



**Fourth Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature**  
of the  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**

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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS  
(HANSARD)**

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41 Elizabeth II

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



**VOL. XLII No. 45 - 1:30 p.m., TUESDAY, APRIL 20, 1993**

**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
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
GRAY, Avis	Crescentwood	Liberal
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	NDP
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Liberal
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	NDP
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	PC
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
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
PALLISTER, Brian	Portage la Prairie	PC
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	PC
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	NDP
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
REID, Daryl	Transcona	NDP
REIMER, Jack	Niakwa	PC
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	PC
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ROSE, Bob	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	NDP
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	NDP
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	PC
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	PC
WASYLYCIA-LEIS, Judy	St. Johns	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	NDP
Vacant	Rupertsland	

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 20, 1993

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

### PRAYERS

#### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS the United Nations has declared 1993 the International Year of the World's

Indigenous People with the theme, "Indigenous People: a new partnership"; and

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

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

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

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

#### 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 Sisler High School, sixteen Grades 9 to 12 students, under the direction of Mrs. Carole Grier. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

Nour tenons aussi à signaler la présence dans la galerie publique de 33 étudiants de la 12<sup>e</sup> année du Collège Jeanne-Sauvé sous la direction de Bernard Des-Autels. Cette institution est située dans la circonscription du député de Seine River (M. Dacquay).

#### [Translation]

Also with us in the public gallery are 33 Grade 12 students from Collège Jeanne-Sauvé under the direction of Bernard Des-Autels. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay).

#### [English]

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

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

### Canadian Wheat Board Barley Marketing

**Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River):** Mr. Speaker, the Carter report was released yesterday and is causing farmers in Manitoba great concern. The Saskatchewan and Alberta governments have already made their positions clear but, unfortunately, we do not know the position of this government. For several days, I have asked the Minister of Agriculture his position on this matter, but he continues to be noncommittal.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon): Since this proposal by Dr. Carter will in actual fact cost malt barley producers \$15 million and, in the end, farmers will be no better off, will the Premier stand with Manitoba farm organizations today and oppose the recommendations of the report? Will he lobby the federal government to retain the sale of barley to the U.S. under the Canadian Wheat Board under the present system?

**Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, I would ask that member to read the report and look at the conclusions, because the conclusions raise a lot of questions as to whether farmers are getting a fair price at the farm gate.

I would like to read some of the conclusions to the member: Under the current system the domestic barley market has pricing and marketing distortions. Secondly, industry participants such as maltsters and elevator companies benefit from these existing distortions and the overall economic impact is that the farmers are losing 17 percent of the value of market barley at the farm gate, Mr. Speaker.

Now those are very, very serious allegations in the system, that the farmer is not getting a fair return. In fact, they are saying that we are missing markets in the United States on the existing system and costing the farmers of Manitoba and western Canada \$120 million.

What that member has quoted is quite a different figure, so obviously there is a lot of discontent out there in terms of believing the facts on either side. My position is, Mr. Speaker, let us find out what the facts are, let us find out what the truth is. If the farmers are losing 17 percent at the farm gate I am very concerned, and I will not support that member who wants farmers to lose—

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

\* (1335)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Speaker, this minister is not listening to farm organizations and he is not standing up with them.

Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that farm organizations have not had the opportunity to have input and they feel that information is inaccurate, and that in the end it will be the producers who are hurt but they have not had input, will the Premier lobby the federal government to hold a plebiscite on this matter before any changes are made to the Wheat Board's mandate?

**Mr. Findlay:** Mr. Speaker, I have just read from the report and the member refused to accept the fact that—

**An Honourable Member:** No, you do not want to listen to the farmers.

**Mr. Findlay:** Mr. Speaker, the farmer from Niakwa does not know what farmers want out there, and I am telling him they are losing 17 percent at the farm gate and he does not care. The member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), who should be representing farmers, does not care. She is only interested in the line companies and the maltsters who are benefiting from distortions and price discrepancies that are hurting the farmers at the farm gate. I will always stand up for the farmers at the farm gate, and I want to get all the facts out on the table, contrary to that member who thinks, leave it under the table; if the farmers do not know, they can be ripped off, and she does not care.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Speaker, I am speaking out for farmers in Manitoba and I thought that the Minister of Agriculture was speaking out for them as well when he spoke at the Pool convention and said, I do not know that there is anything wrong with this system; the Pool system has been giving equal benefits to all farmers in grain sales.

Because of the serious implications that this—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable member for Swan River, with your question, please.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** I want to ask this minister why he is not standing up with Manitoba farmers and defending the Wheat Board. At the Pool convention he said he—

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

**Mr. Findlay:** Mr. Speaker, we have a very large issue at hand here. What I said at the Pool is what

we all believe, and I want to still believe that the Wheat Board is doing the very best job possible, but this report casts some of those actions in doubt. If these are true, in any sense, that the farmers are being sabotaged in the process, then I will stand up for those farmers and ask some very serious questions. [interjection] I am appalled at those members over there who would not even consider the fact that the farmers may not be getting full value for the commodity they are selling in terms of the prices at the farm gate.

I have said for a long time, I am sick and tired of the farmers being ripped off by everybody in the sector, from the farm gate on. Maybe, just maybe, there is another example here, and we have flushed out some of this detail that the farmers have not been able to get answers to those questions in the past. I can tell that member, I will be asking the Wheat Board and the grain companies whether these statements are true in any fact. If they are not, give me the evidence to contradict it. Give me the evidence. I only want to deal with the evidence, and that is what I want to have presented to the farm community in Manitoba.

### **Hunger Prevention Programs Government Initiatives**

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns):** Mr. Speaker, I want to ask this government about the recently released information from Winnipeg Harvest about the use of food banks in Manitoba. To say that these statistics are shocking would in fact be an understatement.

Mr. Speaker, comparing March '92 to March '93, the number of people who relied on a food bank for their primary source of nutrition went up 91 percent or from 17,000 to 33,000 Manitobans, and the number of food banks in rural Manitoba went up from six to 24 in one year alone.

I want to ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon), since it is clear that hunger in a province like Manitoba is caused more by government inaction than by natural causes, what specific plans does the Premier have to deal with the serious and unacceptable problem of hunger in our province?

**Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services):** Certainly, the community has a role to play, and the community is playing a role in assisting Manitobans who find themselves in some difficulty,

and the generosity of Manitobans has never been in doubt.

We provide that basic safety net through our Social Allowances Program, and our allowances program compares favourably with that offered in other provinces, based on the level of funding that we flow through the Social Allowances Program and all the other enhancements that we have added to that program in the last few years.

As well, we have to take into consideration the cost of living in the province of Manitoba, which is about in eighth place across this country, and our rates are probably sixth or seventh, so on a comparative basis the safety net program that we offer is certainly in line with other provinces.

\* (1340)

### **Hunger Prevention Programs Government Initiatives**

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns):** Mr. Speaker, I would have thought these shocking statistics would have been a call to action for this government, not more cutbacks and step-aside policies. I want to ask the Premier of Manitoba specifically about policies with respect to children and hunger among that segment of our population, since about 13,000 of this number, this recent figure, are children.

When will the Premier of Manitoba take responsibility for the growing number of children and families in our province who have no option but to go to food banks, and when will he take action to help the 13,000 children who went to food banks last month and the thousands more who simply went—

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

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, like all Manitobans, I certainly want to ensure that those people who are in need in Manitoba are able to access programs that are there for their needs, but I remind the member for St. Johns that food banks became established in this province when the New Democrats were in office, and they presumably were doing such a great job of providing for all the needs of the people.

In fact, I can show her the press clippings of how one of her predecessors, Maureen Hemphill, also started a clothing provision for people because she felt that her own government did not provide them with enough for either food or clothing in those days

in which the New Democrats were in office, presumably attending to the needs of the needy and the less fortunate in Manitoba.

So this is not something that has arisen as a result of any ideology or as a result of any government's action or lack of action in this province, Mr. Speaker. It is something that has evolved throughout society, as people have recognized, churches, charitable groups, ordinary citizens, that they wanted to play a role in trying to contribute towards the well-being of families in society. So things like food banks arose, clothing exchanges and other matters.

To try and make some cheap politics on that is absolutely a very low and deplorable thing to be done in this House. I would say to the member for St. Johns, she ought to examine her own conscience and examine the actions of her own party in government before she brings this kind of thing into Question Period.

**Ms. Wasylycia-Lels:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know how raising a question about 33,000 Manitobans using food banks every month is cheap politics. I am simply asking this government to take some action.

### Hunger Prevention Programs Government Initiatives

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns):** My final question I would like to direct to the Minister of Health since he received a report two years ago from one of his health advisory task forces, a government-appointed body, on health promotion.

My question to the Minister of Health is: Since that report recommended that this government address the pressing issue of hunger and ensure that all Manitobans have enough to eat, will the minister now finally make public this report, which is two years old, and tell us what his plan of action is for addressing the problem of hunger and dealing with the effects of—

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

**Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, this government has consistently supported a range and array of programs which exceed those available in almost all, if not all, other provinces across Canada in terms of their diversity, in terms of their ability to meet needs across the system, Sir. Despite what I believe is my honourable friend's condemnation of this

government's action, I will put it far ahead of any previous government's initiatives, actions and ability to make this province a better place for all Manitobans.

\* (1345)

### Manitoba Sugar Co. Employment Security

**Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne):** Mr. Speaker, while it is relatively easy to identify the price that this government would have Manitobans pay in pursuit of their vision of how you create jobs and attract industry to this province, it is more difficult to identify the product of this policy.

I would like to ask the Minister of Industry and Trade a very specific question. Why has his government decided to abandon the hundred employees who work at Manitoba Sugar? Why are they not prepared to work co-operatively with the federal government to ensure that those jobs stay in Manitoba?

**Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism):** Mr. Speaker, the honourable member for Osborne is absolutely incorrect in his preamble. We have had a series of meetings with sugar producers, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) and myself. I have had meetings with the Manitoba Sugar Company and we continue to work with that industry to find solutions to the problems that they face. So clearly he could not be more wrong with his preamble in terms of the job we are doing in terms of working with that very important industry within Manitoba.

**Mr. Alcock:** Mr. Speaker, I wish I could believe the response, but the industry says that there are no meetings scheduled, that the growers will not be planting beets this year, and as a result, the plant will not be able to stay open.

Will the minister tell us what action he is going to take to ensure that this plant remains open?

**Mr. Stefanson:** Mr. Speaker, I am basically being repetitive answering the same similar question that the member has already asked me. We have had a series of meetings with producers. We met with the company. We will continue to pursue initiatives with the company in terms of ensuring that there is production this year. A proposal was made to the industry. I am gathering—the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), whether or not he has had an opportunity to have some follow-up in the last 24

hours, but clearly we are working with all elements of the industry to find a viable and a reasonable solution.

**Mr. Alcock:** Mr. Speaker, we are talking about a hundred full-time jobs, a hundred and fifty seasonal jobs here in the city.

Will the minister assure the House today that this company will be in operation this year?

**Mr. Stefanson:** Mr. Speaker, I have already outlined the process that we are going through. There are many issues affecting that industry from the producers through to the final production at the sugar company. We are working with all elements of the industry to see if there is a solution there. Clearly, we will continue to do that and see if that can be found. There are many aspects to it. I would hope that the honourable member will take the time to look at all issues affecting that industry.

In the final analysis, we want industries in this province but also industries that ultimately can stand on their own, can compete with elements throughout Canada, throughout other parts of the world. That is the long-term objective with any of the sectors, whether they are agricultural sectors or any industry sectors that we deal with, Mr. Speaker. We will continue to pursue that initiative and see if there is a final reasonable solution.

### Manufacturing Industry Employment Creation Strategy

**Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon):** Mr. Speaker, in the last four years this province has lost approximately 28 percent of its manufacturing jobs. Part of the responsibility for that decline, for those loss of jobs has to rest on the shoulders of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism. His department has come under criticism by members of the manufacturers in the province, by members of his own back bench and today came under attack by the president of a woodworking company in the city of Winnipeg.

My question to the minister is: Why, after receiving a consultant's report from his own department on December 30, 1991, has this government and this minister refused to support a local manufacturer who could have employed up to 25 people to export product to Japan and North America when his own consultant said it would create some 20 to 25 jobs?

**Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism):** Mr. Speaker, as usual the member for Flin Flon is totally inaccurate with his preamble.

Going directly to the question, whenever we are dealing with any situation of financial support for a Manitoba company we look at a whole range of criteria. I would hope they would be criteria that the member for Flin Flon would recognize and agree with, especially having held a portfolio similar to mine, Mr. Speaker.

We look at long-term viability. We look at issues such as security, the kind of security that we can get for any funding borrowed to a company. We look at the ultimate utilization of those funds that will come from the government of Manitoba. Ultimately, we want to ensure that any dollars advanced are repaid to Manitoba, to the taxpayers of Manitoba.

It is interesting to note that this member is the very same member who continually raises issues like MacLeod-Stedman and the concerns around MacLeod-Stedman, whereas there was an example where we took back security, we ended up with Cotterand Company remaining in Manitoba, holding those jobs in Manitoba and repaying the government of Manitoba.

I can assure that member there are many aspects of the issue that he raises today, and he should look thoroughly into it before he raises too many questions, Mr. Speaker.

\* (1350)

**Mr. Storie:** Mr. Speaker, the minister is incorrect in much of his postamble.

My question to the minister is: If this minister was genuinely concerned about creating jobs, can he explain to the Legislature, the people of Manitoba and Mr. Caligiuri, why, after 18 months of negotiations and discussions between Mr. Caligiuri and the department, he has not returned a phone call, sat down and discussed this, visited his plant, took the time to understand the problems and the possibilities this project presents for Manitobans who want to work?

**Mr. Stefanson:** I think the member for Flin Flon knows this, but this particular project has probably received more attention than most projects, certainly average projects from my department in terms of officials from all aspects in my department, from discussions with the Premier (Mr. Filmon) right through our entire system, Mr. Speaker. I assure

him, there are many aspects to this issue. It is not as cut and dried as he is trying to paint here today.

It is interesting to note, this is the same member who stands up in the House and wants the government of Manitoba to guarantee some \$150 million of guarantees for a seafood processing company that has never been located anywhere. This is the same member who wants us to tie our support to an individual promoting an aircraft company across Canada, that not a single government tied their support to, not even the government in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

So he is the last person—

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

### **Furniture Manufacturing Plant Department of Environment File**

**Ms. Marianne CerlIII (Radisson):** Mr. Speaker, in relation to the problem of pollution in Transcona from a furniture and particle board manufacturing plant, the Minister of Environment said yesterday: "Last year, I think this was probably one of the most closely tested and monitored sites in Manitoba . . ."

Well, Mr. Speaker, if that is the case, we are in big trouble because the department has said that they have lost the file on this plant.

I would ask the Minister of Environment: Is it government regulation to maintain files on all operating manufacturing plants, including plants receiving environmental licences, including all of the original licences and technical data from the environmental review?

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment):** The member should not characterize this as any lack of ability to either control or track the operations at that plant.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, as I have said a number of times in the last couple of days, this is a very vexatious problem in trying to make sure that we have a situation that is carefully and tightly controlled and taking into consideration the concerns that are raised in that community.

But, Mr. Speaker, again, even within the community, there are various views of the effects that living near that plant cause, whether in fact there are any or not. We are presently working with the plant to try some untried technology to see if there is something else that we can do to make sure that

there are controls that satisfy everyone in the community.

**Ms. CerlIII:** Mr. Speaker, for the same minister: Why are people in Transcona who are trying to protect themselves from the pollution of this plant being told that this file, including the initial licensing information, has been lost?

**Mr. Cummings:** Mr. Speaker, this is a very unusual approach. There is a stack of information on this particular operation that is far deeper than almost any other file in terms of monitoring plants and operations.

Mr. Speaker, the licensing of this plant has been very carefully followed. The problem is that we are dealing with a situation that is most difficult to put precise confinements on. It very much comes down to a situation where there are a number of people in the community who believe that the only solution to this site is to remove it from that location.

\* (1355)

### **Dial-A-Life Housing Project Aboriginal Dialysis Treatment**

**Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas):** Diabetes has reached epidemic proportions amongst the aboriginal population in our country. Aboriginal people are being diagnosed at a rate of three times that of the Canadian average.

I will table a map which indicates that in some communities, the rate is as high as 40 percent of the people over 45 years old. A growing number of aboriginal people are becoming dependent on dialysis services. Many of these people are transferred out of Manitoba because there are limited services available due to the increasing demand.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Minister of Health. Dial-A-Life housing has space available for two machines, has space available for offices and space for nursing staff.

My question to the minister is: Will he support Dial-A-Life housing in their efforts to provide vital health services to the aboriginal people of Manitoba?

**Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, it is with apologies that I have to indicate to my honourable friend, I missed some of his detail around the question, but I simply want to indicate that since coming into office, we have very



significantly and substantially increased the budget for dialysis in the province of Manitoba.

That includes, Sir, the commissioning some 15 months ago of the first ever northern dialysis program in Thompson General Hospital. That was designed to serve closer to home a number of natives who are afflicted with kidney failure, particularly as a result of diabetes.

That is an initiative that this government took in order to expand the provision of service. In addition to that, Sir, we have recently and we will be officially opening a dialysis service new and in place in Portage la Prairie, to expand that service.

In the meantime, Sir, we have added substantially new capacity to both Health Sciences Centre and St. Boniface, but the difficulty we have—and that is why it is so important for all Manitobans to seriously consider organ donation, because the number of transplants we are doing in the province of Manitoba has dropped, not because of a lack of budget but because of a lack of suitable organs for donations.

**Mr. Hickes:** As the minister is aware, many aboriginal people already have to relocate to access dialysis service because they fall to the end of the waiting list. The purpose of Dial-A-Life is to provide suitable and affordable accommodations for medically displaced aboriginal people and their families.

Will the minister ensure that every effort is made to move aboriginal dialysis treatment to this centre so that people will not have to relocate out of this province?

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my first answer, that is a significant reason behind why we instituted a dialysis program in Thompson, Manitoba, to serve those Manitobans from northern Manitoba—and a number of them are aboriginal citizens of northern Manitoba—closer to home. That initiative was undertaken some 18 months ago, including expansion elsewhere in the system.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to that, there is a very, very active campaign in terms of education and prevention focused at the aboriginal community, with the aboriginal community at the table in terms of developing and helping to implement education prevention programs so that we avoid the very serious consequences of latter-stage diabetes which often leads to renal failure, and that program will help intervene in the most compassionate way

possible by avoiding the illness, rather than treating it after the fact.

\* (1400)

### **Splash Child Care Inc. Subsidized Spaces**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, Splash day care has some 15 single mothers who are students who rely very much so on having the daycare spots made available so that they can further their education.

Unfortunately this particular government, in the decision that it has made, is saying to the single mothers that if in fact they are unable to find work within two weeks, that they will not have any sort of assurance that those spots will be there when they start school in the fall time.

I am aware of a number of cases, in particular at Splash day care, where a number of the mothers who are looking at this are saying that they will not be able to go back to school come fall time unless they get some sort of assurances that the spaces would be there. The executive director there has indicated to them that in fact they would not be there because of the waiting list.

I am wondering, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Family Services, how does this government save money by ensuring individuals remain on long-term social assistance as a direct result of this government's policy.

**Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that someone in the second opposition party is raising a question on daycare. What we have found ourselves with is an escalating number of people on subsidy. Just a few years ago, there were about 4,000 families accessing subsidies in daycare. By leaving it open-ended, that subsidy list has now gone up to 10,000.

So in our recent budget decision we have indicated that we are going to cap that subsidy list at 9,600. Because of the tremendous increases in the cost on our Day Care line where we overspent that line by some \$5 million last year, we are putting a cap at this time on the subsidies and recognize that those subsidies will become available only when some people leave the system, as they do at the end of August as a new group of children start into the school year.

So there may be, in certain cases, a waiting list, but we have had a dramatic increase in the number of licensed spaces we have put into the system. Also, we have had a tremendous number of increases—

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

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, one daycare—15 single students who will not be able to return to their education or increasing the quality of education, thereby getting them off of social assistance. The executive director is saying that the facility will not have the spaces there. What is happening is we have some single parents who are saying, we are not going to be going back to school this fall. They are going to be relying on—

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

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Can the minister assure students who plan to return back to school next fall will have spots available?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Mr. Speaker, we will assure the member that we have budgeted for 9,600 subsidized spaces. We recognize that there may be a waiting list in some cases, but within our budget, because of the tremendous escalating of the number of subsidized spaces, we have put a cap on it at this time. Our Day Care line will still show an increase in this year's budget.

It is a long time since we have had waiting lists, but because of the number of people accessing it at this time, there will be a cap on the number of subsidized spaces.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, that does not help the students.

