasions, it has won the magazine of the year in western Canada. Its readership is small. It is less than 20,000, but I think it is important for all members of the House to know that it is a very specialized magazine and one which has an international audience. It is not an audience which is just across the border, perhaps as the title suggests, but it is certainly read in Germany and, indeed, in France.

One of my constituents recently, in fact one of the artists in Wolseley, was surprised and delighted to receive a letter from one of the most important international art theorists who lives in France, who wrote to her about the work that he had seen in *Border Crossings*. A correspondence ensued from that.

It is an award in which I think we can all take pride because public support has been very important for the survival of this magazine. It has support from the Canada Council, from the Manitoba Arts Council, and from the Manitoba arts gaming fund commission. So our congratulations to the editors, Robert Enright and Meeka Walsh, and to the many Manitobans who have supported the journal with their articles, their reviews and their editorial advice over the years.

Committee Changes

Mr. Jack Reimer (Niakwa): I move, seconded by the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public

Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: The member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) for the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns); the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose) for the member for Surgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine). [Agreed]

* * *

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): May I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [Agreed]

It is my privilege to pay tribute today to the congregation of the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate. Since the congregation of Sisters Servants was founded in 1892, they are celebrating their centenary of their founding this year.

They began in western Ukraine, and four sisters missioned to Canada arrived in Edmonton in 1902. Since that time, the Sisters Servants have responded to the most urgent needs of their people. They conduct religious education at centres in Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Edmonton, and New Westminster; a coeducational day high school, Sacred Heart High School in Yorkton; an elementary and junior high school, Immaculate Heart of Mary in Winnipeg; Mary Immaculate Hospitals in Lunda and in Willingdon, Alberta; nursing homes in Winnipeg, Holy Family, and in Dauphin, Manitoba; a student residence in Saskatoon and a pilgrimage site and retreat centre, Mount Mary Immaculate, in Ancaster, Ontario.

The sisters sew church vestments in their Toronto and Winnipeg homes. They also provide domestic services at Holy Spirit Seminary in Ottawa and in apocryphal residences. It is appropriate that they were recognized last week by the Osvita Foundation Incorporated as their 1992 foundation honourees. The selection by Osvita Foundation of the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate continues the tradition of honouring Ukrainian Canadians who have made significant contributions to the community as the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate have done in the city of Winnipeg and the province of Manitoba, as well as across Canada.

* (1430)

May the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate be blessed with many more years of service, especially to children, the elderly and the sick.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Darren Praznik (Deputy Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Highways and

Transportation (Mr. Driedger), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair, and the House resolve itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Motion agreed to, and the House resolved itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty with the honourable member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) in the Chair for the Department of Urban Affairs, and Status of Women; and the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) in the Chair for the Civil Service Commission, and the Department of Housing.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

* (1440)

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

This afternoon, this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255 will be considering the Estimates of Civil Service Commission. Does the honourable Minister of Labour have an opening statement?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister responsible for and charged with the administration of The Civil Service Act): Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we will just let the critics get seated.

In introducing the 1992-93 budget Estimates for the Civil Service Commission, I draw attention to the Supplementary Estimates Information which has been provided and contains a good deal of background, organizational program and financial information designed to assist the members with the Estimates review now before us.

As was the case last year, the Estimates for the Civil Service Commission are tabled in two parts: one containing information relative to the operation of the Civil Service Commission; and the second dealing with the employment benefits and other payments which were made by the government as the employer and largely determined by statute or collective agreement. Expenditures under the heading Civil Service represent the discretionary salary and operating expenditures related to the operation of the Department of the Civil Service Commission.

While I would like to keep my remarks brief, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, there is one area of activity I

would like to highlight in introducing these Estimates. The 1992-93 Estimates for the Civil Service Commission again recognize a requirement to provide central co-ordination and support to deal with the staffing and work force adjustment issues related to the 1992-93 budget.

As the members opposite will recall, the government announced in January that there could be up to 300 positions in government eliminated as a result of the 1992-93 budget Estimates. In order to minimize or eliminate the need for layoffs, the government approved a voluntary separation incentive program which provided an 18-week incentive payment for employees who wish to voluntarily resign or retire from their positions of employment. The program was announced January 24, 1992, after consultation with the employer organizations involved and with their concurrence on the process and also with a closing date for applications of February 28, 1992.

Early announcement of the VISIP program in advance of formal layoff notification, allowed the creation of redeployment opportunities for employees who would have otherwise been impacted by budget decisions. In addition, ongoing consultation has occurred with employer representatives through the joint union-management work force adjustment committee set up as required under The Employment Standards Act. Over 300 applications were received for the voluntary severance incentive program and the process of matching volunteers to employees potentially impacted by the budget decisions was very successful. There were 171 matches and business cases accepted under the program. From a potential reduction of approximately 300 positions—of which approximately 100 were vacant—only 39 actual layoff notices were required to be sent out as of April 3, 1992. Of these, only 10 employees had not been offered an alternative job opportunity. The other 29 had been offered an alternative job opportunity which they did not accept.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, realizing the speed at which Estimates are being dealt with, I intend to keep my introductory remarks very brief and now welcome questions from the committee members on the Estimates material now before us.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We thank the honourable Minister of Labour for those comments. Does the critic from the official opposition party, the

honourable member for Thompson, have an opening statement?

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Yes, indeed, Mr. Deputy Chairperson.

I appreciate the opportunity to begin the Estimates of the Civil Service Commission. There will be a number of issues I will be raising. I would also like to indicate, since we had passed through on the Department of Labour last week—and this does relate the Civil Service Commission as well—that I will be raising the issue of the Pay Equity branch, the reduction in staffing of the Pay Equity Branch. I did not raise it at the last sitting in the department, but we will be raising it, if time permits, under this department, the Civil Service Commission, or most likely under the Status of Women, because we believe it relates to both those areas. So I just wanted to indicate that while we did not get into detailed discussion line by line previously, we will be raising it either under these Estimates or the upcoming Estimates.

I want to indicate to the committee that we have a number of concerns in this particular area. One of course is indeed in regard to staffing levels within government, the reductions that took place last year, reductions that have taken place this year and indeed the implementation of some of the decisions of the government in terms of eliminating positions. We will not be dealing specifically with the question of decentralization in the context of the specific connotation of the decentralization announcement made a number of years ago by the current Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey).

However, we will be asking for information on staffing levels within government, both overall and also by region, because I think that is indicative of what has happened in terms of decentralization. We will be asking questions on those areas. We will also be asking questions as regards to the hiring policies of this government, in particular, questions related to the probation of the current Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), which was continued with his transfer to the Department of Rural Development from Department of Education, arising out of concerns that had been expressed and investigated in terms of hiring procedures.

* (1450)

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we would like in this committee to receive some answers from the minister, and we would hope that the minister would be forthcoming in terms of what the nature was

respecting all confidentiality as personnel, what the natures were in terms of the accusations that were made, and why indeed the minister continued to be on probation in the new department, and indeed what the status of that minister is, and further what the status of other ministers are, whether there have been further investigations involving the Civil Service Commission in hiring on behalf of this government.

We will be asking further questions in regard to the hiring of this government, particularly in the area of affirmative action and in particular also in terms of pay equity as in the implementation within the Civil Service. We believe that it is important to continue to raise these concerns in this committee because it is one opportunity we have to look at the overall picture within government, and that indeed is the role of the Civil Service Commission that provides a wide variety of services to government by the Civil Service. We look forward to questions in those areas.

Just one brief comment, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, before beginning the questions, and I know the Liberal critic may have some opening remarks as well. I would indicate again the concern I have expressed about the situation in the Civil Service. In talking to many civil servants, I can indicate to this committee there continues to be a very low level of morale arising out of the layoffs that have taken place. While there were fewer layoffs this year, while fewer people were directly affected by layoffs while others took the so-called voluntary program of separation—I say “voluntary” because in many cases people felt they did not have much of a choice. It is not to take away from whether that is better or worse than being laid off. Obviously, to the minds of the people involved, it was a better choice, but we are concerned about that and the cumulative impact of the deteriorating labour relations that took place because of Bill 70.

While I recognize there has since been a negotiated agreement with the Civil Service, I can indicate there is continuing bitterness. It has not quite manifested itself in the way that it has in New Brunswick. Manitoba is different. The Manitoba Civil Service is different. The MGEA is different.

Indeed I would indicate to the minister, though, that despite the fact there have not been strikes, per se, obviously civil servants have been negotiating another contract, there is a continuing low level of morale in the Civil Service resulting out of the

policies of this government, both in terms of layoffs and in terms of Bill 70 last year. I can indicate to the minister and to this government that I would anticipate that will continue for quite some time, because this government has a long way to go to recover the trust and the kind of working relationship that all governments need with the Civil Service. It has a long way to go, Mr. Deputy Chairperson.

With those few comments, I look forward to asking some of these and other questions of the minister.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I thank the honourable member for Thompson for those comments.

Does the critic for the second opposition party the honourable member for Inkster have any opening statements?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I had made some opening remarks regarding the Civil Service when I addressed the minister regarding the Department of Labour and did want to suggest that we proceed along with the Civil Service in the same fashion that we did with the Department of Labour, if the minister has no objection to doing it that way.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I thank the honourable member for Inkster for those statements.

At this time I would ask the minister's staff to come forward and the minister could introduce them.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it is my pleasure to introduce Civil Service Commissioner Mr. Paul Hart, who is seated with me at the table, as well as, Mr. Terry Edgeworth, assistant deputy minister for Human Resource Management, Mr. Gerry Irving who is the assistant deputy minister of Labour Relations and Mr. Bob Pollock, secretary to the Civil Service Commission Board.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I thank the honourable minister.

As the committee is aware, when we were dealing with the Estimates of Labour we were dealing as a whole. Is it the will of the committee then to deal with the Civil Service Estimates as a whole, the same as the past Estimates were? Is it agreed?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I understand from discussions between House leaders and with the critics that the intention is to complete the Estimates today. If that is the intention and the reason for allowing moving off the line by line to general discussion, I have no objection to it.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we are in agreement.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Then we are in agreement.

By leave, the committee will deal with the Estimates on a whole.

Mr. Praznik: It was just pointed out to me by the Civil Service Commission, I gather it is also the intention to deal with the Employee Benefits and Other Payments as well in this same package.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Then it is agreed, we will deal with both on a whole.

Mr. Ashton: I had indicated a number of the areas of questioning that I would like to ask.

First of all, I would like to ask if the minister could provide information on the current number of civil servants overall in the province and also any information, in comparison to the last number of years, showing the impact of the layoffs.

Further to that, can the minister give a regional breakdown? I am particularly interested in a breakdown that compares the current number of civil servants in the city of Winnipeg compared to outside of the city. If the minister could provide a breakdown between different regions in the province, that would be appreciated.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, if staff can accommodate with photocopying, I would like to table the Comparative Employment For All Employees by department, with a March 1990, March 1991, March 1992 analysis.

With respect to the regional information—if I just may have a moment, Mr. Deputy Chairperson—I am advised that the regional breakdown of employees, an accurate regional breakdown of employees, is not normally maintained by the department. I do not have that specific information for the member.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, if this department does not have that information, who does? I mean, this government has implemented a so-called decentralization strategy. Presumably that was based on information that was available previously. Presumably there was monitoring as to the impact of the decentralization program. Is there no information, approximate, on a regional basis? As I said, I would prefer regions such as Westman, Eastman, Norman, et cetera. Whatever information the minister could provide would be appreciated.

Mr. Praznik: We are able to provide a breakdown on the basis of Winnipeg versus non-Winnipeg. As I am sure the member can appreciate, one of the difficulties in compiling that information by Eastman, Westman, Norman, those traditional groupings, is that various departments operate in different ways with different regions. The overlays do not correspond specifically with those types of regional breakdowns. It is very difficult to compile that information because of the way in which each department structures their own operation and their own breakdown of their operation.

I just say to the member, it is not because we do not appreciate that issue, it is just simply that each department operates differently. The most accurate that we maintain is the breakdown of Winnipeg versus non-Winnipeg, and if you provide me with a moment, I will have that breakdown for him.

I will have to undertake to provide the member with that information; my staff advise me that they do not have that particular breakdown with them.

Mr. Ashton: I would appreciate the detailed information. I would like to ask the minister, though, what the net impact has been, looking at a five-year time frame in terms of employment outside of the city of Winnipeg both prior to the decentralization program and afterwards. I raise that concern because, even looking at the departmental breakdown, it confirms what we have said previously.

For example, the Department of Natural Resources which involves a considerable amount of employment outside of the city of Winnipeg has been decreased from 1,489 in 1990 down to 1,177. There are other departments that have been reduced in terms of employment. In reading through them, they range across the departments but a number of them once again. Even the Department of Rural Development, for example, has decreased from 337 to 300 since March of 1990.

I was wondering if the minister could indicate the general trend and also undertake to provide that information. It would be useful, actually, if he could provide it this afternoon, if that is possible.

* (1500)

Mr. Praznik: Certainly we will undertake to provide as detailed information as we can to the member, but I can tell him now the general trend in terms of the rural-urban, Winnipeg and non-Winnipeg

breakdown is for a larger percentage of our public service to be working outside of the city of Winnipeg than has been the case in past years. So it has been an increase in our percentage of work force outside the city of Winnipeg.

Mr. Ashton: What are the numbers? Obviously if you have changed the base, percentages will change. The question I am asking is: What is the net impact of decentralization comparing before and after? Are there significantly more jobs in rural communities, northern communities? Are there somewhat more jobs? Are there the same number of jobs, or has there been a net decrease? What has the net effect been, Mr. Deputy Chairperson?

I raise that because I know, in the areas where we have been able to compile information, a number of areas of this province have shown a net decrease in jobs. What essentially has happened is that the government has taken one step forward and two steps back in terms of decentralization, by adding jobs into rural communities on the one hand and then cutting them out in the budget exercise and then some on the other. I am trying to get some indication as to exact numbers, Mr. Deputy Chairperson.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, one of the cautions I would give to anyone with this information is obviously many decisions take place within departments and moving staff from office to office to make positions from office to office to fill particular needs at a given time goes on.

The numbers specifically have a fluidity to them that makes it difficult, I think, for anyone reading them, to pin down some specifics. I know the accusations or the commentary that the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) and some of his colleagues have made in the House about specific locations, at any given time, they may or may not have validity, but there is a fluidity to the whole process that obviously means a snapshot at any given time may not be accurate over the long haul.

I can tell him my staff have found some numbers that may be of interest, and we talked about those percentages about four years ago. The approximate breakdown between employees in the city of Winnipeg versus the remainder of the province was approximately 55 percent. Again, it varies from time to time, so these are approximate numbers. Approximately 55 percent of the provincial Civil Service was based in the city of

Winnipeg, while 45 percent was based outside of the city of Winnipeg.

That currently has changed to approximately 51 percent in the city of Winnipeg and to 49 percent outside, the remainder of the province. I think if the member were to look over about a 10-year period the number of people employed by the public service, he would find over that period we had more people actually employed in rural Manitoba than we did during most of the decade.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister still has not answered my question. I am asking for numbers. I point out to the minister that this government made a great ado about this particular initiative. They have spent somewhere, and the minister in charge of decentralization can add more information if he wishes, but there was a budget of upwards of \$10 million in terms of office space, additional accommodation, et cetera.

I am just asking, and I am not asking compared to 10 years ago, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am asking before decentralization, during decentralization, and now presumably after decentralization to the extent to which we have completed the process, although I understand it is not totally complete.

Mr. Praznik: I will certainly undertake to provide the member for Thompson the most accurate information that the commission can produce. But I say this to him that there is a fluidity in the numbers that I am not able to provide him with those specifics today. I can tell him that the trends have been generally positive. I am sure there are always some exceptions to those trends from place to place, but, by and large, our numbers have been good. We see a larger presence of the provincial Civil Service in rural Manitoba than we have had in terms of, over a period of time, real numbers, as well as percentages.

Mr. Ashton: I will make it very clear to the minister that we can talk about the 1980s if he wishes, if he wants to talk about the last 20 years if he wishes. I mean, the fact is there were significant efforts made in terms of decentralization.

An Honourable Member: When?

Mr. Ashton: Well, indeed, for the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), under the Schreyer and Pawley governments, and in fact, 1978, the government of which he was a member hatched which departments?—Northern Affairs, Natural Resources,

and Highways, once again, heavy employers in the rural northern communities. [interjection]

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the Minister of Health had more than enough time to obstruct this committee in its pursuit of information when he was in his own Estimates. I would appreciate if he would allow those of us who are asking for information in this committee, which is Civil Service, the opportunity to do so, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. The bottom line is, as I said, we are interested in the numbers before the decentralization program, immediately before. We are interested in what has happened under decentralization, and we are interested in what has happened up to this point in time where decentralization, if not totally complete—I understand there are still some departments being moved and some workers still being moved—it is a continuing process, but I am trying to get some analysis.

Surely, this government, if it is concerned about decentralization, has to be looking at the numbers of employees outside the city of Winnipeg, the number of employees in each particular region, because the whole logic of decentralization is to create additional employment in northern and rural communities rather than having that employment based in Winnipeg. It is based on the concept that northern and rural communities are facing difficult times. They are subject to single industries in the case of northern communities. They are subject to the situation in terms of agriculture, in terms of the rural communities, Mr. Deputy Chairperson.

It is simply not good enough to have a shell game where some jobs are added, some jobs are eliminated or a shell game whereby jobs are shifted from one region to another in the name of decentralization. I know that has been expressed by people. So if the government can identify and did identify where jobs were going to go under decentralization, what I would ask the minister to do—I think it is a legitimate request—is to provide a list over the last five years. This is going back not any great length of time, but going back to the last five years, comparing the levels of employment, and particularly prior to decentralization and after it, in communities. If the minister has concern about regions, let us boil it down to something that surely can be accumulated.

Will the minister provide information, if not now, in a relatively short period of time, by community

historically comparing before decentralization and after?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I will undertake to provide the information that we are able or have available to us. My staff inform me that up until the time of the decentralization initiative, keeping the kind of breakdown, the specific breakdown other than the general kind of numbers that I have provided already, were not kept by the Civil Service Commission. The reason why, there was no purpose to do it, because the government of the day did not have an interest in a decentralization initiative. So the numbers were not kept. So we do not have the historical base as specifically as the member for Thompson would request.

That, obviously, has changed since the decentralization initiative was taken, so that we can keep track of those numbers. It was not done in the past. We also have to make sure we are comparing apples to apples, whether or not students are included in those numbers or not included in those numbers, terms, a host of issues. We are now trying to compile that information. As we do, I have undertaken to provide it to the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton). I point out to him that he will have an opportunity to deal specifically with decentralization on the Estimates. Hopefully, we will have some of those numbers to him by that time if we are able to put them together.

*(1510)

I say this to the member for Thompson as well when he talks about rural communities and the need for those positions, I remind him again of the fluidity of the process. In my own Department of Labour, we have an individual who was decentralized, I believe, to Neepawa, had a very sick child in his family. We were able to keep that person in Winnipeg. They in fact wanted to go to Neepawa once they found out how things were going to turn out with their child. Very regrettably, the child passed away this winter. That is one position that is likely then to move at an appropriate time to Neepawa with the agreement of the individual.

So there was a lot of accommodation, some for personal reasons, some for departmental reasons. So there is a fluidity to the process that a snapshot at any one time is not necessarily going to give the member an accurate picture.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister gave me snapshots of whatever particular time he

wants, and for every one of those cases that works one way there is one that works the other. The bottom line is—and if the minister is concerned about comparing apples and oranges, it could be done in a common denominator. We do that with all the Estimates analysis of staff, SYs are the common denominator in terms of the Civil Service. If the minister wants to break down full time, if he wants to give it in the form of SYs, if he wants to break out seasonal, if the minister wants to provide information in terms of summer employment, the greater the detail, the more accurate can be our assessment of the information.

Ali I am asking for is detailed information. I do not believe it should be impossible to accumulate it by community since, as the minister himself has said, the decentralization process has focused on individual communities, and that avoids the question of overlapping regions. The reason I had asked originally for regions was because I thought that information might more readily be available, but if there is a problem with definition by regions, I would suggest we go by community, by SY, by full, part time, seasonal. Whatever information the minister could provide would be greatly appreciated.

While I am asking for information, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would also like to ask the minister for information on the current status in terms of affirmative action, particularly in light of the past year's experience, and in particular, if he could provide information in terms of target groups, the situation last year, the situation this year and also how hiring is proceeding in comparison to the target hiring figures in terms of each particular target group.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, my apologies for the bit of a delay here, but I wanted to make sure I provided the most detailed information possible. I would like to table for the benefit of my critics the Manitoba Civil Service Comparative Profile Affirmative Action Target Groups, which members may find very interesting, which I think demonstrate, in all but one category where I think we dropped from 4.71 to 4.7 percent, increases in the percentage of employment in the work force.

I am also pleased to indicate that despite the competitive process with the fewer positions being available with the voluntary incentive program and the matching process, et cetera, in 1991-92, I believe we had approximately 530 competitions compared to about 880 in 1989-90, and that

representation in all groups was not negatively impacted; in fact, in effect has been showing a modest increase in those competitions. As well, we have seen a significant increase in appointments, promotions, through the internal process, where people in those target groups are being more successful in internal competitions. I understand that has increased from 9.46 percent in 1991 to 12.2 percent in 1992.

So the trend is certainly in the right way, and we are moving forward. I know all honourable members of this House would like to see this continue as we move toward the targets that we have all set for government.

Mr. Ashton: I have just received the information. It shows some progress in terms of aboriginal and disabled, which is certainly positive, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, but a decrease in employment of visible minorities by 21. That is overall employment.

Can the minister indicate why—and recognizing again that there has been overall shrinkage; that would explain why there has been only a relatively small percentage decrease—there has been a decrease in terms of visible minority employment with the government?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, certainly a very valid and a good question in this particular area and one that we have spent some time on within the commission. Certainly my office has been involved in this process. One particular bit of information that I think may reflect some of that change—first of all, I have to preface my comments to the member that in the work force reduction process over the last two years, we have obviously had to live with the collective agreement and the bumping provisions of that collective agreement. So we were not able, and I am sure the member would agree with that, to go around our collective agreement with respect to specific individuals.

I just want to put that on the table, and I am sure all of us who are supporters of the free collective bargaining process and the right to organize having collective agreements appreciate that concern. In terms of new positions that have been available, the vast majority or the largest percentage have been in rural areas. If you look at the visible minority community in Manitoba, excluding aboriginal, which is in its own category, the bulk of that community is located in the city of Winnipeg.

The new opportunities that have been available have primarily been in rural areas, and that has made a little bit of those positions not as attractive in recruiting people from the visible minority community because their community and their sense of home is here in Winnipeg. That may be part of the reason, something we suspect.

I should tell the member as well that we have done some work, or the commission has done a fair bit of work, on the aboriginal side in working with an advisory structure to be recruiting and working with people for internal promotion, et cetera, in the aboriginal community. We are just in the process of looking at how we do that in the visible minority community. We have had success in the aboriginal area from these numbers, partly, I think, because of the number of positions available in rural Manitoba. That may work the converse. We certainly want to get into that same advisory, promotional-type activity in terms of the visible minority community.

Mr. Ashton: I am concerned, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, because what is happening in the other target groups in terms of aboriginal disabled in particular is what should happen, given that the whole concept of affirmative action is to over time achieve the target group representation, and it is based on reflecting that fact in the hiring process. So in any given year, there should be a higher percentage of people higher than the target group, and obviously in the case of visible minorities, this is not happening. There has been an overall decrease in terms of the number of jobs.