My question to the minister is: Is the minister willing to consider extending the two-week time frame at least for half days to give these parents enough time, at the very least, to find a job so that they can reserve those particular spots?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Mr. Speaker, the member is making the assumption that people who are leaving school either in the high school system or university or other training will not find jobs. If they do that, their children will continue to have those subsidized spaces, but we are not going to extend the number of subsidized spaces which this budget allows.

## **Gas Leaks Contaminated Soil**

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** Mr. Speaker, over the past few weeks I have received numerous calls from constituents concerned over the leakage of gasoline from area gas stations.

I would ask the Minister of Environment: How much contaminated soil has been found at the Petro-Canada site and Elmwood Motors on Henderson Highway and also the third location, the Hespeler auto centre at 87 Hespeler?

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment):** I did not quite catch the first part of the question, but I understand that the member wants to know if there are investigations being done or if there will be. If there are complaints in that area, they will be investigated.

**Mr. Maloway:** Mr. Speaker, perhaps I could clarify for the minister the question, and that is, there has been a lot of digging going on at these area gas stations in the last couple of weeks. It looks like ground hogs are operating in the area.

My supplementary question to the minister is: Since one area business has been forced to close, the florist shop, and many others are now worried about how far the gas has leaked, will the minister commit himself today to find out how far the leakage has gone?

**Mr. Cummings:** Mr. Speaker, this is one of the very obvious problems associated with determination of the extent of ground water or simply ground contamination and the extent of plumes from contaminated sites. Obviously, the member should know that one of the most difficult problems the department encounters is establishing the length of a plume or how far movement may have occurred.

If he is asking me to make a pre-emptive judgment on how far contamination may have gone, I certainly cannot do that. Obviously, if the department is onsite and if a great deal of digging has gone on, I presume that that is attempting to find the extent of that plume. I will certainly share any information I have with the member.

**Mr. Maloway:** Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that the minister should be more aware of what is going on over there. In fact, the initial digging started last August at that one site.

### Environmental Concerns Contaminated Sites List

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary to the same minister is: Would he endeavour to provide us a complete up-to-date list of all sites in the province that are currently being investigated? What percentage of the cost of cleanup are the people affected paying?

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment):** Mr. Speaker, there are dozens, in some cases hundreds of sites, that can be of concern in terms of the possible ground water pollution or possible escape of gasoline or other fuel products into the surrounding soils. If the member expects that I should be able to respond to each individual one on a moment's notice, I am afraid I do not have that capacity.

Mr. Speaker, we have a list of all of the sites that we are working on, and we will be more than willing to share that with the member opposite.

### Break and Enters Sentencing

**Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice.

The rate of break and enter into private homes in this province is growing and has grown at an alarming rate in recent years. In Winnipeg alone, the rate of break and enters went up 15 percent between 1990 and '91. Indications are that, again, the 1992 numbers will show an increase in the number of residential break and enters.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister knows, when someone's home is broken into, often they never feel the same again about their own home and, in particular, the elderly are affected by a break and enter into their homes.

My question for the minister is: Why, when Crown attorneys are speaking to sentence on cases of break and enter, are they only treating these offences as property offences? Has the minister considered, or will he consider, having his Crown attorneys ask judges to consider these not just as property offences, but as offences against the person in the sense that people's lives, day-to-day lives—

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

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** It may be that almost everyone knows someone or has him or herself been victimized in this way at one point or other during life.

It is indeed a very serious offence, so serious that I think the Criminal Code allows for a sentence of up to 14 years for the case of break and enter into a business or as much as life imprisonment in the case of break and enter into a home. So I think that is a very strong message to the judiciary, to Crown attorneys and others in the justice system of the importance of safeguarding the homes and property of our citizens here in Manitoba.

In this regard, I pay tribute to all of those people throughout Manitoba involved in programs to help in crime prevention, such as Neighbourhood Watch, and pay tribute to the police and citizens who are involved with those programs, and indeed, I will take what the honourable member has to say under consideration and discuss it with the Prosecutions branch of my department.

\* (1410)

### Deterrent

**Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James):** Mr. Speaker, again, for the minister, in that these offences are premeditated—they are intentional break and enter into people's homes—my question for the minister is: How does the minister intend to get the deterrent message out to the community, which obviously needs to go in our corrections system which deals with people who get sentences, has to deal longer with people who get stiffer sentences? How will he get that message out when the corrections system is being reduced by over 4 percent this year, Youth corrections by—

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

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** We are going to get into a discussion on criminology, I think, if we are going to talk about provincial time being served for offences that the honourable member has just talked about as being extremely serious, and I agree with him.

Those who are involved in this kind of offence as a living usually end up in a federal institution, where you are there for much longer than two years, generally. It is the federal parole system then that deals with the issue of release.

I am just not sure where the honourable member's question is attempting to lead except I think that he is trying to make the point that break and enter is an extremely serious matter. I have agreed with the honourable member and said that I would take this up with my department.

### **Headingley Correctional Facility Future Status**

**Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James):** Finally, for the minister: Can the minister indicate what his plans are for Headingley Jail that has now experienced a reduction in available incarceration spaces of one-third? There has been a one-third reduction in two years. What are this minister's plans for that jail which is the primary penal institution for this province?

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Mr. Speaker, indeed it is a penal institution. It is also a correctional institution. The Department of Government Services and my department have been looking at all of the facilities' requirements, of the penal system here in Manitoba, for the future.

As we develop that particular plan, changes and plans will be made known to all Manitobans.

### **Manitoba Lotteries Foundation Hair Length Policy**

**Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway):** As the MLA for Broadway, I have a constituent who, like Samson who fought the Philistines, wears his hair long, but neatly and decently. He applied to one of the only growth industries in Manitoba which is the Lotteries Foundation. He was refused the final interview and was told that he had to cut his hair because the Lotteries Foundation has to maintain its corporate image.

My constituent is complaining, and he said this is discrimination because when he asked if he were a female whether he would be asked to cut his hair, he was told it would not be so. So the rule applies only to men.

My question is directed to the honourable minister responsible for the Manitoba Lotteries Foundation: Can the honourable minister explain her government's policy about wearing hair by males, whether or not it will violate so-called corporate policy?

**Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Lotteries Foundation Act):** Mr. Speaker, I believe there were a couple of male individuals who did call and complain on a radio talk show that they had applied. I do not know if one of them was the MLA for Broadway, but anyway, when the Manitoba Lotteries Foundation was contacted with the names, indeed, both names that had been reported, the Lotteries Foundation had no record of those people applying for jobs or had applications.

**Mr. Speaker:** The time for Oral Questions has expired.

### **Introduction of Guests**

**Mr. Speaker:** I would like to draw the attention of honourable members to the loge to my left where we have with us this afternoon, Mr. Larry Desjardins, the former MLA for St. Boniface.

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

### **Nonpolitical Statements**

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Prior to recognizing the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), I will recognize the honourable member for St. Vital for a nonpolitical statement

Does the honourable member have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

**Mrs. Shirley Rønder (St. Vital):** Mr. Speaker, once again Glenlawn Collegiate has shown what a talented group of students it has. Under the direction of Marilyn Redekop, 12 students known as Jazz Junction are performing in Showstoppers.

Mr. Speaker, Glenlawn Collegiate was the only high school in Winnipeg chosen to perform in Showstoppers, and that is not all. Glenlawn Collegiate, again, because of the abilities and talents of its students, was asked to compete in a national event called Musicfest. Nine bands and choirs under the direction of Marilyn Redekop, Graham Bruce and Bill Kristjanson will be performing in Edmonton next month.

I would just like to say congratulations to the students for achieving such excellence and thank you to their teachers for the time and energy they have spent bringing these students to such a high performance level. Thank you.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the honourable Minister of Justice have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank my colleagues. Very briefly by way of a nonpolitical statement, I would like to call to the attention of the House the passing of former Chief Justice George Tritschler of the Court of Queen's Bench for Manitoba to offer the condolences and sympathy of all of the members of this House.

For many, many things former Chief Justice Tritschler will be remembered, but certainly his work at the appellate and trial levels of the court in Manitoba was a significant contributor to the society that we enjoy today.

Former Chief Justice Tritschler contributed much to his country and to his community, and I would like to pass on condolences to the family.

### MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

**Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), that under Rule 27.(1) ordinary business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, namely the removal of marketing of barley from the jurisdiction of the Canadian Wheat Board.

**Mr. Speaker:** Before determining whether the motion meets the requirements of our Rule 27, the honourable member for Swan River will have five minutes to state her case for the urgency of debating this matter today. A spokesperson for the government and the second opposition party will also have five minutes to address the position of their party respecting the urgency of debating this matter today.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Carter report was made public on continental barley markets. This report was full of inaccuracies and material that was not substantiated. It is absolutely urgent that we know this government's position on this report and what action they are going to take.

The reason it is so urgent is that we are led to believe that the federal government could propose legislation as early as this Friday in the House of Commons that will change barley sales to the U.S.

This government must make representation to the federal government on this urgent matter.

I want to urge the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) or the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to lobby the federal government to protect the authority of the Canadian Wheat Board. Farmers have not been consulted. Farmers have provided information that Dr. Carter has not reviewed. Before any changes are made to the jurisdiction of the Canadian Wheat Board, farmers who are most affected by this change must have a chance to have input.

It is absolutely urgent that the federal government conduct a plebiscite on this issue before implementing any changes, Mr. Speaker. That is the urgency of this. This could have a devastating effect on farmers across the country. We have had no position from this government on this matter. They continue to say that they are going to review the matter, but time is running out, particularly if we are going to see the legislation introduced, as we hear it is going to be.

Mr. Speaker, farmer groups held a press conference yesterday and expressed their concerns. They urged this provincial government to take a stand as well. One of the main things they said in their press conference was the many inaccuracies in the Carter study.

The Carter study assumes that feed barley yields will increase significantly, that there are going to be new varieties of wheat that are grown that will increase the yield by 15 percent. Where are these new varieties? We have no information on that. He assumes that the United States' demand for feed wheat will increase by 500,000 tons. This is based on the assumption that the State of California has a large feed deficit, but they do not. He does not take into consideration that there is a surplus in North and South Dakota that could fill this market.

\* (1420)

Mr. Speaker, the Carter study assumes that the U.S. demand for Canadian malting barley will increase by 400,000 tons. Again, the author's best estimate has no basis. There is no evidence to support this.

He assumes that the increased sales from Canada will all be made at the same price. He assumes that the continental market will stay the same. He assumes that the continental market will have no impact on international prices. Yet we know, Mr. Speaker, it has been found that the price

in the U.S. Northwest has a direct link to the prices in Japan. A drop in the price of the Pacific Northwest prices on feed barley will have a direct impact on international prices.

Mr. Speaker, they assume that significantly more malting barley will be selected. The Carter report states that 50 percent more barley will be selected for malting purposes because of lost Canadian Wheat Board control. New markets could be found for lower quality marketing barley. He does not state that the Canadian Wheat Board already sells low-priced barley where there is a demand. This is very urgent that we discuss this matter before—

**An Honourable Member:** Urgent. She just said it is urgent.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** It is very urgent that farmers know what the position is of this government and that farmers know what changes are going to be made into the Wheat Board mandate before spring seeding. They have to know what is going to happen. They are going to make investments into planting their crops, but all this is going to do, Mr. Speaker, is lower the prices for farmers. We know that farmers in the end will be losers. There is a risk that we could lose the pooling system. If the Wheat Board loses its monopoly, there is a risk that we lose the Wheat Board. By undermining the Canadian Wheat Board, there can be an impact on all of Manitoba.

Will the Canadian Wheat Board be able to continue without the sale of barley under its jurisdiction? There are 430 jobs—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable member's time has expired.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, one is always sympathetic in terms of what is going on with rural Manitoba. When we hear the concerns with respect to the removal of the barley and the responsibility of the Canadian Wheat Board, we are all concerned in terms of what would happen by this particular action.

What I wanted to comment on, Mr. Speaker, is it is a very serious issue and the order of Estimates is actually Highways, then Agriculture follows. I know our caucus would be quite prepared to lead off, if the will of the House was to do that, into Agriculture so in fact we could deal with that issue right now.

I know, Mr. Speaker, there are also other opportunities whether it is through a condolence—whether it was through a grievance I should say—not

a condolence. What we would like to see is that the issue be addressed in Agriculture and if the government's will was to do that, we would be in support of doing that. Failing that, we understand and appreciate the importance of debating the issue today. Thank you.

**Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, in my view, the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) has failed to establish any urgency with respect to this issue. I could make a number of points, and I will. I will make them in quick order, because I am sure there are other matters that are as pressing and I say more pressing than this.

Firstly, this is not within the jurisdiction of the government of Manitoba. I dare say, Mr. Speaker, the government of Manitoba has virtually little or no say in this matter. We do not govern the wheat board act, and the acting House leader of the NDP says, what is your position. Well, now, if that is, in essence, why the members have called forward an emergency debate on this, because they want to hear our government issues, then ask that in Question Period.

As a matter of fact, the member did ask a question on this in Question Period, and she received a full and expansive answer from the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay). I would say that the members of this House, of this Legislature, have the latest and the fullest response from our Minister of Agriculture as to the government's point of view on this whole issue. So I say to her, Mr. Speaker, that if you were to rule that this subject were in order, I would say that everything goes after this. Not only is it out of the jurisdiction, but any issue of the day the members opposite could bring forward and call for an emergency debate.

Mr. Speaker, more than the member having the gall to bring up this type of an issue and calling for an emergency debate, was the manner in which she did it. I think she not only failed to establish the urgency, but beyond that, she argued completely the topic. Indeed the rules state in no uncertain fashion that it is not a time for debate. The member has covered all of her points and I think she abused the rules. As a matter of fact, I notice members across the way are doing this in a growing fashion every time they call forward for an emergency debate.

Mr. Speaker, I will close by indicating that the members have sufficient opportunity coming up over the course of the next several weeks and months to address this issue. There are many opportunities ahead. I will not go through the list of them. I know you are fully familiar with them. I would hope that you would rule the request out of order.

### Speaker's Ruling

**Mr. Speaker:** I would like to thank all honourable members for their advice as to whether the motion proposed by the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) is in order to be debated today.

I did receive the notice required by our subrule 27.(1). According to our Rule 27 and Beauchesne Citations 389 and 390 for a matter of urgent public importance to be proceeded with, two conditions must be met. First, the subject matter must be so pressing that the ordinary opportunity for debate will not allow it to be brought on early enough, and second, it must be demonstrated that the public interest will suffer if it is not considered immediately.

Beauchesne's Citation 387 indicates also that a matter of urgent public importance must be within the administrative responsibility of the government. In this case the responsibility rests with the federal government.

I am ruling that the matter is out of order as a matter of urgent public importance. I have not been persuaded that the public interest will suffer if this matter is not debated today, as this matter currently is only a recommendation to the federal government. Also, it is not within the jurisdiction of the provincial government. There are other opportunities to raise the matter available to the honourable member. She has not used her grievance, and I note also that the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture will be considered in this Chamber immediately after the Estimates of the Department of Highways and Transportation. Therefore, the honourable member's motion is out of order.

**Mr. Doug Martindale (Acting Opposition House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, although I have great respect for your office, I feel I must appeal your ruling.

**Mr. Speaker:** The ruling of the Chair having been challenged, all those in favour of sustaining the Chair, please say yea.

**Some Honourable Members:** Yea.

**Mr. Speaker:** All those opposed, please say nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**Mr. Speaker:** In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

**Mr. Martindale:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to request a recorded vote.

**Mr. Speaker:** A recorded vote having been requested, call in the members.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Speaker:** The question before the House is, shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained.

**A STANDING VOTE** was taken, the result being as follows:

### Yeas

Alcock, Cummings, Dacquay, Downey, Driedger, Ducharme, Edwards, Enns, Ernst, Filmon, Findlay, Gaudry, Gilleshammer, Gray, Helwer, Lamoureux, Laurendeau, Manness, McAlpine, McCrae, McIntosh, Mitchelson, Neufeld, Orchard, Penner, Praznik, Reimer, Render, Rose, Stefanson, Sveinson.

### Nays

Cerilli, Chomiak, Dewar, Evans (Brandon East), Friesen, Hickes, Lathlin, Maloway, Martindale, Plohman, Reid, Santos, Storie, Wasylcyia-Leis, Wowchuk.

**Mr. Clerk (William Remnant):** Yeas 31, Nays 15.

**Mr. Speaker:** The ruling of the Chair is sustained.

### House Business

**Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, before I move the Supply motion, I would like to make announcements on House Business.

I would like to announce that the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections that was called for tonight will be cancelled and set for a date hopefully next week.

Mr. Speaker, also I would like to announce the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources will meet on Monday, April 26, 1993, at 10 a.m., to consider the 1991 Annual Report of the Workers Compensation Board and the 1992 Five-Year Operating Plan.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

**Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I move, (seconded by the honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae)), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of Supply 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 St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) in the Chair for the Department of Family Services; and the honourable member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) in the Chair for the Department of Highways and Transportation.

## COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

### FAMILY SERVICES

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau):** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. Today, this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255 will be considering the Estimates of the Department of Family Services.

Does the honourable Minister of Family Services have an opening statement?

**Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services):** Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. I have some introductory comments to begin the discussion of the 1993-94 spending Estimates for the Department of Family Services in the Committee of Supply.

This government has been faced with a series of difficult budget years as we have addressed the challenges brought about by a national economic recession, falling provincial revenues, federal offloading and rising caseloads. However, the development of the 1993-94 Estimates has been an especially complex and difficult exercise. In spite of these circumstances, we have done our best to maintain the basic programs and services that are needed to protect vulnerable Manitobans.

In recognition of the importance we place on these priorities, we again see an increase in the allocation to the Department of Family Services that is among the highest of any department. The fiscal reality is that there is no new money. Flat government revenues combined with increasing demands have left governments across Canada with little flexibility in spending decisions.

Much of the pressure comes from the increasing demand in statutory programs, specifically in social assistance where despite efforts to target support to the most needy, spending will increase by an estimated 10.6 percent, primarily due to growth in social allowances caseloads and costs. The choices are no longer ones of applying increased resources to new and expanding programs. They are ones of how to ensure that our very limited tax dollars are directed to ensuring that basic needs are met.

\* (1500)

During this Estimates process, adjustments have been made in all program areas to ensure that basic services are available to those who most require help. Rising caseloads and social assistance have been experienced by all provinces, and this trend is of great concern to governments across the country. A number of general societal factors are contributing to the increasing caseloads at both the provincial and municipal levels—continued high unemployment rates, certain social trends such as the increased frequency of marriage breakdowns and a higher percentage of unwed single mothers raising their children and due to federal offloading, an increase in costs for off-reserve treaty Indians receiving provincial and municipal assistance. These are all factors that work in this area.

As a result, while provincial social allowance cases are increasing in this fiscal year by about 5 percent, the municipal assistance caseloads are expected to rise by about 24 percent. Our approach has been to target our resources to those most in need. To assist families and individuals on assistance, basic rates were increased by 1.2 percent on January 1, 1993. Based on the average increase in Winnipeg's Consumer Price Index, shelter guidelines were also increased by 1 percent on January 1, 1993.

These increases are intended to maintain the buying power of provincial social allowances, while other significant changes have enhanced benefits for targeted groups of recipients. For example, the income assistance for the disabled introduced last year at \$60 per month has been increased by \$10 to \$70 per month. The goods and services tax and the child tax benefit have been treated as exempt income. Health benefits will now be continued for sole-support and disabled recipients for up to one year if they leave assistance due to employment.



These targeted benefit enhancements and the costs of increased caseloads have required a close examination of the more discretionary areas of assistance. As an example, we have announced changes in eligibility for health services benefits which will now be more similar to the benefits provided through private health and dental plans.

Given the need to target scarce resources, the categorical student social allowances program will therefore be discontinued. Current recipients may still be eligible for either provincial or municipal assistance. Over the last three years, the costs of providing social assistance have risen by about 65 percent. For the 1993-94 fiscal year, costs outlined in these spending Estimates will show a further increase of over 10 percent or another \$35.6 million.

Because of the significant increases in costs, other areas of the department will need to be held to no overall increase, or will be required to operate on less than in 1992-93. The finance and administration area, for example, will operate for 1993-94 with a net reduction of almost 5 percent. In spite of this reduction, we will see the implementation of an important new function in the department. The Children's Advocate will soon begin to carry out the important job of ensuring that the rights and interests of children in the Child and Family Services system are protected.

I am pleased to note that Mr. Wayne Govereau has been appointed as the Children's Advocate and has been preparing for his new office to begin accepting cases. We hope to see the legislation governing the Children's Advocate proclaimed shortly.

Difficult decisions had to be made in the Child and Family Services area. We are taking measures to ensure that increasing costs do not jeopardize our ability to provide basic protection services. As a result, basic foster care rates have been reduced by \$2 per day. I note that even with this adjustment, foster care rates in Manitoba will remain amongst the highest in the country.