In fact, I would like to ask the minister what the current targets are so that we could put it in perspective in terms of aboriginal disabled, visible minority employment, assuming that female-male would be the population ratio of 52 to 48.

* (1520)

Mr. Praznik: It is my understanding that the target percentages for aboriginal are 10 percent; disabled, 7 percent; and visible minority, 6 percent, so we obviously have a fair way to go in all of these areas. Part of it, of course, is governed by the number of job opportunities that become available, and as I know members opposite are fully aware, those have been reduced somewhat in the last two years so that has slowed down the process.

The concern is appreciated; we have to live with the collective agreement in terms of hiring practice and process and the bumping provisions when you

have a work force adjustment period. Having said that, I think we still moved ahead. The targets are there. We are inching towards them and moving towards them. I hope that as more opportunities become available in the public service over the years, we move at a faster pace towards those targets.

Mr. Ashton: I asked the minister for the number of hirings in the past fiscal year, the number of people hired in each target group of those hirings. What percentage of the hirings were of each target group?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, staff are trying to track down the information that the member requests. I will undertake to provide that to him, if that is fine, on those numbers. I would like him to have that data, including the number of people who applied. I flag the difficulty with him, of course, that we have had an unusually large number of applications or postings in rural Manitoba, and that has changed somewhat the usual numbers because of that balance.

Mr. Ashton: I appreciate whatever rationalizations the minister is trying to come up with, but I would like the information first before we get into the rationalization stage. My concern is that based on the figures here, and doing some quick extrapolations, it seems that there has been a decline commensurate with the overall decline of employment in terms of visible minority. The percentage is relatively the same. It means what has happened is there have been layoffs and cutbacks of positions, but on the other hand, very little pickup in terms of employment on the visible minority side.

What I want to really put to the minister, because from what I can see, the figures that he will produce will probably indicate that, that there has not been the real push in terms of the hiring process to correct the imbalance, that something needs to be done in this area. It is not the first time I have raised this, by the way, in committee, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. I have raised it continuously throughout the last period of time, and I was very vocal when we were in government, the need for recognition of visible minorities in terms of hiring.

There have been numerous studies that have shown that visible minorities face particular discrimination. There was one in Toronto that showed that if you are from a visible minority, you are more likely not to get a job than someone who is not, to the point where job opportunities are

somewhat in the neighbourhood of 50 percent. I would note in Ontario, they are currently looking at some significant employment measures, particularly in the visible minority youth.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, whether or not the jobs are in rural Manitoba or not, there are more than enough people qualified for this type of employment. In fact, you will find virtually every type of skill available in the various visible minority communities. What we are dealing with is systemic discrimination, and we need to break it by making progress in terms of hiring. Obviously, we have had a year with no progress. In fact, the overall employment in terms of visible minorities is down from 1990.

So what has happened is we basically plateaued in 1990, and visible minorities appear from this to have taken a setback because of the government's reduction in the number of employees in the Civil Service. I say that in the sense that it is not so much that the percentage is slightly down—I am not going to make a big deal out of 2.71 percent or 2.70 percent—what I am concerned about is the overall reduction in numbers, 514 in comparison to 493, and also the trend line. If you look at the trend line following the recognition of the need for affirmative action for visible minorities, in every year, employment, until about 1990, was going up by 40, 45. We should be at the position if that trend had continued from 1990, for example, where at the end of 1992, we would have 580, 590, instead of 490 visible minority Manitobans employed in the Civil Service.

That is the way affirmative action works, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, and particularly this model works. It works on hiring. It works on that trend line eventually bringing it into equilibrium, if you like, and it still provides job opportunities for all Manitobans. In this particular case, the minister's figures will confirm, I am sure, that many individuals who are not part of an affirmative action target group continue to receive employment.

But I am concerned, and I want to ask the minister if he can undertake perhaps to meet with the Minister responsible for Multiculturalism (Mrs. Mitchelson), because multiculturalism is more than culture and heritage. It is about economics; it is about job opportunities; it is about recognition of the qualifications of individuals from other countries, many of whom have professional skills that are not recognized in this country. It is about giving people

a fair chance, whether they have immigrated to this country or whether they have been in this country for generations.

It is appropriate, in a way, that we are discussing this on a day that The Manitoba Multiculturalism Act was introduced in the Legislature, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. I am wondering if the minister will be willing to meet with the Minister responsible for Multiculturalism to ensure that we have a real multicultural policy that looks at the economic bottom line, and surely must include an analysis of why the Affirmative Action program is not working in this particular area.

I have said before, I am pleased to see the progress in terms of the disabled. I am pleased to see the progress in terms of aboriginal Manitobans. I am not sure, by the way, why the Department of Natural Resources, according to these figures, has included inactive staff in calculation of departmental employees. We are not interested in affirmative action for laid-off employees. We are interested in affirmative action people to have jobs.

I would ask the minister whether he will meet with the minister of Multiculturalism to deal with this. I am not trying to blow it out of proportion, but I think the minister has to recognize that this is a setback this year in that area. While there has been progress in two other areas, there has been a significant setback in terms of visible minority employment.

Mr. Praznik: Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, just for the information of the member for Thompson, the staff who are listed in "inactive" are those who would be on seasonal layoffs, so they would still be coming back to their position—just so the member is aware.

I have to tell the member for Thompson I have really enjoyed his remarks on this particular matter. I think they are most apt when we are talking about the opportunities related to people who often could be discriminated against, who do not have a fair opportunity. In fact, I am going to take his remarks out of Hansard, and I am going to send them to Mr. Olfert at the Manitoba Government Employees' Association.

* (1530)

I have to tell the member that one of the stumbling blocks in developing a good Affirmative Action program has been the MGEA. I know I had a meeting with them recently—[interjection] No, I say to the member, the member winces, but I say to the

member, in a meeting I held with them, they suggested that the only affirmative action positions that be hired be entry level—entry-level positions—that we not look at hiring people from outside of the Civil Service into anything other than entry-level positions.

Now, if you believe very strongly in affirmative action, if you believe very strongly in accepting outside credentials, if you believe very strongly in giving people opportunities in this province, you have to ensure that those opportunities are provided at all levels within the Civil Service.

I appreciate fully that there is a balance to maintain between internal promotion and bringing new people into the Civil Service. I say to him—not to be unfair to the MGEA, they put forward that position—we are involved in some discussions which I think are very positive. I think the MGEA has indicated to me that they are very interested in working with us, but there is a fundamental difference of opinion, and one perhaps philosophical, on where you bring people into the Civil Service.

That is something that has been there in the MGEA and part of the labour movement for some time. I respect that. There are some valid reasons behind that, but also, one has to maintain those balances. I am very pleased to hear the remarks of the member for Thompson.

I can tell him, as well, that on the aboriginal side, in terms of our aboriginal numbers, we developed some very unique processes that have been successful. We are now working toward transferring that same process over into the area of visible minorities and people with disabilities. We recognize to some degree that we need some more momentum in that area. I certainly will acknowledge that. We hope, within a very short time, to be able to move that forward, to have that momentum. His concern is certainly a very valid one, and we are moving to meet that.

I would also like to point out to the member for Thompson that the target numbers which were set some years ago in the mid-'80s, I understand, were targets that were meant for a 20-year period, and in terms of aboriginal, we are slightly ahead of our target area. I certainly acknowledge we are just slightly behind our target in the area of visible minorities. That is why we need the effort, which I would acknowledge, to bring us up in that particular area. I hope that when I am able to report to this

committee next year, if that be the case, that we will have seen an improvement in that area. So I respect his comments and his concern, and it is certainly an area that we want to address in the very, very near future.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the MGEA could speak for itself and this government can speak for itself as well. The bottom line is the failure in this particular case, the most significant failure in terms of affirmative action this year in terms of visible minorities, has been in terms of hiring. The MGEA has nothing to do with the hiring process. It is the Civil Service Commission and the departments.

An Honourable Member: What?

Mr. Ashton: Well, the day that the minister allows the MGEA to appoint individuals to hire in the Civil Service, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I think he may be able to co-opt others into accepting responsibility for what is happening here.

All I had asked the question for was to identify it as a concern, to ask the minister to look at it and look at it in terms of the hiring. The minister should know that the MGEA was involved with the whole development of affirmative action policy and program in the beginning. The labour movement has been a full supporter of affirmative action.

If the minister wants to discuss that with the MGEA or representatives thereof, that is certainly his prerogative. If he has disagreements, obviously, as the Minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission, those disagreements will be aired. My concern was within the area that is within the parameters of the government in terms of overall policy, which is in terms of positions and hiring of positions, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, which takes me into another area because I do indeed want to ask some questions about hiring.

I ask the minister if he can update this committee as to the current status of the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), the former Minister of Education, particularly in relation to the probation, the warning that was issued to others related to the minister essentially being on probation, having his hiring authority suspended which was transferred to the other department. Is the Minister of Rural Development off probation yet, Mr. Deputy Chairperson?

Mr. Praznik: Just before we get onto the new matter, I would like to point out to the member for Thompson—which I would hope given his reference

to his steelworker days that he fully appreciates—when you have a collective agreement that it does have an impact on the hiring process, particularly when you are talking about other-than-entry-level positions. It is the intention of this government to work with the MGEA on this process. As I have said, we have had discussions to date, because if we do not have co-operation—and remember the MGEA is coming from a position that is only for hiring at entry level positions, which I did not think serves those minority communities well. We want to work out an arrangement that they are comfortable with, respecting everyone's needs and concerns, because if it is not the case, the process can be terribly bogged down with grievances every time someone is hired to a nonentry level position on the basis of affirmative action.

So I say to the member for Thompson, it is a very important issue, and we do try to work within that collective agreement. There is a difference of opinion, and we are trying to bridge that and bring people together.

With respect to the comments regarding the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), I say to the member for Thompson that the responsibility for all hiring ultimately rests with the Civil Service Commission. The commission, from time to time, delegates that authority to various departments. They run a regular audit process of hirings to correct any errors, for whatever reason. In that process, they correct them when they find them. The Department of Rural Development, as I understand it, is not currently delegated that authority. It was not delegated that authority prior to Mr. Derkach becoming minister, because at the current time they do not have a personnel officer. So the hiring within that department, before Mr. Derkach became minister and currently, is the responsibility of the commission. If I may just add, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the delegation of that authority is between the commission and the deputy minister responsible for that particular department.

Mr. Ashton: That is interesting, Mr. Deputy Chairperson.

I want to ask the minister if he can perhaps then finally indicate to members of the Legislature, on what basis—I am not asking for specific names—was the action taken against the former Minister of Education in terms of the suspension of the hiring authority? How many hirings were involved, Mr. Deputy Chairperson? I am once again not asking

for names, I am asking for what exactly the minister had done to receive the response that he did from the Civil Service Commission.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, with respect to that removal of delegation, the Civil Service Commission, in the course of their work felt it was best to remove that authority and work out a plan to solve some of the problems within the department. They, in fact, did that and I would point out that regular audits and reviews of departments are not unusual matters. The Department of Education had a similar removal of their delegation in, I believe it was, June of 1984 when a former colleague of the member was minister and Mr. Ron Duhamel was the deputy minister.

The point I make is not to bring any ill repute on any members of this Legislature. There are certain rules and requirements that a department must follow. From time to time those go amiss for whatever reason, some in error, not looking at the redeployment list, for example. The Civil Service Commission who is ultimately responsible for hirings has within its power to remove that delegation or make appropriate adjustments. It happens from time to time.

Mr. Ashton: Once again we are not getting to the bottom of what happened. We know of two incidences which received some public attention involving the minister's comments involving one position. It is interesting in that case that the individual claimed, and it is probably accurate, that they would have received the job anyway, and no one is suggesting that in that particular case the result was improper, although the interference of the minister certainly was.

There were allegations made in terms of hiring for a school transportation position that an individual did not have the qualifications required for the position. Were there other positions involved? Did the Civil Service Commission investigate other positions other than these two that we know have come to public attention? If not, why not, given the concern that was expressed?

Mr. Praznik: Again, just for the edification of members of the committee, the responsibility for hiring the delegation is made to the deputy minister, not to the minister, so the withdrawal of authority to that department was to the deputy minister, not to the minister.

I think it is so very important, as I said at that time and I repeat again today, how important the process is. The commission has that authority, and there are numerous reasons why errors may be made in the hiring process. The commission, when it delegates that authority to a deputy minister, has to make sure certain things are in place to their satisfaction because ultimately the commission has that responsibility. They audit, from time to time, the hirings within every department to ensure that there is compliance with the strict rules and procedures of the commission.

* (1540)

If they have problems—and a common problem, I do not know how common but from time to time happens, is not checking redeployment lists to ensure if someone is available. If those happen and the commission feels, in the course of their work that they have some concern about the delegation, they have the power because they have the responsibility to take corrective measures on individual competitions, and if they feel it important, for whatever reason, to remove the delegation.

I, as minister, do not interfere in any way in that process, nor would I think members of this committee would want me to interfere in that process. They handle that matter in a routine and ongoing way, and I think they have done a commendable job of it over the years because they ensure ultimately that there is as much fairness as possible in the hiring process. They handled the matter. They take corrective steps when they find errors, for whatever reason, and I think Manitobans generally are well served by that process.

Mr. Ashton: The minister was involved in this particular matter. The minister was transferred. There was a memo issued indicating essentially that he was on probation. That is a polite way of putting it. It was given to members of the press, the announcement of the cabinet shuffle. The concerns involved the minister, not the deputy minister. So the minister ought not read the technicalities of the hiring process and read into it more than he should.

What we are asking from the minister is very clear. We know of a couple of incidences. We would like to know—and this is not on our behalf strictly as individual members of the Legislature—on behalf of the many people who applied for positions in that department during the period on which, obviously, something happened. We know of a couple of

cases where improprieties took place, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. We want to know what happened with the other hirings and so do the people who were applying for those positions and at stake is the very type of concern about the Civil Service hiring process the minister is talking about.

The minister, to my mind, has to be the watchdog, if you like, in terms of hiring with this government. We realize it is difficult. I know some probably feel that the biggest mistake the former Minister of Education made was getting caught. When I say getting caught, I am not suggesting anything other than interfering in the hiring process, but that in itself is significant, because we do have a Civil Service hiring process.

I want to ask the minister, for the public record, if he can indicate whether—pardon me, there was obviously some sort of investigation. What investigation took place? How many positions were involved? What type of allegations were investigated?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would like to make a comment on a point that the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) has raised with respect to responsibility. I am a great believer that what is the strength of our system is the fact that the Civil Service Commission operates as it does. I, as minister, have responsibility for the act. The operation of that act is vested in the commissioner. One may argue that it is in fact a fine line, but I think it is an important one, because the worst thing that I think we could do as members of this Assembly is to place the ultimate responsibility on making those decisions when it comes to politicians is to place it on a politician.

The Civil Service commissioner has that responsibility within their office. They handle matters internally to their operation to ensure—because they have responsibility for hiring—that it operates in a correct fashion. Because it is their responsibility, they prepare working documents from time to time on reports, on their audits and on their work. Members talk about formal reports and the like and formal investigations, their working documents that they use to make judgment calls as to whether they should withdraw authority or their working documents, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, which they have to do in order to carry out their functions.

I say to this, when they find irregularities, when they find procedures not being properly followed for

whatever reason, they have responsibility to correct it and they do correct it. Not only is the audit function in place to ensure that things are being dealt with properly, but there is also the appeal function that on any particular hiring, any hiring that has taken place in any department or in any government, there is a period in time in which the unsuccessful applicants can appeal. At that time, the commission reviews the procedures, reviews what happens and ensures that they were properly handled.

I say to the member for Thompson, in this particular case, that I think the facts of the matter, the way in which the issues were handled, corrective action being taken, proves that the system does work. I can tell him as well today that there are still ongoing difficulties in terms of the delegation to the Department of Education which have nothing to do with the minister, the previous minister or the current minister. They have to do with the operation of the personnel services within that department. I can tell him today, I am advised by staff of the commission, that there is no immediate intention to return that delegation until some of those internal problems are worked out. Again, the system does work.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the system works best when there is co-operation from the government in implementing the system. We have expressed the concern in this one department. That appears not to have been the case, certainly in terms of the number of incidents that were identified.

What also I find unfortunate, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, is the fact that the government has used the excuse of personnel privacy which is reasonable. That is a principle that is reasonable. Indeed, but if the minister would care to look at the questions, I asked very specifically not for names and positions, I only mentioned two that had come to public attention. I asked for some sort of indication as to the degree of his investigation, the number of positions involved, et cetera. I hope the minister would at some point in time consider releasing that information. I know it has been requested by the Liberal Party as well in addition to our own caucus because justice needs to be done and it needs to be seen to be done.

There are confidentiality in terms of personnel, but there is also an obligation on behalf of the government to scrutinize its own hiring, to ensure that it takes place properly. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, this is not a debate about patronage.

I am not criticizing the government for some of its appointments which are probably based on patronage. I assumed that was going to happen, and previous governments have made such selections. Obviously, there are certain positions that this government has identified.

I know the Liberal critic will probably be asking questions, which appear to be more patronage oriented rather than in the terms of the role of the particular government section or department. The bottom line is we are concerned about the fact that there is no clear information on the public record. We are concerned about the Civil Service hiring process.

I just want to say, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, in concluding my remarks and these will indeed be my final remarks in terms of this section of the Estimates that I would reiterate again that we are concerned about what has been happening in terms of the Civil Service. We are concerned about the morale. We are concerned about the situation in terms of hirings, particularly the impact of the layoffs on rural Manitoba, northern Manitoba, and the so-called decentralization process. We have expressed concerns in terms of affirmative action to hope that there will continue to be progress in terms of aboriginal people and the disabled, but we also can see some addressing of the problems in terms of visible minorities which obviously are being indicated by the information here. Indeed, as I just finished saying a few minutes ago, the whole area of government hiring policy—in particular the interference by ministers in that policy. So with those few comments, I will be concluding from our caucus, and I know the Liberal critic, I am sure, has many questions.

* (1550)

Mr. Lamoureux: In fact, I do have a number of questions along the same line that the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) has been putting forward this afternoon.

I was pleased to hear some of the remarks that the minister has put on the record in respect to the Civil Service Commission, and I believe, trying to understand how important the Civil Service Commission is. In fact, the Civil Service Commission, through Mr. Hart, has a very heavy responsibility. I think he, the minister, would concur with me that when we go to the doors during election time and even in between elections that there seems to be a lot of general disappointment in terms

of how politicians like to give out jobs to their friends and buddies and so forth.

I know that I have had on occasion phone calls from some of my own constituents who are of that opinion that if you give the MLA a call, and you know the MLA well, that you might be able to get a job. I am quick to point out to those constituents that there is a process that needs to be followed, and that is the way that, in fact, it should be. If the process was respected from all governments, the Civil Service would be able to perform that watchdog, if you like.

There have been a number of things which have occurred in the last year and a half where I have really called into question how the minister has not necessarily done what was in the best interests of protecting the Civil Service Commission and, in fact, in the best interests of Manitobans. I wanted likely to start off with where the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) had left off and that is in regard to the Minister of Education, because it was an issue that came before us awhile back in November. When I had first heard about it, like most, no doubt, we were somewhat disappointed in the allegations that were being put forward.

I had some contact with Mr. Hart and other individuals at that time to discuss it, to try to get a better understanding in terms of what actually occurred, because it was not just one allegation that was being made. There were a number of allegations that were being made, and it included more than just one particular position. I know that with the one that was reported on, we have never ever questioned, and I think that has been the case in every question that I have put forward no matter what the minister has been, in terms of the credentials or the qualifications of any individual who has been appointed from government.

We have, on numerous occasions, questioned the process in which an individual was given a position or what might have appeared to be a competition, but in the views and minds of many was not a competition. I wanted to go back to this particular case. I know I had sent a letter to the provincial Ombudsman and basically had suggested that there had been a violation in the hiring agreement, because this is something that was in fact verified, that I was concerned as an elected official as to what role the Minister of Education played in the hiring agreement being withdrawn.

No matter who I questioned, there was no one who was able to give me any indication whatsoever as to what role the then-Minister of Education played in the hiring agreement being withdrawn. Now I have a tough time with that. I have a tough time primarily because it is in the public's best interest to know if in fact a minister had a role in the hiring authority being withdrawn. There was speculation that there was a note, if you will. There was an allegation that there was a note that was attached from the minister in one particular case which we wanted to get verified and, to some degree, was in the sense that it was never refuted from the minister, the then-minister at that time. There were other allegations that were being made about some appointments or some job positions through the Civil Service that were being filled out in Russell.

So it was not just one position or one note, if you will, and that is what the media seemed to want to pick up on was the fact that there was a note that the minister interfered in acting on behalf of one of his colleagues, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. That was not the whole issue. The issue included other allegations that were being put forward dealing with other positions. I was hopeful that this afternoon, because we have the Civil Service Commission here, that we would be given some sort of an idea in terms of what actually did occur that caused the hiring agreement to be withdrawn.

Now I said I went to the provincial Ombudsman. The provincial Ombudsman had suggested that I go to Freedom of Information. I tried through Freedom of Information and was given no information because they felt that it was sensitive and that the matter had been resolved in the sense that the competition was being redone. Yes, in that sense in that one particular position, I would concur that it was redone and quite appropriately, but there were other allegations that were being made, and I wanted to find out the validity of those allegations.

I am somewhat hopeful that this afternoon, in what short time that we have, that the minister will be able to provide some additional information, in particular, in regard to the Department of Education having some hirings in the then-Minister of Education's riding.

Mr. Praznik: Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I certainly appreciate the commentary and the issue which the member for Inkster raises. I think it is very important at this time for me just to outline again the process, because the process is so important to this

issue, particularly when a process has proven to work, for whatever reasons that have to be corrected, but the process, does it work? That is the prime concern I think for Manitobans, to ensure that there is fairness, no matter which politicians sit in this office, no matter what people of the bureaucracy occupy what positions, so that people have a sense that it is humanly possible that competitions are held fairly.

Mr. Bob Rose, Acting Deputy Chairperson, in the Chair)

I, as minister, am responsible for The Civil Service Act, which is somewhat different than being a minister responsible for a line department. The Civil Service Act contains authority to hire public servants, as the member knows, in the province of Manitoba, and the responsibility for the hiring rests not with the minister, but with the commissioner who, unlike all other deputy equivalents in government, has a tenure which is far more secure; in fact, can only be removed, I believe, by a two-thirds vote of the Legislative Assembly. So it is a very different relationship than most departments.

My responsibility, as I view it as minister, is the safety net over the commissioner, to ensure that the commissioner is in fact following the requirements of the legislation. If the commissioner and the commission have gone astray, then it is my responsibility to bring that matter to the Legislative Assembly, if that is what is required, and ensure that the commission, then, is functioning. So my role is to ensure that the commission is living up to its obligation.

The commissioner's role is to ensure that departments and that hiring, in the case of hiring, is done pursuant to the legislation that he is charged with. I can tell you today I have no concerns as minister in the way that the commission has operated or handled its matters.

In terms of the commission dealing with its responsibility, it has the ultimate responsibility for hiring, pursuant to the rules that we have set out as a Legislative Assembly. The ability to hire, the commission has the ability to delegate its authority to departments. I know I am repeating myself for the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), but I think it is important to lay this out.

The commissioner and the commission have that authority. They delegate it to departments. If departments, for whatever reason—and it could be such a simple issue as not looking at the

redeployment list pursuant to the rules—do not exercise the delegated authority in a proper manner, the responsibility lies ultimately with the commissioner. If the commissioner is not taking steps to correct that, then I have a responsibility.

* (1600)

In order to ensure that this delegated authority is properly managed when it is delegated, the commission has two vehicles for checking that. One is the regular audit process, and I believe they audit some 10 percent? I look to the commissioner for a nod—approximately 10 percent of hirings are regularly audited by commission staff. So we have that spot check basis.