In the daycare area, subsidy expenditures have risen dramatically in the past year. In keeping with the belief that parents are primarily responsible for the care of their children, subsidized parents using daycare have been asked to pay for a greater proportion of the cost of this service. Subsidized parents will now pay \$1.40 more per day toward the cost of their child's care. As well, other participants

in the daycare system are being asked to manage with less.

In the area of Rehabilitation and Community Living, overall expenditures will remain relatively constant in 1993-94. To achieve this goal, some projects and services will be delayed or have funding levels reduced. We will however continue to introduce later in this session important new legislation to protect and support the rights of vulnerable persons living with a mental disability.

Since so many of the department services are provided through external agencies, it is not possible to implement the necessary budget decisions without impacting all of these organizations. As a general rule, all agencies receiving funds from this department are being asked to operate on the basis of 4 percent less on the salaried portion of their funding. This approach is consistent with the one being followed by the provincial government as a whole and by other parts of the public sector.

Some agencies will be asked to make a greater contribution to the tough measures we must take. Those organizations which do not provide a protective or direct service will be required to operate with a 10 percent reduction in funds from the department. Other general organizations such as membership associations of service providers have had their grants eliminated for 1993-94.

The challenges faced by the Department of Family Services are considerable. The trends and pressures which have contributed to growing demands on Family Services are expected to continue through the 1990s, creating an ongoing challenge to better target and manage our range of programs in order to preserve and strengthen the most critical areas. We have not sidestepped the tough decisions in the preparation of the 1993-94 Estimates. We have asked all program areas and all external agencies to accept their fair share as we reposition our programs and services to meet the most essential needs.

I look forward to the comments and contributions of committee members as we review the spending Estimates for the Department of Family Services. I will now be pleased to respond to members' questions.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** We thank the honourable Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) for those comments.

Does the official opposition critic the honourable member for Burrows have any opening comments?

**Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows):** Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson.

We in the official opposition appreciate that this minister and his staff have had to make many tough decisions, an expression that we have heard over and over again in the Chamber and which our Leader has agreed with. We understand that when you have less money you have to make tough decisions. We have also heard from this minister's government that everyone has to share the pain. I would like to comment on both of those things.

Although we appreciate that the government has made tough decisions, we are very concerned about how many of those decisions have been made and concerned for the staff who have made those decisions, because it is our understanding that many of those decisions were made in great haste and yet staff had to implement those decisions without ample time to do so.

We are concerned that many of the decisions made in this department were made without consultation and that some organizations were totally unprepared for some of the decisions that were made. For example, the Manitoba Foster Family Association had an agreement that they were hoping the government would sign that they had negotiated in good faith, and they thought that the government had negotiated in good faith. Then very suddenly they had the rug pulled out from under them.

I believe there was very little analysis or study of the impact of many of the decisions that were made. I believe much of the information that was provided to the public and to opposition parties was misleading at the very least, for example, a press release which said that there were 400 fewer spaces in the child care system. We now know, although the minister will not admit it in Question Period, that what he really meant was "cases," and in many cases in the past as many as two or three children occupied one space. Our information from the child care community is that is no longer true, and we believe that many more than 400 children will be denied access to child care.

\*(1510)

I am also very concerned about the way in which the decisions were made, especially the decisions around which organizations would get reduced

funding and which organizations would get no grant from this government. We understand that a public opinion polling firm was hired, and members of the public were asked if cuts have to be made, which of the following organizations are you in favour of cutting. I believe that is a very cynical approach to making decisions in government and there are much better ways. [interjection]

The minister says that I am wrong. I hope that during the course of this debate he has the opportunity to set the record straight.

I also believe that many of the decisions were made on an anecdotal basis, including at Treasury Board. I do not think it is fair to make the kinds of decisions that are the responsibility of this minister and this government when decisions in this department so greatly affect people. Many of them are very vulnerable people whom I believe this minister and this government should be protecting and defending.

Secondly, the members of this government talk repeatedly about everyone sharing the pain. I think you will find that in the budget speech by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness). However, we believe that low-income people have been sharing much more of the pain than other Manitobans.

If you look at the programs that have been eliminated or reduced or cut back, the evidence is there. The elimination of the student social allowance program is a good example. The decrease in fees to foster families, the increase in fees that parents pay for child care, the elimination of grants to Indian-Metis Friendship Centres—one of the cruelest cuts of all, given that aboriginal people have the lowest socioeconomic status in our society, is the elimination of the grant to the Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization, not just an advocacy group, an organization that provided services to people who needed them.

The decrease or cuts in medical benefits to people on social assistance and the cut in hours for staff in agencies including the Child and Family Services agency of Winnipeg, a decision which, I believe, is opposed or at least questioned by the Director of the Winnipeg Child and Family Services agency, Mr. Keith Cooper, who is on record as telling the media that they are already understaffed and stretched to the limit, and they do not know how they are going to reduce service by 3,000 hours.

It suggests to me that they do not believe that it can be done. As one of the board members said to me, there is no down time in Child and Family Services. They cannot rotate the staff with 10 days off. This is a stupid decision. That is what is being conveyed to me by union representatives and others who are very involved with Winnipeg Child and Family Services agency.

I know that the minister is negotiating with the director and directors of other agencies, but I believe that they have been handed an impossible task.

The minister blames the national recession, increasing caseloads and federal offloading for the problems that his government has; however, I believe there is another view and that is that the Filmon government is creating some of these problems.

If you look at the results of your policies, we know that many of the decisions that are being made are going to result in more people on social assistance, fewer people accessing educational institutions, people who are unable to get child care and therefore may not be able to participate in the workforce. Those people, some of them, are going to collect unemployment insurance, but most of them are going to end up on social assistance.

We know that the biggest increase in this minister's budget, and I believe the only substantial increase of any department's budget in this government, is for social assistance. I believe that part of that is a direct result of this government's policies.

The minister talks about increasing social assistance rates for provincial recipients on January 1 this year; however, they have also cut back by 2 percent in part of the budget that affects social assistance recipients.

So, at the outset, I would like to say that we have many, many concerns about how decisions were made in this department and about whom they are affecting. We believe that they are going to adversely affect many Manitobans who are unable to speak up for themselves, many Manitobans who are very vulnerable and many women, children, aboriginal people and poor people who are taking the brunt of the pain of the fiscal decisions of this government.

When you compare the cutbacks, the reductions and the decisions that affect those people with the decisions of this government that affect affluent

people, it is very obvious to me that there is a great deal more hardship on this community that this minister is supposed to be protecting than on any other group in Manitoban society. Thank you.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** We thank the critic from the official opposition for those remarks. Does the critic from the second opposition party, the honourable member for Crescentwood, have any opening comments?

**Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood):** Yes, I do. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. I am pleased to be able to provide some opening remarks as well as have an opportunity to question the Minister of Family Services on behalf of the critic of Family Services, the member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs).

Basically, and I will keep my comments short, because I think it is important to move right into the substance of the Estimates. Certainly, as the second opposition party, when we look at the Department of Family Services, we see this really as one department out of 26. So a number of our comments and questions will be about specific programs and services within this department, but certainly within the context of the entire budget and the other departments.

I think it is important to keep in mind that when we look at this particular budget, it is not done within an isolated context of this particular fiscal year. This government has been in power since 1988 and, although there has been a change of ministers in this particular department, the government has remained the same. The decision makers within cabinet have remained the same.

I think, certainly, some of my questions this afternoon will be questions that relate to the overall philosophy and direction of this department over the course of the past five years and looking on to the next five years and, as well, some questions surrounding the supposed tough choices that this government has made and, again, although this government does not use these words "reform" and "restructure," I think they are very important words now when we talk about governments in general having to make tough choices.

I would suggest that in fact we have seen very little evidence of reform or restructuring within Family Services or within many of the other departments. So I believe that the tough choices in fact perhaps have not been made. I will look

forward to hearing from the minister as to the criteria that have been used in reaching many of these funding decisions, whether it is to programs within the department or grants to external agencies that prioritization that has occurred and how it has done. I recall that in '88-89 there were certainly grave concerns as to the lack of criteria that was used when decisions were made within the department, and I look forward to seeing an improvement in that particular area.

I think there is no question. I certainly agree with the official opposition critic that in fact when you look at the Department of Family Services and the programs and services it does provide, there is certainly an impact on the disadvantaged because of some of these funding decisions. I know the minister indicated in his opening comments that the basic services of this department were intact. We will probably debate that issue, because I would suggest that in fact, no, those basic services have not remained intact when you are looking at capping of various programs or elimination of some programs.

Certainly, the impact on people who are vulnerable in our society or who have more barriers to success such as abused children, the mentally handicapped, single mothers, other low-income families, students, these disadvantages I think are being compounded by some of the decisions that have been made in this particular department.

\* (1520)

I also am concerned about the lack of clear direction as to this government's policy on workweek reduction affecting their civil service staff and Child and Family Services staff. I know when the decision was made in cabinet that in fact decisions had not been made within departments as to who would be affected and what essential services were. So given that that is the case, one certainly questions whether the government had any idea or sense as to what the impact would be within departments, when in fact they had not even decided what essential services were.

So I certainly have questions about the workweek reduction and wonder if in fact there could have been other ways to perhaps be creative. Although I know the Premier (Mr. Filmon) in the House in his comments the other day, in response to the budget speech, talked about a savings for government of 4 percent on the Salary line, I would suggest to this

Minister of Family Services that in fact there will be other indirect costs of that workweek reduction which will be hard to quantify, but will be there. Perhaps we will not see those costs so much in this particular budget year but in the next one and the year after and the year after.

So I think some of these decisions that are made now within the Department of Family Services, I see them as actually having long-term effects on the clients which they serve, and I look forward to discussions about these programs and services and look forward to some discussion with the minister about the analysis of the long-term effects of a number of these decisions. So I will leave my opening remarks at that. Again, I look forward to the debate.

Thank you.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** We thank the critic from the second opposition party for those remarks.

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

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

**Mr. Gillehammer:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, joining me at the table are Roxy Freedman, the Deputy Minister of Family Services, Martin Billinkoff, the Assistant Deputy Minister of this particular area of the budget, Kim Sharman and Wes Henderson.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** I thank the honourable minister for that.

At this time, we will be dealing with Item 1.(b) Executive Support, (1) Salaries \$408,600.

**Mr. Martindale:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, under the Expected Results, it says: "Allocation of resources will be managed efficiently, economically, and effectively."

Can the minister tell us, if it is appropriate at this line, what plan does his department have to allocate resources efficiently, economically and effectively when there are fewer resources to allocate? I presume that we are looking here in Executive Support at senior staff who have to make many of those decisions.

I know that in Question Period the minister did not really have time to answer fully some of my

questions. This is the next opportunity. So maybe, if it is appropriate, we can follow up on some of the questions about allocating resources, for example, in Child and Family Services, unless you would rather do that down further.

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** No, that is fine. We can do that right now.

The critic for the NDP spent some time in his opening remarks talking about some of the funding decisions that we have made. He has raised these in the House and is raising them again. Again, I challenge him to talk about the alternatives.

In his opening remarks, he referenced that his Leader as well as himself are aware that very, very difficult decisions have to be made in government. I am sure he is aware, as he looks at other budgets across this land coming down, that every government has tough decisions to make. They are making it in terms of workweek reduction. They are making it in terms of the layoff of staff positions.

The government of Ontario, at the present time, is talking about removing 18,000 positions from the Ontario civil service. Other departments of government in British Columbia have closed a major hospital in Vancouver. In the province of Saskatchewan, there is a question of 52 rural hospitals being closed.

If the member has not recognized yet that all governments at this time have those tough decisions to make—he referenced the decisions we have made and says he appreciates the fact that we have to make these decisions, yet I still have not heard of one alternative, any alternative that the member would bring forward within the Department of Family Services where he would reference other decisions we could have made. He indicated in the House one day that by spending more money today we will save more money in the future.

I am telling you that we budget year by year and we have to save that money now. Our deficit is going to be contained this year, but our long-term debt, most of which we have inherited from his fellow travellers across the other side of the House, is something that has to be addressed. So these decisions—and I am glad you recognize that they are tough decisions, but you still have to come up with some alternatives. I realize in Question Period you are not allowed to answer questions, but I know that you would be prepared to do it here because we

have a little more latitude in talking about these things.

The other part of the member's opening remarks was to criticize the staff in Family Services and say that they were not prepared to bring forward recommendations, they did not have an opportunity to make suggestions, that the decisions we made were not well-thought-out, not well researched, and I say you are wrong. This department in the three years that I have been here has worked very effectively, very efficiently, and I can tell you I am proud of the quality of work that they turn out.

I anticipate, even with the reductions that we have made across the board to a number of organizations—some of whom were advocacy organizations, some of them are in the service-delivery area—I can tell you in meeting with Child and Family Service agencies, they recognize there is a challenge there. That is what the member does not seem to recognize. It is a challenge that other governments are facing. It is a challenge that the private sector is facing and it is a challenge that we have to come to grips with.

We are not in a position any longer to continue to spend money, but even this year in the tough decisions we have made, the budget line for Family Services is going to go up almost 5 percent. Yes, there is going to be a workweek reduction within the department, that we will be operating with fewer staff, but I say the member is wrong if he thinks that we do not operate effectively and efficiently. We have a very professional complement of senior staff officers and people who work within this department.

**Mr. Martindale:** Well, the minister is twisting my words. I acknowledge that he has a very capable staff. What I said was that I believe that they did not have adequate time or notice to implement some of the policies that were made by Treasury Board and cabinet. Also, the minister says I do not recognize the challenge. I recognize the challenge that faced this minister. My question is how are you going to meet it? What is your plan?

I think this is a suitable time to talk about the workweek reduction, for example. You mentioned that it is happening in other provinces. Well, it is happening in Manitoba too. How will you cope with the workweek reduction when caseloads are up in social assistance, when there are great demands on Child and Family Services agencies, and when

there are demands on many other parts of this minister's department? How are you going to meet increasing demands with less staff time? What is your plan and how are you going to implement it?

**Mr. Gillieshammer:** The member says that the staff have not had sufficient time and notice. I would say to you that last summer in the month of August of 1992, the department started to work on budgetary plans. That work continued through September, October, November, December, right up to the time that the budget is finalized and made public.

\* (1530)

If the member is saying we maybe should have started in June or July, I accept that as a criticism. We could have started, I suppose, a couple of months earlier, yet we did not get out of the House until the end of June last year. Summer is sometimes a little difficult to really start formulating plans for the next year. If the member thinks we should start on the 1994 budget in June and July, it is a comment we will take into consideration in looking at the workload ahead of us. I can tell you that last August senior staff and department staff started to work on this particular budget. Without starting earlier, I am not sure how we could do that. I would assure you that as we get close to finalizing the budget, the staff are also working evenings and weekends.

I do not know whether there is a good criticism there or not, that we are not working hard enough and that staff did not have time to prepare. In my mind, we probably used the same amount of time as we have in previous years, and I have not heard from senior staff that maybe we should have been working longer hours, because in fact we have.

The workweek reduction, we are dealing with that within the department in the areas where we deliver service and are in the process of developing plans so that many of the service functions that the department offers will continue to take place. The external agencies, and I think this is probably where the member is most interested, are also developing those plans and, by and large, that is their responsibility to meet that challenge.

I have indicated to the member before, and I do not mind repeating it again, in meeting with the board chairs and the executive directors, particularly of the Child and Family Services agencies, they are aware of the challenge that faces

them. They are aware of the challenge that faces all governments. They are aware of the restructuring that is taking place in society. The Child and Family Services agencies in particular are used to developing contingency plans for what they call night service. They are used to developing contingency plans for long weekends and the executive directors of those agencies are currently working with their staff to see how they can make the most effective use of the time that they have.

Sure, there are staff who do not agree with this decision but, more and more, I think they are recognizing that it is better that we have jobs available for more and more people and that this is a plan that other jurisdictions—I know Maritime Premiers are saying, yes, we are going to accept a version of that. I think the Saskatchewan government is looking at a version of this to preserve jobs, to save money and employ the most people we can and still continue that service.

That is a challenge that we face within the department and it is an easier challenge to face with the staff who work on things like policy, who work in administration, who work in other areas of the department, but I do recognize that we have regional operations where many staff deliver that front line service in areas where agencies do not exist. We will develop a version of the workweek reduction which will allow the basic protection services to still be in place.

**Mr. Martindale:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister says that he is in the process of developing plans. I do not think the minister has answered my question yet. I would still like to know: What are your plans and how are they being implemented?

**Mr. Gillieshammer:** The member quoted me correctly and, as such, I cannot give you the final blueprint before we have finished those deliberations to see how it is going to affect the staff within the department. At the present time, I can tell you that ministerial offices will be closed for 10 working days during the year, but closed to the extent that we are not going to have the civil service staff at work there. I intend to use my political staff to answer the phones on those days. People who want to reach our offices will be accommodated by the staff that I have referenced.

**Mr. Martindale:** It seems to me that the minister has just admitted that they made the budgetary decisions before the plan was finished. The

minister said, if I am quoting him correctly, that the plan is not completed. They are still working on it. So it appears that my initial observations were correct that there is not a plan. It was not well thought out, because the budget decisions were made first and the plans are following.

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, if the member wants the heavy hand of government to dictate to external agencies how they should cope with a workweek reduction, I think he is wrong. We are going to allow those agencies to develop their plans which will leave the service intact and recognize the relationship that we have as government and being the funder of those agencies, and they are currently in process of finalizing them. So the plan may not be the same, for instance, in the Winnipeg Child and Family Services agency as it is in central Manitoba or western Manitoba.

Again, I do not think that those agencies want to have central government determine how best they can provide the service by dictating to them which days they will be closed. As far as many of our government offices where we have staff who are not delivering primary services, they will be closed on probably seven Fridays during the months of July and August and three days over the Christmas season. That will be different, as I have indicated, in our regional offices where they are the primary service delivery agency. Those plans will be developed at the local level so that the service component can remain in place. Some of them will choose to take that unpaid holiday on a Friday and, perhaps, another segment of the staff will take that day off on a Monday so that there still will be service provision in place.

**Mr. Martindale:** I think it would be helpful if I made a distinction between the minister's department and external agencies, because I believe that external agencies should be independent from the government as much as possible but still accountable to the government. I guess what we have is a difference of opinion here. The minister feels that the external agencies are aware of the implications of the workweek reduction. My interpretation is that they are saying they cannot do it.

If you look at the comments of Mr. Keith Cooper and his observations about having 3,000 less hours to deliver service, can the minister tell us how he expects external agencies to provide the same or a similar level of service in the case of Winnipeg Child

and Family Services agency with 3,000 less hours of staff time to deliver the same or even an increasing demand on service?

What are those agencies supposed to cut out? Has the minister made any suggestions to them about what they should cut besides just hours? Are they to cut out preventative services? Are they to take less children into care? What is the agency saying to the minister about the changes and the implications that will result with 3,000 less hours of staff delivery service time in the case of Winnipeg Child and Family Services?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** I do not want to be too critical of the critic for Family Services, but the conclusions he has drawn from the observations he has made from a newspaper article are wrong. The executive directors of the agencies are simply recognizing that there is a challenge there, and they have dedicated themselves to working with their unions, with their staff to find solutions.

\* (1540)

At no time should the member read into what he calls his observations based on a newspaper article that they are going to throw up their arms and abandon the ship. On the other hand, they accept this as a challenge and have indicated that, yes, it is a difficult challenge, but they are prepared to find those solutions.

I would invite the critic to go one step further than simply reading newspaper articles. Perhaps he might want to pick up the phone and have a direct discussion with the executive director of the agency. [interjection] Well, the member says he has talked to him, which is good. Then he need not rely on his observations from the newspaper article. I think he will well know that the agency is accepting this challenge, and the executive director and his senior staff are actively looking at options and have the support of their staff to meet the needs of the children who are out there.

The member, I think, is looking for a blueprint of how this is going to work. I can tell you, it is still in the process stage, as we have turned this decision over to the agencies. I expect they will meet that challenge.

**Mr. Martindale:** I guess we have a difference in interpretation of the situation. The minister considers it a challenge. I would consider it an impossible task.

I notice the minister still did not answer my question. What are external agencies saying to the minister about what services they plan to cut or reduce or will be unable to supply because they have 10 days less work this year, in the fiscal year? Can the minister tell us what they are identifying as areas that they can reduce their service in because they have fewer hours to provide the service?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, they have not provided me with that detail at this time because I think that the process is still going on.

The fact that they will have fewer people at work on a particular day is not a new challenge to them. They face that challenge any time there is a long weekend. They face that challenge on weekends because that is the critical service that they provide in protecting children, is their very basic mandate. That is what they will primarily focus on.