Every time there is a competition in which there is an appeal, part of that appeal process is to review the process and the procedure. If an irregularity becomes apparent in that process, then the remedies are available to the commissioner. The usual remedy, of course, with respect to the individual competition, is to overturn it and hold another one. They also have that ability when they are auditing. If they determine that the irregularities or the problems in a department in the hirings are sufficient that they no longer feel comfortable with their authority being delegated to that department, they remove that authority and take it back unto themselves to ensure that things are properly done.

I know it is a complicated process, but it is one that has ensured all of the balances. I think it is well-balanced and it ensures that all of the interests are ultimately protected. In the case of the Department of Education, which has lost its delegated authority twice within a 10-year period, there were a host of issues, and I tell the member, I am not privy to all of that, nor do I think it appropriate I be. There are, as the commission has indicated, a host of difficulties. They, in their internal audit and as the result of appeal, overturned some competitions, took corrective measures and felt that those problems warranted a removal of the delegation which they are responsible for and which they did.

In fact, today, I can tell the member—they informed me here today—that they are not prepared to return that delegation to the Department of Education which is now under a different minister because the problems that they were concerned about in process have not been properly alleviated. So they have that responsibility and are responsible for hirings in the Department of Education today and for

the next period of time, until they are comfortable that they can return that trust of delegation to the department.

So I think that this would suggest to the member that there are some major difficulties in the department that go well beyond the concerns that he has raised with respect to the previous minister.

I say to him, as well, with respect to release of reports—and I can appreciate that if I were in his chair, I certainly would want to see as much information as possible. I have no problem with that request, but I think that what one must understand, and I have come to appreciate this as minister, is that the ability of the commission to do its job is dependent upon its ability to flow information internally among its staff to the commissioner.

The so-called report that everyone talks about, from what I understand from the commissioner—and I have never had a copy of that forwarded to me, because I am not the one responsible for it—is a working internal document where commissioned staff, after reviewing an appeal, doing an audit, make a report on things that they suspect. They do not have to provide proof. They do not have to get into a major investigation. Anything that causes them some concern that they should be worried, for whatever reason—and it may turn out to be nothing. They do not have to meet strict standards of proof. It is an internal working document, flagging to the commissioner that there is some concern about the way in which a department is using the delegated authority for which the commissioner is responsible.

So they have to have the ability to have those working documents. Are they tested by fact? Do parties have the opportunity to respond? No, because they are not a formal report. They are not prepared under oath. They do not do necessarily a thorough investigation where everything is checked out. There is simply an internal working document, internal memo, et cetera, where someone from commission staff says, hey, I think there may be a problem here and flags it with the commissioner. Then it is up to the commissioner to decide what action the commissioner wants to take, because it is ultimately the commissioner's authority and responsibility that is at stake.

So, having said that, I think that is the process. It has proven to work because in the instance that the member raises, there were one or two competitions there that were overturned and new competitions held. There are still problems in the department.

That is why the commissioner has not felt fit to redelegate that authority to the department.

The commission has to have, as I am sure the member can appreciate, the ability to carry out its work without fear that its individual working documents are going to become part of the realm of public debate, because I know, myself, in my relationship with my deputy minister, if every document that the deputy minister passed to me as minister, was going to be found in the public realm tomorrow, her ability as Deputy Minister of Labour would be terribly impeded to deal with me as her minister, and in the same kind of sense, the ability of the commission to deal internally also has to be protected.

So I say to the member for Inkster, I appreciate his concern. I know it would be—there is always that interest when you hear reports and internal workings, but I have come to the conclusion, very sincerely, having gone through this issue over the winter, that the process does work. It has been in place for a long time, through various administrations. It has proven to work. That is not to say it works absolutely every time.

I am sure from time to time errors are made, et cetera, that often do not get caught because no appeal is made, et cetera. But with the appeal and the audit process, errors are caught and corrected.

I do not know how we could ever give the public of Manitoba a greater security that there is within the realm of human ability fairness in hiring. I do not know if we were to expose every internal document in the commission to public review, if we would really aid the process of comfort or simply mean that information would have to be thoroughly tested, not provided, et cetera. Because, remember, if I as a member of the commission, if I were an employee of Mr. Hart's in the commission and had some concern about the operation of a particular department and committed myself to paper and that paper became public information and it turned out that information was wrong, then I would be subject to a libel suit potentially by the individuals involved. So would I commit myself to paper or I would just tell them orally? I do not know.

So I think for those who have had the experience of seeing the whole process operate, I would suggest—and I appreciate where the member for Inkster is coming from. I appreciate his concerns. I appreciate the commentary on the issue, but I think the process over time has proven itself to be

probably the best way to ensure that, as far as humanly possible, there is fairness in the hiring of our Civil Service.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I am not too sure if the minister is really addressing the point that I am trying to express. This is not something that happens every day. He alluded to the fact of what the Civil Service is doing, has acted and so forth. I understand that this is the second time in the last 15-20 years where something of this nature has occurred. I am not sure and I am not convinced that there is anything that the Civil Service can do and in fact have been led to believe that there is not anything that the Civil Service can do in terms of taking any sort of disciplinary action against a minister.

If you withdraw the hiring practices because of allegations that might have been made, that we cannot say have been substantiated one way or another, if the minister is changed in a cabinet shuffle, the minister does not lose. You are penalizing the department, you are not penalizing the minister. We want to know, and we have always wanted to know, not necessarily every inner detail as to what occurred, what we want to know is how the Minister of Education interfered, if he interfered at all.

Right now, the minister cannot tell me if the then Minister of Education interfered whatsoever and will try to go on and on about, well, nothing really was done wrong. Well, I should not say, nothing was done wrong, that there was corrective action that was taken. The problem has been resolved. Well, I will suggest to the minister that the problem has not been resolved, because this is a particular case where we have seen or at least we believe that the minister has interfered. To what degree, we do not know. We would love to know. There is a responsibility for the government to let us know in terms of what degree, because the Civil Service Commission cannot tell us that.

So the question, quite simply, to the minister is: To what degree, what role did the Minister of Education have in the Department of Education losing its hiring practices? That, the public does deserve to know.

* (1610)

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I would like to point out to the member for Inkster that he mentions about no ability for the Civil Service

Commission to penalize the minister. The authority to hire is that of the Civil Service Commission. They choose to delegate it, not to ministers, but to deputy ministers and their departments.

If the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) certainly heard my comment, that the authority to the Department of Education which has as their minister now, Mrs. Vodrey, and not Mr. Derkach, is currently still not being redelegated to that department because they have not satisfied the Civil Service Commission to the extent that the commission is prepared to return it to the department. That department also had the removal of delegation in 1983. These things are ongoing and Mr. Derkach is not on the scene in any way.

I want to say to the member for Inkster, the responsibility for penalizing or reprimanding ministers is never with the Civil Service Commission. Ministers are appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor on the recommendation of the First Minister. It is the First Minister's responsibility to deal with all ministers including myself. Ultimately, the First Minister, the ministers and the government have to answer to the electorate of the province who will be the ultimate judge of who they choose to sit in our chairs in this Legislative Assembly and hold the offices of the Executive Council.

Ultimately, there is the responsibility, and I say again to the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) that the authority to hire is that of the Civil Service commissioner. If he or she, the occupant of that office, so chooses to delegate, they will. If there are problems with that delegation they will take it back, and they will ensure that there is fairness in hiring. That, ultimately, is the issue. Does the process work? I think it does, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I do not think with all sincerity that the minister is able even to convince all of his own staff. I look at the Hay Report. There was another incident which was brought up, and I want to quote right from the Hay Report because it deals specifically with the comments that the minister has just put forward. He tries to give the impression that the ministers of the government have absolutely nothing to do with the hiring, that it is the deputy ministers, that everything is clean, right above board. I like to think that is the case 100 percent, but I do not think we have achieved that 100 percent.

I look towards—we, as I say, quote the Hay Management Consultants report. If you will listen to this, the ministerial intervention: The control that the minister appeared to have over who gets approved for selection causes some concern. There is the perception among managers and employees that not all appointments are made on the basis of merit because there is, quote, too much ministerial intervention in the hiring process. The minister knows whenever there is a vacancy and can ensure that an individual of that right party colour will be hired, or that an individual of the wrong party colour will not be hired. I am suspicious of a ministerial action.

This comes from a senior manager, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson. For the minister to try to leave the impression that ministers do not play any role in the hiring of the Civil Service just does not wash. We have an excellent case here in which the minister refuses to give any sort of explanation or any further detail as to what happened with the former Minister of Education, trying to say that matter has been resolved. Well, the matter has not been resolved.

If we go back to this particular case, that is where there was an appointment for the Women's Directorate. That is what was being called into question at that time, the manner in which that appointment took place. I would go back to the minister and ask the minister if the minister feels that the Minister of Education had anything to do with the withdrawal of the hiring authority, from the then Minister of Education.

Mr. Praznik: I want to say to the member for Inkster, first of all, that I think the member for Inkster when he says that my purpose was to leave the impression that ministers have no involvement in hiring, I think he should be aware that there are certain instances when ministers certainly have an involvement in hiring—every appointment that is made by Order-in-Council, which a minister has to take to cabinet for approval. I tell you as minister, I am not going to take a name to cabinet for approval on an Order-in-Council appointment in which I am asking my colleagues to make that appointment without comfort in the individual that I am taking forward, that they are the best person for the job and can do the job that I am ultimately responsible for as minister.

I want to say to the member when he quoted the Hay audit report, he talked about perception. That

is the word he used in that quotation about perception. Perceptions are often very different from reality. There are lots of perceptions. The time I spent working with the Manitoba women in government, and some of the meetings I have had with the steering committee, I can tell there are a lot of perceptions. There are perceptions that some senior managers hire people or ensure that people get positions because they are friends or known by that senior manager.

There are a lot of perceptions out there that not necessarily meet reality. I can tell the member for Inkster that every position that currently is filled in government requires the approval of the minister to hire—not to hire the individual, but to begin the process. Any vacancy that we move to fill in the Department of Labour, in the Civil Service Commission, in the Department of Agriculture requires the minister of the day to authorize that that position then go out for competition. So there is some involvement. Now, whether that leads to misperceptions on the part of individuals or what have you, I am not sure, but the member brought a quote that talks about perception. Perception is not reality.

If the member wants to bring forward cases to this table with evidence of ministerial interference in a host of positions in government, then let him do so, but he has not done that—he has talked about perception.

He mentioned the Women's Directorate position. Within The Civil Service Act is the provision for technical appointments, in which a minister, with an Order-in-Council, has the ability to make a technical appointment. That is a provision that is in the law; it is there. There is nothing illegal, immoral or wrong for a minister and the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council to use that provision of the act to make a technical appointment. The issue surrounding that, of course, is, how many technical appointments does a government make? Is it really necessary to make one? Those will always be judgment calls that are in the purview of a minister and ultimately the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council.

So to put on the record that there is some wrongdoing in using a technical appointment, I think, is inaccurate. If you want to challenge the judgment of the minister and the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council in using that vehicle, that is fair ball, but it is not wrong, illegal or immoral to use that

vehicle that is provided by the Legislative Assembly in The Civil Service Act.

When the member references the particular position in the Women's Directorate and indicates that somehow this is ministerial interference, as if some wrongdoing has gone on by the minister, that is absolutely incorrect, and I reject that accusation.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, the minister herself has said—she is the one who made the commitment, not once, but twice to an open competition. She was the one that made the decision that allowed for an open competition.

The minister talks about perception. Well, at the beginning, the minister talked about the importance of having that confidentiality. Now he has challenged me to put down a specific case. I could give him a specific case where that perception could possibly become reality.

I could talk about, and this is in regards to the Minister of Education, where there was a position that was filled where I understand there were three applicants. Allegations were that one particular applicant had qualifications that had anticipated that individual was going to be receiving the position; the other individual had experience; the one that ended up getting the position happened to have an association of some nature with the Minister of Education.

* (1620)

I am not going to go into the details; the minister responsible can find out the details, no doubt, about it. Unfortunately, when I asked the question, when I tried to get the answers from the minister, because the Civil Service was unable to give me the answers—I cannot tell if the perceptions from the individuals who knew the person who was hired in this particular case are real or not, because the government will not allow us. The government tells us that all we can base it on is perception, because we cannot talk about specific cases, nor will the government give us any of the details. You cannot have it both ways. You cannot tell us at one time to go ahead and give us specific cases to demonstrate that they are real, that they are not perceived, and vice versa.

Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I would ask the minister if, in fact, he has seen the report and what actions the Minister of Education, what role the Minister of Education played in the hiring practice

being withdrawn, hiring agreement being withdrawn.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I say to the member, in the case he raises with respect to the Minister of Education, the safeguard in all cases, no matter who is in government, no matter which department you deal with, no matter which personnel manager, deputy minister or whoever the minister is, the safeguard there is the ability to appeal.

If the individual who feels that they should have had the job and did not, appeals, that triggers the commission to review the matter to see that all processes were properly followed. If they were not, the competition would be overturned and another competition held or appropriate action taken. If—pardon me, the competition has been properly conducted and there are no grounds to overturn it, it would not happen.

So the process, the process is there that is so important to ensuring fairness in hiring, for no matter what reason, whether it is a personnel director who fails to consult the redeployment list; where there is someone who should have been given priority for the position because they are on the lay-off list and has not; to whatever other possible interference that could take place, by whoever is in power. The issue, of course, is process, does it work. I think time has proven that the process does, in fact, work.

Mr. Lamoureux: I am wondering if the minister can give us some sort of an indication in terms of how many requests go into the Civil Service Commission for appealing?

While the minister's staff is looking for that, I also wanted to make reference to the fact that one of the unfortunate things that I found is that even though a number of allegations were being given to me, not from one individual but from a number of individuals, regarding the same hiring in the former Minister of Education's riding, one of the things that I was told was that I cannot, as an MLA, ask for the Civil Service Commission to look into a matter; that it has to be, in fact, an appeal from someone who has been aggrieved through it; that I, as an MLA, cannot suggest or ask the Civil Service to look into some allegations that have been put forward.

Mr. Praznik: Yes, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, my understanding of the appeal process, if you are a party to the process, in other words you are an applicant who has not received the position, then

you have the right to appeal. Third parties, whoever they may be, do not have that right.

If the individuals who did not receive the job are not prepared to file an appeal, then what is the issue?

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, if someone who lives in rural Manitoba in a relatively small community, for whatever reasons does not want to put their name forward, or the unsuccessful candidate decides that it is not worth submitting an appeal, but the allegations or the claims that are being made are very serious, there is no mechanism for an investigation, can the Civil Service take the onus on itself to investigate? The minister makes reference to random investigations.

Mr. Praznik: Yes, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, if someone has raised allegations and is not prepared to appeal, one has to first of all question that, but if there is some concern that is raised, that is a decision the Civil Service commissioner has to make, because ultimately the Civil Service commissioner is responsible for the process.

So if the commissioner, for whatever reason, if it is an accusation made by you as a member of the Legislature, and you make it in Question Period, come forward, if the Civil Service commissioner feels that there is some potential merit to that issue, they will move, the Civil Service Commission will move to investigate because the responsibility is ultimately with the Civil Service commissioner.

So if the member has concerns or questions and raises them with the Civil Service commissioner, they will result if the Civil Service commissioner feels they are warranted in an investigation. So there is plenty of protection.

With respect to the specific information that the member asks for, I have a total, just to put it in perspective, that the following analysis of the period 1985-86 to 1990-91 provides an overview of a number of appeals filed in their disposition.

The number of appeals initiated in total was 317, of which 174 dealt with selection. There were approximately 140 appeals on classifications and other matters, so I do not think those are the ones the member is interested in. Of those 317 in total that were initiated, of which 174 were selection, 56 were actually heard and went through the process and were not withdrawn, I take it, by the applicant. So two-thirds of the appeals made are withdrawn by applicants.

Of those that were actually heard—and remember we are talking over a period from '85-86 to '90-91—15 were granted in favour of the applicant and 41 were denied. If you look at the numbers of hirings that are done in the Civil Service at any given time—I take it we have been running around anywhere from 500 to 800 positions a year during that period—you can see that the actual number that are overturned are very, very small.

So, although there are specific problems, from time to time in the hiring, I think this record proves that, generally speaking, our system in this province is a fair one. It is certainly supported by the fact that, in all of those years, some six years, we have had only actually 15 successful appeals on hirings—and that is over two different governments. If the member is trying to create the impression that there are rampant irregularities in hiring in the Civil Service of Manitoba, that is just not the case.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, can the minister tell me if the certification office in Russell has been investigated from the Civil Service Commission? Were there any appeals?

Mr. Praznik: I am informed by the Civil Service commissioner that, to the best of his knowledge, no appeal was made on any of the hirings related to that office.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I wanted to move on to something that I had asked the minister the other day inside the Chamber. I guess it is an extension from the Civil Service, because we have suggested in the past that the government does have a role to play within the Civil Service, the Crown corporations and so forth. It goes without saying, there is absolutely nothing that can be done about the private sector nor should it.

But my question to the minister is in regard to: What role does he feel, if any, does the Civil Service Commission have in the hirings that go on in Crown corporations?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, in answer to the member's question, I would like to make one thing perfectly clear—to quote one of my colleagues—to the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), and that is, my opinion as to what practices, whether or not the Civil Service Commission, should be used, et cetera, in hirings in various governmental agencies outside of the Civil Service, is irrelevant.

My opinion is irrelevant. The responsibility for the hiring mechanism is designated by the Legislative Assembly of this province in the acts which establish agencies outside of government. Those acts and the ministers responsible for those acts have that responsibility.

* (1630)

So my opinion whether they should be or should not be is irrelevant as trustee of The Civil Service Act. As a member of the Legislative Assembly, that is a different matter, and we all may have our opinions on that, but as Minister responsible for The Civil Service Act, my opinion on that matter is irrelevant. It is my duty and the responsibilities that are given to me by the Legislature of Manitoba that should concern me.

I can tell him that in each piece of legislation that creates an outside agency the mechanism for hiring, if it should be stated by the Assembly, is clearly indicated, where the Civil Service rules and Commission, et cetera, would be the hiring authority. In many cases, that is designated to the Crown corporation to decide, and in many cases is the result of the collective agreements that they ultimately negotiate with their employees.

Mr. Lamoureux: So the Civil Service Commission has nothing to do then with the Crown corporations in terms of any of the hirings?

Mr. Praznik: Not unless the act which incorporates the agency or body or corporation specifically designates the Civil Service Commission to have the responsibility in that agency.

Mr. Lamoureux: Could I get a copy of that list of corporations that do?

Mr. Praznik: Yes, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I will undertake to provide that list to the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

Mr. Lamoureux: I wanted to talk very briefly in terms of the minister made reference to technical appointments and contract positions. Is there a government listing of what technical appointments are being made in contract positions? I know that there is through O/Cs that come before us, but is there any listing that is maintained?

Mr. Praznik: Yes, every technical appointment made under section 32 of The Civil Service Act requires an Order-in-Council. Those would be listed in the Orders-in-Council that come out from time to time from Executive Council, and they are certainly public information.

Mr. Lamoureux: Is there any sort of listing that is available in terms of the technical appointments? Is there any record that is kept?

Mr. Praznik: There is not specifically a list that is kept, but that would also include deputy ministers, executive and special assistants to ministers, a host of those positions as well as others who are from time to time appointed on those technical appointments.

Mr. Lamoureux: So in order to achieve that you would virtually have to ask from each department what their technical appointments are?

Mr. Praznik: Yes, I would suggest the member get it out of his copies of the Orders-in-Council. They change from time to time as certain staff positions change, but they are all available to him and come out, I understand, on a weekly or bi-weekly basis as they are passed by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council. They are all public information for anyone who wants to go and track them down.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I wanted to ask the minister in regard to the Civil Service decentralization. He had given some figures earlier in terms of percentages from Winnipeg and rural. I do not believe he said the years or at least it went by me. He had said that in Winnipeg it is 55 percent or it was 55 percent, now 51 percent; rural Manitoba, 45 and 49—if I can get the years on that?

Mr. Praznik: The approximate numbers, going back about three or four years ago when this government came to power, was an approximate breakdown of 55 percent of the positions in Winnipeg versus 45 percent outside of the city. Currently, as of this spring, it is March of 1992, the breakdown is approximately 51 percent in Winnipeg versus 49 percent outside of the city of Winnipeg—approximately.

Mr. Lamoureux: I would ask the minister in terms of the decentralization plan that has been forward from the government. It made a commitment of some 500-plus jobs being decentralized. Can he give us some sort of indication in terms of how many of those positions have been decentralized?

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

Mr. Praznik: I would think that question would be best answered in the Decentralization Estimates. They have an accurate running tally because they are charged by that responsibility. It would not be necessarily something that we would be keeping.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, given that, I will move on in terms of another form that was brought forward and the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) had talked about in terms of the affirmative action target groups and so forth.

Given the importance of it, and I was somewhat intrigued with what the minister had to say with respect to the MGEA and also interested in terms of what the response was from both the minister and from the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton). In the last couple of years where we have seen a number of layoffs, I would ask the minister, does he have a percentage breakdown of those affirmative action groups that have been laid off?

Mr. Praznik: Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the numbers, and I can give him some approximations. I would just like to preface my remarks, as well, that our information on target groups is based on self-declaration, so there are many people in the provincial Civil Service who do not make that declaration, who, of course, do not appear on our numbers.

I should tell him that, generally speaking, the target groups were represented about evenly across the board, or evenly generally speaking in those people who were affected by positions, and, of course, we have to live within the confines of our collective agreement that has certain provisions for bumping, et cetera. I should tell him, as well, if I remember the numbers correctly, over the two years there tended to be more males than females in the number of staff positions that were reduced. Part of that had to do with the fact that we have a much higher percentage of females in clerical positions and administrative positions that were much easier to fill in other vacancies, so that is part of the reason.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the other thing I wanted to get some information on was in regard to the '91-'92 budget where we had seen both the freeze and the termination of a number of positions. I would ask the minister to give some sort of a breakdown on that.

* (1640)

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, going back to last year's staff reductions in the Civil Service, we eliminated in that budget 954 positions, impacting 431 employees. The remainder of the positions being vacant across 19 government departments, those would be full-time positions, some of them, I understand, involve seasonal, part-time positions,

et cetera, that were impacted, and those totals of seasonal reductions add up to that total. There were 431 actual employees, I believe, across 19 government department who were affected. Given the voluntary retirement program and the ability to place people in other positions as of February 7 of this year, we still had approximately 100 employees from that round remaining on the re-employment list.

Mr. Lamoureux: Does the minister have in terms of how many of them were matched and so forth? I did not quite catch just the last part of his answer.

Mr. Praznik: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, I understand we moved from about 430-some employees, as I have indicated, to approximately 100 who still have not been matched or found alternative employment in the Civil Service arising out of last year's Estimates.

Mr. Lamoureux: Can the minister tell me what is being done for those employees in the last year's, the '92-93, in terms of upgrading? Were any other forms of redeployment whatsoever going on?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, just to clarify. The numbers I gave the member were for last year's budget process. As I have indicated earlier in the Estimates, in this year's process only 39 employees had received layoff notices of which all but 10 had been offered alternative employment. So you know we are basically dealing with 10 employees from this year who have not been yet made alternative employment options. We are dealing with approximately 100 from last year's process.

The services that we provide, if the member will just give me a second—yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we have an ongoing committee, the work force adjustment committee, with the two representative groups of those employees, and we are continuing to work to find opportunities for them or re-employment, retraining opportunities.