They will have to look at all of the other activities that the agency provides. They have staff who are responsible for accounting functions and it is going to have to be part of the agency's plan that the mandatory accounting functions that they have to do be done in a shorter period of time. They have staff who are responsible for recruiting foster parents. They are going to have to perhaps make some decisions in that area and be sure that they have sufficient supply of foster parents to meet the demand.

You can go through all of the functions that agencies provide, and I am sure that even within the Winnipeg agency, which is divided into the four quadrants of the city, they will make different decisions based on the client base that they have within those quadrants and make the most efficient use of the staff time that they have available.

This is a prerogative of the agency, to make different decisions based on what is right for that area of the city. I can tell you that the chairmen of the boards of the three agencies and the executive directors have not indicated that this is an impossible task. They say, yes, it is a difficult challenge, it is a tough challenge, and they are prepared to meet it.

**Mr. Martindale:** The minister certainly has not talked to the board members that I have talked to and I think he should. One of the tasks or part of the mandate of—

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson—

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Order, please.

**Mr. Martindale:** Can I finish?

### Point of Order

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** The member is asking that I go and talk to each and every board member individually. The way we relate to the board is to deal with the chairperson.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Order, please. The honourable minister did not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Martindale:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, part of the mandate of Child and Family Services agencies is to protect children, and when I have talked to front line staff, one of the things that they have said to me is that sometimes children are in a borderline situation, that in some instances they might take children into care and in other instances they make a judgment call and they decide not to. I guess maybe another way of describing a borderline would be a threshold. We hope that the new instrument that is being developed about characteristics will be helpful to workers in those situations.

What are front line workers, what are workers in the field supposed to do if they know that there are fewer resources, fewer hours and fewer staff with these borderline cases? Are they to move the border? Are they to change the threshold and put more children at risk instead of taking them into care?

I do not think we want to have more children in care. I think the goal should be to always have fewer children in care, but that means being able to provide services like homemakers and preventative services and recreation and that sort of thing.

If those are not available, how are staff to make the decision about what is a serious enough case to take a child into care who needs protection? How are they to make these decisions in these kinds of cases?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, thank you for the question, because it gives me an opportunity to address a concern raised by the critic from the Liberal Party, who wanted to talk about what reforms have taken place.

One of the reforms that has taken place is that we have adopted the high-risk indicators. This is a piece of research and a development of an



instrument in child welfare that is being hailed across Canada and in fact across North America as one of the tools that social workers have been looking for for years, perhaps for decades, to make those borderline decisions that the member references.

Borderline decisions in child welfare is normal business and has nothing to do with workweek reduction or changes in the budget that reflect on other areas of this department. I think we in Manitoba and within government, within the department, can be extremely proud of the fact that this high-risk indicator was developed here in Manitoba by Dr. Sigurdson and Professor Reid, and I know the member from Crescentview will be interested in this. [interjection] Crescentwood? I almost said Ellice, but it is Crescentwood—will be interested in this because I think she does have an interest in the reforms that we have brought forward in child welfare and maybe has not been as close to the picture over the last few years and does not know about this.

This high-risk indicator is being acclaimed across the country and in various American jurisdictions as that tool that social workers can use to make the determination of who should be taken into care.

Prior to the development of this instrument, of course, it was the judgment of the social worker, and that judgment is so critical. Now, of course, it is based on previous experience. It is based perhaps on the number of years that social worker has been in the field. It is based on intuition, based on judgment.

I think the member would recognize that judgment is a variable characteristic which will differ from one person to another and probably even accept that maybe social workers would make different judgments in different cases.

\*(1550)

So the high-risk indicator has been hailed by front line workers, by supervisors, by agency directors. I think even board members are saying, this is a giant step forward in the art or science of social work that we have been looking for, and again, we take some pride that it was developed right here in Manitoba.

It is being field tested. It is being introduced in some of the agencies and found to really meet a perceived need out there. The front line social workers, as they get more comfortable with that, should make the same decision in not only

borderline cases, but other cases. They should make the same decision in various geographical areas of the city. They should make the same decision in remote areas of the province, given the other parameters around that particular case.

It is something we have brought in over the last couple of years to help social workers make those decisions. Maybe, if you like, I could go into some of the other reforms that I know the member for Crescentwood will be interested in. We have also, of course, brought on stream the Child Advocate, and we will get into that later today perhaps as another reform to assist social workers, agencies, but most importantly, to assist children if in fact the system is not serving them well. I suspect we will get a chance to talk about that a little later.

The third thing I would mention is the service information system. Again, I think I had the opportunity in a previous Estimates to say that I was appalled when I became minister to find that this department and agencies had not gotten into the modern technology which exists to do case management with, and to have records and to have information at their fingertips. Some of the first reports that I received on particular cases that had gone awry spoke over and over and over again about how records were incomplete, how files were lost, how social workers did not have the up-to-date information on children who are very mobile and they move from one area of the city to another, from one area of the province to another.

I am pleased that we have spent millions of dollars on developing a service information system that allows social workers to have that information. I recently had a demonstration of it at our Portage office or the office of the central Manitoba Child and Family Services agency, and they expect that in the not-too-distant future social workers perhaps can even have, through cellular hookup, access to that information system in their vehicle as they are going to look at a particular case and perhaps make an apprehension. They will be able to flag, on their way to dealing with a case, all of the information that has been compiled on that particular child, on that particular family. So again, a major reform.

I know members will, if not want to congratulate the government on these steps, at least recognize that we have spent the resources of the province, in terms of putting these things in place. We have dedicated staff time to it, and we do not expect that this is going to replace social workers. They still are

the front line caregivers and have to make those judgments, but the members might want to recognize that these were issues.

The member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) being, I know, an honest and straightforward person would recognize that the potential to do those things was there in 1985 and 1986 and 1987 and 1988 and then, because there was no will on the part of the government of the day to do them, those things did not happen. These are reforms that are recognized in the academic community. These are reforms that are recognized in the service delivery community and, I suspect, in the mind of the critic. He would say, yes, these were steps that should be taken. So while this does not replace social workers, it certainly enhances their ability to deliver service.

**Mr. Martindale:** Regrettably, this minister's ideas and initiatives for reform are limited to the high-risk indicator in computerizing the system—[interjection] and the Child Advocate, we will get into that later. However, if you look at other initiatives by this minister and this government, we see fewer services for foster parents since the grant to the Foster Family Association was eliminated, a less accessible, less affordable child care system and less money for social assistance recipients.

Going back to Child and Family Services agencies and one of the implications of the minister's budget decision is that those staff are now going to have to find more families and more placements for foster children.

Does the minister expect that there is more staff time available to do that, and where is that staff time coming from, since other people are—well, since all the staff are taking 10 days off without pay?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member wants to get into talking about foster parents, the child care system and social assistance. I welcome that.

The fact is, the grant to the Foster Family Association has been eliminated, but there has been budgetary consideration to have the services that were provided in terms of legal services, in terms of insurance—budgetary decisions have been made to leave that in place. The agencies in the past have been responsible for the recruitment and the licensing of foster homes and foster families. We feel that it makes good sense that they would also be responsible for the training of those families. The services that were provided will still be taken

care of. Budgetary decisions have been made to ensure that.

The member has also referenced the child care system. I would challenge him: What is your vision of a child care system? It should be just open ended and a statutory obligation to spend as much money to serve the demand that is there. We are saying that that budget line, which was around \$26 million when the critic of the second opposition party was in these Estimates in 1988, has now grown to \$47 million. In fact, last year it was over \$50 million because we had to get supplementary funding for \$5 million.

So the resources have been put in place for the most comprehensive child care system in Canada. The standards have remained the same. Much more money has been put into the system, yet the member is still critical. I think the only way we would satisfy him is to have it completely open ended, in other words, spend as much money as there is a demand for spaces and for subsidy and for grants. Well, this is the 1990s, and we simply cannot do that. The member might say and might even be curious to know how Manitoba can spend four times as much as Saskatchewan. Is that not evidence of our commitment to child care?

The member has not offered any solutions how we could spend that \$47 million that we have budgeted this year in a better fashion. We will give fair treatment to families who present themselves to the system to access those subsidies. The only way we can meet the demand is to take the cap off and let the money flow. Well, there is not a government in Canada that is doing that in any department in the 1990s. [interjection]

The member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray), representing the Liberal position on daycare, which has always been a mystery to us because rarely is there a question asked or a comment made on daycare by the Liberals, but the member is saying, spend as much money as the demand out there. Well, that—

\* (1600)

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Order, please.

### Point of Order

**Ms. Gray:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I have concerns that if we are to get through this Estimates process orderly that in fact over the last hour we have seen the minister continually twist the member

for Burrows' comments and my comments. I would hope that he would stick to the facts and listen to exactly what we are saying because in fact I did not talk about spend, spend, spend.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** I would like to thank the honourable member. The honourable member did not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

I would advise all honourable members that we are dealing on a line-by-line basis and at this time we are dealing with line 1.(b), which is Executive Support, Salaries of said Executive Support. If we could deal with that one line I would appreciate it.

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**Mr. Gilleshammer:** I am prepared to go line by line and deal with Executive Salaries if that is the decision of the group.

**Mr. Martindale:** I would like to give the member for Crescentwood equal time now.

**Ms. Gray:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, just moving backwards in terms of the comments that have been talked about as far as this department, the minister spoke about capping on child care. He brought up the issue and I am wondering—

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Order, please. Could I have the honourable member speak into the microphone so that Hansard can pick it up.

**Ms. Gray:** I am going to respond to some of the minister's comments that have been put on the record at this point if I can ask some further questions.

As I said, moving backwards on the questions and comments, the minister referred to a cap in the area of child care. I would ask the minister, he talks about no other department or service where there is a cap.

Maybe I have missed, maybe there has been a change but, given that the minister sits in cabinet, if he could tell me at this point in time, when someone is eligible for a service in home care they in fact do receive that service, which does cost dollars, can the minister tell me why we are still continuing to service the aged and infirm and the physically handicapped in the area of home care where the need is identified but in fact we have not used that same philosophy when it comes to subsidized spaces, when it comes to the number of spaces in the child care program?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** If the member wants to get into the Health Estimates, she is going to have to wait until she has an opportunity to talk to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard).

What I am saying in child care is, because our budget has grown so dramatically, this government at this time cannot afford to have that completely open ended. The member is aware as a long-time Manitoba civil servant that there are areas of the budget where it is not a statutory obligation. While we have to respond to the demand in social allowances if that demand presents itself, the same is not true in child care. As a result, we have made some decisions there to freeze licensing and to cap subsidies so that we can live within that \$47-million budget.

**Ms. Gray:** My follow-up question then to the minister would be: Does this minister support the fact that the services provided in child care that as a government there should be a move towards having that service as an ensured service similar to home care?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** I think I can safely say there is not a province in this country that has that policy, whether it be a province that is governed by Liberals, New Democrats or Conservatives.

Manitoba has been a leader in child care on the standards side, on the side of developing legislation to ensure quality daycare. We have also been a leader on the side of expenditures in terms of what the provincial commitment is to daycare. I think that our record there has been a very positive one.

In fact, I might refer the member to a recent article in the Winnipeg Free Press where the past president of the MCCA, Carol Draper, said that Manitoba has the best child care system in Canada.

**Ms. Gray:** Well, I am not quite sure if—I guess the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) is to not pay attention to newspapers and I am but, be that as it may, the minister still did not answer my question in terms of this government's philosophy in regard to the child care system, and given that it is becoming a way of life—we do have a good child care system, or we did here in Manitoba, and in fact there certainly is a need for child care within our province.

There are certainly studies to suggest that in fact our gross domestic product improves when there is adequate child care, and I would ask if this government supports the philosophy that child care as a service should become an ensured service.

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** The philosophy that I support is to do the best job that \$47 million can do for the needs of child care in Manitoba.

**Ms. Gray:** That does answer my question then. The answer is no.

A further question to the minister: The minister referred to his reforms, and I am certainly prepared to defer the discussion of service information systems and Child Advocate until later and in fact high-risk indicators, but I am wondering if the minister at some point would table for the members a copy of the high-risk indicators, the package, the material that is being used. That would be appreciated, because the minister is correct; I am very interested in that.

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Well, certainly, we would be more than happy to provide the member and both critics with information on that.

**Ms. Gray:** The minister has talked about an efficient use of staff and gave some suggestions of how the Child and Family Services agencies might perhaps do some restructuring in regard to how they deliver services, and I certainly think that it is incumbent upon all governments and agencies to continue to look at their structures.

I would ask the minister if he feels that his department is efficient and if—well, first of all, does he feel that his department is efficient, or in fact is there some need for changes to be made in terms of how his department delivers services?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** I think that, at any point in time, you would not get agreement on whether government is efficient. The view of the greater public out there is that government is probably very inefficient.

I would say that over the last three years I have increasingly been impressed by the professionalism, by the dedication, by the hard work and by the expertise of the people I work with within Family Services.

Having said that, if the question is, can we do better, yes, I think we can. I think that any professional, whether it be in teaching or nursing or engineering or government, has to constantly say: How can I become better at the job I do? As a result, we have people taking training programs. We have people going to in-service programs. We have people going to conferences. You always have to balance your expenditures on that type of

professional improvement with the great demand for money for service.

Yet I believe that every department of government has to strive to become more efficient, I think was the word the member used. Efficiency usually relates to expenditures. I am not sure if that is the direction the member wants to go, but I think I have had a growing appreciation for the manner in which this department is able to carry out its responsibilities. But if the member is saying can you do better, the answer is yes.

\* (1610)

**Ms. Gray:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, yes, I am referring to efficiency, but I suppose I am really referring to efficacy which in fact not only measures efficiency, but also looks at the quality of service. I think that is important, as well.

I would ask the minister, and let me say that no one is questioning the dedication and the hard work and the long hours that civil service staff put in, because I think they certainly do put many long hours in. Whether in fact their work—and this is not a reflection on them as individuals, but a reflection on the system—is productive work, that I think is another issue in question, because I think in fact civil servants spend too much time doing nonproductive work that is generated by the system.

When you asked the question, is in fact this work directly related to the quality of a service that should be being provided to a client? I am not sure we can answer yes in a lot of cases. So when we talk about efficiencies of departments and efficacy of service, I would ask the minister because he has actually challenged, I would suggest, the Child and Family Services agencies and probably other external agencies as well, to look at their structures and look at their way of doing business and perhaps make changes. I would ask the minister if, in fact, there is any formal process in place within his own department to do that as well?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Well, the formal process would be the meetings of senior staff whereby they have an opportunity, whether it is in a retreat situation, to examine the way we do business or whether it is in their normal weekly meetings. But we have done a lot of restructuring within our department in the three years that I have been here in terms of trying to put the various units within the Department of Family Services in an org. chart, if you like, where they most appropriately belong. Yet, there are always

operations within a department that perhaps seem to be a bit of an anomaly. That is true across government and, in fact, in the last number of years we have made some transfers out of units.

When I first became minister, there was a group within the department that dealt with immigration, and that has since been moved over to Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, where there seems to be a better fit. So that challenge is always there, and it is ongoing. We are always looking at ways to do things better.

**Ms. Gray:** Can the minister tell us, is the cabinet and, again, his department—I appreciate his comments about weekly meetings of senior staff, but is there a major process in place to actually look at the restructuring of the various government departments or a change in how the government does business?

I use the example of the Department of Labour, where in fact I think there is a pilot project that is underway in terms of restructuring that department, and I am wondering if that has been expanded to other departments.

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** That is an ongoing process.

**Ms. Gray:** It sounds like in fact there is not really anything definite that is being put in place as a priority or one of the goals of this particular department, for Family Services to do that.

I would ask the minister, when he talks about the workweek reduction and basically the fact—I was not quite clear on one of his answers. He talked about, I think, the essential services still being in place or ensuring that there were staff in place. Perhaps he could clarify for me, in regard to regional services, whether that is Income Security or the other Regional Operations: Will there in fact be staff working on a regular basis, will there be reduced staff, or will it be done on a stand-by weekend basis? Perhaps he could clarify.

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Yes, that will depend on the function that is being provided by those regional services. An example I would use is—and the member is aware that we do Child and Family Services work in some of the regions where we are responsible for providing the service.

It is incumbent on us then to have in place staff who can respond if there are children at risk. On the other hand, there may be certain areas of the department where a certain service is provided that is not regarded as being an emergency service or

where they perhaps are not providing emergency services, where that unit can shut down for the entire day.

**Ms. Gray:** Community Services and rehabilitation staff, will they be working on those days or not?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Well, there is no single answer for that right now because we are in a process of looking at the needs that are required. For instance, MDC, which is where one-third of our staff works in this department, some 600 staff members, will do their staffing to allow the services that are required to continue.

Again, they will have to plan the workload at that particular facility which they would normally do for a long weekend or other traditional holidays and still provide the essential services that are required there. So when you talk about our entire staff, fully one-third of our staff are located at that institution.

**Ms. Gray:** I am still not sure—I mean, will those staff in the institution be working on the Fridays and the days between Christmas? Will Community Services vocation rehabilitation counsellors and counsellors who provide services to the handicapped and income security staff be working on those days?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Some of them will be.

**Ms. Gray:** Can the minister tell me how this government has already decided how much money will be saved on salaries with this workweek reduction when in fact it sounds like some of the planning in terms of who is working and who is not still has not been determined to this date?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** The savings is based on a workweek reduction of 10 days over the course of the budget year. The exact planning within various parts of the department is currently in process.

**Ms. Gray:** Is the minister then saying that some staff will be working so in fact there will not be those 10 days reduction, or is the plan that all staff within his department as an example will actually be taking those 10 days off without pay?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Staff within the department will be having the 10 days off but in some areas it will be on a rotational basis so that they are not all off on the same day.

**Ms. Gray:** That answers my question. Can the minister tell me, given that basically all staff who are providing direct service will be off a minimum of 10 days, that means effectively that you are reducing

the amount of service that is available to the consumer, the client, the individual out in the community, what is the department's policy going to be in regard to overtime?

I ask that question for a couple of reasons. One is the agreement, the government employees' agreement usually refers to overtime hours being beyond the 36-1/4 or 40 hours a week, and given that they are taking one day off out of five days, those hours are skewed, so I am not sure what the policy is in regard to overtime. As well, when you look at the overtime hours of staff who are providing service, I would suggest that you probably have a number of overtime hours. The question is, are you going to allow staff to continue to work on an overtime basis and be paid and/or compensated for time off, or what will the policy be?

\* (1620)

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** There will be no change in policy. There may well be need for overtime on the same basis as it was needed before and we will have to accommodate that.

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

**Ms. Gray:** If in fact there will be no change in policy for overtime, then, and I could be wrong, that would mean that staff, providing they have permission from their supervisor, would work the overtime. One might assume that a number of staff, being dedicated, will try to work more overtime hours to do the work that they have not been able to do on those days that they are off, because there is certainly work there for five days a week unless we limit caseloads and other things. They are going to try to do that work at another point in time, i.e. overtime, and they can of course ask for pay and after 90 days we are required to pay them. So in fact how can this government be assured, unless they change the overtime policies, that they are in fact going to save really any money, because the overtime costs may skyrocket?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, overtime is always a concern to government because it is a cost that, in many cases, you do not accurately anticipate. The supervisory staff will have to work as diligently as possible to do the managing of staff to see that the savings that government anticipates from the workweek reduction plan, which is being adopted in many jurisdictions in Canada, is not eaten up by overtime.

I agree with the member that we do have a lot of very dedicated staff, and I know that they are dedicated to their jobs. It is part of the management function to make the allocations of workloads so that government has some success in achieving the savings that we are looking for. I know the member, because of her extensive knowledge of government, knows that there are vacancies and there are—and I do not say that in a derogatory sense. I readily admit that she knows more about government than I do—that there are vacancies and there are term staff and there are full-time staff and there are people who have longer holidays than others and this management of staff will have to be done to achieve the savings that we are looking for with this workweek reduction plan.

**Ms. Gray:** Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, then if I can interpret the minister's comments, it would be then his expectation as minister that his supervisory staff ensure that in fact the overtime hours do not increase above and beyond what they normally are now in the course of a year. So, therefore, the minister is assuming or will accept the fact that the services to individuals in the community, in fact that there will be a decrease because of that.

I would then ask the minister, has he asked his staff to put in place any type of criteria given that the volume may be more than what the hours of work are available to get the job done, is there going to be some kind of further prioritization of services to individuals in the community?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Well, certainly, if you have hard-working and dedicated staff who are going to be working 10 less days, there is going to be a difference in the amount of output that you would expect if they were working full time. What the workweek reduction does is challenge the manager and the supervisory staff within the department to ensure that the most critical work is done. In child welfare that we talked about earlier, the child protection is the most important thing that the Child and Family Services agencies do. There are other areas that are not as critical. They are not life-and-death issues that we are going to have to challenge the managers to make those changes in. So this will vary with the various components of the department as they find the areas in which they can realistically make those reductions and those savings.