As one can appreciate, I know in that group are a number of engineers whose positions were eliminated over the last two years, particularly the last year, and it is somewhat more difficult, as I am sure the member can appreciate, to find work for engineers in other Civil Service jobs when their training is specifically as engineers. So they tended in that group to be people who were in a position who were not as versatile to be able to move, and we are working with retraining opportunities where applicable and other options.

Mr. Lamoureux: Can the minister indicate again for both years, if we want to maybe just deal with the two years combined, because he has given the numbers that we are talking about. How many civil servants actually applied for, in one particular case, the 18-week payment under voluntary separation incentive program and so forth?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am told it is approximately 275, 278 in 1991-92 and about 324 or so in 1992 who applied, and that is people who applied to take the 18-week package and make their job available. That was always conditional on having someone with whom we could make a match. We also particularly this year worked very hard to move people and do shuffles within departments because there may be someone who could move into a job where we had a VISP applicant, and by them making that move freed up another vacancy for someone who is on the redeployment list. So, by doing that kind of juggling, I think that is why we were able to get down to all but really 10 employees in government in this particular year being offered other alternative job opportunities.

Mr. Lamoureux: I know I had talked to one individual that was hoping to be able to take advantage of the situation and be able to retire earlier, but it is part of the criteria that he did not meet but felt that because of his health condition that he might be able to fall under this particular program. Were there any special circumstances that were given or were the criteria firmly adhered to?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am advised that in the process we, the staff working on this, considered a host of exceptions that were requested, but the two bottom-line criteria that, as I am sure the member can appreciate, had to be accepted were either that, by the individual taking the VISP, the 18-week incentive, there was a person on the redeployment list who could fill the job so that government was not going and hiring another person to take that person's place but we were re-employing someone, or that the job could remain vacant for a sufficiently long period of time as to recoup the 18-week payment. But there was not savings to government if we allowed someone to leave with the 18-week incentive and had to refill the position from outside the redeployment list immediately because the position was needed. That was not what the VISP was intended to do.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I believe that I have covered those questions that I had to cover, but I did want to just seek some further clarification, because I am a bit confused on it. That was in regard to how the Civil Service can determine, or if an individual that did not make an application for a position did not want to go forward and appeal, is there not any mechanism that would allow a request from an opposition party? I am sure that if the minister had a request, no doubt the legislation would allow for the minister, upon request, to have the Civil Service look into something that the Civil Service would do just that.

I am wondering if there is anything within the legislation that would allow an opposition party, in particular, to have something initiated from the Civil Service, given the role and the importance that the Civil Service Commission plays in Manitoba?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, within the authorities of the commission, they have the ability to make those investigations. Obviously, it is in their best interests if there is sufficient information brought to them that would warrant a concern whether that information be brought to them by a member of the Legislative Assembly, by applicant for a position or a third party. There is no guarantee, of course, that the commission will launch that investigation unless they have some comfort level that there is some validity to the concern.

I mean, they could not be chasing ghosts, in essence. So if a member of the public comes forward with a concern that has some validity to them or maybe there are a number of concerns that come forward that would raise suspicion. It is in the Civil Service commissioner's best interests in fulfilling their responsibility to carry on that investigation.

The only automatic review that takes place is when a party to a hiring, a selection process, launches an appeal that automatically results in the kind of investigation of process. Otherwise the commissioner has that power and through me, as minister responsible, has indicated that I should assure the member that any matters that they bring to his attention that would warrant an investigation will be warranted by the commissioner.

* (1650)

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I must admit I do feel a bit uncomfortable in the sense that I would like to think that we do have some role as a

Legislature, as an individual or as an opposition and that we do carry along with us some credibility. That if, in fact, there have been allegations, and we feel that some of those allegations can be substantiated, much like the minister who is responsible for the Civil Service, that a request, a formal request or some sort of a request should be allowed.

I would suggest to you that this is something that would have minimal usage and if it is not in the act that maybe this is one of the amendments that could be brought forward to the act to allow members to request the Civil Service to look into a matter given the number of matters that they currently look into. I do not think it is going to be an abusive thing.

Mr. Praznik: Yes, I say to the member, he has the ability to request that investigation now of the Civil Service commissioner, and he is free to do so. The only concern I would raise in his commentary, if there was a process specifically in the act where members of the Legislative Assembly could—they can do that now—but a specific process for members of the Legislative Assembly, I would suggest to him that probably on every hiring in government in which there was more than one applicant, which is all of them, there would regularly be requests coming forward by people who feel that they should have had that position.

I can tell him now on numbers of applicants for positions, it is not unusual to have 200 or 300 people apply for positions now, and out of that group, I am sure, you will always have some who feel that they should have been hired over the successful candidate. I do not offer that by way of a suggestion to put off the member in any way. The process is there now for the member to make those requests. If one were to flag it as a specific section of the act, I think it would invite much greater use in cases where there probably is no wrongdoing, but simply people who feel that they should have got a job over someone else. That is always one of the difficulties, I can tell him, as Civil Service minister. I have a stream of mail during the course of the year from people who are not hired for positions, who write in and complain because they feel they should have got the job given their qualifications, et cetera.

As you can appreciate, those are not matters with which I want to deal specifically, but when you are looking at 200 to 300 applications for jobs, there are always going to be some people who feel that they were not dealt with fairly because they believe they

were the better candidate, and I do not know how we ever get around that.

The question of course is, within human ability, was the competition dealt with fairly? I think that is what the member is getting at. That process is now available to him, and I would invite him to use it if he feels it is important to do so. If it turns out that a competition was not properly held, the Civil Service commissioner has ability and authority under the act, the specific provisions of the act that apply, and under those terms to overturn competitions. He also has the ability not to delegate authority if it is so warranted, and I am sure the commissioner would welcome any of those inquiries from the member.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I know as the critic I have received two, one which was a technical appointment, and the other one was in regard to the former Minister of Education. In fact, I did put in a request and I was told then that there is nothing that can be done unless it is appealed. So I am glad to hear that there is, in fact, something that can be done and I will pursue that. But failing any sort of satisfaction, not personal satisfaction but more as an opposition party satisfaction, I think that what might be an appropriate thing to do is to allow for something within the legislation, and that might be a form of a private member's bill in the next session, if the government itself does not concur with it.

Thank you.

Mr. Praznik: Yes, one brief comment on the two cases the member raised. I believe one of them was already under appeal, that the member had requested, so the process was working. With respect to the technical appointment, there was nothing wrong in practice with the technical appointment that can be appealed. The use of it by the government or by a minister going to Executive Council, or Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council to have it confirmed is obviously a policy decision, political decision, whatever one wants to put it, and the scrutiny of whether one makes a technical appointment or not is the Legislative Assembly and ultimately the electors. The only issue, of course, is was the technical appointment properly made? That would be in the realm of the commission. Whether it is used or not is in the realm of the ministers and the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council, and that is subject to public debate.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, just to conclude, the technical appointment was not

something that we, in fact, had approached the Civil Service on. It was just the one matter, and in that particular matter, yes, the one incident was investigated, but not other aspects, not other allegations that were being made, and those were the allegations that I thought had merited some sort of an investigation.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 1. Civil Service Commission (a) Executive Office: (1) Salaries \$240,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$59,200—pass.

1.(b) Administrative Services: (1) Salaries \$570,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$386,100—pass.

1.(c) Human Resource Management Services: (1) Salaries \$1,616,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$578,300—pass; (3) Less: Recoverable from Other Appropriations \$344,000—pass.

1.(d) Labour Relations Services: (1) Salaries \$841,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$152,700—pass.

Resolution 14: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$4,100,400 for Civil Service Commission, Civil Service Commission, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1993—pass.

Page 47, Employee Benefits and Other Payments (VI). Item 1. Employee Benefits and Other Payments (a) Civil Service Superannuation Plan \$28,372,100—pass.

1.(b) Canada Pension Plan \$14,434,700—pass.

1.(c) Civil Service Group Life Insurance \$2,145,700—pass.

1.(d) Workers' Compensation Board: (1) Assessments re: Accidents to Government Employees \$3,825,500—pass; (2) Less: Recoverable from Other Appropriations \$3,300,500—pass.

1.(e) Unemployment Insurance Plan \$22,828,800—pass.

1.(f) Dental Plan \$5,179,100—pass.

1.(g) Long Term Disability Plan \$1,699,600—pass.

1.(h) Ambulance and Hospital Semi-Private Plan \$353,100—pass.

1.(j) Levy for Health and Post-Secondary Education \$14,964,100—pass.

Resolution 33: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$90,502,200

for Employee Benefits and Other Payments, Employee Benefits and Other Payments, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1993—pass.

This completes the Estimates of the Civil Service Commission, Employee Benefits. The next set of Estimates that will be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply are the Estimates for Housing.

* (1700)

The time is now 5 p.m. and time for private members' hour. I am interrupting the proceedings of the committee; the Committee of Supply will resume considerations at 8 p.m.

URBAN AFFAIRS

Madam Chairperson (Louise Dacquay): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

* (1430)

This section of the Committee of Supply is dealing with the Estimates for the Department of Urban Affairs. Does the honourable minister have an opening statement?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Urban Affairs): Madam Chairperson, I am pleased to introduce the 1992-93 Estimates for Manitoba Urban Affairs. I will take this opportunity to report to the committee on the progress my department has achieved over the past year and inform you of its plans for the current fiscal year.

As a former Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism and a former Winnipeg city councillor, I appreciate the unique role the city of Winnipeg plays in our province. As Minister of Urban Affairs, I have also had the chance to see the integral role my department plays in delivering its mandate. Its role is to provide and maintain a legislative, financial and planning framework for an urban government that will meet the needs of the citizens of Winnipeg.

Manitoba Urban Affairs continues to be the focal point for intergovernmental relations between the city and the province. The department's primary responsibility is administering The City of Winnipeg Act and co-ordinating and implementing provincial-urban policies and programs in the city and in the capital region.

I am pleased to report that the department is making progress with its legislative program that began in 1989. During the past year, the building

standards and planning and development sections of the act were updated considerably. A new section on waterways is also added. Other amendments were passed which reduced the size of City Council and established new ward boundaries. Legislation for 1992 has included amendments to validate the 1991 business taxes and to allow for the creation of the municipality of Headingley. In addition, legislation on Part 3 dealing with official languages has also been introduced. We expect this continuing and comprehensive review of The City of Winnipeg Act to support more effective urban government in years to come.

My department is also involved in the current review of Plan Winnipeg. I have given the City of Winnipeg a document entitled, Directions for Plan Winnipeg, that defines a number of policy areas the province believes should be addressed in the Plan Winnipeg by-law. We will continue to be involved as the city moves to adopt a new Plan Winnipeg in June. I will formally review and approve the plan after City Council gives the by-law second reading.

The financial relationship between the city and the province has always been very important. The province is very conscious of its role with respect to the City of Winnipeg's finances. A number of activities were initiated over the past year that will support our objectives and role in urban finance. These changes, Madam Chairperson, include announcing a six-year renewed urban capital projects allocation of \$96 million. This represents a \$6-million increase over the last allocation. It has been designed to give Winnipeg greater flexibility and autonomy in capital expenditure decisions; secondly, providing incentives and provincial capital grants to ensure that the city's interest costs on capital borrowing do not become excessive; thirdly, advising the city that the province is prepared to commit up to \$11-million additional money over and above the \$96-million capital allocation toward twinning the portion of Highway 75 that is within city limits; fourthly, a commitment of \$5 million as the province's share of a public works job creation program in 1992.

With respect to provincial grants, I am pleased to be able to announce an increase in financial support to the City of Winnipeg this year of 4.2 percent. This increase is one of the reasons the City Council was able to hold down the 1992 property tax increase.

The 1992 capital grant commitments to the city will be used primarily for infrastructure renewal projects. These projects will not only upgrade existing infrastructure within the city, but will also create jobs in the construction industry and have beneficial effects on the economy. The province is committed to infrastructure renewal and strongly supports the initiatives of the city to make progress in this area.

My department is also responsible for urban revitalization. As you are aware, the renewed Core Area Initiative entered in March 31, 1992, the agreement stipulates that no expenditures can be made after September 30, 1992, therefore, there will be a significant decrease in core activities in this fiscal year. However, we are still committed to tri-level partnership in revitalizing our capital city.

There are ongoing discussions for a new redevelopment strategy with the two other levels of government. Toward this goal, \$1 million has been included in the budget for an urban development agreement for Winnipeg. I remain optimistic that I will be able to announce a new agreement this year.

Manitoba Urban Affairs continues to support the Manitoba/Winnipeg Community Revitalization Program. This program is designed to improve living conditions, municipal services and community facilities in Winnipeg's aging residential neighbourhoods. My staff have worked with the city on revisions to the program guidelines, which should further improve program operation.

I am also continuing discussions with my federal and city counterparts about amalgamating the North Portage Development Corporation and The Forks Renewal Corporation. We believe a merger will provide more effective decision making and a more efficient operation.

The Winnipeg Region Committee, now renamed the Capital Region Committee, established by the province, continues to meet regularly. Our progress seems slow sometimes, but it is real and offers the promises of greater co-operation and understanding. This committee gives Winnipeg and surrounding municipalities an opportunity to come together as equals and participate in a co-operative effort to enhance the competitiveness and attraction of the capital region.

During this fiscal year, the committee will focus its efforts on contributing to the capital region's sustainable development strategy, which is one of

the components of Manitoba's general sustainable development strategy.

In closing, I would like to express my appreciation to my staff in the Department of Urban Affairs. They are not many, but they work hard to achieve the mandate of my department. With a staff complement of only 19, the department continues to play a key role in delivering provincial priorities efficiently and cost effectively.

Madam Chairperson, that concludes my opening remarks, and I look forward to the discussion of these Estimates.

Madam Chairperson: Does the critic for the official opposition have an opening statement?

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolesey): I only want to make a few brief remarks. We have had many opportunities to talk about Urban Affairs in the Legislature. We have seen many quite dramatic changes to the city of Winnipeg and to the structure that the province has set up for the city of Winnipeg in the last few years.

We have seen changes in the democratic structure of the City of Winnipeg with the reduction in the number of councillors and the increase in their size of constituencies. We have seen changes in Bill 35 in the last session to many of the environmental and planning provisions of the city, many of which affected areas such as riverbank development and controls of airport planning in particular, which have continued to concern the opposition.

We also have seen changes to the very planning functions of the City of Winnipeg in the most recent bill of this session in which the minister proposed to hive off sections of the city initially under regulation rather than in front of the Legislature.

So we have had many occasions to speak about the things which concern us in the city of Winnipeg, and the ones which I have spoken of most frequently, most recently, have been those changes in levels of democracy in the city, more recently in the changes or absence of planning in the regional context of the city of Winnipeg.

As I look back over the Estimates process for the last few years, it is something which we have certainly emphasized before, and we have talked briefly about the minister's role in the Winnipeg Regional Committee at different times. I notice that he mentioned it in his opening statements, I believe characterized by—I do not have the statement in

front of me—but progress is slow, I think was perhaps the phrase we might attach to that. It certainly has been. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss that more with the minister in Estimates.

* (1440)

We are obviously extremely concerned by the absence of any reported progress on a core area initiative. We are very concerned about the deteriorating economic conditions for many, many citizens of Winnipeg. We believe that if you look at the city of Winnipeg in 1988 when this government took office, and the economic and social conditions of the inner city at that stage, we believe that there has been considerable deterioration, in part because of the policies of the federal government, in part because of the high interest rates and the high dollar prices that we have had in the centre of Canada.

But the impact that they have had on urban Manitoba in terms of unemployment, social impact on families, the increasing level of child poverty, and the increasing number of young people, particularly young males who have never been part of the working community—as the time slips by, two, three, four years in the lives of those young men is very significant in establishing a commitment to a community and to a participation in the regular social and communal life of this city.

It is not something which is obviously in the entire purview of this particular minister, but he is a minister who is responsible for the provincial direction and provincial goals for the city of Winnipeg, and we will want to be asking him about the social changes that he has seen and the kind of plans that he has for the inner city of Winnipeg in the absence of the training programs and of the economic impact of the trilevel agreements that have made some difference to the city of Winnipeg over the last number of years.

We have had the opportunity to talk about The Forks and North Portage. I think there may be a couple of questions which may come up on that, but I recognize that we have primarily discussed that with the chief executive offices of each of those organizations.

We have also had some concerns about the environment which continued to, I think, be addressed under other departments as well. I do want to raise the issue again of the decreased funding from this department to the Dutch elm disease battle in the city of Winnipeg, as well as to

discuss some areas of provincial waterways, riverbank policies, the riverbank corporation, which we have not heard very much about lately, and of course, to the environmental planning over waterways and the airport context as well.

We do not have very much time today, so I will leave that and hope that we have the time to address each of those as we come to them.

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Madam Chairperson, I want to make my opening comments very brief because, as my colleague the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) has pointed out, we do not have much time, and we want to give adequate attention to the line-by-line details of the Estimates.

I do want to indicate to the minister that it is interesting that his department has been legislatively strong in a sense that there has been a lot of legislation coming out of this department and spoken to and put forward by this minister in the last number of years. Throughout that period of time there has been a lot of opportunity for debate on some of the issues that have come forward in this department.

When one looks at the actual numbers in this department and factors out the grant to the City of Winnipeg, it is not that big a department in the financial sense, but it does have a very vital role to play. Of course, that is geographically restricted in terms of the province overall to the city of Winnipeg; however, it is an important department in terms of its leadership in the City of Winnipeg and where the city is going, and has come into a lot of controversy revolving around the pieces of legislation which have come forward.

The Core Area Initiative that my friend indicates is important to her is certainly important to our party. We have had a lot of debate on that issue. It is important, I think, at this point to come forward with some type of a plan. I hope the minister can give us some further details as to where those negotiations are at with the other two levels of government.

The upcoming civic elections, of course, will provide a dramatically different, I think and I hope, City Council for the coming term. So to a certain extent we are at a crossroads for Winnipeg, and I and our party think that is a good thing and look forward to a new and improved City Council after the next election.

The Dutch elm disease initiative that my friend indicates, we have gotten together on, and we have

taken, I think, a fairly nonpartisan approach at least with respect to the opposition parties in trying to impress upon the government and in particular the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), although, I think, the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst), as well, should have a very real interest in this in ensuring that we do not lose the urban elm forest which we have and are so blessed with in this city.

Madam Chairperson, there are other issues, and I want to get into them in the line-by-line analysis. At this point, I simply want to indicate to the minister that I think we have fundamentally disagreed with him on points which have come forward in legislation, in particular, on the issue of the Headingley secession. I believe that was a blueprint and will prove to have been a mistake for future years.

But I do say that this minister has been forthcoming with information when asked, and I appreciate that. He has consistently called me and the critic for the New Democratic Party to his office and given us advance notice of legislation and what it would contain. I appreciate that, and I certainly do not question his personal commitment to the department.

While we, of course, disagree with his views, which is natural and understandable, we do appreciate the fact that he is candid and, to the best of his ability, tells it like it is. So we have no intention of making these arduous Estimates for him, nor do we have any intention of questioning at the end his salary or making that a sticking point as is sometimes the case with other departments. But we will have some questions on a line-by-line basis, so we look forward to getting into those.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Madam Chairperson: I would remind all members of the committee that the Minister's Salary is deferred until all other items have been passed. At this time, I would invite the minister's staff to enter the Chamber.

Mr. Ernst: Madam Chairperson, if I take the opportunity—I am not sure that critics are familiar with the staff of the Department of Urban Affairs. On my immediate left, Mr. Jim Beaulieu who is the deputy minister; I think both have met him. We have Mrs. Marilyn Waldner, who is the manager of Revitalization—I think is the appropriate terminology; and Mr. Vernon DePape, who is our finance and administration officer, on my right.

Madam Chairperson: 1. Administration and Finance (b) Executive Support: (1) Salaries \$236,000.

Ms. Friesen: I am just looking for my right page. Are we looking at page 14—the same one? I wanted to ask about the increase in managerial salaries here. It is about a \$6,000 increase in the managerial salary. I do not think there has been any increase in the number of people in the department, and it is a department which, I believe, supervises a couple of agreements, not the ARC agreement, perhaps, which is still listed. But essentially, there are 14 people in the department and we have a deputy minister with a salary of \$86,700.

* (1450)

I would like to say, first of all, this is not an issue of personality or individuals or people. It is a question of increase in salary in a department which has not increased and which is relatively small in provincial terms, in terms of supervision. I wonder if the minister could perhaps give us some account of the reasons for that and where perhaps he sees the future. What do the next five years look like for the position, not the person, but the position of deputy minister in this department?

Mr. Ernst: Firstly, Madam Chairperson, I can say, it sure as hell is not mine, but apart from that, it is the salary of the deputy minister, and with the GSI, general salary increase, and merit increases, that is what happens. You are familiar with the step program of merit increases, and then when you couple that with the GSI, that is what happens. So you have an increase of that amount.

In terms of the department's future, obviously somebody has to be in charge. Now, whether it is a person that is a deputy minister—and that is what former governments chose to employ as the head of the Department of Urban Affairs. Our government has continued that process. We think it is of sufficient importance that we should have a person in that role of a senior deputy level so that we are able to have expert opinion as is required.

It is not simply the direction or the supervision of staff. If you look at the organizational chart, most of the staff are manager level anyway; certainly, the operational end of the staff are. So, from that point of view, that is not a significant role. It is more of a co-ordinating effort and one of senior policy advice with respect to the City of Winnipeg.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Chairperson, I want to, I think for the record, note that the two Professional/Technical salaries in this section of the department did not increase, and I assume that is because of the government's freeze on salaries in the MGEA group. It is not a question of merit or lack of merit at this level.

Mr. Ernst: These, I think, just let me check—I have been advised that apart from that we did have one staff change occur part way through the year, and a new person was brought in at a lesser level. So there would be a small change there.

Ms. Friesen: Just a final comment, I think it is very striking within a small department to look at the impact of the government's wage rollback and wage freeze in the last session on its own employees where you have a striking, quite a striking increase in one person in the department, and the others, as the minister recognizes, largely managerial and technical and professional staff where there has been no increase at all.

Mr. Ernst: Madam Chairperson, I should point out to the member that these two are my support staff, my executive assistant and my special assistant. While housed in this department, they deal not just with Urban Affairs but also with Housing.

I can tell you this, that the one staff person who left during the past year left at the high end of the range, and I did not hire somebody at the high end of the range. I hired somebody at the low end of the range. So you cannot attribute this to necessarily the wage freeze, but to the fact that you have somebody new in the department who does not have three years of experience, who does not have that level of expertise that they can offer for which they should be commensurately paid. So that is the reason for the static line.

Madam Chairperson: Item 1.(b) Executive Support: (1) Salaries \$236,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$48,500—pass.

1.(c) Administrative and Financial Services: (1) Salaries \$169,300.

Mr. Edwards: I guess we are sitting down in this committee, so I will stay seated. It fluctuates from department to department, but I notice my friend from Wolseley is doing that so I will too. Yes, I know what the rules are but I will follow protocol.

I note that one of the activities identified under this heading is to assist with the financial administration of provincial activities under the Core Area Initiative.

The Core Area Initiative office, of course, is closed now. There were complaints coming from various sectors that the Core Area Initiative's financial planning left something to be desired and that there was a problem with not just administrative costs, but financial accountability.

I wonder if the three parties to the agreement are undertaking a thorough review of the financial efficiency and accountability of the Core Area Initiative now that it has been wound up?

Mr. Ernst: We are not aware, Madam Chairperson, of any accountability problems with respect to the Core Area Initiative. We have had clean audits all the way through. We have had no indication of any concerns with respect to the accounting or the financial administration of the Core.

Where we have had some discussion, and some concern I guess, is program effectiveness, program audit, or an analysis of did the program meet the needs or meet the intent of what it was intended to meet. We have had some analysis of that, but by and large, what is done is done.

Most of the money was determined to be spent on program rather than navel gazing. So as a result, again, as the program wound its way down—and that is really when I came in, was in the last few months of the program—the determination was that we should spend the money on programs and to do the things that the Core was intended to do, and not to spend it on a lot of analyses that may or may not provide any major benefit. So that basically is where it is at.

Mr. Edwards: The minister says, what is done is done and that is true. It is over. The question that I had, and perhaps it is more appropriately put later on when we actually come to the administration of the Core Area Agreement structurally. My question is not with respect to programs so much as the process by which money was spent, that is, the various committees and the decision-making structure at the Core Area Initiative.

It would strike me that for purposes of determining whether or not to duplicate that structure or change it, there should be a thorough review, and I would be interested to know if one is being done and if it is being done by someone other than the parties involved. Has there been any company or organization contracted with to review the decision-making structure of the Core Area Initiative as we knew it?

* (1500)

Mr. Ernst: Madam Chairperson, the simple answer is at the present time no, although there was an analysis of the whole core model done a year or more ago that was reasonably positive, I think, in terms of the overall delivery of the core program. It dealt with the entire model, not just, I think, the kind of tight focus that the member is referring to.

Madam Chairperson: Item 1.(c) Administrative and Financial Services: (1) Salaries \$169,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$28,900—pass.

2. Financial Assistance to the City of Winnipeg: (a) Unconditional Current Programs Grant \$20,910,000.

Ms. Frlesen: Madam Chairperson, I just wanted to know if there is—I know there is an unconditional grant—ever any written report that is presented on this, on the unconditional grants?

Mr. Ernst: Because it is an unconditional grant, Madam Chairperson, Urban Affairs does not require a written report. We feel that the process that the council must go through to spend the money is adequate protection for the public in terms of how it is expended.

Ms. Frlesen: With the withdrawal of the new municipality of Headingley, is there any proposal to reduce this grant?

Mr. Ernst: Madam Chairperson, that bridge has not yet been crossed. We are not in the 1993 Estimates cycle yet, although it is looming. There may be—no decision has been taken—a per capita arrangement of some kind, but that has not been determined.

Ms. Frlesen: Perhaps I could phrase it another way then. What is the basis? Is it a per capita basis at the moment? It has been this amount for some time now, I think, has it not?

Mr. Ernst: I guess we are a little out of sync in terms of the question. I assume you are talking about provincial-municipality tax-sharing payments. No, there will not be any change, at least I do not anticipate there will be any change.

Ms. Frlesen: Maybe we should clarify. We are looking at the Unconditional Current Programs Grant. Could I ask the minister what is the basis for the current allocation, and has it been the same amount for some years now, which was my understanding?

Mr. Ernst: I suppose, Madam Chairperson, it is relatively arbitrary, but it has been the decision of government over time that, based on what it can afford, what it has historically provided, and these—for instance, this year I think it has increased 2 percent over last year, roughly, so that it has gone from '85-86, it was \$18,200,000. It is now, '92-93, at \$20,910,000, so it slowly grows as time goes on, based principally on what government feels it can afford.

Ms. Frlesen: So then to clarify, there is no indication at this time that it would be reduced as the size of the city of Winnipeg is reduced, since it is an arbitrary allocation.

Madam Chairperson: Item 2.(a) Unconditional Current Programs Grant \$20,910,000—pass; (b) Urban Transit Operating Grant \$17,450,000.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Chairperson, I have some questions for the minister under the City of Winnipeg operating grant for the urban transit. I had the opportunity in the last Estimates last year to ask the minister some questions on this section, and I would like to have that opportunity again.

Can the minister give me an indication of the breakdown of the Urban Transit Operating Grant, because I believe there is a Handi-Transit portion of that, if I am correct, and if it is not in there, can the minister give me a breakdown on what the extra costs or grant is that is allocated to the City of Winnipeg to operate the Handi-Transit portion of the transit system?

Mr. Ernst: Madam Chairperson, this line refers to the current operating costs of the City of Winnipeg Transit system exclusive of capital or acquisition of equipment. We make no distinction. Fifty percent of the cost of operating the transit system which includes Handi-Transit is covered under this line subject to a cap, upper limit if you will, as outlined in the Estimates. Handi-Transit is part of the City of Winnipeg Transit system, and as a result there is no distinction made. This is the second year, I think, that there has been no distinction drawn between Handi-Transit and the regular operations of the transit system.

Mr. Reid: Madam Chairperson, the last Estimates the minister gave a figure of Handi-Transit brokerage of \$425,000. Does that same brokerage fee—is that part of the grant to the City of Winnipeg for transit costs, because last year he gave me a

separate item showing it was a separate grant to the City of Winnipeg for Handi-Transit operation.

Mr. Ernst: That number that I think I provided the member with last year was what the amount was in 1990, fiscal year 1990. Last year the amount was rolled into the regular Transit Operating Grant as part of the lump sum, and we provide 50 percent cost-sharing now on a lump sum basis over the entire operation of the transit system, including Handi-Transit and including Handi-Transit brokerage.

Mr. Reid: Does the minister have any indication of the type of revenue that was generated by the City of Winnipeg Transit? Does this \$17,450,000 represent the 50 percent? Is the other revenue generated by the City of Winnipeg for the transit operations an equal amount? Do they anticipate that to be an equal amount to the figure that is shown here since it is supposed to be a 50-50 cost share?

Mr. Ernst: It seldom, Madam Chairperson, ever works out exactly. This is all an estimated process, but, in general terms, the city provides 25 percent of the cost of operating the transit system, the province provides 25 percent of operating the transit system, and the farebox provides the other half or 50 percent. So we cost-share 50 percent the deficit, not the total cost of operation.

Mr. Reid: Last Estimates, I also had the opportunity to ask the minister of the different types of bus technology that were available. We saw out in the front of the Legislature last week displays of various pieces of transit equipment that are supposed to be the new and latest technology. Of course, we saw several pieces of this equipment are manufactured right here in our own city of Winnipeg, and that, from my experience, seemed to be state of the art.

* (1510)

I asked last Estimates, when we talked about the grant that is provided for the deficit for the City of Winnipeg, why the government does not attach some strings to the deficit grant that is provided to the City of Winnipeg to encourage the city to undertake the purchase of product that will allow all members of our society the opportunity to use the regular transit system.

As we well know, looking at the pieces of equipment that were on display last week, there is a great deal of extra expense that goes into specialized pieces of equipment, and that if we had

and made use of the pieces of equipment that are now a regular part of the production and the assembly-line production of these plants right here in our own city of Winnipeg, we would allow our seniors, our disabled people, our mothers with young children in strollers, and other members of our society who may have difficulties getting on and off the current transit buses, the opportunity to access the regular services, if these pieces of equipment, this latest technology, were in use.

So I ask the minister: Has any consideration been undertaken by his department to attach some strings to the grant that is provided to the City of Winnipeg to encourage them, or has any encouragement gone forward from his department, asking the City of Winnipeg to consider purchasing this type of technology, whether it be locally in the city of Winnipeg or in the province of Manitoba, which, of course, would be advantageous from an employment perspective, but also because we want to provide a readily accessible service to all members of our society, including the disabled and the elderly?

Mr. Ernst: That is really two questions. The first is related directly now to the technology aspect. The Department of Urban Affairs is not in the transit business. The Department of Urban Affairs is in the business of providing the framework for the City of Winnipeg, in which it should operate. The City of Winnipeg is in the transit business.

The City of Winnipeg also knows its market and knows what services it should or is necessary to provide. So we are of the view that the City of Winnipeg best knows its market, its ridership and what equipment it should be purchasing.

Secondly, and that is relating to the question of attaching strings, I gather, to the purchase of buses locally. There is only one manufacturer of transit buses in Winnipeg and that is New Flyer Industries. New Flyer Industries sells annually anywhere from 200 to 400 buses, 35 of those may or may not go to the City of Winnipeg. If we were to introduce a preferential purchasing policy for the Province of Manitoba related to New Flyer Industries, New Flyer Industries would be the first one to scream.

With their exports, if they were to be frozen out as they are in Quebec by the way—unfortunately some work, prior to my coming to this department, I had initiated on that behalf to determine if we could try and seek out opportunities for New Flyer in Quebec. Nonetheless, when we started directing trade

barriers around an exporting province like Manitoba, particularly for New Flyer Industries, I think we are sending a very wrong signal to New Flyer's customers, the fact that you are prepared to freeze out other manufacturers just because New Flyer is here.

Alone, New Flyer's presence here in Winnipeg should give them a distinct cost advantage over any other supplier simply on the basis of delivery alone, and if they can be competitive in San Francisco and Minneapolis and Las Vegas and Toronto and Boston and Vancouver, certainly they can be competitive in Winnipeg.

Mr. Reid: I thank the minister for those comments, but I think he misinterpreted my question to him and the statements that I had made. I did not for a moment suggest that the strings attached to the grant going to the City of Winnipeg was solely for the use of purchases of bus technology through the New Flyer plant although that would obviously be for the spinoff benefits for the City of Winnipeg, and to our advantage in the sense of job creation opportunities for our residents here.

What I was asking was the fact, and I look back to the objectives from the minister's own Supplementary Estimates, and the second objective that is listed in that booklet. It says: "To promote public transit as a viable transportation alternative to the private automobile in view of the environmental, social and economic benefits associated with increased transit ridership"

When I talk about this new technology being available and having us play a role when we provide the grant to the City of Winnipeg or to any other communities around the province that have public transportation systems, that we attach some strings to it so that we can meet this second objective, so that we look at the social impact costs that are involved, because there is a tremendous amount of cost right now to provide the specialized vehicles.

The disabled members of our society do not want to be treated differently than other members of our society. They want to be treated the same and equal, and if we had this type of bus technology available in the city of Winnipeg, it would allow these residents, these disabled people, the people with disabilities, the opportunity to use this technology. They could get on and off at the regular bus stops the same as anyone else, in weather that would be allowing them to do that.

That is why I mentioned to the minister that if we had this grant with strings attached indicating to the City of Winnipeg, at least indicate to them, that this would be to the benefit of all members of our society, that we would allow these people to use this regular type of service, not only for the people who are in wheelchairs but for the young mothers that have strollers and want to take their children shopping or out visiting; or we have seniors in our communities that need the assistance of cane or crutches that would like to get on and off at curb height without having to climb up and down stairs. This technology provides for that no matter what the curb height, because it has a kneel-down technology involved with it allowing the bus to raise and lower it, and it does it all in 45 seconds. So there is not a time consumption factor that is involved. They can still meet the same scheduling requirements.

So that is why I asked the minister why we do not attach those strings to the grants that we provide so that we can allow for other members of our society, give them equal access and equal opportunities. They have mentioned this time and time again. If we are serious about providing for these members of our community, then we should take that step forward and attach some strings to that grant.

Mr. Ernst: Madam Chairperson, I have, since becoming minister, met with a number of representatives of handicapped organizations. Not once have they brought forward the suggestion that the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) brings forward, but rather they are looking for enhanced Handi-Transit service, because the ability of getting from one's home, where the Handi-Transit service picks them up, to a conventional bus stop, notwithstanding the technology on the bus, presents almost an insurmountable barrier particularly in the winter months here. The ability to get from their home where the walk may be cleared and so on down to the public thoroughfare, but then to get from there to the bus stop becomes a very substantial barrier. So they have not made any representations to me at all. I am not aware that they have made any representations to the city either. Now, you know, we will be prepared to look at and discuss it with them.

I am not prepared to attach any strings, quite frankly, to these grants, but I am certainly prepared to take it up with the city to see if they (a) have considered it, (b) have any demand for it, and (c) assessed the cost effectiveness. The problem is, of

course, that you would have to virtually equip all of your buses because you never know which one is going to be there at the time that the public needs it. So you would have to, over time, convert your entire fleet to that technology. Now, I said I did not know whether they have considered it, they may have. See, we do not get into a detailed analysis of operations of the transit system other than on a financial basis, but I am prepared to discuss it with them.

Mr. Reid: The minister raised an interesting point about seniors in their own homes looking to access the regular transit service, and I think back to my own community and think about the seniors that are in the community—and a part of what the minister mentioned does apply because not all of the seniors' residences are on the main thoroughfares where the buses move back and forth. I think back to the major facilities in my own community, and I am talking about the seniors' residences, the apartment blocks, the low-cost housing, a lot of it constructed within the last decade. They are on major thoroughfares, and the ones that are contemplated to be constructed in my community, and I do not think that my community is much different than a lot of others, a lot of these facilities are being constructed on main thoroughfares that will allow the seniors to leave their homes and to go right out on to a bus stop, right at the corner, because in a lot of cases these facilities are constructed in that area, so they do not have the great distances to walk and they do not have to fight the elements for a long way.

* (1520)

It would allow them the opportunity to utilize this service, but the barrier that is there for them now are the stairs that they have to climb. The minister mentioned about phasing in the purchase of this technology. I think that is possible and if we were to give some direction, some guidance to the City of Winnipeg and others, stating that we would prefer to see them move in this direction, and if necessary make it conditional, then I think we will be doing the right thing and we will be providing the proper direction for the people with disabilities and for the seniors in our community and others.

I hope the minister will take that into consideration and have his department review that with the different representative groups of our city here and let them have some input into that process because I am sure he will find, as I have found in my own community, that people would like to have that

opportunity. Talking with people with disabilities right on the steps of the Legislature, they have indicated to me last week and other times before in my meetings with them that they would prefer to be treated the same. They would like to have access to that technology as part of the regular transit system. I hope the minister and his department will consider that.

Madam Chairperson: Item 2.(b) Urban Transit Operating Grant \$17,450,000—pass.

2.(c) General Support Grant \$8,262,000.

Mr. Edwards: Just under this appropriation, I wondered if the minister has received any detailed information as to the recent proposed increase in pensions for city councillors and what has happened with that? It has gone through various contortions and it has now gone to Mr. Justice Monnin.

I wonder if the minister has information regarding what was passed. I realize it is not his jurisdiction, but my office, and I am sure his, have received various requests for information. Is there a detailed report which was ever given to him by City Council on this issue?

Mr. Ernst: Madam Chairperson, first to the payroll tax transfer back to the City of Winnipeg, it is based on their actual payroll.

With respect to the other question raised, no, I have no information.

Madam Chairperson: Item 2.(c) General Support Grant \$8,262,000—pass.

Resolution 125: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$46,622,000 for Urban Affairs, Financial Assistance to the City of Winnipeg, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1993—pass.

Item 3. Urban Policy and Agreement Management (a) Salaries.

Ms. Friesen: I want to use this section to ask about the Winnipeg Region Committee and about the planning for the Winnipeg region.

The minister has heard my comments on this and the sympathy that I have with anybody who does try regional planning in the Winnipeg region area. I do not pretend that it is easy, but I have tried to emphasize how important I think it is. I think the minister perhaps shares some of that.

I thank the minister for providing me with one or two of the minutes of the Winnipeg Region Committee. I would like to say at this time though

that I would like to see the rest of the minutes. I believe I have had meetings three and five; I would like to see the others. I assume there were minutes from the other ones and there is a meeting, I believe, coming up this month.

Mr. Ernst: First, let me suggest that we changed the name at the last—we did have the meeting, it was last week—no, a week before last, 27th of May, I guess it was, two weeks ago. We did have the meeting, we changed the name. It is now the Capital Region Committee, not the Winnipeg Region Committee—small point.

With respect to the minutes, part of the problem we had was that the committee was meeting about every four months, and then minutes would not get approved until the next meeting. We have now restructured that so we are giving the municipalities two weeks following the time of our mailing of the minutes so that they can review it.

If there are any changes that need to be made, we will make them and then they are available for distribution, so we will be able to provide you with the most current up-to-date minutes. Quite frankly, they are a little more productive, I think, as you will see when you read them, than were the earlier meetings where it was kind of a groping-in-the-dark process.

Ms. Friesen: Will those minutes be available publicly? Are they, for example, going to be filed in the archives or the provincial library, because I know that there are more people than myself who are interested in looking at the regional process?

Mr. Ernst: Well, they go to every member and municipality, so in terms of being public, that is about as public as you can get. They go to the City of Winnipeg; they go to all of the rural municipalities surrounding Winnipeg and are available through our department. We do not file them as a matter of routine practice with any place in particular. They are available either through the municipality or through ourselves.

Ms. Friesen: I can see that they are widely distributed, but my point is public deposition and public accessibility. That is something which I obviously would like to see much more of at the City of Winnipeg, for example. So starting, perhaps, in the first place, the province, which does have an archives, which does have a library, which does offer public access to this kind of information—municipalities do not. The City of

Winnipeg certainly has very little of this, even though it has available to it the City of Winnipeg Library. So I am asking the province to make public deposition in the same way that it does with its annual reports and Estimates.

Mr. Ernst: I will certainly take the suggestion of the member under advisement.

Ms. Friesen: I want to clarify something too about this new name, the Capital Region Committee. This is then separate from the Sustainable Region Committee and separate from—no? Maybe we should clarify that? What regional committees exist at the moment?

Mr. Ernst: Group of municipalities, Madam Chairperson, surrounding Winnipeg, including Winnipeg. What started off was a Winnipeg Region Committee. We have since—because of the predominance of the name Winnipeg, some may have felt there was an overbearingness from Winnipeg, so we changed it to Capital Region—which really it is, the capital city's region—simply to try and take away from the name Winnipeg, giving it more predominance than the others, and trying again to bring together communities of very divergent interests into a common process.

That committee is undertaking a sustainable development strategy for the Winnipeg region. Part of the sustainable development strategy relates to land-use planning, which is the primary focus of some people, at least, with respect to the Winnipeg or capital region.

* (1530)

Ms. Friesen: Yes, Madam Chairperson, it is the land-use planning which, I think, in the first instance concerns most people, and I am interested in the relationship between the sustainable development strategy, and presumably the committee of the capital region which is going to look at that, and the draft policy of the rural development, the new provincial land-use policies. Is that the starting point for this program? They are still in the draft form. I believe they have been circulated once. They have not yet made it into legislation or regulation, and there are still many comments being received.

So I am interested in the minister's perspective on that provincial land-use policy, and the way in which it will have an impact upon the criteria and work of

the sustainable development strategy of the Capital Region Committee.

Mr. Ernst: The 15 municipalities surrounding Winnipeg that are part of the Capital Region Committee will be subject to the provincial land-use policies whenever they are made applicable and however they are made applicable, so as the strategy progresses, they will have to progress either in tandem or in sync because ultimately the two will have to fit together. Presumably, that should not be a problem, at least theoretically, because the provincial land-use policies should, by and large, reflect the province's commitment to sustainable development.

There may be a glitch here and there, I do not really know at this point, but they are not applicable at the moment to the city of Winnipeg. That is something that has not yet been finalized as to whether they will or will not. It is very difficult to create a set of land-use policies for rural Manitoba that have equal impact on the city of Winnipeg without leaving a lot of things on the table, because of the very nature of the fact that the province's largest city and two-thirds of its population are resident in one place. So it has not yet been finalized but it may be that, as time goes along, the provincial land-use policies, in general, will not apply to the City of Winnipeg. I cannot say more at this time.

Ms. Friesen: Is the minister prepared to look at a different set of land-use policies for the Winnipeg region, for the capital region, or is he going to try and apply the provincial land-use policies to that region?

I am not sure where the priorities are. I mean, I think we both agree that Winnipeg is different, that the province of Manitoba is different in having a substantial proportion of its population in that area. I think we all know the rate at which the surrounding suburbs of Winnipeg are growing, some of which are within the city boundaries, many of which are outside it, and that the real growth, the real expansion in Winnipeg, is coming in those extra-Winnipeg areas.

So I am wondering if the minister has looked at the provincial land-use policies. Does he see that as sufficient to guide the planned development of that capital region or does it require something different, something special, beyond the general land-use policies which are applicable to Brandon or to Dauphin, for example?

Mr. Ernst: I guess we will not really know until we go through the process and find out what comes from the sustainable development strategy process. It may be that the provincial land-use policies are in conflict in some areas. It may be that you will have to meld a kind of Plan Winnipeg and the provincial position with respect to that, related to overall planning in the capital region.

I do not want, quite frankly, to try and jam square pegs in round holes at the moment. This process is tough enough as it is. You are taking very divergent views. This is not the question of the lower mainland in British Columbia, where you have a whole bunch of urban municipalities all kind of lumped together and they all have significant populations and significant interests not dissimilar. That is what was done under Unicity virtually. This is not St. James and Transcona and Fort Garry getting together to try and come up with a new planning strategy for what was then called Greater Winnipeg. We have very, very divergent views.

You have municipalities like Rosser, with a population base of 600 or 700 people who do not want to have any development, nothing. You have the municipality of East St. Paul which wants every stick it can get and then some. You have West St. Paul and St. Clements which are probably somewhere along the periphery of that, leaning more to the pro-development than the anti-development. You have St. François, Cartier, Macdonald, all of which, municipalities, by and large, have very little in the way of interest.

So there are a number of very divergent views at play here. To try and—I do not want to say, direct, because direct is not the correct word; well, leadership, maybe is the correct word—to try and lead these people toward a sustainable development strategy that will meet many of the needs of those municipalities, yet at the same time recognize what the inherent problems with wholesale development happening. While we saw an article in the newspaper not long ago about a 22 percent increase or something along that line, in East St. Paul or 18 percent, I think maybe it was the number.

It really reflected in terms of the actual numbers very few people. You know, in percentage terms it was large, but in actual numbers the city of Winnipeg had far more. I think the difference was something like 300 or 400 people versus 22,000 even though Winnipeg's growth rate was 3.6 percent.

Anyway, I am getting a little off topic, but the fact of the matter is that as we guide this process along, I think we will sort of hold the provincial land-use policies on the one hand, Plan Winnipeg on the other and see where the process takes us. So that at some point, where they may or may not become in conflict, then we will have to see what adjustments need to be made in order to accommodate.

Ms. Frlesen: One of the reasons I am suggesting that there be a special category of capital land use planning is because it seems to me, as I read the provincial land use policies, that what we are seeing is a combination of quite high-minded ideals, but some municipalities might see them as limitations. Some might not, given the various interests of the groups that you have already mentioned.

But, for example, page 28 of the provincial land use policy draft suggests a minimum lot size of two acres, for example. Now, is the minister looking for those kind of specific guidelines for the municipalities around Winnipeg? Are they going to be subject to the provincial land use policies, or is there going to be something different for them?

Mr. Ernst: The answer, I suppose, is yes. If the provincial land use policy document is adopted, that the member refers to, then it will apply. But you have to recognize that there are three kinds of sustainable development strategies as they relate to municipalities or local government, if you will.

One is the northern sustainable development strategy, the other is rural, and then the third is capital regions. So I think by virtue of the fact that it is a separate sustainable development strategy, that it is going to recognize a number of the concerns that I think maybe rest in the mind of that critic from the NDP.

As I say, we are not about, at this point, to try and reinvent the wheel by coming up with a whole new set of guides, because there are specific problems and there are—I mean, for instance, just within the sustainable development strategy concept for the rural municipality of Rosser, two acres might not be enough, and in East St. Paul it might be too much.

So to set a policy in place at the moment that is so restrictive that it does not have some kind of flexibility to deal with those interests, I think at this point, is a little premature.

We would like to proceed down this path over the next year and a half which is the projected time line for the conclusion of the sustainable development

strategy to see where we go and what needs to be changed in order to accommodate it.

* (1540)

Ms. Frlesen: So you are looking at a year and a half to develop that strategy. Could the minister tell me in the interim what the connections are with the provincial land use policy? What input is this department having into the development of those? When is that policy to be presented, because I gather it is already delayed? The draft I have is January '92, which, I think, is the most recent one.