**Ms. Gray:** Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I appreciate the minister's comments because I think

that you do have a number of managers out there who would be delighted to take up the challenge in terms of looking at more efficiencies.

My question then to the minister is: Is he going to allow these managers the latitude to in fact make decisions so that the existing staff can be more productive in the hours in which they are working? By that I mean ignoring some of these stupid rules and regulations that governments—and I am not referring to this government—traditionally have in place that do not allow managers to in fact make those common sense decisions so that staff spend their time doing productive work in getting a service to the client.

Whether that means technology such as looking at E-mail, which I understand senior levels of some departments have, the service deliverers do not, that means looking at lap top computers and more dictaphones. This may sound silly but it is impossible for people in a region to actually have access to some of those basic kinds of pieces of equipment to actually do their job better because of ridiculous rules and regulations about what you can do and what you cannot. Are you going to give some latitude to managers then to come up with some common sense ideas and solutions on how we can actually do a better job and let them do it?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** I would dearly hope that government is not an impediment to people using common sense. The example that I used before and I just very briefly repeat, when I first came into the ministry and realized in our Child and Family Services section of the department that we did not have any automation to any degree, I tried to make that a priority and my colleagues in government agreed, and we have set aside millions of dollars. I know that this member has not said this but other critics are saying oh yes, you are just spending money on fancy gadgets, that you are just spending money on automation, you are not spending money on kids.

I am pleased to hear the member say that these things are important and that she recognizes the fact that we have to make expenditures in those areas to assist staff to become more efficient, to give them the tools to do their job. If she would accept that as a valid example of a commitment, yes, I would certainly want our managers to have some freedom to manage and to use what she calls common sense.

**Ms. Gray:** Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I certainly agree with using common sense and the importance of information systems, however, I do not want the minister to think that I am necessarily supporting the fact that it takes 20 SYs and a whole new information system to actually put in place a system that in fact has probably been ongoing for five years, and I would suggest still is not in place. There may have been better ways to do that but that is another issue.

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** The member says that this has been ongoing for five years. I know that in September of 1990, there was not a system in place, that government had made no commitment to automating this particular area. In recent budgets we have made that a priority to spend millions of dollars on automating that service information system in child welfare. I can assure you that the system, while not completely finalized, is now in place. I know that it was, I think, last fall that I had a demonstration of that system in the Central Manitoba agency and while we still have more work to do on that, we have made a commitment that we are following through on and that we will finalize.

**Ms. Gray:** The minister probably is correct about 1990. I thought he had referred to in previous comments that this process had started in '88.

\* (1630)

Quickly one more area—the minister referred to in his comments at the beginning of responding to questions, talking about tough choices and prioritizations and asking for suggestions on government priorities. I would mention to this minister that when this government took power in '88, there were millions and millions of dollars spent on capital projects—not necessarily within Family Services, but within government of which Family Services is one of the departments and this minister is part of cabinet—for new hospitals, as an example, throughout the province.

Three years later, we now have a government suggesting to these very same centres that in fact they must rationalize the types of services that they provide and what they provide. Yet, at the beginning of this mandate, all this money was spent on these brand-new facilities when in fact three years later the government is saying, now as facilities you have to really change the way you do things and perhaps look at providing the services differently. Again, I wonder how responsible that

was when government decided to go ahead and build all these facilities.

I also noticed that as far as our prioritization, in this budget we still have \$2 million in the Community Places Program. Community Places provides a number of interesting structures to a number of interesting communities, but I guess my question would be, if we are looking at \$2 million and we are having to make tough choices in the area of Family Services, Health and Education, are there not perhaps higher needs for that \$2 million than to look at replacing roofs on curling rinks and improving golf courses? Are there not better uses to this dollar, given that governments are expected to make tough choices?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I am pleased that she brought up Community Places. She can go to the Estimates of the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship to confirm this, but that program no longer exists in this budget. The budget line that the member refers to is to pay for the commitments that were made in the previous budget where projects have commenced and the payment is not made until the community organization completes the project and submits their bills. So I know that the member will want to congratulate the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mrs. Mitchelson) for doing what the member is expounding.

Further to that, the member talks about capital projects. I am well aware of her record and the Liberal record on capital projects. I recall in 1988, the then member of Ellice said, do not fix the roof on the Minnedosa courthouse; let the building fall apart; you do not need it. Hansard will show that. [interjection] Well, the member is definitely on record as criticizing a decision by Government Services to fix the roof on the Minnedosa courthouse and would have that building crumble to ruin and not have those services provided in rural Manitoba.

I remember her comments and her Leader's comments on the personal care home in Minnedosa. People do not need to be there; 60 percent of them could be turfed out into the street; that they were placed there for the wrong reasons. I remember her Leader and her colleagues saying, do not build hospitals in rural Manitoba, spend the money in Winnipeg. I can tell you that is not the way rural Manitobans feel, that the hospitals that I am aware of were capital redevelopment of aging facilities. The member and her Leader and a

colleague are on record as saying, do not build hospitals anywhere in Manitoba except Winnipeg. I do not agree with that, and our government does not agree with that.

The member is critical of community organizations that want to repair and build curling rinks, skating rinks under the Community Places Program. When we came to government, there was \$10 million in that program. Last year it was scaled down to about \$4 million, and this year there is a pause in the program. It does not exist except, as I have already indicated, to pay off the commitments that were made in the last budget year.

The member is saying, do not spend money on capital. Well, we are proud of the fact that the Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger) has a \$100-million Highways budget. You have colleagues who are saying, you have to do more in tourism, but you are saying, do not build highways, because they do not matter in rural Manitoba, do not build hospitals, do not build schools. Well, I can tell you that rural Manitobans deserve and expect those capital facilities will be built and redeveloped. You know, I am surprised that the Liberal Party has not learned that there are voters outside of the Perimeter Highway. They pay taxes, and they deserve these facilities as well as people who live in Winnipeg.

**Ms. Gray:** Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I am surprised the minister is still continuing to twist what the comments were. I think the comment in regard to the roof on the Minnedosa courthouse—in fact, I know the comment was: If I had a choice between putting monies towards something like that and monies towards direct service to children, I would choose children. I still stand by those comments. Which would the minister choose?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** We would choose both, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson. We would serve children. We would serve people. I know the member from Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) would agree to that, that we have a balanced approach within our budget, that you have to provide money for capital. Sure, that is a quick fix, that you spend less and less on capital, but that is a one-year solution. I mean, the previous government did that. They came to government when the Highway budget was nearing \$100 million. When they were in government, it went lower and lower, not taking into consideration inflation. But in the late '80s, when they were still in



government, the Highways budget was around \$80 million.

So you can make a one-year or a two-year saving, but you will pay for that later on, plus what you are doing is talking about putting the construction industry out of business. You want to save the \$100 million in Highways, you want to save the hundreds of millions of dollars in hospital construction, perhaps \$30 million in school capital reconstruction, sure, you can do that for one year, but you spend that later, plus you throw into chaos a construction industry. You throw off the five-year planning that school boards go through. Capital budgets have to be maintained.

**Ms. Gray:** Well, the minister makes a very good point, and that is that he talks about how short-term planning decisions in fact cost you in the long run. I would ask this minister: When we look at services to foster families and how there has been a reduction, what about the commitment to foster families that this government has failed to provide?

It is nice that we are continuing on our commitments with existing community services' dollars, but what about commitments to foster families? What about the fact that now training and education for foster families, which is so, so crucial, that Child and Family Services agencies are going to have to pick that up? Given that their caseloads have increased, and in fact now they are going to be working less hours of the week, how can the minister talk about those short-term decisions? What is the long-term impact of those decisions if this minister feels that it is important to make long-term budgetary decisions? He talks about Highways and capital planning. What about those decisions affecting children and affecting real people? What about that?

I mean, when we get into a discussion of Child and Family Services and even looking at services to the handicapped, the increased number of sexual abuse cases we have seen where care providers are involved, it is so important that we have good foster families. It is so important that we train them to do the very difficult job they must do.

What is the effect of the lack of commitment to foster families, and what is that going to be in five years, not this year?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** I referenced capital budgets because the member brought it up, and I thought that she perhaps wanted to talk about it.

This department has no capital budget, so when you talk about capital budgets, I had to assume you were referring to Highways, hospitals, school construction and other government services work. But we have no capital budget in Family Services. All of our funding is dedicated to serving people.

The member is referencing foster families and our commitment. I have here in my folder the interprovincial comparisons, and Manitoba compares exceedingly well to other jurisdictions, that the money we spend on foster families and foster care in Manitoba is higher than the other prairie provinces, that we have a strong commitment there and is equivalent to what is spent in B.C. and most other provincial governments.

\* (1640)

The whole idea of the budget is to have some balance in your expenditures, and if the member thinks you can take all of the money out of capital to spend it on people, I say she is wrong, that we have to have a balance in our approach. Our commitment to foster families is not what it was last year in terms of dollars. I grant you that, but it still compares very favourably with what other jurisdictions are doing.

**Ms. Gray:** Just one quick question, because I know we are ready to move on to the next section. Under Indirect Salary Costs, 11.5—if the minister could just indicate what that is for and if the minister could also indicate to me, with all due respect to all deputy ministers, what has been the increase in salaries for deputy ministers over the last three years?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** We are moving from a wide ranging discussion to line by line, I take it. We are on 1.(b) Salaries—you are in the supplement?

**The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Penner):** I would wonder whether the honourable member would want to pass item 1.(b) Executive Support and then move on to the next item of discussion.

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Right, I had the answer here a minute ago. I am told that that is a cost for overtime.

**The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Penner):** Item 1.(b) Executive Support, (1) Salaries.

**Ms. Gray:** No, we are still waiting for one more answer.

Clarification of the question was, could the minister indicate to us what the percentage increase for the deputy minister's salary has been over the last three years, if he has that information?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** I do not have that information, but I am sure we could get it. It is part of the negotiated increase for all civil servants.

**The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Penner):** Item 1. Administration and Finance, (b) Executive Support (1) Salaries \$408,600—pass; (b)(2) Other Expenditures \$83,900—pass.

Item 1.(c) Children's Advocate (1) Salaries: \$172,800.

**Mr. Martindale:** I should probably know this, but when did the Children's Advocate begin his term of employment?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Maybe I could take the opportunity, since we have moved to this line, to introduce Wayne Govereau who has been hired as the Children's Advocate. In answer to your question about when he started work in the Province of Manitoba, I believe it was around December 15.

**Mr. Martindale:** I notice that part of the Activity Identification for the Children's Advocate is to monitor and/or recommend policy and program changes. I am wondering if the Children's Advocate has made any recommendations to the minister since he began his employment last December?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** The Children's Advocate, Mr. Govereau, started in December, and I can say that the majority of his activities to this stage has been to make other service providers within the province aware of his appointment and to meet with a great many of these service providers across the province of Manitoba. He has done some liaison with the advocates in other provinces, the many, many tasks that go into setting up of the office, planning to make all Manitobans aware of the services and the role that he will be playing. At the present time, he is involved in the hiring of staff and the setting up of the office.

We have met on a regular basis to review the activities that he has been involved in, and we have had some opportunity to talk about child welfare in Manitoba.

**Mr. Martindale:** Is the minister able to share with this committee any of the recommendations that the Children's Advocate has made to him?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Well, we have talked about the various agencies and service providers that exist in the province of Manitoba. Certainly, I am aware of the fact that Manitoba probably has the most comprehensive child welfare system across this

country. We have talked a great deal about the issues that confront child welfare agencies and child welfare workers. We have talked about some of the ongoing developments that we have in Manitoba.

We have talked about the task force that is currently working on the native child welfare in Manitoba and the appeal panel that we have put in place to address concerns that have been raised by a number of people vis-à-vis political interference and the involvement of the community with the native child welfare agencies. We have talked about the budgetary decisions that government has made. We have talked about the reforms that I referenced earlier, and we have talked about the communications that are necessary to make Manitobans aware of the service, whether we use pamphlets, meetings, a variety of ways in which children and families and service providers across Manitoba become aware of the services offered.

So there has been a wide variety of issues that we have had a chance to talk about, and we are currently working out processes and protocols to develop the relationship that we need so that the advocate has access to myself as minister and will be able to bring issues forward that I should be aware of. I think the member can probably appreciate, as a politician taking over the ministerial duties in an office, you come to that office, in many cases, with a lot of questions about what the department does. Probably it would be hard to understand that after a few months in office there were still areas of the department that I wondered what they did.

\* (1650)

Going through the Estimates process the way we do I find is the best way to understand how you employ 1,800 people and spend \$700 million. We not only have competing issues across government where ministers need to advocate for their own department—and I know it will be no surprise to the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) that the Minister of Highways would like to have a capital budget of \$200 million to address those needs across this province. Similarly, as Minister of Family Services, we have been pleased over the last four or five budgets to have one of the largest increases in provincial resources to address some of those problems, and I am proud that we have been able to bring on board the high-risk indicators and develop that particular reform that we spent those millions of dollars on the service information

system, that we in fact have brought forward the Child Advocate.

There are many issues that we have to work on in terms of developing the ability of this particular unit to provide a unique service to children and to families in Manitoba. I know that there are high expectations that many have of how the Child Advocate is going to provide a service that was perceived to have been missing before.

Again, it is not a new idea. I know the previous government discussed this, and at times considered creating an advocate's position. It was recommended a number of times during the 1980s, and it was not deemed to be a priority at that time. We have brought it forward as part of our reform of the child welfare system in Manitoba. I guess if we lived in a more perfect world, we would, first of all, not need the office and need as much assistance in this area, but in reality we do. We need to gain some experience in providing services across the province, and in many ways, it depends on the type of resources that the government is going to be able to dedicate to this particular area to see what sort of growth we have, to meet the demand that is out there.

So I trust perhaps that this has answered the member's question.

**Mr. Martindale:** I should probably have said earlier that I think you made a good decision in the person you hired. I think he has excellent qualifications, and everything I have read and seen about him, I have been very impressed by.

But I would still like the minister to answer my question more specifically. The minister mentioned that he has had numerous discussions and mentioned some of the topics he has talked about, and I am wondering if the Children's Advocate has made recommendations on policy changes, program changes or even changes in legislation, or whether perhaps the minister cannot answer that question directly, whether you cannot say yes or no whether he has or not.

If he has, I would be interested in knowing, if you can tell me; if you cannot, I would be interested in knowing that, too.

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Well, yes, we have talked about some policy issues. We have talked about budgetary issues. We have talked about some direction that the government is going to go.

You can appreciate that the legislation has not yet been proclaimed. You can appreciate that the office is not yet fully open and open to the public, that staff have not been hired, that pamphlets have not been printed, that we still have a lot of work to do in a practical sense of getting the office up and running.

So I think it is fair to say that a lot of the energy that has been expended to this point in time is dealing with some of the practicalities of opening the office, of hiring staff, of making as many people as possible aware of the services, and that a lot of the policy work is going to be left to after the point where we are fully open and gaining that experience in working with specific clients and specific cases.

**Mr. Martindale:** When will the legislation be proclaimed?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Well, I am hoping that it will be proclaimed in the not-too-distant future.

**Mr. Martindale:** When will the office be opened?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Shortly after proclamation, I would anticipate the office will be opened.

**Mr. Martindale:** When will the staff hiring be completed?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** It is in process now, and given the various civil service intricacies that I am not aware of, it takes time to make some decisions around the positions and classification and bulletining. Those things are all underway.

**Mr. Martindale:** I notice that there are quite a few changes under Other Expenditures in the budget from last year to this year. I assume that it is because this year you are able to do much more specific budgeting, but I would like to check out that assumption with the minister. The total expenditures are relatively the same, a slight decline. Perhaps the minister could say, well, if my assumption is right, that you are able to do more specific budgeting this year.

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** That is correct. The hiring will be taking place, the rent is being paid, the utilities are being accounted for. You know, it is not a big budget. It is fair to assume that the majority of the costs are in salary. The other costs are involved with the setting up of the office and the functioning of that office.

**Mr. Martindale:** One concern I have about the Other Expenditures budget is that the transportation budget has been reduced from \$25,000 to \$19,000.

I presume that this is for travel all over Manitoba. I wonder if the minister could tell us how much travel he expects the Children's Advocate might have to do, how available he will be to rural Manitoba, and if he considers this budget to be adequate.

**The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Penner):** I presume the honourable member is referring to the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review. [interjection]

**Mr. Gillieshammer:** Well, I thank you. Yes, certainly, there is travel involved, most of it within the province. The advocate has made a concerted effort to be in contact with our regional offices, with our agencies across the province, and the travel of the advocate and staff will largely be dependent upon caseload and the particular area of the province where service needs to be provided.

Again, as I indicated earlier, as we gain experience in the workings of the office, I am sure that we will be more able to accurately forecast expenditures.

**Ms. Gray:** Could the minister be more specific when he said the office would be fully opened as soon as the act is proclaimed, give us an indication of when that might be. Is he looking at the end of June, is he looking at September, before Christmas, and by that, as well, can the minister indicate to us when will sort of referrals be accepted or are they already in terms of specific cases, and can and will MLAs be able to access the Child Advocate directory of children?

**Mr. Gillieshammer:** There were a whole bunch of questions there, and I did not write them down, but the legislation will be proclaimed well before Christmas and hopefully sooner than later.

The Advocate has been involved in some cases already, and I am sure that he would welcome questions from MLAs, I believe was one of your questions.

I know that there is just a wide variety of agencies and groups that he has met with, which has been very time consuming, but because of his history in the province of Manitoba, I think the relationships that were built in the past have been positive in being able to touch base with so many of the agencies that he will be working with.

**The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Penner):** The hour being five o'clock, shall committee rise? Committee rise.

## HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

**Madam Chairperson (Louise Dacquay):** Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will be dealing with the Estimates for the Department of Highways and Transportation.

We will begin with an opening statement from the honourable Minister of Highways.

**Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation):** It is a privilege for me to present the sixth set of Estimates for the Department of Highways and Transportation. The budget reflects the present state of the economy, the slow recovery from the long-lasting economic recession.

The total budget for Highways and Transportation for '93-94 is \$4 million down or 1.8 percent lower than the previous year. This will present a considerable challenge to the department to find even more efficient ways of delivering programs so that we can maintain the same level of quality programming that Manitobans have come to expect.

Challenging and tough decisions have had to be made. While decisions may be hard to swallow, they were necessary decisions for the sake of all Manitobans in the province today and those of future generations. While we are forced to tighten our belts, the end result will be a healthier state of economy for the province.

A desire to reduce spending and cut deficits is in no way unique to Manitoba. All governments, provincially as well as federally, are struggling with the issue of rapidly spiralling costs and dwindling revenues.

Despite less overall funding, there is some good news, increased dollars for a construction program in the Department of Highways and Transportation. Capital spending has risen from \$103 million to \$110.6 million. The reason for the increase in the capital program is based on the fact that we have been successful in negotiating a very favourable federal-provincial Strategic Highway Improvement Program, basically \$70 million in funds to be cost-shared 50-50 over the next two years. That is probably a much better deal than any of the other provinces across the country have been able to negotiate with the federal government.

\* (1500)

I just had the privilege last week to meet with ministers from Saskatchewan and B.C., and they feel that their agreement is not as beneficial as ours.

This program basically will include what we had considered as part of the National Highways Program, which is PTHs—the Trans-Canada 1, the Yellowhead-Trans-Canada 16, Highway 75 and the Perimeter Highway around Winnipeg. Those are the projects that basically are included under the SHIP program.

While the federal government has agreed to provide short-term financial support to assist improving some of the designated national highway network in Manitoba, we will be working to negotiate a further cost-sharing agreement past 1994-95. There is an urgent need for ongoing federal and financial support for the system. This is essential to the provision of a safe, competitive and sustainable Canadian highway network.

I just want to add, to the members, that for myself and, I think, for other ministers as well across the country, it was a big disappointment on December 2, when the federal minister Mazankowski made his economic statement and had not addressed the National Highways Program. But, in his terms and in further discussion, we regarded this as an interim measure, and discussions will continue to take place between the federal government and ourselves. In fact, we are looking at having a meeting of the provincial ministers and federal minister sometime in May to continue the negotiations regarding the national highway system.

The additional funding that we have received will have many beneficial effects. It will significantly improve our provincial road infrastructure, thus facilitating the movement of goods and people. It will result in a greater number of jobs, and while it might not breathe renewed life necessarily that much into the sagging construction industry, it will at least help to maintain it for the time being.

It will provide benefits to our motor carrier industry, good roads and good business through less fuel consumption, motor vehicle maintenance costs, improved safety and more convenient and timely movement. These things are illustrated in the study that was undertaken by TAC when we established National Highways Program.

A major initiative of the department which will greatly enhance the delivery of the construction

program is regionalization. As of April 1, many of the currently central engineering and administrative functions will be phased into five regional offices located in Steinbach, Portage la Prairie, Brandon, Dauphin and Thompson.