I am looking for some co-ordination here. Are we going to put in place a provincial land use strategy and tell all the surrounding municipalities that they are subject to this—in some cases, quite specific, which some would see as restrictions, others would not—and then to come in two years from now with separate and different capital region strategy?

Mr. Ernst: Firstly, Madam Chairperson, let me say that the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) and I co-chair the Capital Region Committee. Secondly, both the Minister of Rural Development and I are members of the Provincial Land Use Committee of Cabinet which deals with questions of policy planning related to areas outside of Winnipeg. The deputy sits on the Interdepartmental Planning Board.

There is a PLUC strategy in place that is continuing that deals with the question of the capital region, the fact that they are deferring any major subdivision until all of this business is finalized. I anticipate that will continue. Certainly the policy of PLUC is to continue it, so that we will defer any major subdivision. The municipalities themselves, in fact, are doing that.

They understand where the problem is and what the concerns are, so rather than foster any major problems until certainly the Provincial Land Use Committee plans or policies are adopted, there has been a deferral and will continue to be a deferral of any major subdivision. We are talking that one- or two- or three-lot splits and things of that nature have gone on, and there has been a few of them. But anything of any significance is not being proceeded with.

Ms. Frlesen: Just to clarify. I realize it is not your responsibility to approve those subdivisions outside of the city of Winnipeg, but that restriction or regulation will remain until a capital region strategy

is approved, or until just the provincial land use strategy?

Mr. Ernst: For the moment it is the provincial land use policies, and have not yet raised the question beyond that. When we get to that point, then I will be raising the question of the sustainable development strategy for the capital region, and I do not anticipate any problems related to that.

Mr. Edwards: Madam Chairperson, one of the activities of this branch, the Urban Policy and Agreement Management, is to review legislative amendments, administration of The City of Winnipeg Act. I know the minister meets regularly with the City of Winnipeg officials to discuss many things, amongst them the changing structure of the city of Winnipeg. I wonder if there has been any discussion with City of Winnipeg officials on a reconstitution of a Winnipeg police commission or some such other body. Has that matter been raised in discussions with the City of Winnipeg in this last year?

Mr. Ernst: No, Madam Chairperson.

Mr. Edwards: I wonder if the minister can indicate whether there has been discussion on broader issues, general issues of review of police by the City of Winnipeg, and whether or not the present model can be improved upon, specifically the committee for parks protection and culture at the City of Winnipeg. Or does the minister leave those discussions entirely to the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae)?

Mr. Ernst: Madam Chairperson, by and large, when those kinds of discussions take place it has been the practice of the city and I think the provincial government, both this government and previous governments, to have those discussions take place direct with the line department. Formal communications that relate to any line department in the government generally come through the Department of Urban Affairs, and we act as the co-ordinator on this side, or here in the provincial government, to direct those issues. There may have been discussions directly either with the mayor or the minister or on an administrative level with the staff of the Department of Justice, but we are not aware either at a staff or political level that any discussions have taken place.

Madam Chairperson: Item 3.(a) Salaries.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Chairperson, I want to ask about the Plan Winnipeg. The minister had some

difficulties with some of the comments made by the City of Winnipeg in its Plan Winnipeg proposals. I think in relationship again to the Winnipeg region the City of Winnipeg suggested that there should be perhaps some more co-ordination or some particular attitudes developed towards development on the outskirts of Winnipeg and the minister believed that did not have a place in Plan Winnipeg. I wondered what the minister's recent reflections were on Plan Winnipeg.

Mr. Ernst: Madam Chairperson, as I indicated earlier, this is not an easy process. When you look at what was in place previously, which was implemented as part of The City of Winnipeg Act in 1971, that process for involvement of municipalities on the periphery of Winnipeg quite frankly did not work. It horribly alienated those municipalities until the present day, created animosities and friction that were quite frankly very, very counterproductive in the overall scheme of things.

I know, I participated as a front-line member of that process. I know what the people feel. I knew what they felt then, and I know what they feel today. If we are going to get a strategy that will have the support and not have the constant conflict and agitation, but have the support of the area municipalities in terms of what we have for an overall land-use plan in the periphery of Winnipeg, then it has to be a co-operative effort.

It has to come from a commitment by all members or a substantial majority of those members to make it work, because the previous structure did not work. I was concerned, quite frankly, that the view of the present commissioner of the City of Winnipeg, from what I have been able to determine at least in the public accounts, is that he thinks the previous governments used the Big Brother approach, that we should simply impose it upon the surrounding municipalities and tell them that is the way it is going to be and too bad if you do not like it.

I do not think that is any way, quite frankly, to get the co-operation and the commitment out of those area municipalities. In fact, I have been bending over backward trying to do just the opposite. I get quite frustrated, quite frankly, by statements being made or reports being brought forward by the commissioner to the City Council committees that tend to frustrate that kind of activity, because every time somebody raises toll gates at the city border or an imposition of planning directives and those kinds of things, it just totally frustrates the process and

creates all kinds of fears and all kinds of concerns in those same groups of people that I am trying to give some kind of comfort level to, to say that yes, we are prepared to work with you to try and reach some common ground, shall we say, with respect to a strategy.

* (1550)

Now, what happens if we do not? I do not want to think about it, quite frankly, at least not yet. What I want to think about is reaching a common goal, to reach a strategy where everyone or the majority at least or significant majority will be able to work together towards that common goal. If that occurs, Winnipeg and the entire capital region will be very much better off than it would have been had an imposition been made.

Ms. Friesen: Can I follow that up with asking you for a report on the status of the rivers corporation? What is the level of co-operation there at the moment between the province and the city?

Mr. Ernst: Slim and none. It is my view that they are not interested at the moment, which is unfortunate because you need only take a look down the riverwalk to know what riverbanks mean and can mean to the city of Winnipeg. Now, that level of intensity is not good enough elsewhere but many, many good things have come from that.

So I basically took the view—I mean, I am not going to beat my head against a brick wall. If the city does not want to co-operate and sees this as some kind of power play by the province to usurp their authority, which is crazy in my view, but nonetheless, it seems to pervade the minds of some at least anyway, I am prepared to wait until after the election and the new council is in place and then pursue it again. Maybe taking a fresh look at it after the election, we will be able to achieve something.

Ms. Friesen: I will look forward then to discussing that next year. What I understand then is, it is still on the minister's agenda and that he will pursue it with another City Council.

I wanted to ask about the 1992 ministers' conference which is also under this appropriation, and perhaps to use that as the opportunity to ask the minister about his attitudes to the proposed changes in the federal role in urban affairs. First of all, will there still be a minister's conference if federal government moves out of urban affairs; and second of all, has the minister had any input, any discussions with the minister who is negotiating the

Constitution for Manitoba on those proposed changes?

Mr. Ernst: Yes, Madam Chairperson, I have had some discussions. Of course, there is no federal minister. There is no federal presence, by and large, short of the odd agreement, I guess, negotiated from time to time. Overall, it would be no big deal. The feds do not do anything anyway to speak of apart from, say, the odd arrangement like the Core or through some line departments like CMHC or whatever. In terms of pure urban involvement, there is very little in the way of involvement by the federal government, so I do not view that one way or the other, whether they do or they do not. Quite frankly, devolution of power over urban affairs is already in the hands of the provinces and has been for some time, if not forever. I am not enough of a historian to know, but certainly in my political lifetime it has been by and large in the hands of the provinces.

Ms. Friesen: What I was looking for from the minister was essentially a statement of policy. Is this government supporting the transfer of Urban Affairs to the level of the province? I am particularly asking for his opinion and the kind of input that he has had as Minister of Urban Affairs; and whereas I agree with him there has certainly been a concerted lack of interest by this particular government in urban affairs and although there has not been a minister, there certainly has been some monies, and certainly an interest carried over perhaps from previous Liberal governments in urban policy, urban transport policy, policies directed towards core areas. Is the minister saying he welcomes the transfer of that to the province?

Mr. Ernst: Madam Chairperson, as I say, that is not national or federal policy. That is a one-off agreement on the Core Area Initiative. That was likely the policy of the current minister, whoever he or she was or may be under these kinds of agreements as the federal partner. So, in terms of overall schemes of things I do not see involvement or no involvement in a Core Area Initiative as federal for Winnipeg, for instance, as a federal policy initiative at all. I say it is a one-off agreement negotiated because somebody was either smart enough or devious enough, as the case may be, to be able to put together a package like that.

I say by and large, to my knowledge, federal involvement in urban affairs has been nil. They have no minister, nobody is responsible from the

federal government's point of view. There are no line departments; there are no budgets. The money for Core Area Initiative does not come from anywhere than other line departments of the federal government doing their individual things but under different delivery mechanisms perhaps than normal.

So I do not think it matters one way or another. It is much ado over nothing.

Madam Chairperson: Item 3.(a) Salaries \$494,800—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$120,100—pass; (c) Winnipeg Wards Review Committee: (1) Salaries zero—pass, (2) Other Expenditures zero—pass.

(d) Canada-Manitoba Winnipeg Core Area Renewed Agreement.

Mr. Edwards: Madam Chairperson, with the various announcements which have come forward on a sporadic basis about the Core Area Initiative, can the minister give an update as to the present status of the negotiations with the other two levels of government with respect to a renewal of the Core agreement and what has been agreed to, and what is still on his agenda as to what has not been agreed to, what he would like further than what has already been agreed to?

Mr. Ernst: Madam Chairperson, I guess since I became the Minister of Urban Affairs in February of 1991, this subject matter has been on the agenda of federal-provincial discussions. The agenda over that period of time changed slightly in focus, back to a tripartite type of arrangement which was fortuitous and I think in the best interest of everyone.

We are not yet completed our negotiations with respect to the overall general funding of the agreement. There are some discussions and have been some discussions with respect to individual parameters, focus areas, things of that nature, but we are a ways away yet from finalizing a tripartite arrangement.

I thought, quite frankly, that we would have been able to complete this six months ago. I was very optimistic at the time, perhaps naively so, but nonetheless optimistic that we could have done something by the end of 1991 or early January. That has not happened and we are a ways away yet from concluding, I think, even the general parameters for an agreement.

Where I think there is some general agreement is in terms of the process once that occurs. Once we can kind of get a general framework, then we would

want to undertake some public hearings to hear what the community has to say with regard to what programs were successful, what were not, where the focus should be, what new areas should be addressed, and things of that nature. Then take that information, match that with the interests of the other partners, and coming from that a strategy for delivery of a program based on some general funding parameters, and cut the cloth to fit the suit, I guess. So that is where, basically, we are at.

*(1600)

Mr. Edwards: Following up on that, I have two questions, and I will put them together. One is: Is the minister convinced that there is a commitment in principle at least, a real commitment from the federal government to renewal in some form or other? Secondly: Is there an agenda of meetings, either at the ministerial or at the senior official level which is ongoing? Are there meetings still planned and still being held with a view to constructing those types of procedural parameters which he says are the next logical step to take?

Mr. Ernst: I am hopeful, Madam Chairperson, that we will be able to successfully conclude a framework within—I have guessed in the past and been wrong, I hesitate to guess again—but relatively soon. However long that may be, I do not know. I think there is a willingness to try and work toward that goal. In terms of ongoing staff, we have that ready. That part of it is ready.

Every government is facing a problem today. There are limited funds available, notwithstanding the fact, having sat on Treasury Board for four years, that there probably is not a bad program. Somewhere there is redeeming value from every program that ever is brought forward. They would all be nice to do if you had the dough to do it. But, unfortunately, everybody is facing tight constraints.

I mean, one of probably more significance to the inner city than the loss of a Core Area Initiative Program would be the fact that the 3 percent cap on CMHC budgets will have much more material effect on housing of the poor than any Core Area Initiative Program, and that is forever. I mean, we are talking 35-year commitments under CMHC for provision of those kind of programs. That, ultimately, is probably more harmful, to see a 50 percent reduction in our ability to deliver social housing units, than it would be to face what you could do under a Core Area Initiative agreement.

However, be that as it may, the process is ongoing. We are hopeful that at some point in the not-too-distant future, we will be able to come to a successful understanding. Following that, we will have some public hearings.

Mr. Edwards: Was there any discussion at the time that the Core Area Initiative was being wound up between the city and the province to continue certain programs, try to bridge them until a new agreement could be put in place?

Mr. Ernst: The only one that comes to mind is the employment and training program, which, quite frankly, at our insistence was extended until the end of June. Core staff kept on to ensure, again, in anticipation that we would have something before now. The expectation that we would be able to flip them into that new program right away. That has not happened, but that is as much, I guess, of their bridge funding of those programs as has gone on to date.

Mr. Edwards: So now that it is coming to the end of June and there is no new agreement, is that going to be bridged further?

Mr. Ernst: We have no plans nor any money to do it.

Mr. Edwards: This subappropriation, and perhaps the minister can clarify this for me: the 1991-92 Adjusted Vote came in at \$3.2 million. There was an authorization provincially for \$7.8 million.

Similarly, 1993, there was an authorization for up to \$2.1 million and actual expenditure was just under \$400,000. Can the minister clarify what was underspent? Have I got that correct?

Mr. Ernst: That is not an exact easy answer to provide, but I can say this: with respect to the available monies under the core, there are commitments made against those monies, both capital and current, and they are funded on an as-required basis out of these kinds of appropriations.

But, for instance, there is currently sitting around \$2.7 million in the land expropriation account to provision for the expropriation of the last two or three properties that are still outstanding. Whether the money does not flow, so there may be in it to match exactly commitments against the capital or current, is not all that easy. You know, if you have got a specific thing, we might be able to trace it through for you.

Mr. Edwards: Well, this is obviously just going on the figures we have in front of us, but there are explanatory notes which are helpful which indicate that total authorization for the Core Area Renewed Agreement including expenditures related to capital was \$7.8 million for '91-92, actually spent was \$3.2 million. That is a shortfall of \$4.6 million approximately.

There was another \$1.7-million shortfall as a result of the 1992-93 expenditures authorized, which was \$2.1 million, which, if you take away roughly the \$400,000 that was spent, is \$1.7 million then, for a total over the two years of about \$6.3 million. That is monies that were authorized but not spent in those two years to March 31, '92, with an expected shortfall up to March 31, '93 of another \$1.7 million. So that is the shortfall based on what I read here on this page. Is that wrong?

Mr. Ernst: My staff tell me you are wrong. Let me suggest, first of all, that total expenditures under the Core to March 31, 1992 represent \$93,395,854. That leaves an unexpended balance in the Core Area Initiative II of \$6.6 million approximately—\$6,604,146 to be exact. That is roughly what is in here in terms of expenditures over the balance of the agreement up to September 30, 1992, or is it March '93 for the last claiming date? Last claiming date is March 31, 1993. Assuming nothing else happened, we should in fact expend \$100 million over the six years or seven years that the agreement has been in place up to the last claiming date and there should be no money in the budget next year for this.

* (1610)

Mr. Edwards: I understand that the six-point-whatever million dollars which is represented on this page is there in the event that the Core Agreement is renewed. It is monies available and authorized to be spent on that but will not be spent if it is not renewed. I see people at the table shaking their heads, so maybe the minister can explain what they are saying to him.

Mr. Ernst: Madam Chairperson, the appropriate name for the purposes of this book and other referrals, the Canada-Manitoba Winnipeg Core Area Renewed Agreement is in fact Core II, which expired back in March. It has nothing to do with any future or new agreement and is simply to do with Core II. So the money that may or may not be in the budget, we will get to it in due time; for any renewed agreement is another line, it is not here. This is

simply for commitments made against Core II and the funding that will be required to resolve those commitments through to the last claiming date under the agreement.

Mr. Edwards: But the amount set aside for Core II then was not fully spent, correct?

Mr. Ernst: Not yet, but it is anticipated to be.

Mr. Edwards: The minister has talked about a \$2.7 million fund to cover expropriation costs. What else is there that comes up to the \$6.3 million which appears to be excess based on these two lines?

Mr. Ernst: Madam Chairperson, a myriad of programs that are still running. We have any number of them, and I can go through the list if you want. I can supply you with a list at a later time, but there are a number of, particularly under the \$6.3 program area which is community service functions. The SKY project, a good example, is in fact a two-year program running through until the end of next year and is funded actually under this agreement, will be cleaned as we go along and so on. There is \$1 million on the Pantages Theatre, for instance, that we anticipate expending under this agreement.

Mr. Speaker, I am glad you showed up.

As I say, I can provide you with a list if you want, unless you have a specific one you wanted to refer to.

Mr. Edwards: Well, it is obvious from the minister's earlier answer that there is no provision in the expenditure of the remaining monies for the employment assistance program. That much is clear, is that as at the end of June there is no more money for that program.

Mr. Ernst: That is correct. The money that was used to extend it from April 1 until the end of June was actually found in the old agreement. It is commonly or affectionately or whatever referred to as slippage, where you budget or anticipate a certain expenditure and then it does not quite reach that level, so you have a little money left over in a number of different programs. So that money was then accumulated and put into extending or using that to bridge the agreement until the end of June.

Mr. Edwards: What was the cost of that program per year, Madam Chairperson?

Mr. Ernst: \$12 million over five years.

Mr. Edwards: Is that a relatively constant figure in the sense that it was functioning at a regular level,

so if you took \$12 million and divided it by 5, on an average that was roughly, give or take, what that program cost; or did it go through various phases where it cost more per year? If so, what was it costing in the last year?

Mr. Ernst: Like most of these kinds of programs, Madam Chairperson, it seldom was a constant level. Generally speaking, you had a start-up phase or an initial phase where it went up and then it reached a peak or zenith and then declined, and that is basically what happened with this program. The expenditure in the last year was \$1.8 million.

Ms. Friesen: I wanted to ask about core area as well. I do not think you have to be as cynical as I am, Madam Chairperson, to suggest that in fact the whole core area renewal strategy is related to and directly connected to a federal election strategy. As the minister describes it, it seems to me what we are going to see is a framework agreement, signed in the next six months, with much celebration and many flags displayed and federal and provincial and civic officials, presumably after the next civic election, too, all well to the forefront on this.

Then we will have public hearings which will give much public display to the appropriate cabinet ministers and other federal officials who want to keep their seats in Manitoba, and we may indeed get a new core area agreement of some kind.

But it seems to me that for three years, however the minister wants to cut the pie, we have had no new money flowing into the core area of Winnipeg. In that time, I do not think I need to recite the statistics that we have had in this House day after day; an increase in unemployment; an increase in homelessness amongst children; an increase in the food bank use; an increase in the poverty of families in the inner city.

The core area, in fact, has been successful in avoiding the depopulation of the inner city which has happened to so many other American cities. It certainly avoided that, in that under difficult economic conditions many people have remained, and in fact, been attracted to the inner city, but they have remained poor.

In fact, the Core Area Initiative has been a holding operation, and it is one that three year's ago essentially came to an end as far as offering any kind of hope or change for people in the inner city or who are increasingly moving to the inner city from rural Manitoba.

I think we should put that on the record. I know the minister is aware of the economic and social conditions in the inner city of Winnipeg. I do not want to suggest that he is not, and since the purpose of this department is to suggest some provincial goals for the city of Winnipeg, I wonder if the minister could perhaps give us some idea of how this department is addressing those social and economic conditions in the city of Winnipeg?

Mr. Ernst: The Department of Urban Affairs is not the city of Winnipeg; it is not the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism; it is not the Department of Family Services; it is not the Department of Health. Those departments deliver line services as does the City of Winnipeg deliver services to its resident population.

* (1620)

However, we are aware that significant problems remain in the core of the city of Winnipeg and are hopeful that, through the provision of a further agreement, some additional assistance can be provided. We carry on discussions with the Department of Education, the Department of Family Services and other departments in the provincial government over strategies and implementation agreements and a variety of other things that occur that will benefit the city of Winnipeg. We do carry on discussions, strategy planning and things of that nature to try and address the needs of those people. [interjection]

(Mr. Ben Sveinson, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

True, we have not made millionaires out of everybody in the core area through the Core Area Agreements. I think there has been significant benefit accrued to the core area in a variety of ways, some physical in nature and others related to the human need there. There have been failures. There have been limited successes. There have been large successes. However, that is to be expected, I suppose, under these kinds of agreements.

Nobody has all the answers. Nobody can pluck out of the air a solution to all of the problems that face the core. In particular, quite frankly, Mr. Acting Chairperson, the fact that we have endured a prolonged international and national recession has severely impacted—for all of the good that was on the horizon, had the economy remained buoyant and had those people been able to flow from their variety of assistance training, et cetera, into the work

force, and to get good solid jobs so to get on with their lives—would have been highly desirable. That is not what happened.

The economy went the other way for a whole host of reasons. I am not for a minute going to blame anyone, because you cannot blame only one rationale, even though members opposite tend to blame the Free Trade Agreement for everything. There are a whole host of things that occurred in a very short time span in the global economy. I happened to be where the action was at the time that this was occurring and was being recognized, for I was the Minister of Industry and Trade at the time, that a whole host of things came together in very short order to create not an insignificant havoc amongst the world's economy. We are still paying the price for it.

It is unfortunate that occurred right at the time when the benefits from a lot of the training initiatives, entrepreneurial initiatives and a number of things under Core were coming to a head, because, all of a sudden, the direction and the goal that they were working toward, all of a sudden, there was a bottomless pit at the end of that road, there was not an opportunity for them to launch off into the kind of things that they were going to do because the economy had taken a significant turn for the worse.

So we recognize the problem. We are trying to seek and assist in solutions to that problem, but ours is a function of analysis, co-ordination, and trying to pull together resources in order to direct and focus them in the best way possible.

Ms. Friesen: The minister has given us an international perspective on the changes in the global economy, but specific to Winnipeg is the issue of the aboriginal population, the migration of that aboriginal population, its education levels and its ability to access, first of all, training, and then, second of all, jobs in the city of Winnipeg. It seems to me that an urban ministry in the province of Manitoba faces the same problems that other cities face, yes, but in addition, and specially, it faces that particular problem.

So I would have expected that from an Urban Affairs department in the province of Manitoba we would have seen some policies which address that, and some policies both now, and looking to the next three to four years, would be emanating from this department. So can the minister perhaps suggest to us what conversations he has had with the Minister of Native Affairs (Mr. Downey)?

What prospect do we have of an urban-aboriginal strategy? What information collecting, what policy and planning is taking place within his department to address those issues which are specific to Winnipeg?

Mr. Ernst: Well, the Department of Native Affairs is taking a lead on an urban-aboriginal strategy. I personally have been to meetings with urban native leaders. We are having discussions on a number of fronts related to these issues.

It is a problem that is somewhat unique to Winnipeg and to maybe Regina, probably the two cities with the most urban aboriginal populations. So it is not that there were lots of great models to follow from other places. There are unique problems related to the urban aboriginal population.

I know my colleague from time to time has gotten into difficulty by suggesting that a job on the reserve, or at the reserve or near the reserve is not a bad urban-aboriginal strategy. People migrate here for a reason, and to a system that is relatively foreign in terms of their traditions and culture. It is not necessarily what they want either, but they are here and we have conditions to address and problems to address along that line.

So there is more I guess—you can probably roll aboriginal self-government and a whole host of other situations into an urban-aboriginal strategy. If in fact the migration is going to happen the other way under aboriginal self-government, and the fact that the native population will want to become, on their home reserves, a government to themselves and provide for their people and so on. If that is a more attractive option, then people will return there. The end result may happen over a long period of time, but I do not think it is going to happen overnight. Certainly we have a problem at the moment.