This restructuring will provide for greater delegated authority and accountability at a regional level and more effective organization. We believe that it will enable greater responsiveness to community needs and better use of resources.

I am pleased to report that, despite the fact that the overall level of departmental spending is down, we have been paying the same level of funding for grants to cities, towns and villages, work in LGDs and unorganized territory and the Rural Municipal Bridge Assistance Program.

However, it would have been my desire, had the funding been available, to increase the Rural Municipal Bridge Assistance Program. We maintained it at the same level which I think that for the future has to receive consideration for expansion. It is an objective of this government to assist municipal and local governments develop and maintain their local infrastructure consistent with their needs.

Not only does the department provide financial support to communities, staff provides numerous other support services to assist in meeting transportation requirements at the local level.

In like vein, the department is maintaining its full level of funding to municipal airport commissions to assure the safe operation of local airports.

The government recognizes the limited resources available to municipalities to develop local transportation infrastructure so vital to local economy.

The department has been instrumental in the negotiation of a new funding arrangement for the 830 kilometres of winter road east of Lake Winnipeg which has been cost-shared on a 50-50 basis by the federal government and province. For this portion of the system, the federal government has transferred the funding and responsibility to the Southeast Resource and Development corporation, which administers this segment as a step towards aboriginal self-government.

The department has worked long and hard in evaluating its operations to find more effective and cost-efficient means of delivering programs. Focus has been and continues to be the development and

delivery of services that are better as well as more cost-effective.

At no other time has this been more necessary than now. The transportation industry of Manitoba is suffering a series of significant blows and setbacks that is threatening the province's role as a major transportation centre. First of all, the activities between our air industry with Canadian and American looking for a merger—these hearings are taking place at the present time—and the fact that Air Canada and Continental have arranged a financial arrangement as well. Certain of the arrangements that are taking place, amalgamations that are taking place, are again affecting jobs in Manitoba. So these are some of the events that underscore the fact that the province is facing major challenges.

Economic recession has resulted in a decline in traffic which has negatively affected carriers, transport sector employees and the provincial economy. The priority goal of this government is to maintain Manitoba's position as a net exporter of transportation services and to preserve Winnipeg's role as a transportation and distribution centre.

My department continues to work closely with carriers, shippers, and users of transport services addressing service needs and industry problems. Initiatives taken to assist the Manitoba trucking industry: We have expanded the designated RTAC highway routes in Manitoba, as conditions allow, to increase efficiency and reduce barriers to interprovincial transportation.

We have successfully implemented 14 of the 17 national safety codes standards which promote safe operation of commercial vehicles on our highways. We hope to implement the remaining three standards which deal with carrier profiles, trip inspection reports, and facility audits by the middle of this year; adoption of the new uniform inspection standards for commercial vehicles which will be reciprocal across the provinces.

We have a current review of a number of regulatory options with a view to enhancing intraprovincial trucking in Manitoba. Given our view that solutions to problems rest in establishing a strategic planning approach involving key stakeholders, consultation will take place with shippers and carriers before any changes are made.

We are at the present time giving consideration for legislation providing authority to prescribed

requirements for contracts between owner-operators and for hired modal carriers. The province in the meantime is pressing for an economic component for the fitness entry test for the extra-provincial trucking.

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

My staff have been involved in studies with the federal government, and we have some concerns that the federal announcements of the need to cut the nation's rail system in half, which is of great concern to the province of Manitoba. We believe it will result in massive transportation sector layoffs. It will also lead to a transfer of traffic to highway network.

We have been working with the federal government and other provinces, the railways and shippers in an effort to identify what rail line shipments constitute the national rail network. In Manitoba, we will be pressing for all major rail arteries in Manitoba to be part of this national rail grid including the Churchill line; those local and regional lines not designated as part of the system will be retained as essential feeder lines.

In the event of abandonment, Manitoba's position is that compensation must be provided for resulting in increased Crow costs. This problem will be exasperated if changes to the Western Grain Transportation Act and the method of payment of the grain rate subsidy results in greater transfer of traffic to the road system. We are in the process right now of drafting short-line railway legislation which will, hopefully, assist in avoiding abandonment of a number of rail lines in the province as well as ensure safe standards of operation and protection of the shipper, community and public interests. We are in the final stages of drafting the legislation. I want to indicate to the member that I hope to be able to bring that forward, the railway legislation, which would be accommodating legislation, and I will deal with the details of that when I finally table the legislation.

We will continue to press for policies and programs that ensure that, whatever changes are made in the GATT negotiations, the method of payment, the WGTA or the pooling system, Manitoba grain producers continue to have access to the highly competitive international grain market. Implicit in this is the maintenance of competitive export gateways, including Churchill. Under the

increasing threat of the closure of the Port of Churchill and the possible abandonment of the northern rail network, Manitoba and Russia are negotiating the development of a two-way trade between the ports of Churchill and Murmansk. An Arctic bridge task force has been established to identify projects having the greatest potential for trade between the two countries. We are hopeful of a successful outcome that will assist in promoting economic opportunities for Manitoba and will also lead to the upgrading of the Port of Churchill and rail infrastructure.

In my view the only salvation for the Port of Churchill will be a successful negotiation and completion of the Arctic bridge. Manitoba will continue to—we will also continue to lobby the Canadian Wheat Board to ship a significant volume of grain through Churchill in the 1993 shipping season. We have not been that successful in the past, and hopefully some of the arrangements that are taking place with Russia will increase the possibility of more grain moving through Churchill. At the present time, with the amount of grain that has been moved through the Port of Churchill, the port has been losing money. We have concerns as to—we need about 500,000 to 600,000 tonnes to go through Churchill to make the port viable, aside from the activities on the rail line.

\* (1510)

I just want to mention to the members of the Legislature that never has a government worked that hard in terms of trying to influence the movement and the protection of the Port of Churchill, from the Premier (Mr. Filmon) on who is lobbying the federal Minister of Agriculture and responsible for the Wheat Board to many of the other ministers that have been working together, as a result of the agreement that was signed initially by the Premier in Russia to look for expansion of trade.

The second area was the signing by the Minister of I, T and T (Mr. Stefanson) and the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) in a further agreement. Subsequent to that we had a delegation of Russians coming to Manitoba, and a further agreement was signed where a consultant was hired by the agreement of the Russians and our people, and these are going to be developing the Arctic bridge activities.

In my view, again, that is the only real hope that I see for the future of Churchill. If we continue on the

basis of what has happened till now, I doubt whether there will be a very positive result to what is happening in Churchill.

**An Honourable Member:** Till they get rid of the federal government at least, eh?

**Mr. Driedger:** Well, that will be the option of all Canadians when the next election comes, I suppose.

We are also concerned for the future of the air industry, and I have recently called for a national air carrier policy framework to deal with the problems in the air sector. It is imperative that we have access to competitive air services and that remote communities are able to avail themselves of reliable, low-cost air transportation.

Our actions in this area include monitoring the present round of developments in the Gemini proceedings and the American Airlines' proposal to acquire interest in Canadian Airlines.

We were successful in obtaining a voice in the Canadian-U.S. air bilateral negotiations. It was pushed for an expanded consultation process. Our aim is to ensure that Canadian service interests are safeguarded in these proceedings.

To protect our airports, and ensure that 24-hour service continues at Winnipeg International Airport, the province is developing legislation covering the land use in the vicinity of airports, and I think everybody is comfortable with what we are bringing forward at this time.

We have also been working with the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce and the City of Winnipeg with a view to determine the feasibility of operating Winnipeg-area airports and our local airport's authority.

While considerable challenges still confront us, the department has instituted a number of initiatives which have had beneficial effects for all Manitobans.

I am pleased to report that the two-year implementation phase for photo licencing was completed in December 1992. I think that is one of the bright spots, at least in my accomplishments. I feel very good about that.

Henceforth, one-quarter of all licensed drivers in Manitoba will renew their photo licence each year. The program has proven to be very well-accepted by the motoring public. The licence has offered tangible benefits to the public in terms of improved

identification and helping to keep illegal drivers off the road.

Another major initiative on which we have embarked is the rewriting of The Highway Traffic Act. The rewriting of this act will provide more concise and enforceable legislation protecting the safety of Manitoba's travelling public. [interjection] Well, the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) says they started approximately 10 years ago, but they never got anywhere. We are seriously into this thing, and it is a very massive undertaking because a lot of consultation has to take place and we anticipate that that legislation should be ready to be put on the table possibly by next session.

We will continue to work closely with MPIC in developing the specifications for those elements of the Autopac 2000 project which would see the introduction of staggered vehicle registration insurance renewal, hopefully in 1994, the deduction of a transfer of ownership feature which will provide prospective vehicle purchasers with more readily available information.

Amendments to The Highway Traffic Act to facilitate the introduction of the new business practices associated with this project will be presented at this session.

To conclude, Mr. Acting Chairperson, this government faces a high value on transportation in Manitoba. We have dedicated increased resources to road construction and continue to work diligently in resolving many of the transportation issues facing Manitobans today.

We have introduced several new programs which greatly benefit the public and will continue to strive for even greater benefits. On this note, Mr. Acting Chairperson, I am prepared to listen to the opening statements of the critics and proceed with the review of the Estimates.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Relmer):** Thank you, Mr. Minister. Does the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid), the critic for the official opposition, have any opening statement?

**Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona):** Yes, I do. I thank you, Mr. Acting Chairperson. I think, though, before I get into my opening comments with respect to the Estimates for the Department of Highways and Transportation, that we should take a few minutes to recognize a member of the minister's department who has recently retired, Mr. Boris

Hryhorczuk, who retired from public service after 30 years.

Of course, I am referring to the press release that the government had issued somewhat earlier this year, and I will quote some of the information from that for the record. I think it is important for Manitobans to know the accomplishments of the individual in the various duties that he held in public service.

Of course, Mr. Hryhorczuk was a native of Ethelbert, Manitoba, which is a community that is familiar to members on this side of the House with respect to the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) and the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), both having, I believe, represented that community over a number of years now.

Mr. Hryhorczuk between 1961 and 1979 worked for the Metropolitan Corporation of Greater Winnipeg and the City of Winnipeg in a variety of positions in the field of urban transportation. It goes on to say that Mr. Hryhorczuk was also involved and very instrumental in the formulation of the national highway policy, something that the minister has talked about here over the course of the last two years. The minister of course has tied great hopes to that National Highways Program. We recognize and salute the efforts and the accomplishments of Mr. Hryhorczuk, as he provided that service for the minister and the department and for the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Hryhorczuk, of course, had a great deal of education. It indicates that he has a Master's degree in transportation engineering from Yale University, something I myself did not recognize prior to this information coming out from the government. Of course, I am sure it is a great loss to the minister's department and to the people of Manitoba, because we obviously relied very heavily on Mr. Hryhorczuk's experience.

I know the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) has spoken often about Mr. Hryhorczuk's abilities and efforts to assist him when he was the Minister of Highways and Transportation in this province and for that, Mr. Acting Chairperson, we on this side of the House would like to thank Mr. Hryhorczuk for his contributions, his 30 years service of public service to the province of Manitoba and of course wish him every good fortune and good health in his retirement years. We hope that he enjoys his retirement.



I would like to talk about some of the comments that the minister has made here in his opening statement, but first I would like to deal with some of the issues that are going to affect us in particular in this province, because we have been denied the opportunity here to debate what is going to happen if barley is removed from the Canadian Wheat Board control, from a single-desk selling operation.

If that barley is removed from the Canadian Wheat Board, from my understanding of it, this will put Manitoba in an awkward position, not only from the producer perspective but also what it means to the province itself as a whole. It is going to put greater strain on the services that we provide as a government for the people of this province by way of transportation, opportunities and also by way of marketing, in the sense that those producers that are close to the American border will transport their product across the line. At the same time, we have to recognize that the Port of Churchill is seriously impacted by a potential decision to remove barley from the Wheat Board control and jurisdiction.

If barley is removed from the Wheat Board, what that will do in essence is go a long way towards driving the final nail in the coffin of the Port of Churchill, because this government—we have not seen any ministerial statements come forward in the last year on what is happening with the Port of Churchill with respect to the Arctic bridge agreement. We had hoped there would have been some progress in that by now but there does not seem to be any good news on the horizon.

\* (1520)

If barley is removed—barley was one of the biggest, I would say, nearly 75 percent of Churchill's export market was barley to various destinations in the world—from the Wheat Board, producers then will be able to direct where their barley is exported. It will be sold by the marketing agencies, the wheat pools, the private grain interests and other interests in the country.

Let me assure you that with those private grain interests dictating where barley is exported, they will also dictate the port of export. Since these interests do not have any interest in the Port of Churchill—in fact, they would very much like to see it go under—I can see very soon that if this Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) does not take some serious interest in this issue within his own cabinet, that barley is going to be removed as an

export commodity from the Port of Churchill. Then that will be the end of Churchill because there is no other good news on the horizon from what we can see here.

At the same time, the minister talks about transportation, in particular, railway jobs being very important to us in this province. I have not heard this Minister of Transportation, outside of just a few moments ago, talk about the method of payment, the change into the WGTA method of payment. If that method of payment changes, and it goes to pay the producers versus pay the railways, that is going to have serious repercussions for us on the railway industry within this province and most likely within my own community of Transcona, because the method of payment then, the producers will dictate how, where and when their product is moved and by whom. If they have to move it from their farm gate, they are going to pick the part that suits and meets their needs individually.

I suspect they will move away from the railways, for those that are close to the American border, and will begin to move their product through the American ports, and quite likely, down the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico. That, then, will represent another serious challenge to us in this province. I hope the minister takes and has taken—at least I hope he has taken those concerns back to cabinet and raised them with cabinet, and the impact that it is going to have on us in this province.

As we go through the debates here today, and over the course of the next several days, I will be asking the minister various questions on different issues including Churchill, rail line abandonment, rail line jobs in this province, the airline industry, trucking, all of the sectors of transportation.

We will be talking about the University of Manitoba Transport Institute, something that I think is important to us in this province, that I see deteriorating seriously in this province. In fact, I heard again, just as recently as a couple of weeks ago, and it is my understanding now that there has been serious pressure put on that facility to vacate that building altogether as a transport institute, and the Faculty of Management is looking at taking over that building and structure. We have no investment then.

How are we going to continue to do the research operations and planning that we need to have done

in this province if there is no staff in the minister's department and we do not have an institute in this province to do that for us, even under a contract basis, as the minister has been directing over the last year plus?

**An Honourable Member:** What about all the money that we have put into it?

**Mr. Reid:** A significant amount of money, and we are just going to throw that investment away. That is one of the things that worries me about the change in direction for the University of Manitoba Transport Institute.

We will be talking about VIA Rail and the report to the Royal Commission. I will be asking questions on that and the minister's position on that, because it has serious repercussions not only for the southern part of the province of Manitoba but for the remote northern communities in the province of Manitoba. The recommendations that were made in there indicate that they want to have a user pay system, and if my understanding of the report is correct and the federal government accepts the recommendations, then the people that are using the VIA Rail system will have to pay the fees that VIA will charge, whatever they are going to charge above and beyond the rates that are there now. From a point from Gillam, say up to Churchill will be the only part that will be subsidized. Anything from there to the southern part of the province will have to be at the rate that VIA charges. So they are going to reduce or totally eliminate the subsidy for that type of service.

The minister talked about short-line railways, and that he has legislation that is being drafted. I will be interested to see that legislation and the impact it is going to have on us in this province, because that is one of the reasons why, when I raised—and the minister used to criticize us and myself in particular, in this House for not coming forward with constructive recommendations or suggestions—when we said last year, we think that we need to have a policy in this province where we can play a partnership role with the federal government, the province of Saskatchewan, and the CN Rail in a four-way partnership to upgrade the rail line to Churchill.

Now, if the minister is bringing in short-line legislation into this province, does that mean that we are going to have to take over or have that line to Churchill, the bayline, sold off to short-line interests?

Is that the purpose of this legislation? That is the only line that I can see in this province that is going to have any interest in having a short-line operation.

The branch lines the railways want to abandon; they say they are not profitable. I will be talking to the minister about that and asking questions on that as well because we want to know what communities are going to be impacted by that. We hope the minister has a breakdown by now of the communities that are going to be impacted because there are going to be serious consequences for those communities and the residents that are there, and will attack, I believe, the rural way of life in this province.

We also want to ask questions about resupply through the Port of Churchill to the northern communities. We hear that there are oil tankers going to be coming around from the St. Lawrence, from the ports in the Montreal area, to resupply the northern communities. What consequences is that going to have for Churchill? What actions has this government taken to ensure that we continue to provide that service through Churchill?

The minister talked about bilateral services, air, and he says we have a voice. We will be asking some questions on that. We want to know why we have not made any representation at the hearings, the competition tribunal hearings that are ongoing, that have been ongoing for several weeks now. Why have we not made any representation there? Who is our voice there? Do we have a member of the minister's government, or is it somebody else that they have contracted this service to?

I know when we were going through the Budget Debate here the minister seemed to be wringing his hands with glee when the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) announced that we are going to have a 3-1/2 cents a litre reduction in the fuel tax. At the time when I was thinking about it, I thought, that is a good first step to help the railway industry in this province, and transportation in general because the other sectors were impacted as well. By that I mean the slight decrease in aviation fuel taxation in this province, and the fact that trucking fuel was frozen at the current level in taxation.

The question I have for the minister: Where were we three years ago? Why did we not act on this three years ago? Why did we not take that serious action? [interjection] I was not here in this House at that time. No. That was prior to the 1990 election.

[interjection] No. I mean, I can pull out a calendar and show the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) if he wants to see that.

I think it is important that we recognize, and this is one of the things that I want the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) to get together on. The railways have been lobbying, I know, the minister and this government, and they have been lobbying us on this side as well, to have some changes to the taxation structure in this province. But what we wanted to see, and I know this is the case because I have talked to the employees of the railways, I have talked to the employees of the airlines and I have talked to employees in trucking, and they all wanted to tie some job protection, some minimum job numbers in this province to any reduction in the taxation levels of this province.

Without that, the minister—I had to laugh because the Minister of Finance said just this week in this House here, he said that we have lowered the taxation in this province for the transportation industry to send a clear signal, a message to the transportation industry that this is a province to come and do business in. Now I hope that the transportation industries out there have their antennae up and that they are getting that clear signal that is supposed to be coming from the Minister of Finance.

I suspect that we will probably see in this province that there will be no announcement coming forth saying that the job losses that were announced in the various transportation sectors of this province are going to be rescinded. I have made that statement in the House last week. I made it again this week. No minister of this government—none of them will stand up and say that those job abolishments have been rescinded. That has serious consequences not only for the province of Manitoba, but for my own community.

CN Rail announced earlier this year that they are going to eliminate some 700 jobs in the province of Manitoba. When you announced the reduction of your fuel tax for them in this province, did they come back to you and say, well, we are going to take back that announcement, we are not going to lay off those people? That is not going to happen.

There are going to be more layoffs again next year. We are going to see the same number or

more next year. At the end of this month, at the end of April 1993, Transcona main shop, CN, going to a four-day workweek. How many people are going to be affected by that decision there? That decision has not changed.

CP Rail—the minister may not know this, but CP Rail announced that they were going to move and relocate their complement of locomotives from the motive power shops at Weston to Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. That decision has been put on hold until May now.

\* (1530)

Did the minister and his department know that the shop that is supposed to handle that locomotive transfer complement is too small to handle that transfer assignment? Did his department do any investigation on that, or was this just a ploy on the part of the company to encourage the minister and his government? Is this the ploy of the company to put pressure upon the government to lower its tax rate in this province? [interjection] Well, maybe the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) would like to take a trip out there and maybe talk to some of the railway employees, the ones that operate regularly that know this business, I am sure, a lot better, because they have to do this job day in and day out.

I have got the name in my file here if I can locate it. It is a senior member of the transportation department that even told the employees that that was happening. The employees knew it themselves, but he confirmed that that was actually the case. [interjection] I said senior member of the transportation department, senior management level. I am sure the minister would understand that.

There are many other issues that I would like to talk about, and I know we will get into questioning a bit. I will probably be starting off talking to the minister about his proposed reduction in the workweek and the impact it is going to have not only upon the employees of his department, but the impact on the services that are provided to the people of Manitoba.

I hope the minister has some plans in place on how he is going to implement this. He may not, but we will find that out if that is the case. We want to know how he is going to designate various sections of his department as essential services. I hope he has a breakdown or a list of that. We have several segments of his department that I think should be designated essential service. I hope he has taken

those steps and that they will continue to provide those services to the people of Manitoba.

We will have many questions as we go along as I indicated, and I think with that, Mr. Acting Chairperson, that I will conclude my remarks for now until we move into the individual sub-appropriations where I can ask more detailed questions. Thank you.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Reimer):** Does the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), the critic for the second opposition, have any opening statements?

**Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James):** Yes, thank you, Mr. Acting Chairperson. I look forward to going through these Estimates in greater detail in the coming days, and I want to thank the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst) for recognizing my tie. I appreciate his compliment.

Mr. Acting Chairperson, I do not want to spend time during these Estimates simply putting rhetoric on the record, not that I have done that in the past, but I simply say that for the edification of the minister and the other critic that I hope we can get through this with reasonable dispatch and do our jobs and understand the issues that are currently before this province.

We are at the start of the process, and I look for some efficiency in the way we do our business here, which I think Manitobans expect of us, so that we can deal with the issues seriously and in a concerted effort but not use this forum, as it often degrades to, as a partisan forum simply to trade shots at each other.

Mr. Acting Chairperson, I have some concerns I want to highlight for the minister in these Estimates. Obviously, he has talked about the Port of Churchill. I am greatly concerned about the Port of Churchill. I am concerned about its economic viability and the community of Churchill which, of course, is a major impact on the entire northern economy--  
[interjection]

The member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) indicates: Have I ever been to Churchill? The answer to that is, no, I have not been to Churchill. Like most Manitobans, I have not been to Churchill. I would like to go to Churchill. I would like to be able to go on the rail line to Churchill that I believe is threatened by the--and believe me, if the government seeks to arrange a trip for me to Churchill, I would be more than happy to oblige them.

My grandfather was the first white doctor in Churchill. He left the University of Manitoba with his new wife, he went to Churchill, and he served Rankin Inlet. He served that area as a doctor in the 1920s and the 1930s when that was some experience. So I have heard my whole life about that area and about the people in that area, and I would very much like to go. I would like to be able to take my children, and I would like to be able to take that train. I hope it still exists, Mr. Acting Chairperson.

I have been to the Hudson Bay Route Association meetings, as have my colleagues. We feel most of the time like we are banging our heads against the wall, but with the Wheat Board and some of the powers that be down east and in other parts of this country, which do not seem to feel the same way about that port that we do and seem to resist the economic arguments that we make, but I believe that it is a viable port.

I believe that anybody who looks at the facts dispassionately, as I have, will see that it should continue to be a significant port for this country. I have to ask, if that port was in the province of Ontario, I just wonder, and I wonder out loud, whether or not it would be in the same situation year in, year out, that it is now, where we seem to be clinging and begging for its existence?

I resent that. That is an incredible asset to this country, and we want the people around this country to recognize that. They think of the Prairies in Manitoba and do not consider, or do not know, or intentionally ignore that we have this great resource. We have got, and I have seen from the minister, correspondence from officials in Russia saying they would prefer to ship through this port, because their port, I believe Murmansk, is on a latitudinal line that is consistent with Churchill. They have the ships that are going to extend the shipping season. They want to ship through that port.

We seem to be butting heads constantly in this province with Wheat Board officials and others, and I must say gentlemen like Charlie Mayer, who represents the federal Conservatives in this province, is not onside with us. I have heard him speak about this issue and I have discussed it with him. That is a great disappointment to me, Mr. Acting Chairperson.

I want that to be an issue in the upcoming federal campaign. I think all Manitoban politicians, and in

particular Mr. Mayer, have an obligation to make it clear to Manitobans where they stand on that issue because he has not been with us on that issue. When I say us, I mean I think the people of Manitoba.

**An Honourable Member:** He has been against.

**Mr. Edwards:** In fact, he has been an advocate, as the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) says, against the survival of that port.

(Madam Chairperson in the Chair)

What we have to realize is it is an insidious process, because you know if the railway starts to deteriorate, well then they will have to look at the upkeep costs, and then you will see over the years more and more arguments, more and more rationalizations to cut that port in that community off. That is what is going on. We all know it and we see it. I am very disappointed in the response of the federal government but even more disappointed in the response of some of our local members of Parliament, with the government's side, who really ought to be standing up for that port and have the power to do something about it. That is the tragedy.

Another issue I raised with the minister is the rail industry generally, and, of course, there have been many things occurring which have taken a lot of the jobs created in that industry to other parts of this country, oftentimes for very partisan reasons, and there are certain disincentives which these companies say have forced them to have large cutbacks.

I think we have to discuss that in some detail here, and obviously, the pressing concern of the airline industry, the importance of that industry to this province and tied into that the airport. I am here with the minister again talking about the same thing his committee recommended in 1990, I believe it was, that we need some protection for that airport. We need a consistent plan.

There was a committee. It was appointed by the minister, but I know there was a representative from the committee Mr. Harvard the MP from St. James and I established with the airport—as representatives of that area, we established an airport noise advisory committee with citizens on it in 1988. A member from our committee, George Chapman, a lawyer in St. James, was on the minister's committee, and they came up with this report and I was very hopeful.

\* (1540)

I read that report and I, of course, believed that the committee was somewhat partisan—I say, somewhat in the sense that the minister appointed it but I thought the result was good. I was not on that committee, the minister says. I asked to be on and his department said no, but I did not say anything. I waited for the report and the report actually I agreed with. Mr. Chapman was good enough to keep me posted and briefed me on what was happening, and they recommended legislation similar to that in Alberta. I do not know what happened.

Well, I do know what happened in the cabinet. I believe that the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst), you know, somehow got his way and it ended up that this somehow got thrown back to the city for their Winnipeg 2000 study or something. Well, where are we now? They have not come up with anything that I can rely on. I believe it is back in our court, and I think the province has legitimate grounds to say this is a provincial resource. The airport in Winnipeg has an enormous economic impact on the entire province and to that extent we should play a role in protecting that airport. So I looked to Alberta as the model, and I want to talk about that in these Estimates.

I also want to talk about some other smaller issues, nonetheless important but smaller, that have come up in the course of the last year from various people around this province. I think, like my friend, there are many issues which come forward from individuals which do not warrant perhaps an immediate question to the minister, but we preserve for the Estimates process, not intending to belabour the process.

I have a number of letters that I have received in the past year and will want some clarification of course. The minister in many of those in the past takes them as notice, and I must say this minister has been very good in the past in responding to questions he has taken notice of in this process. So I appreciate that, and we will ask him to continue that tradition.

With those comments, I would be prepared to commence the detailed Estimates.

**Madam Chairperson:** I would remind members of the committee that debate on the Minister's Salary 1.(a) will be deferred until all other items in the Estimates of this department are passed. At this time I would invite the minister's staff to enter the Chamber.

**Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation):** Madam Chairperson, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce the staff people that I have here. The opposition critic sort of upstaged me by making reference to my past deputy minister.

I had intended to make some comments about that at the time when I introduced my staff, and at the present time I want to take this opportunity to just thank the member for his comments. Certainly the five-year relationship I had with my previous deputy was a real benefit for myself, a very qualified individual, a man of his own mind. Our discussions were quite loud and vocal at times, but we always managed to come up with a good conclusion.

I also want to just repeat the comments that the critic made in terms of the major role that Boris Hryhorczuk played in terms of establishing the concept of the National Highways Program. He single-handedly almost brought the issue from the start to the final conclusion of the TAC report. Unfortunately, we had hoped that, as I mentioned before in my remarks, on December 2 that the National Highways Program would be announced. I think this was a major disappointment, certainly for myself but certainly for my then-deputy Boris Hryhorczuk, who had put a tremendous amount of hours in, worked very diligently with all the components, federal and provincial across the country to bring it to the stage where it was at. So I thank the member for those comments on that, and he can probably only anticipate how much I will miss that individual.

I would like to now take the opportunity to introduce Mr. Dan Coyle who is now the acting deputy. We are in the process of advertising for the position of a deputy minister. Mr. Coyle, who is the registrar, is the acting deputy at the present time. With me here I have Mr. Bill Dyck who is the ADM for Administrative Services and looks after the financial responsibilities within the department, and Doug Struthers who is the ADM for my Construction department and Maintenance.

Those are the gentlemen I have with me here at the present time. Thank you.

**Mr. Reid:** Just for a point of clarification, will we be moving now into subappropriation 1.(b) at this point, or are we open in that already so that I can ask my questions?

**Mr. Driedger:** Madam Chairperson, I have always been relatively flexible how the members want to deal with this. I would prefer to do it on a section-by-section basis so that I could have my other staff people come in. As far as whether the committee wants to go on a line-by-line basis or cover the general discussion and then pass it, I am very flexible on this. I leave it up to the discretion of the critics as to which way they want to handle that.

**Mr. Reid:** I note that by the minister's introductions that he has some experience and advice available to him on, I think, what would cover most of the areas of his department, if I am correct in that. Maybe in that sense, where we have questions, the minister could indicate that if I ask a question that is out of turn, and he does not have staff available, just indicate that to us and then we will ask that question at a more appropriate time.

**Madam Chairperson:** 1.(b) Executive Support, (1) Salaries.

**Mr. Reid:** I believe this is the section that deals with the minister's support staff that he has, including political appointed staff, EA/SA staff. Can the minister give me an indication if he has retained the same staff as he had last year in that department, or if he has added to or deleted from it in any way?

**Mr. Driedger:** Madam Chairperson, is it the desire—a question of clarification—do we get up every time or do we stay sitting? Is it at the discretion of ourselves? I am talking in terms of whether we get up to reply each time we speak, or do we remain sitting.

**Madam Chairperson:** That is entirely at the honourable minister's discretion. As long as you can attract the attention of the Chair, you can do that by remaining seated and raise your hand.

**Mr. Driedger:** In my reply to the member, my political staff, I have two of them, an executive assistant by the name of Hollis Kinsey and, no, a special assistant. Which one is it now? Have I got them right? I have two assistants. Anyway, it is the same ones whom I have had. One has been with me now for over three years, and I think one has been with me now a little over four years, and we have our exciting moments as well, but they are still with me.

**Mr. Reid:** The reason I asked that, maybe I should ask this question first. There does not appear to be any other change in the salary structure or amounts that are paid out for '93-94 for the minister's

executive support staff. Can the minister indicate if, because there is a decrease in the expenditures of staff salaries, is this as a result of the government's announced reduced workweek? Is that why there is a reduction from \$412,000 down to \$404,000? I think the minister indicated to us at the last Estimates process what the salary levels for these individuals are and I do not think it is necessary for us to go into that again unless the minister has some new information for changes affecting these employees.

**Mr. Driedger:** Madam Chairperson, the reason for the decrease in the salaries is the same reason that will be throughout the whole Estimates here, the 4 percent cutback or, if you want to call it, the reduced workweek. It is affecting everybody, including my political staff.

\* (1550)

**Mr. Reid:** I say this a bit tongue-in-cheek, Madam Chairperson. Can the minister indicate to me whether or not he has designated any of his support staff as essential services?

**Mr. Driedger:** Madam Chairperson, my political staff have a very unique privilege in that they work the same hours that the minister by and large does, and they are considered essential services, but they still have to work all the time.

**Mr. Reid:** One last question there. I do not see it indicated here, and I think I should ask it, because it has occurred in other Estimates process where there were vacancies that existed within certain segments of the minister's department. Can the minister indicate if there are any staff vacancies in this department, either the managerial, professional/technical, or administrative support?

**Mr. Driedger:** Madam Chairperson, at the present time in these positions, there are no vacancies. However, I must indicate to the member that my department which has over 2,300 employees, there is almost ongoing turnover, and we have an ongoing vacancy rate which does not change that much.

**Mr. Reid:** Maybe to make it somewhat easier for the minister and his staff—last Estimates I asked if the minister could provide the information relating to the number of females that were employed within his department, not only those that were employed in administrative functions or capacities but in also other functions. I would also be interested to know, and I say this to the minister now to give him and his staff the opportunity maybe to come back at a later

sitting somewhere as this Estimates process progresses, that he could provide that information for us if it is not readily available. We would also like to know if there is information available relating to the visible minority component of his department, because I think it is important for us to know that as well.

**Mr. Driedger:** Madam Chairperson, one of the blessings I suppose, or maybe not, when going through the Estimates process with the same critic a few times, you already almost anticipate some of these questions, so we had anticipated that this is probably when it would be coming forward.

Out of a total component of 2,411 employees as at March 1992, we have 447 female employees in my department; we have 108 aboriginal people employed in my department; we have 27 disabled people employed in my department; and we have 27 visible minority people employed in my department. [interjection] Oh, there are changes here.

Okay, I have the figures for '93 in which there is not that much change. It is 447 for females, 111 aboriginal, 28 disabled and 25 visible minority out of a total component of 2,369. The member should maybe understand that this department, in terms of the female employment it is a little bit more difficult because—we were talking about it this morning—we do not have too many female operators on our motor graders or some of the—the kind of work is such that it does not necessarily have that many female employees in some positions. However, in the engineering end of it we are continually looking at getting more females employed within the department. Like I said, we have two very qualified ladies right now in the bridge department. So there is more and more interest from that aspect in this department.

**Mr. Reid:** I am not sure if I have asked this in previous Estimates. Maybe the minister can clarify for me, and if I have not I will ask the question now. Does the department have any kind of a hiring policy dealing with people with disabilities, women or those of First Nations or aboriginal people? Is there any preferential hiring policy in the province in the minister's department?

**Mr. Driedger:** Madam Chairperson, when it comes to, let us say, hiring for our northern operations in airports, et cetera, first consideration is given to the aboriginal people in hiring out there. In fact that is

where most of our aboriginal people, the 111 whom I have mentioned, are.

Madam Chairperson, I am just going through some information here. In our advertising propositions, we always advertise as an affirmative position so that the option is there in terms of placement.

**Mr. Edwards:** Madam Chairperson, maybe I can just ask why and what was cut in the reduction of expenditures here from 480 to 468. Where did that come out of?

**Mr. Driedger:** Just for clarification, Madam Chairperson, can the member be more specific where he is asking his question? Is he following the Supplementary Estimates?

**Madam Chairperson:** 1.(b).

**Mr. Edwards:** The Estimates of expenditure are down by about \$12,000. I see 10 of that—or eight of that appears to have come out of Salaries and another three out of Expenditures. Is that salary reduction, and is it reflected all through these Estimates representing the 10 days which staff are taking off? Is that what it relates to?

**Mr. Driedger:** Madam Chairperson, just so that I can maybe clarify for both critics, this will be taking place throughout the whole Estimates, and that is reflective of the reduced work program that we have instituted. Above that, you will note that throughout the whole department there are further reductions in other expenditures continually, because we were challenged through the budgetary process to meet certain targets. Invariably, you will see reductions in almost every category on the wage side, the Salaries side, as well as Other Expenditures.

**Mr. Edwards:** Just for clarification on the reduction or the reduced work year, that was throughout the entire department including the deputy minister level and right up to and including that level? Or was that cut off at a certain managerial level?

**Mr. Driedger:** Madam Chairperson, it is affecting all personnel in my department, but there is provision that we can make some adjustments in the construction end of it with. For example, when contractors are working in the course of the summer there is some proviso that they will be taking their time during the off season.

We have the same thing that will apply to the ferry service up north which we cannot really take and cut back on the services, but these are positions that by

and large get laid off during the winter months. We are working together with the Civil Service Commission to try and work out the details that they will take certain time off on the off season.

**Mr. Edwards:** Well, I am glad to hear that because one of the things that struck me about this and other departments is that if in fact work has to be done during that period of time that the same dollars or more dollars would be spent on overtime or other times to get work done if that was applied rigidly. So it is good to hear that there is some flexibility in order that the true cost-saving can be found and the intent can be worked out, that being the government's intent.

The other, moving on to the next, the minister mentioned staff numbers. Can he indicate how many staff he has in his Executive Support under this line?

\* (1600)

**Mr. Driedger:** Is the member asking under Executive Support service? There are nine, and they consist of three people in my office, three people in the deputy's office, my two political staff and myself.

**Mr. Edwards:** Is that the same number as was there last year?

**Mr. Driedger:** Madam Chairperson, that has been the same number that has been there for virtually five years now.

**Madam Chairperson:** Item 1.(b) Executive Support, (1) Salaries \$404,200—passed; item 1.(b) (2) Other Expenditures \$64,500—passed.

1.(c) Administrative Services, (1) Salaries \$536,400—passed.

Item 1.(c)(2) Other Expenditures \$110,700.

**Mr. Reid:** I may have neglected to ask this in my opening comments when we moved into the individual subsections. The minister had provided for us, as the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) has said, much information for us and we appreciate that. To this point in time, we have only received the supplementary Estimates book and the minister has usually provided for us a copy of the construction program that is planned—the planning program, and has given us the opportunity to view that. I am wondering if the minister has that information available so we might take a look at it before we move on a bit further into the Estimates?



**Mr. Driedger:** Madam Chairperson, I do not have that available at the present time. Part of the reason is, and I will want to maybe explain that, we are working on that right now, but we have not got it completed. What sort of deterred it a little bit was the Estimate process this year until we finally had a capital target established, and then we had the SHIP program which we were quite excited about, took away from some of the time as well. So I do not have that information at this time. I will give the undertaking that the moment that we have completed that, I will be tabling that as I have in the past in the House. The only unfortunate thing is that it is not available here right now in terms of the program.

Let me maybe explain to the critics to some degree. The program that would be submitted for approval at the present time in the spring would basically be next year's construction, 1994 construction, because we have basically been working on two years in advance to allow us to have a project's—and if we run in to problems with environmental licenses, acquisition of right-of-way, any other problems, we are always two years in advance. So what we would be approving this spring would be 1994 construction.

Then in fall, we go forward to approval for my colleagues as well for the advance program which is basically certain programs or projects that we feel are on the major trunk highways, not necessarily but—so we have two sets of approvals. We have one that we do this spring which will be for 1994 and then we have the advanced program in fall which basically would be tendered during the winter as well.

So we have not completed this year's program for approval. As soon as we have that, I will take and submit it to both critics.

**Mr. Reid:** If I understand the minister then, there was a project list that he had provided for us in past Estimates. His department will be working from that project list, completing the current projects that are on that. Is there a short list that he has that can give us some kind of an indication of what projects his department will be working on through the course of this construction season that may be underway now, or due to start soon? Can he give us an idea of how long we might expect to wait until he would table that information, just roughly?

**Mr. Driedger:** Madam Chairperson, what we try and do each year is submit a list to the heavy construction industry in terms of the projects that have been tendered and a timetable for projects that will be tendered during the course of the next six weeks, two months, whatever the case may be. We have just completed that end of it. I am prepared to take and give a copy to both critics of the scheduling that we send out to the heavy construction industry. I do not know whether that will suffice for the present time, but that basically would be dealing with the actual activities that will be taking place during this construction year.

**Mr. Reid:** I believe, Madam Chairperson, we are in Section 1.(c)(2). I have questions here concerning information that is provided that indicates that internal audit services fall under the heading of Administrative Services here. Can the minister give me some indication on the type of audits that are performed under this department's control and direction?

**Mr. Driedger:** Madam Chairperson, during the past year, the following audit reports were issued. One was on the DDVL Safety Directorate, Records and Suspension Section; Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs, the Motor Transport Board, the Taxicab Board, the Highway Traffic Board, the Licence Suspension Appeal Board, Traffic Engineering, Construction Contract Progress Payments and five annual shared-cost agreements. Planned for the '93-94 audits is the Northern Airports and Marine, Equipment Rentals, Transport Compliance, Summer Maintenance, certain activities, Mechanical Equipment Services, Inventory System, Equipment Acquisition and Disposal, Winter Maintenance.

Under DDVL we have the Financial Branch, Licencing Branch, Vehicle Registration, shared-cost agreements, and Audit Assistance, sectoral envelope. The last ones that I read are the ones that are looked at being audited during the '93-94 year.

**Mr. Reid:** Am I clear in my understanding then that the list that the minister read out goes through the audit process every year; they are audited as part of the normal course or they only select certain subcomponents of the minister's department, such as the Highway Traffic Board or the Taxicab Board, for audits? How do they make that determination on which they are going to audit then?

**Mr. Drledger:** It is part of a five-year program that is set up, where it is sort of cycled, where the executive by and large set up which is going to be part of the internal audit. It is prioritized every year in a five-year program so that every element gets audited every five years. Everything in the department gets cycled within five years for an internal audit.

**Mr. Reid:** I can understand that and appreciate that you have a cycle, and I suppose departments should be audited on a regular basis. How do you prioritize? What criteria do you use for prioritizing which departments are going to get audited? Is there some discretion that a minister or the department heads would use in determining that audit would be done for the subdepartments or the board or the agencies under the minister's direction?

**Mr. Drledger:** The deputy and the directors and ADMs are the ones who get together at the beginning of the year and make those decisions.

**Mr. Reid:** On page 23, Sub-Appropriation 1C lists transportation costs under Other Expenditures. What type of transportation costs are we talking about there? Is that for staff to move about the province in the performance of their duties, or are there other items that I may not be aware of here that maybe the minister can bring to my attention?