So there are a number of issues that are being dealt with both in the Department of Native Affairs and in the Department of Urban Affairs. Particularly, too, as it relates to any renewed core agreement that obviously a significant portion of that will have to reflect the concerns and problems of our native people of Winnipeg. We are very cognizant of that, and in our planning toward that end, we will have to address that issue.

Ms. Friesen: Has the minister or the department conducted any research into aboriginal conditions, economic, social, political conditions in the city of Winnipeg?

Mr. Ernst: Well, the department has not conducted its own specific research. It is not that research has not been conducted by a number of other agencies from which we benefit from their analyses.

We are not also blind or deaf or, you know, we recognize a number of the problems that exist that do not need a whole bunch of research. We know, generally speaking, a number of those kind of problems just with our association with other agencies and so on.

Ms. Friesen: It seems to me that other agencies asked the kind of questions in research which are specific to their agencies, and as the minister said, this is not the Department of Health and Welfare, it is not the Department of Native Affairs, but it is a Minister of Urban Affairs who has a responsibility for the city of Winnipeg, which has a predominant aboriginal population.

So it seems to me that relationships, for example, between aboriginal and nonaboriginal, between the gaps in income between suburban and inner-city aboriginal people, the migration rates between reserves and the city of Winnipeg are questions which are not being asked by other people, and which have direct implications for the kind of planning which should be going on by the provincial department in charge of Urban Affairs.

So I am concerned about the absence of research, because it indicates to me a lack of questioning and a lack of policy planning.

* (1630)

Mr. Ernst: Well, Mr. Acting Chairperson, I do not know that anybody has got an exclusive handle on all of the problems that are present and so on, but there is an awful lot of work gone into analyzing the concerns and the problems relating to the urban native population.

Maybe they all have not been asked, I do not know, but I suspect that both the aboriginal leadership in the city of Winnipeg and from all of the analyses done by a whole host of government, nongovernment, semi-independent, government-funded host of agencies and service organizations related to the natives in the core or in the city of Winnipeg should have provided most, if not all, of the information.

If there are some vacant spots along the way, we will have to address those.

Ms. Friesen: It seems to me that one of the responsibilities of a Department of Urban Affairs

with a research component would be, in fact, to know where those gaps were; to at least, at the very minimum, have some kind of watching brief that says, look, here are the current studies, or studies of five years ago—which is, in fact, when many of them were done—and here are the gaps that we should be looking at.

I wanted to ask a specific question about the CP station and what the current provincial position is on that. Where are the negotiations on that? When can people expect to see some resolution?

Mr. Ernst: Mr. Acting Chairperson, we have given the native community a commitment. That commitment is subject to a number of conditions—I think reasonable business conditions associated with that, things like, where is the rest of the money going to come from to buy it? Where is the money going to come from to renovate it? Who is going to pay the rent and the operating costs to ensure operating costs in the future? Do you have a business plan related to the operations of the building to ensure that, once in, you are able to operate on a reasonable basis, and so on? Are those business plan cases confirmed?

I saw one suggestion somewhere along the line that the provincial government was going to move into 100,000 or 200,000 square feet of space at some rental that was way above market, and that was the basis upon which a business plan was predicated. Well, have you asked the provincial government if they are going to do that? Have you asked the federal government if they are going to do that? Do you have those commitments in writing, at least in principle if not in terms of actual leases, and those kinds of thing?—as any prudent investor would in the event of acquisition of a property such as this. I have my own view about how the CPR should have reacted to this situation, but it is my view.

Ms. Friesen: Well, it is tempting to pursue that line, but I do not think I will, given the time. What I understand the minister to say then is that he has a commitment. Does that mean dollars?

Mr. Ernst: Yes.

Ms. Friesen: How many?

Mr. Ernst: I do not have a problem, personally, in saying how much. I am not sure it has been announced yet, or transmitted. The reason I know is because I am a member of Treasury Board.

Ms. Friesen: Is it in here?

Mr. Ernst: No, it is the Department of Native Affairs, so I would hesitate at the moment until I clear where we are at.

Ms. Friesen: I will pursue the amount then in Native Affairs. What I understand the minister then to say is that there is a commitment to a sum of money, but that the business plan is not yet acceptable.

Mr. Ernst: I said, Mr. Acting Chairperson, it was subject to a number of conditions, conditions which I offered to the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen). I do not think those conditions have been fulfilled, at least it had not been as of last week. It is not a question of being acceptable. There were some speculations that I referred to earlier, not a business plan, so that we want, as any prudent investor would want, an answer to those questions satisfactory to the government before we advance any money.

Ms. Friesen: I understand through the Department of the Environment, I do not know through which particular block of federal money, has made a commitment—the federal department, Parks Canada for example.

Mr. Ernst: That is what we are led to believe, but I have no paper on that at all.

Ms. Friesen: Does the provincial government have any intention of renting space in that building?

Mr. Ernst: I do not think any decision has been made in that regard at all.

Ms. Friesen: Is the minister aware of any federal intention to rent space in that building?

Mr. Ernst: No, I am not.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Sveinsson): Item 3.(d)(1) Payments to Other Implementing Jurisdictions \$55,000—pass; (2) Payments to Other Provincial Departments \$182,000—pass; (3) Departmental Expenditures \$130,000—pass.

Resolution 126: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$982,400 for Urban Affairs, Urban Policy and Agreement Management, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1993—pass.

Item 4.(a) Financial Assistance to the City of Winnipeg \$15,400,000.

Ms. Friesen: I wanted to ask here about the changes to the appropriation in Dutch elm disease. I gather this is one—am I under the right line here? Capital grants to the City of Winnipeg, \$149,000 for Dutch elm disease protection capital replacement

program. Could the minister confirm that line in fact has diminished from the previous year and by how much?

Mr. Ernst: That urban reforestation line in the capital Estimates is on a 50-50 cost-share basis. So if the city spends more we spend more. If the city spends less we spend less. It is a 50-percent cost-share arrangement.

Ms. Frlesen: Could the minister's staff give us the amounts on that line for the last three years?

* (1640)

Mr. Ernst: Mr. Acting Chairperson, in 1990—now, the city is on a calendar year—it was \$194,000. In 1991, it was \$220,500. In 1992, it is \$147,200, again contingent on the city's matched funding.

Ms. Frlesen: Could the minister explain—I know the minister has not been minister for those three years—but could the department explain the differences in those three amounts? What is contained in the discussions between the city and the province that would lead to such fluctuations in amount? Why, for example, do we now, in 1992, have a reduction from \$220,000, when the amount of Dutch elm disease reported last year was an increase over the year before? What was the basis of those negotiations?

Mr. Ernst: There really are not, Mr. Acting Chairperson, any negotiations per se. The city determines how much it wants to spend on a particular line and the province cost-shares it. But there are some general parameters, there is what we cost-share and what we do not cost-share. But they determine the level.

What has happened, I suspect, is that in 1992 the City of Winnipeg severely cut back on its capital borrowing for a variety reasons, one of which was our insistence that they control their servicing costs. As they cut back on their budget for 1992, presumably this is one area where they cut back. But we provide 50-cent dollars; if they want to spend a million, we provide half, presumably, within that general kind of framework.

Ms. Frlesen: Has the minister pursued the issue of Dutch elm disease prevention with the city in any of the meetings with the official delegation? I mean, at the same time, if this is the case, that the city is spending less on the capital reforestation here, it is certainly true, if you look at the amounts, that the city spent considerably more. It has been increasing by, I think, two to one the provincial contributions to

the removal of dead elms, to prevention and detection, et cetera, of Dutch elm disease.

So I am wondering, is there a general discussion that has gone on between the city and the province in this area? Has there been any policy focus on it? Is it in this department or is it in another department?

Mr. Ernst: This funding is provided through the Department of Natural Resources, as the member is aware. The minister has discussions and we have discussions with the city all the time with regard to, you know, they want more money. That tends to kind of be the focus of the thing. It is simply, give us more money and we will look after it.

I mean, the reforestation program and the development of an urban nursery for potential reforestation, we recognized a long time ago. As a matter of fact, I happen to be the guy who brought it forward when I was at the City of Winnipeg. To suggest that it is fine to control Dutch elm disease, and it is fine to take out the dead ones and to provide very substantial pruning to try and keep the trees healthy and so on, but the fact of the matter is there is no cure yet, and the fact of the matter is we are going to lose American elm trees, and that ultimately, they should be replaced, they need to be replaced.

It is, quite frankly, not acceptable in my view that we should be replacing them with little saplings a half inch in diameter. I mean, it will take two lifetimes to reach any kind of major maturity in these trees.

So it was my view then, and it is still my view, and I encourage it whenever possible, that you need to start—and in fact, it was implemented 10 years ago, and presumably, today we are going to have 10 years of advanced start on that growth for replacement shade trees so that you can put in trees that are four or five inches around in diameter. Now the cost of providing those trees, the cost of planting them is substantial, a lot more than a little sapling that we talked about, but at least when you got a replacement, it is going to be substantial and it is going to provide—it will not provide all the ambience because you will not ever get the ambience of elm trees. The stateliness of those trees is difficult to match with any of the varieties that are kind of disease resistant today, the green ash and the basswood and so on.

You are not going to get those kinds of huge trees, I do not think, at least from what I have seen anyway. But at least you are going to have a substantial tree,

one that is not going to succumb to the first kid with a hockey stick going by it, or school bag or something, you know, as kids will do. But I guess that is where we are at. Sorry, I get carried away.

Ms. Friesen: But no such urban nursery was in fact established. The minister is talking about a policy idea he had some years ago of establishing an urban nursery for reforestation, but no such nursery was established.

Mr. Ernst: Mr. Acting Chairperson, referring to the time when I was a member of City Council, and in fact a program was established, and in fact significant sums of money have been put into that, and, in fact, there are presumably somewhere around—it was not a government sort of set off a chunk of land and said, this is where we are going to plant trees, it was funding provided to private growers to create that stock rather than the city hire a bunch of foresters and workers and so on to run the program.

It was better off to go to the nurseries and say, set aside a chunk of your property, grow these kinds of trees. This is what we want, and we want them 10 or 15 or 20 years down the road.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Sveinsson): Item 4.(a) Financial Assistance to the City of Winnipeg \$15,400,000—pass; (b) Riverbank Development; (c)(1) Payments to Other Implementing Jurisdictions \$1,280,000.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I had wanted to ask a couple of questions on Riverbank Development. I wonder if the minister would mind if I asked one or two questions in that area. I doubt if he is going to change his staff. Perhaps I could just ask specific to—[interjection] Yes, he has no staff to change.

I would like to ask: There was some discussion earlier about the Riverbank Development and The Forks, and I wonder if the minister can just indicate what the status of that is and what the plans are. I recall The Forks Renewal Corporation being in front of the committee, and as I recall, they had indicated they want—at some point, their long-range plan is to have the walkway on the south side of the Assiniboine as well. Is that part of the plan or do I have that wrong?

Mr. Ernst: I think I was at the same meeting and I do not remember that. Although there may be a suggestion that on the south point they may want to extend the walkway, once development takes place

in the south point, say from the railway trestle around onto the Red River. Although it does not ring a bell really with me, with respect to that, we can look into it if you like.

(Madam Chairperson in the Chair)

Mr. Edwards: Madam Chairperson, I am not saying that they said that. I recall them saying something about the south side, and it may well have been that in discussing the south point, which is going to be an aboriginal—dedicated to their use.

What involvement, if any, or discussions did the minister have with the city with respect to the development of the Richardson property out in Charleswood? Was there any discussion about preservation of riverbank for public access that the minister had?

Mr. Ernst: None.

* (1650)

Mr. Edwards: Did the minister see that as part of his role, to make representation with respect to riverbank use in this province or in this city?

Mr. Ernst: No, Madam Chairperson.

Mr. Edwards: At what point does the minister see himself or the provincial government having a role with respect to the use of riverbank property and its zoning and its development in the city? Is there no role that he plays of his own initiative, or does he simply wait for other levels of government to come to him in reaching the objectives, which I note are to work with other levels and the community to enhance Winnipeg's river quarters as natural and heritage resources? Does he see no role in that objective in playing—in being an advocate for the enhancement of our rivers as natural and heritage resources?

Mr. Ernst: Yes, Madam Chairperson, there definitely is a role. We made an offer to the city two years ago for Riverbank Management corporation to deal with issues such as this and a host of others affecting riverbanks. The city told us to take a hike. They did not want us to be involved in their involvement in the riverbanks and, because they own 60 percent of the riverbanks in the city of Winnipeg already, you pretty much have to have them onside if you are going to have any kind of an effect at all.

So I indicated—and you may not have been present at the time—I indicated to the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) that by and large on the

Riverbank Management corporation there is still no interest that I can perceive after advances to the City of Winnipeg. So what I intend to do is wait until after the election. Then once the new council is in place, then we will advance our proposal again or at least advance discussions toward that. Perhaps, we can come up with an appropriate arrangement that will see us in co-operation deal with the riverbanks overall.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Chairperson, I have some questions for the Minister of Urban Affairs on his position regarding airport protection legislation. As he knows, this is something that the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce is in favour of and have requested. I believe the City of Winnipeg is in favour of it. His colleague the Minister of Transport is in favour of it. The federal government has passed enabling legislation to allow provinces to pass airport protection legislation. Due to the time, I will not say any more. I know the minister is quite familiar with this issue.

So I would like to know what his position is and what the position of his government is. Are they planning to bring in the airport protection legislation?

Mr. Ernst: Madam Chairperson, the provincial Department of Highways and Transportation is in discussion with the federal Department of Transport following the passage of that bill the member refers to, to determine the method of creating an agreement between the federal and provincial governments to allow airport legislation to happen. It is presently, including Alberta, ultra vires. If it was ever tried to be enforced in a court, it would be thrown out. That is the legal opinions that have come forward.

So the reason that the federal government passed bill whatever it was this past winter was in order to provide for relationships to occur between the federal and provincial governments related to airport protection. We are in the process of doing that, and once that happens then we will get on with it.

Mr. Martindale: It seems to be quite successful in Alberta where apparently the legislation was brought in in 1975 and over 40 airports have been registered and another 37 are going through the public process to be regulated.

Could the minister indicate when he expects legislation to be brought in in Manitoba?

Mr. Ernst: As I say, Madam Chairperson, the Department of Highways and Transportation is in discussions with the federal government with respect to an agreement which is the first prerequisite. Notwithstanding the fact that Alberta has done a bunch of things, basically the legislation in Alberta says that it enables the municipality to provide a plan or requires in conjunction with the Alberta legislation to provide a land use plan related to that.

Anyway, I do not want to get in an argument with the member over whether Alberta works or does not work or whether it is ultra vires or not. The fact of the matter is we were advised we have to have an agreement with the federal government pursuant to the legislation before you can do anything. That is where we are at at the present time, and once that is done we will look at either (a) devolution of those responsibilities direct to municipalities under that agreement; or (b) introduce provincial legislation. That decision has not yet been determined.

Mr. Martindale: One final question: When do you expect to have an agreement with the federal government?

Mr. Ernst: If it is anything like some of the other things we are trying to do with the federal government, I would not hold my breath, but the fact of the matter is that we are pursuing it. I asked my colleague just the other day to check up again and see where we are at. I cannot give you an indication at the moment.

Madam Chairperson: Item 4.(b) Riverbank Development \$0—pass; (c) Acquisition/Construction of Physical Assets - Canada-Manitoba Winnipeg Core Area Renewed Agreement: (1) Payments to Other Implementing Jurisdictions \$1,280,000—pass; (2) Payments to Other Provincial Departments \$125,000—pass; (3) Departmental Expenditures \$40,000—pass; (d) Urban Initiatives \$5,000,000—pass.

Resolution 127: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$21,845,000 for Urban Affairs, Expenditures Related to Capital, \$21,845,000 for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1993—pass.

Item 1.(a) Minister's Salary, \$10,300—pass.

Resolution 124: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$493,000 for Urban Affairs, Administration and

Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1993—pass.

This concludes the Estimates for the Department of Urban Affairs. The hour being 5 p.m. and time for private member's hour, Committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 5 p.m., time for Private Members' Business.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Res. 33—Inner City Housing Upgrade

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), that:

WHEREAS large numbers of revenue properties in the inner city of Winnipeg are very old and deteriorating; and

WHEREAS the federal government had an excellent program to assist landlords with repairs; and

WHEREAS the federal government has allowed funding for this program to lapse.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the federal government to reinstate funding for a landlord residential repair program.

Motion presented.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to speak on this resolution, because I have considerable familiarity, I would say, with the problems not only that tenants have with housing accommodation in the inner city but also with landlords. It is quite interesting to be a tenant advocate and to only advocate on behalf of tenants and then get elected and have to consider the views of all my constituents and have to consider the views of landlords as well. So one might say I have gone through a bit of a conversion experience. I know the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ernst) will be happy to hear that.

When I was working for the United Church in North End Community Ministry, I was president of the housing concerns group, and we were advocating on behalf of low-income tenants, both in public housing and the private rental market. We

were very familiar with the very serious problems that many renters have, problems which sometimes were of their own making, but most often were the result of their landlords who did not keep up their revenue properties but allowed them to deteriorate. [interjection]

Well, the Minister of Housing is helping me with my speech, and I appreciate that. He said— [interjection]

When the New Democratic Party was in office, there were numerous programs to help landlords and tenants in the inner city, which the Minister of Housing knows well. In fact, if you look at his Estimates and compare the Housing Estimates from year to year, the number of programs and the number of dollars has greatly declined, especially last year to this year, because of the lapsing of the Core Area Initiative, which we will get into in Housing Estimates tonight, and also because of the federal government cutbacks.

In fact, this resolution is really directed at the federal government and asks them to reinstate the landlord RRAP program. I have had phone calls from landlords saying, I have problems repairing suites; it is a great expense; and is there any program? Regrettably, I had to tell them, yes, there was an excellent program but the program had ended. So they were not able to get the help that they needed.

We know that the need is great in the city of Winnipeg, because the housing stock in the inner city of Winnipeg is very old. In fact many other inner cities have had much of the original housing stock torn down and replaced, but in the inner city in Winnipeg much of the original housing stock is still there and deteriorating. In fact, I can personally attest to that living in a house that was built in 1922 and increasingly has problems with foundation and many other serious problems which cost a lot of money.

An Honourable Member: Put some money into it like the rest of us.

Mr. Martindale: Well, I am fixing it up.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Well, then do not complain.

Mr. Martindale: The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) says do not complain. Well, I am lucky, I can afford to fix up my house. We put three piles under the front of the house last year; 25 feet of concrete under the front of the house cost \$2,500.

An Honourable Member: That is why we are living in Manitoba.

Mr. Martindale: That is true.

Point of Order

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Could I have a quorum count, please?

Mr. Speaker: A quorum having been requested, I would ask the Clerk to count the members. Would all honourable members please stand so the Clerk can count the members?

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): The Honourable Mr. Manness, the Honourable Mr. Cummings, the Honourable Mr. Ernst, Mr. Laurendeau, the Honourable Mrs. McIntosh, Mr. Reimer, Mr. Lamoureux, Mr. Martindale.

Mr. Speaker: A quorum is present.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale), to continue with his remarks.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, before I was interrupted, I am fortunate that I am able to fix up our old and falling-apart house, but there are many tenants who cannot afford to fix up their house. In fact, the problem with the tenant is that you do not expect the tenant to fix up a house that is old and badly in need of repairs. Landlords have the responsibility, but frequently they do not have the financial capability, and so they look for assistance from government from time to time to make the necessary repairs.

As I was saying earlier, a large proportion of the inner city of Winnipeg has an older housing stock. Census data in 1986 suggests, for example, that of the 18,000 owner-occupied dwellings in Manitoba which require major repairs—and the definition of major repairs are repair to one or more basic systems or structural components—13,000 units were located in Winnipeg and 10,000 of these were situated within the core area of Winnipeg.

I should maybe point out that this problem is no longer restricted to the inner city of Winnipeg, but is spreading to what one time were new suburban areas that are now becoming older suburban areas. In fact, I have talked to people, and it is not just areas like River Heights where people have severe foundation problems, but places like Windsor Park

where you would not expect that people have structural problems in their homes, but they do.

Of the additional 48,000 dwellings in the province requiring minor repairs, it is probable that a large proportion is also located within the city of Winnipeg. So we know that the number of units is substantial. We also know that the ability of landlords to make significant repairs is impeded by their financial ability. Even where landlords want to make the repairs, they cannot afford to.

I have addressed the first "WHEREAS" and that is that we have thousands of units in the inner city of Winnipeg, very old and deteriorating housing units. The government had an excellent program. I do not have statistics on it. I wish I did, but the program was extremely helpful, and it did not just benefit landlords but it benefited tenants as well. It benefits everyone who lives in those units.

Regrettably the federal government has allowed funding for this program to lapse. In fact, I would go so far as to suggest that this is part of a pattern, that the federal government has allowed a number of things to lapse, most significantly their commitment to the Core Area Initiative. It seems that we have a very strong commitment from the City of Winnipeg. In fact, I remember the Choices coalition got the mayor to sign a commitment saying that the City of Winnipeg was ready to renew the Core Area Initiative.

We have had what I would describe as a lukewarm commitment from the provincial Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst) who has said, yes, he is in favour of it, but the negotiations are still going on and there is nothing that he can do about the commitment of the federal government. It seems that the federal government is the least-willing partner. In fact, I have heard people suggest alternatives, if the three governments cannot get their act together, cannot co-operate, cannot renegotiate a renewed Core Area Agreement, then perhaps the city and the province should go it alone on some programs.

* (1710)

Examples of those would be programs like CARUMP, the Core Area Residential Upgrading and Maintenance Program which ran its course and was terminated. It was an excellent program because it combined housing inspections with teachers' aides and social workers so that when the inspectors went in, they did not just go alone and condemn the properties and take them off the

revenue market, the rental market. Instead, they helped the tenants to relocate. The teachers' aides went into homes and helped people with homemaking skills and budgeting skills so that people were able to cope better with their low-income budgets.

The social workers were very instrumental in working with the families in finding suitable accommodation. Suitable accommodation is not easy to find in the inner city in Winnipeg. In fact, there is a very serious problem which has financial implications for the school board and the government. Because of the lack of decent affordable housing in the inner city, many families move and move frequently. One of the costs of that is when they move from one school to another. In Winnipeg School Division, they have hired migrancy teachers and they have a migrancy program. When children go from school to school they do not have to be retested, but rather their files follow them and the migrancy teacher hooks up with their new teachers so that children do not get behind. There are actually some statistics on this.

We know that if children move more than twice in one academic year, almost 100 percent of those children will fail their academic year. So that has a cost implication to the taxpayers, to people who pay taxes to support the education system. So there is a link between the quality of housing and the quality of education that children receive, and so we know that if we can provide stability and affordability in housing, children are going to do better in school.

In fact, there is a very interesting book written by Stan Fulham, the director of Kinew Housing, about his experience as general manager of Kinew Housing. He points out that at one time 70 percent of his tenants were unemployed, and that 10 years later only 30 percent were unemployed. I do not think he says it in the book, but I would conclude that the reason was stability in housing, that when people lived in one place for a long period of time they were able to get other things together in their personal lives, that they are able to go back to school and get more education or to get upgrading in their job skills. Then they are able to find employment, and they were not constantly moving as people on social assistance do.

In fact, the people we are talking about primarily are people on social assistance who are on the move all the time to find cheaper or better housing, or safer housing, or housing that is in a better

neighbourhood or a larger number of bedrooms or more affordable. Frequently we know that people move and get accommodation that is often more expensive, and they take the money for the rent out of their food allowance, their personal allowance and their special needs funds to put that money on rent simply because they want a better place to live and they are willing to make that kind of sacrifice.

So all of these people would be helped by a landlord residential repair program. I look forward to hearing the comments of the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ernst). I anticipate that he will be replying on behalf of the government, and I would think that this is the kind of resolution that we could pass unanimously today, because all of us can agree that landlords need assistance with their revenue properties.

So I hope that the minister speaks in favour of this resolution, and if not I will be interested to see how he amends it and whether he amends it to congratulate the government as they usually do. He may choose to talk about his housing programs in such an amendment or in his speech, but I think he might be hard-pressed to do that because there are so few of them now compared to even one or two years ago because of the ending of the Core Area Initiative and because of the ending of programs. In fact, his government ended the Co-op HomeStart Program. They ended the Seniors RentalStart program. The federal government cut out the federal Co-op Housing Program and have now cut back in the social housing budget.

This is one of the areas that the minister and I actually agree on. I described this as a miracle in Question Period one day. I look forward to discussing this further with the minister in Housing Estimates tonight to see what this minister is doing, what he is saying to the federal government about the termination of the Co-op Housing Program and about the devolution of housing responsibility of the provincial government. He is on record as saying that he is opposed to this.

We know that it has financial implications for the Province of Manitoba, and I would like to look at that further in Housing Estimates to see what the financial implications are for the Province of Manitoba. He has suggested to me that it is severe, and I agree with him because, as we all know I hope, most subsidized housing is cost-shared, 75-25, 75 percent by the federal government and 25 percent by the provincial government.

So the problem is not just giving responsibility to the province, the problem is what if there are no further dollars coming to the province. Then we are in big trouble, because the federal government is paying the majority of the costs and we have thousands of housing units. I think the minister's Estimates say 23,000 units of public housing in Manitoba. I understand that is the highest per capita in Canada.

So I will conclude now, Mr. Speaker, because my time is up. I look forward to the remarks of the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ernst) and to the third party and hope that this resolution in support of landlords and asking for federal government support will be supported by all parties.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Housing): An initial reaction to this is that if I happen to agree with the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) I must obviously be wrong and that I should not go along with such a resolution. But, Mr. Speaker, stranger things have happened in this world.

Mr. Martindale: Do you not support landlords?

Mr. Ernst: The member for Burrows asks, do I not support landlords? Mr. Speaker, some I do, some I do not. I do not for a minute support the slum landlords of this province for any reason.

Nonetheless, notwithstanding the fact that I may or may not agree with the member for Burrows, I think the whole question of the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program has been a very big boon, particularly in Winnipeg, the whole of the country certainly, but particularly in Winnipeg because we have the largest, I think, percentage of wood-frame housing probably of any major city in Canada. As a result of that, and plus, as the member for Burrows indicated, the soil conditions here in Winnipeg, Red River gumbo and all, have caused some considerable deterioration of our housing stock.

We also have a very large portion of our housing stock that is built prior to the 1930s and a lot of that has suffered as a result of advancing age, so to speak. But if you take a drive through some of the inner-city neighbourhoods today and see the kind of renewal that has taken place, it has taken place because of two things: neighbourhood improvement program and RRAP.

Those were the two major programs that over the past 10 or 15 years have severely impacted on, to the good I might add, Mr. Speaker, the inner-city

neighbourhoods. We have had substantial renewal of properties. I know I participated in some of the very early neighbourhood improvement cum-RRAP programs that were initiated and saw the kind of big turnarounds that took place. The very first was North Point Douglas where there was still a cohesive neighbourhood arrangement. That is spread over a wide variety of communities throughout the core area of Winnipeg.

I guess the only one that really did not come together as well as everyone would have liked or would have expected was the—I just forget the name now, it is the Centennial one, the one just immediately adjacent to the downtown—because I think a sense of community was a little worse off there than it was in most other places, that there was not a large, long-term resident population. Nonetheless, Mr. Speaker, those programs have worked significant benefits on a number of neighbourhoods around the core area of the city of Winnipeg.

Now, the question of landlord RRAP, to address the concerns, by a number of rental properties that are in seriously deteriorating condition, is one that I think I support, in fact, this government has supported for some time. We have attempted to address the question of landlord RRAP, both from reinstatement of the program itself, as it was, from conversion of existing other program dollars into that, because we see that as a very big potential benefit to low-income people. The fact of the matter is that there are a great number of low-income people living in those properties throughout the core. Yet there is no housing program to assist the owner of the property in maintaining it, keeping it up, improving it, making it better.

As a matter of fact, when you have a situation—and I had one just the other day, where the owner of the property lived in a suite on the main floor of the building and the upper floor was rented, then the RRAP grant was cut in half. Only the portion related to the home ownership was granted. The part relating to the rental accommodation within the same, basically an older two-storey home, was rejected.

It did not make sense. I mean, how do you apportion, if you have to put a pile underneath the foundation, how much goes to the rental unit and how much goes to the ownership unit? I mean, Mr. Speaker, if you do not pile under the thing, the whole

thing is going to fall apart, come crashing down around your ears.

* (1720)

So there is some good reason, I think, to ensure that this kind of RRAP program related to rental property should be brought back. Because it helps us more than maybe it helps other cities, in a national program, we are prepared to say, look, at least give us the opportunity of taking existing program dollars, maybe rent supplement dollars or nonprofit housing dollars even. Let us take some of that money and put it into rental RRAP. We will get more bang for our buck by doing that than we will by building new units. Then we will have an opportunity to be able to pull some of the program dollars out of our existing programs and put it into rental RRAP, so that at least we will get something in the area of 25 to one in terms of new units on stream because of that.

I think it is a very good opportunity for us to do that, but unfortunately the way Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation has been operating in recent times, they have not seen it quite our way and, as a matter of fact, have not let us put other program allocations toward this purpose. Of course, now with the reduction in CMHC—I should not say reduction, it is a capping of CMHC's growth rate—it will now again significantly impact dollars available to Manitoba, so that by the end of 1993, we will have a 50-percent reduction over 1991 in terms of dollar allocations available to us for reuse in the housing field.

We will continue to press the Minister of Housing, the Honourable Elmer McKay, on this issue. We support it 100 percent; we think it is a very valuable tool particularly for Winnipeg. Particularly because of the large amount of wood-frame housing, the large amount of housing that is older, the number of neighbourhoods where they are concentrated and things of that nature, we see a very great need. Unfortunately, CMHC has not seen that same need that we have, but hopefully over time, if we continue to press, we will be able to at least convert some of our program dollars into that area.

The other option, Mr. Speaker, with respect to trying to deal with this slandered RRAP issue, is the question of what we can do in terms of a new Core Area-type agreement for the city of Winnipeg. Now, we have been through my Urban Affairs departmental Estimates earlier today and had some discussion about that issue. While not yet resolved,

I am still reasonably confident we will resolve that, that we will have a new agreement. Quite apart from that cynicism demonstrated by the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) in that she saw this as a deep, dark Tory plot for re-election purposes, I have not sensed that at all with respect to negotiations. Maybe she is being a little bit too cynical on this issue.

Nonetheless, I think we have an opportunity, hopefully an opportunity, if this matter gets put into place, that we can deal some dollars out of that agreement toward this end, toward the support of the landlord RRAP, because, again, when I was saying the fact that we have 20-some thousand housing units in the province of Manitoba, the fact of the matter is that I still think by far the majority of low-income people live in homes other than those owned by the government.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, we want to pursue this. We want to try and reach some kind of conclusion with respect to this issue. The fact that we can either go through the conversion of existing program dollars from within the Department of Housing or through some new program dollars that may become available through a renewed Core Agreement or some agreement of that type, or at least that the federal government may see that this program has a large benefit in general and will see to reinstate some of the funding or alter their own resources to deal with this type of funding in order to provide that opportunity for that private-sector housing, because, as I indicated earlier, I do not have the numbers in front of me, but it seems to me for every unit that we could deliver on a new fully subsidized basis under landlord RRAP we could produce 25 units.

Those 25 units would go a long way to housing an awful lot of people in reasonable comfort and not slum-like conditions. It may well serve to bring back the number of units that are presently out of service, unavailable for people, back into service with a number of benefits. There is an economic benefit in that construction jobs and related activity will certainly raise income levels in terms of people who are, maybe, presently unemployed, building helps people, and so on.

The fact of the matter is they will raise the assessment value of the property and, of course, the municipality will benefit from that; the municipality and the school division, because of increased, enhanced values of those properties, and people

will have decent, affordable housing to live in. That is a win-win situation for everybody.

Maybe the benefit should not be as much as it was, maybe a reduced benefit program would be better, that while it gave still some benefit, it still gives you the opportunity of seeing those landlord properties being renovated. So there is a number of issues that we will have to address, and we will progress with them as we move along.

I would like to propose, Mr. Speaker, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) that we would have a friendly amendment to this particular motion. I would propose that the resolution be amended by deleting all of the words following the word "lapse" in the last line and substituting therefor the following:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba supports the government of Manitoba in its efforts to have the federal government reinstate funding for a Landlord Residential Repair Program.

Motion presented.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I must start off by saying that it is somewhat of an improvement from amendments that we have seen in the past, where, after the first "WHEREAS" we usually find that is deleted, but we still find it somewhat self-congratulatory in the nature in which it is being proposed again.

Having said that, I take the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ernst) at face value in the sense that when he talks about the importance of having the landlord residential improvement program here in the city of Winnipeg and particularly in the core area, I would hope that, in fact, it is a very high priority, because it should be.

There are a number of different issues that are facing the inner city, and one of the most important issues is the landlord and the conditions of many of the rented facilities within the inner city. We had at one time a program that allowed for landlords to be able to receive the assistance in order to improve those homes. It was not limited to within the inner city; it also included other areas, because what is very important here is that we recognize the fact that there are other urban areas outside the city of Winnipeg that also would benefit from a program of this nature.

* (1730)

The merits of this particular program and the other one that has gone hand in hand with it, the

Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program, both programs have gone a long way in ensuring that the areas of the province of Manitoba are revitalized, and it is one of those programs, Mr. Speaker, that prevent that downward spiral of many different areas. Programs such as this and the in-fill housing program, housing co-op programs all tend to improve the character of the different older or more established areas of our urban centres. In that sense, I stand up to indicate that our caucus support the resolution. We feel that it is a resolution that merits it, that the program should never have received the cuts that it received, and having said those few words, thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Speaker, just briefly I would like to indicate that our party agrees with the government's amendment. I anticipated that we would be in agreement. I did not anticipate the amendment, but it is a friendly amendment. So I would like to speak in favour of it and say that we would like this to come to a vote today. I have already talked to the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ernst) and indicated that we would do that. Before I do, I would just like to add a few more things to the record about the problem of revenue properties in the inner city and repairs, because frequently governments say, well, there is no money for this, but on the other hand governments find money for that.

A good example I came across in a brief on housing for Plan Winnipeg review '92 from the Winnipeg housing coalition presented September 16, 1991. The example that they use—well, I will quote: Plan Winnipeg also indicated that 80 percent of the housing stock required by the end of the century is already in service and that an emphasis must be placed on the revitalization and maintenance of existing neighbourhoods.

I think one of the problems we have in the city of Winnipeg is that we constantly have this tug of war which I think is illustrated by the Conservative and New Democratic Parties in this Legislature between suburban expansion and inner city revitalization. In fact, that same tug of war takes place on City Council where you have pro-development councillors and those who are opposed to more suburban expansion and want to revitalize the inner city. We in this caucus and our government when in office put a lot of money into things like neighbourhood revitalization programs. On the

other hand, great sums of money have gone to I would say subsidized suburban expansion.

When new subdivisions are built, developers pay for the cost of constructing roads, sewage systems and water lines, but they do not pay soft costs of increased policing, snow clearing, fire service, ambulance, or the greater load on sewage treatment. For example, when the new suburb Lindenwoods was being developed no mention was made of the \$14 million additional cost required for sewage. City councillors have tended to believe that increased taxes from the homeowners in Lindenwoods and other similar developments in Winnipeg would cover the costs of new infrastructures. This has not proven true. The source for this was the Winnipeg Free Press, December 12, 1989—a summary of a Free Press article.

Taxpayers from other parts of the city also subsidize new subdivisions. So, in conclusion, I would say that the government should find money for inner city revitalization. They should find money for programs like the landlord RRAP program which the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ernst) agrees with. Unfortunately, that money is often not forthcoming, but money is found for suburban sprawl. We on this side have a strong commitment to revitalizing the inner city and, for that reason, we are being very co-operative. We are going to sit down now and have a vote on this resolution. We are pleased that the government supports my resolution on inner city revitalization through landlord RRAP.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is on the amendment as moved by the honourable Minister of Housing (Mr. Ernst), seconded by the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), that the resolution be amended by deleting all the words following the word "lapse" in the last line and substituting the following:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba supports the government of Manitoba in its efforts to have the federal government reinstate funding for a landlord residential repair program.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Motion agreed to.

The question before the House is on the resolution of the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale), Resolution 33, as amended. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Motion agreed to.

* * *

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if there might be will of the House to give me the opportunity to do second reading on Bill 83.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave to bring forward Bill 83 at this time? No, there is no leave. [interjection] Six o'clock? No.

Res. 34—First Year Distance Education Program

Mr. Speaker: Resolution 34, resolution of the honourable member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), the First Year Distance Education Program. The honourable member for St. Vital.

The resolution falls to the bottom.

Is it the will of the House to call it six? No. Okay.

* (1740)

Res. 35—Environmental Youth Corps

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): I move, seconded by the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson), that:

WHEREAS the Environmental Youth Corps is structured to stimulate the implementation of local volunteer-based, action-oriented projects that provide opportunities for Manitoba youth to be involved in environment-related areas; and

WHEREAS the program will increase the level of awareness of Manitoba youth of the importance of group and volunteer-based efforts in the solutions to environmental problems and challenges; and

WHEREAS the program has funded such programs as recycling, town cleanup, park enhancement, clearing presently misused land for wildlife and wildlife conservation.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, the government and young people across the province join together to promote and maximize the benefits of environment-related projects.

Motion presented.

Mr. McAlpine: Mr. Speaker, the government of Manitoba has allocated \$1 million to a five-year environmental youth program. The program was initiated in June of 1991 and announced by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) at the Fort Whyte Centre for Environmental Education.

The program is a joint effort of Manitoba Environment and Manitoba Family Services and the purpose of the program is to promote and maximize the involvement and the participation of youth in the province, especially high school students in environmentally related projects.

The objectives of the program are threefold, Mr. Speaker. The first one is to stimulate the implementation of volunteer-based action-oriented projects that provide the opportunity for Manitoba's youth to be involved in environmentally related areas. It is also to increase the level of awareness among our young people, and the need for protecting and enhancing our environment in effectively managing our resources; to increase the level of awareness of Manitoba; use of the importance of group and volunteer-based efforts in the solutions to environmental programs and challenges.

Encompassing a fall and summer program, the projects are able to access \$5,000 grants and covered under these grants are materials, supplies, transportation, honorariums for participants and salaries for supervisors.

This is not an employment program, Mr. Speaker. It is all volunteer based, and the types of projects that have been funded through this program have been such programs as river cleanups, community enhancement, fish habitat restoration, recycling, and protection of the flora and fauna, restoring wildlife habitat, and rehabilitation of the natural environment in local parks as well as wildlife conservation, tree planting and composting.

Of the 1991-92 budget of \$200,000, a total of \$173,458 was awarded to 65 projects. There was a total of 89 applications this year, with 13 projects deferred to next year; 10 projects were not approved and one project cancelled the funding. Through these 65 approved projects, a total of 6,510 youths were involved in a variety of environmental-oriented projects throughout the province. Of the total funding awarded, Mr. Speaker, 42 percent went to the wages and the remaining 58 percent went to project expenses. There has been a spin-off benefit from the program of the job creation. A total of 63

short-term positions were created and a number of work sheets, and a total of 72,985 was approved for wage support. The total number of work weeks created was 264, and the average wage paid under the program to the supervisors was between \$5 and \$7 per hour. The average amount allotted per person for wages was \$1,122.85.

The criteria for this project was: The eligible projects must address environmental quality concerns, including environmental protection, enhancement, rehabilitation, conservation and resource management. Youths must be residents of Manitoba and between the ages of 16 and 24 years of age. Each project must have a clearly identifiable beginning and ending. Each project will provide hands-on experience for the volunteer youth, which is proven to be almost invaluable.

The eligible applications have been charitable and volunteer organizations, environmental organizations, service clubs, local governments including municipalities, band councils and aboriginal organizations. Educational institutions and student groups are also included as the eligible applicants.

Promotional efforts for such—our mail-outs were distributed with brochures, posters and a letter from the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings). These mail-outs were sent to Manitoba school boards, Manitoba Council on Rehabilitation and Work Incorporated memberships, umbrella organizations, nonprofit organizations, as well as youth groups in all Manitoba schools.

Environmental Youth T-shirts were also distributed to participants. Environmental Youth Corps buttons were developed for distribution to all participants. There have also been efforts to get local media coverage on some of the projects. A thank-you advertisement was designed and placed in all local and community newspapers for the youths who participated in the Environmental Youth Corps.

This advertisement was designed and placed in all local and community newspapers for all the youths who participated in the Environmental Youth Corps. This advertisement will also be used for a promotional effort for the 1992-93 program.

From the news releases, quotes from the Minister of Environment: The youth are among the people who are the most concerned about the environmental challenges of our province and planet, and I guess it is fair to say that the reason

that they are is because they are the people who are going to be most affected by this. They are the ones who are going to end up with the mistakes and the things that we have not done, and what has been left to us as we inherit the environmental pollution that we are faced with today in every aspect of our lives.

The EYC will develop into a major force, giving the young people practical experience in community service in career-oriented skills. These young people are demonstrating their commitment to their future by working to enhance their environment today.

Charitable and volunteer organizations, educational institutions and local governments are eligible to apply for support through the Environmental Youth Corps. Hundreds of young people are spending their summers cleaning rivers, planting trees, recycling and teaching others about the environment.

We have a lot that we can learn from our young people. The amount of time that the young people and the commitment that the young people make to clean up the environment is one that, I think, all of us could have the admiration for these young people in the commitment and the work that they do.

* (1750)

These young people are demonstrating their commitment to their future, to work to enhance their environment today. They are announcing that their first 25 projects approved by the program will receive \$75,000 in financial support. Environment projects involving youth at the ages of six to 24 years is something that is important because we are bringing young people at the most impressionable ages that we can, and they can learn from one another. I think it is something that the Minister of Environment—I congratulate him and his department, and commend the young people for the effort and the work that they are doing. It is only going to make our life on Earth and what we do in today's society and our wilderness—we talk about environmental commitments that we have to make and are making in government today. I think that it is something that we never even thought of many years ago. We talk about the environmental studies that were done by governments years ago and it was not even a concern and lots of times people are paying the price for that today.

I could certainly talk about some of these projects, but that is not the idea of what we are wanting to get

into. I think that I can only congratulate the minister for the effort that he is putting forward in protecting our environment. I think that the youth in our society today have to also be congratulated for what they are doing and the contribution that they are making. As I have said before, I think that we can all learn from these young people. I think that they only have one thing in mind when they are doing this, and that is to go out there and make things better for the people and to clean up the environment. When we consider the parks that we have in Manitoba, we have a lot to be proud of. We should be giving some recognition to these young people for the part that they are playing.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support this resolution and as far as the minister is concerned, the government's commitment of \$1 million on a five-year Environmental Youth Corps program is something that is long overdue. The program with the Manitoba Environment with the Family Services is ideal in the sense that we are bringing other people and the young people are taking ownership of this. Government cannot take the responsibility themselves.

I think this is something that I like about the project is that we are involving young people. We are involving the community to take ownership of this that government does not have to legislate. I think this is something that the minister probably had in mind along with his department when they involved the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer). That is the way these two ministers worked together. I think it is important to recognize that and to involve as many people as we possibly can, not only the youth and government, but also businesses to learn about the—

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

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I only wish I had more than four minutes today to speak on this resolution. This exposition on the part of the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) is a total and complete abrogation and abuse of private members' hour. Mr. Speaker, the member for Sturgeon Creek spent 13 of his 15 minutes explaining the program, which he could have done in 30 seconds if he had just tabled the prospectus for the program, which sounds like the information that he was giving us.

Mr. Speaker, this program—and I was paying attention to the member for Sturgeon Creek—is, I

believe, open to youth between the ages of 16 and 24. Now those youth do not get paid. They are doing this voluntarily. Well, the reason this program can work so successfully is because there is an enormous pool of unemployed youth in this province between the ages of 16 and 24.

It is unbelievable that this government would spend a million dollars over five years on this program, when they have cut back job creation programs, when they have cut back Education and Training programs, when they have cut back services to people who are at the lowest economic strata in our province. Mr. Speaker, when the government asks the opposition, where would you cut, what choices would you make?—I would be tempted to say I would prefer to put \$200,000 a year into the employability enhancement programs that this government cut in the Department of Family Services, programs that were designed specifically to help people on social assistance get off that treadmill.

But, no, Mr. Speaker, this government, the same Minister of Family Services who cut those programs, puts \$200,000 a year into volunteer youth environment programs. Unbelievable. This

resolution is one again in a long line of self-serving resolutions put forward by this government, probably because the community at large is not doing a whole lot of congratulating to this government on their job creation programs.

They have no job creation strategy. What they do is put money into volunteer programs that take advantage of the fact that there are no jobs available in this province for the youth of this province and pay minimum wage to the supervisors.

Let us support the environment; let us support youth, but let us not do it in this minimal, inappropriate use of government funding, and particularly let us not spend private members' hour patting the government on the back yet again for their mismanagement, lack of programming, lack of plan and—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Wellington will have 11 minutes remaining.

The hour being 6 p.m., I am leaving the Chair with the understanding the House will reconvene at 8 p.m. in Committee of Supply.

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Monday, June 8, 1992

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Presenting Petitions

Brandon General Hospital Funding L. Evans	4297
Independent Children's Advocate Office Carstairs	4297

Reading and Receiving Petitions

Brandon General Hospital Funding L. Evans	4297
Independent Children's Advocate Office Carstairs	4297
Dutch Elm Disease Funding Friesen	4298

Introduction of Bills

Bill 98, Manitoba Multiculturalism Act Mitchelson	4298
--	------

Oral Questions

Bill 70 Doer; Gilleshammer; Downey	4298
Employment Training Friesen; Vodrey	4300
Department of Natural Resources Gaudry; Cummings	4301
Workers Compensation Board Reid; Praznik	4301
Policing Services Agreement Wowchuk; Derkach	4302
Seven Oaks Youth Centre Carstairs; Gilleshammer	4303
St. Boniface Hospital Wasylycia-Leis; Orchard	4304
Mental Health Care Facilities Wasylycia-Leis; Orchard	4304
Thicket Portage, Manitoba Ashton; Driedger	4305
CN Rail Ashton; Driedger	4305

Thicket Portage; Manitoba Ashton; Driedger	4305
Selkirk School of Psychiatric Nursing Dewar; Orchard	4306
Health Care System Dewar; Orchard	4306
North American Free Trade Agreement Martindale; Stefanson	4306
Child Guidance Clinic Chomiak; Vodrey	4306
Mental Health Care System Reform Cheema; Orchard	4307

Nonpolitical Statements

Philippine Heritage Week Mitchelson	4307
Santos	4308
Lamoureux	4308
Cheema	4308
Border Crossings Magazine Friesen	4309
Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate Martindale	4309

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Committee of Supply

Civil Service Commission Urban Affairs	4310 4334
---	--------------

Private Members' Business

Proposed Resolutions

Res. 33, Inner City Housing Upgrade Martindale Amendment	4357
Ernst	4360
Lamoureux	4362
Martindale	4362
Res. 35, Environmental Youth Corps McAlpine Barrett	4363 4365