**Mr. Drledger:** In that particular case, it is car mileage. I want to refer the member, maybe both critics, to page 115 where there is a sort of a classification in terms of what comes under the various categories just so that it might help when they look at the supplementary information, where we have Transportation, Communication, Supplies and Services, accommodation, et cetera.

It is outlined there. That might help put some understanding as to what it covers. Okay?

**Madam Chairperson:** Item 1.(c)(2) Other Expenditures \$110,700—pass.

Item 1.(d) Financial Services, (1) Salaries \$691,600—

\* (1610)

**Mr. Reid:** Under Financial Services, one of the Expected Results is: Timely and accurate customer invoicing.

Can the minister indicate for me who the customers are?

**Mr. Drledger:** All suppliers for all supplies purchased within my department.

**Mr. Reid:** It is my understanding—I could be wrong on this, I am probably not the best business person to ask—but invoicing to me indicates that you send someone a bill for services or goods that you have provided for them.

It says here customer invoicing. Are we invoicing our subdepartments out in different parts of the province? Are we invoicing or sending payment for goods or services received to suppliers?

**Mr. Drledger:** That portion of it is where we do work for others, where we do work for some of the Crown corporations, where we do work for municipalities, where we do work for individuals, for example, up north where we provide certain services in isolated areas for grading or snowplowing, et cetera. That is what this is making reference to.

**Mr. Reid:** Okay, I can understand that. What type of work would we do for Crown corporations? Are we talking provincial Crown corps? Are we talking federal Crown corps here? What type of service would we provide as a province or a department that they themselves would not be in a position to provide or do for themselves?

**Mr. Drledger:** Madam Chairperson, actually we end up doing work for many, many people including Hydro, Telephone, at certain times, especially in areas where we have equipment and they do not have equipment.

Just an example that we talked about today was, for example, where we provide services for the RCMP where they virtually commandeer our equipment at times for certain reasons, either accidents or spills or, you know, looking for things. So we have all components that we basically provide a service to and that we bill them for the services provided.

We do that with some municipalities as well that do not have all the equipment that is required. We do that for individuals up north. So we provide a variety of services really with our equipment throughout Manitoba in various ways.

**Mr. Reid:** I may be misinterpreting the way the Estimates are printed here, but it is shown under the heading on page 25, Staff Years, that there has been a change from 19.7 down to 15.2. Now am I misinterpreting that as staff years when that is meant to represent dollar value?

**Mr. Driedger:** Madam Chairperson, if the member will look a little higher under page 25 where it says Total Salaries, there is the SY component of 20 and last year's was 20. Where he is making reference to Other that is 19.7, and 15.2 that is Operating.

**Mr. Reid:** Dollars?

**Mr. Driedger:** That is dollars, yes.

**Mr. Reid:** I take it then, although I do not know this for sure because this is, I would sense, more an administrative function, that there may be more females employed in this section of the minister's department.

Can the minister give me an indication of what the ratio of this sub-department would be here if he has that. If not, it is not critical—and if there are any vacancies in this department as well?

**Mr. Driedger:** I do not have the breakdown as to how many female employees there are. If we go through, especially the administrative, this section here, I would expect that probably the majority of that would be about two to one is female employment in this area here because this deals a lot with the office staff. I think just by the heading itself will probably give an indication that this is more office and clerical oriented than the physical aspect of it.

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

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Reimer):** Item 1.(d) Financial Services, (1) Salaries \$691,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$128,100.

**Mr. Edwards:** Line 1.(e), Mr. Acting Chairperson.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Reimer):** Yes. Item 1.(e) Personnel Services, (1) Salaries \$819,100.

**Mr. Edwards:** I wanted to discuss Other Expenditures. I understood that was what we were on or are we still on the Salaries line for 1.(e)?

In any event, Mr. Minister, Other Expenditures, Supplies and Services is listed as accommodation. What does that relate to?

**Mr. Driedger:** Yes, that is the rent that we pay for accommodations. You will find that in every one of these categories—office accommodations. I do not know whether I clarified that, under Supply and Services, Accommodation, this is a subcategory, that is the rent that we pay out of that.

**Mr. Edwards:** Our Personnel Services of the Department of Highways pays \$78,200 a year in rent?

**Mr. Driedger:** Every component or every section of my department pays rent. It is broken down this way. If you see there, Supply and Services, a total of 81.9 and Accommodation is 78.2, which is the rent paid, and the 3.7 is other expenses at the time.

**Mr. Edwards:** The minister can just touch on this generally then. He says every, and I have not looked through this and have not touched on this in prior years, but does the government, the Highways department, not function in buildings that the government owns in some cases, or is it all rented space that this department operates out of?

**Mr. Driedger:** In some cases we own property. For example, in the rural areas where we have our shops, but in this particular area here, this is office space that is rented in the city here to provide these services. It is allocated based on the amount of square footage that I think everybody has, but we do have properties which we own outright. The garages we own outright, but the district offices, in most cases, are leased as well. So, in most cases, we lease the properties.

\* (1620)

**Mr. Edwards:** Is that all done out of the Department of Government Services? Does the department put in a request for a need and a location and then Government Services handles it, or how does that work? Does the department itself make the arrangements and make a determination as to purchase or to rent, and if so, rent at what cost and purchase at what price?

**Mr. Driedger:** It used to be that Government Services was responsible for that. What is happening now is that Government Services makes the arrangements and the departments pay, so they still do the negotiations for space, but we end up paying the bills.

**Mr. Edwards:** The department being the one who pays the bills, I assume the answer to the question is to who makes the determination. Is it the department—the department decides whether to buy or to rent, and if to buy, at what price, and if to rent, at what price? Is that a departmental decision in the Highways and Transportation department?

**Mr. Driedger:** To my understanding, it is sort of a joint decision that is made where Government Services—let us say the department needs some

space, which happens from time to time. This information is relayed to Government Services, who then go out and look for the space. When they come up with the required space, the discussions take place and the decision is made, which ultimately has to be approved by the necessary process in terms of whether that space is acceptable, the price is right, et cetera, but it is sort of, we tell them how much space we need, and they go out and see where they try and provide it. Then it is a matter of getting approval to get that space.

**Mr. Edwards:** When the minister says approval, what is the approval process? Treasury Board?

**Mr. Driedger:** Yes, Mr. Acting Chairperson, ultimately that is where most decisions get made.

**Mr. Edwards:** What is the Other under Supplies and Services, \$3,700, and why is it down from eight? What was cut?

**Mr. Driedger:** Mr. Acting Chairperson, that is office supplies.

**Mr. Edwards:** Is that—and I have not looked through this entirely—a consistent thing that, I mean, supplies here have been able to have been cut less than half?

**Mr. Driedger:** Mr. Acting Chairperson, those are some of the tough decisions that we made, but this will be applied throughout the Estimates. Everywhere we have had to take a percentage and apply it, and every department within my department had to take a look at being more efficient and doing it cheaper.

**Mr. Edwards:** It is just interesting to me because, I mean, it is just one little line but it is less than half of what they spent last year. It is incredible to me that this one little area could survive and function with half of the office supplies that it did last year. I am not objecting to that. I am just saying, does that mean you have deferred the purchase of supplies to the next year or used up stocks of overbuying in previous years or is it new technology or what is it?

**Mr. Driedger:** Mr. Acting Chairperson, I want to clarify that because that looks a little deceptive there. I am told that in this particular case there was some equipment that was bought that is not being bought now, which is part of Supplies and Services. This could involve typewriters. So the 3.7 is basically office supplies. The eight that you see on the right-hand side is probably including some equipment. I do not have the details here.

**Mr. Edwards:** Just going down on that. The Other Operating, the word "other" always strikes me as something that, you know, I would like to ask questions on. Other just sticks out, and I realize you cannot get into great detail, but Other Operating and then computer related, and then there is an "Other" under Other Operating. What is "Other" Other Operating?

**Mr. Driedger:** Mr. Acting Chairperson, I am glad the member is asking that because I think that is one way of, you know, how our system tries to get past the minister from time to time too. So I will try and get a clarification on that "Other" Other.

**Mr. Edwards:** It just always strikes me as, and I appreciate the dilemma the minister is in, but when you have got Other on top of Other I think it is a fair question. It is only \$13,400, but that is sort of lost money that it would be nice to define what has been spent.

**Mr. Driedger:** I am told that it could include training. It could under Other Operating include hotels, meals, computer related charges, loss, damage, insurance and extraordinary cost, publications, employee education assistance, relocation and transport costs, other membership fees, hospitality—there we are—uniforms, conference, convention, registration fees, incidental allowances.

**Mr. Edwards:** Just for fun, let us get a list of what the \$13,400 was used to spend, and I do not intend to do this on every line, but just as an example. I have just noticed that it is actually Other on Other on Other, because the Other Expenditures is the heading and now we are in Other Operating and now we are in Other under Other Operating. So it would just be interesting to me, and I do not intend to do this on every line, but let us just get a list, and it would be interesting to me to know how \$13,400 was spent on Other Other Other Expenditures.

**Mr. Driedger:** Mr. Acting Chairperson, I do not have it right here, but I will get it for the member in this particular case, but he is not asking for a breakdown on everything like this. Like, in this case just to show an example of what has happened, fine, I will give that undertaking. I will have that information by the next time we meet.

**Mr. Reid:** The minister had sent around a letter indicating that there was some restructuring within his department. In the last Estimates he had said that he was moving from 13 districts down to five

regions. Under this subsection here it indicates that two positions were transferred from Winnipeg to regional offices due to the regionalization of the district offices.

I take it, it is the professional and the technical people who were transferred. Can the minister indicate if that is so, and where did these people get transferred to?

**Mr. Driedger:** Mr. Acting Chairperson, maybe on the regionalization I should do a little bit of a clarification that we—by establishing the five regions, you will notice that not only under this category, but under other categories as well we have a note on the bottom where positions have been transferred from Winnipeg to regional offices due to regionalization.

We have the five regional offices now, and I should maybe explain that the purpose of that is for more efficiency. We used to have 13 district offices. Now we have five regional offices. When we finish our reorganization on regionalization, we will probably be moving as many as 40 people out of Winnipeg into rural areas to provide the services that are now being provided to Winnipeg.

We feel that, for example, that payroll, to some degree the services will be provided from out of there. We have a variety of services. We are trying to provide a better service right at the regional level. Instead of having before going through a district office and then up to the head office in Winnipeg and then down, we felt that it was a complex time-consuming paper trail. We feel that we can offer these services at the regional level, so we will be moving 40 positions by the time we complete this into the five regions.

So every once in a while, confusing as it might seem, we will see under the bottom of these where certain positions have been designated to be moved to the regional areas.

**Mr. Reid:** The minister says staff has moved and there are 40 positions being relocated. Can he give me an indication of whether or not—because I am not sure what procedure was followed in his department. We had heard some stories in the last fiscal year where employees were forced to transfer, decentralize in effect, and it caused one spouse to go one way and one spouse to go the other way in a family.

The people that were attached to those positions, obviously important, were they canvassed as to a

willingness to go to these areas, or were they directed to go to these areas? Can the minister give me some indication on the process that was followed?

\* (1630)

**Mr. Driedger:** Mr. Acting Chairperson, these positions were all basically posted starting from the top down within the department to allow for movement, you know, for people within the department and to these areas. They chose their area. I do not know of one case where anybody was forced or inconvenienced to some degree. My administrative staff took great pains in terms of making sure that there was the least inconvenience to any people in terms of changes.

We always have a little bit more problem with the Thompson office. Not that many people are that receptive to moving up there, but invariably we have managed to work that out without anybody being inconvenienced. As we did the regionalization, positions opened up. Those who had been up North, who wanted to move down, had the opportunity to bid on positions. So we have taken great care to make sure that we did not inconvenience people to any degree. The same thing applies to the ones who will be basically moved from Winnipeg out to the regional areas.

**Mr. Reid:** I thank the minister for that explanation.

There has been a reduction that has been indicated here from eight staff years down to six for the people who have been transferred due to the change, yet when I calculate out the average salaries that were paid for the eight on the past fiscal years' expenditures versus the monies that are being spent average-wise for the six who are now remaining in the department, there seems to be an increase in the average salary that is paid to these employees.

In the past year, the average for the eight was \$42,500. Now the average for the six is \$43,666. Are there merit increases for the employees in this department, because it seems strange that we are going to see a corresponding increase in the average when there are other departments or subdepartments that we have gone through to this point that indicate that there is going to be a decrease in the monies that are expended? Can the minister provide some explanation for that?

**Mr. Driedger:** Mr. Acting Chairperson, that is because in certain categories there are certain merit

increases that are brought into play. That is the case in this particular one here.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Reimer):** 1.(e) Personnel Services, (1) Salaries \$819,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$206,000—pass.

1.(f) Computer Services, (1) Salaries \$1,177,800.

**Mr. Reid:** I believe the department has embarked, I think it was a year ago or maybe it was two years ago, to upgrade some of the computer equipment within the department. At least that is what I recall. It indicates here that this Computer Services prepares strategic system plans for the department. Can the minister provide me with some explanation for that, and also can he give me an understanding on whether or not we contract out, because I believe, if I recall correctly, that there were some contracting out of computer services? In past Estimates, we had talked about it. Is that still the case? Do we contract out Computer Services as well?

**Mr. Driedger:** Mr. Acting Chairperson, we do not develop new programs. We try and pick up systems that other people have already established, and then we modify them to our use.

I just want to maybe give a bit of an insight into our Computer Systems, which are very important to us. You know, we use them, first of all, in our regional offices, and we are trying to establish, as we establish our regional offices, now to try and get computers in there.

There seems to be a misconception, sometimes even with my—choke, choke—Treasury Board, that we have a very sophisticated computer system. That is not necessarily the case, but certainly they play a very important role both in my registrar's department with DDVL and also in the construction end of it where we can do our designing with very sophisticated equipment.

However, in spite of the conception that is out there that we have a very elaborate, good computer system, that is not the case. I am not telling tales out of school, but my registrar is very nervous with the antiquated system that he has there. There is continuous negotiation that takes place in this department with Treasury Board in terms of trying to get our system as updated as possible.

We find that the private consultants possibly have much more sophisticated equipment that they can use than we have within my department. I just wanted to put that on record as well.

**Mr. Reid:** The minister may have missed it. I suppose that resources are scarce, as the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) has said quite often here. It is probably difficult for the department at this time to look at major expenditures for upgrading of computer equipment, and I hope that the equipment will continue to serve until the time his resources become available. Do we contract out any of the computer services?

**Mr. Driedger:** There is no contracting out of computer services.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Reimer):** I am at 1.(f)(1) Salaries \$1,177,800—pass.

Item 1.(f)(2) Other Expenditures, \$585,700.

**Mr. Reid:** Under that Other Expenditures it indicates that there are rentals of \$41,000 planned for the current fiscal year. Are those rentals, is that a tendered process when we look to rent equipment for the computer services department?

**Mr. Driedger:** Mr. Acting Chairperson, that means Data Communications Line Rentals.

**Mr. Reid:** There is also a line there that is called Computer Hardware Rentals. I should have indicated that that was the section that I was interested in instead of the previous one.

Also, under Computer Maintenance, if I understood the minister's answer prior to this question where he said that there was no contracting out, did that also include Computer Maintenance, or is Computer Maintenance done by his internal staff?

**Mr. Driedger:** Some of our hardware is rented, and some of it is owned, and some of it is leased.

**Mr. Reid:** For the part that we lease, do we tender out for that? It is a major part of the subdepartment or is it a relatively minor portion of the expenditures?

**Mr. Driedger:** Yes, it is tendered. It is always tendered.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Reimer):** Item 1.(f)(2) Other Expenditures, \$585,700—pass.

Item 1.(g) Occupational Health and Safety (1) Salaries \$113,300.

**Mr. Reid:** I am trying to form my question here, Mr. Acting Chairperson, collect my thoughts.

There has been a decrease in the administrative support staff here, again by transfers of two positions from Winnipeg to regional offices due to the regionalization.

Can the minister give me an indication of where this staff is transferred to? What regional office did this staff go to? What function did they perform when they were here in Winnipeg, and will they be performing the same functions in their new assignments?

**Mr. Driedger:** Mr. Acting Chairperson, these two that were transferred, one was transferred to Steinbach and one was transferred to Portage. If the member looks, unless there is a misconception that there is a decrease in terms of the safety end of it, that is not the case. Because under our regional offices now, we will have a safety director in each one of these regions and we will still have three operating out of Winnipeg. So basically we have an increase in our safety staffing component.

**Mr. Reid:** I must have missed something there then, if you have got a decrease in the numbers from the previous year from five staff years down to three, how you calculate out you have an increase in staff. Also, can the minister indicate whether or not other areas, other regions of the province, have these same safety inspection staff that the minister indicated would be transferred to Steinbach and Portage now?

**Mr. Driedger:** Yes, we will be having—and if the member will look further down in the supplementary information, they are being paid out of the regional district office so there will be one at each one of the regions.

\* (1640)

**Mr. Reid:** Under the Activity Identification, page 30, indicates that the Occupational Health and Safety segment of the minister's department conducts worksite inspection and environmental monitoring.

Can the minister give me an indication on the type of worksite inspections, how many one might expect that these employees would conduct, and what type of environmental monitoring is being referred to by this Activity Identification?

**Mr. Driedger:** Mr. Acting Chairperson, what happened in '92-93: Implementation of a Co-operative Accident Reduction Effort called CARE program which was a department initiative designed to promote accident prevention within the department.

The program was introduced at 16 training sessions with supervisors and workers and included instruction on effective job instruction, motivating and increasing safety behaviour, communicating

effectively. A 40 percent reduction in loss-of-time injuries occurred in the '92-93 fiscal year, some of which we believe could be attributed to the program.

Also, an initial establishment of a risk management program and committee, audiometric testing of 610 employees, first aid training for 335 employees, 20 operational and safety related start-up meetings with construction and maintenance personnel. That was what was done in last year.

What we are proposing to do for '93-94 is employee safety training, workplace and work zone protection inspections, traffic control training, full development and implementation of a risk management program under which is staff training on risk management concepts and practices, identification and control of liability concerns, identification and control of facility security concerns, first aid training of approximately 250 employees, audiometric testing of approximately 500 employees, review and amendments of the department's health and safety policy procedures, development of safe operating checklists for equipment and work activities, and development of an ergonomic program, including ongoing task analysis and back (injury) prevention program.

**Mr. Reid:** There is quite an extensive list there. Can the minister give me any indication, does he have any statistical data to show—because I take it that his department has a fair amount of construction activity that would take place under his department—the type of injuries that would occur for his department employees? Is there is a breakdown on the type of injuries that are there, the type of lost time one might expect to see? Does he have any year-over-year comparisons indicating whether or not this program has been effective in reducing the number of lost-time workplace injuries?

**Mr. Driedger:** It is available, but I do not have it here today. I will give an undertaking to get that information.

**Mr. Reid:** The minister talked about audiometric evaluation or studies of the employees because there is probably a fair number of large pieces of machinery that the employees of the department would operate through the normal maintenance program in the province. Does he have any data that we can see or become aware of indicating the effect that the operation of this heavy equipment

would have on the hearing of the employees who would do the operations of this equipment?

**Mr. Driedger:** Mr. Acting Chairperson, in conjunction with the other information that I am going to try to get, I will try to get you as much detail as I can in terms of what our accident rates are, how many workdays or hours we have lost, and also as much detail as I can. I will have to provide that. I do not have that here because that is pretty detailed information.

**Mr. Reid:** Can the minister indicate—because when you are in this type of industry, and I came from heavy industry myself—does the minister have a program within his department for employees who are injured or sustain workplace injuries? Is there is a light-duty program within his department? Do we also have some kind of a program in there to rehabilitate workplace-injured employees to get them back into the workplace, or do we find alternate employment for them? What type of program do we have?

**Mr. Driedger:** Mr. Acting Chairperson, yes, we have a program. We are very proactive in that whole area of rehabilitation and shifting where injury has taken place. We try to accommodate them with light-duty jobs.

**Mr. Reid:** Maybe the minister, when he is providing other information, could include that as well in the stats, where we have been able to rehabilitate employees back into his workforce for the department.

Can the minister also provide with that information, because he most likely does not have it available here today, what the workers compensations claims and costs would be for his department?

**Mr. Driedger:** I am prepared to get that information. I do not know how fast we will be able to get it, because as we go through this Estimate process here, I am loading them up pretty good. We are taking note of the commitments that I am making, but I do not know whether I can necessarily assure that we will have all this information by the next time we meet. But I will get it to the members.

**Mr. Reid:** I thank the minister for that. I mean this is for my own information. It is an education for myself. As well, I want to know how the department functions, the programs and processes they have in place, the costs that are associated with operating the department.

I do not mean to put pressure on his staff here. They say they have to do this right away for the next sitting. If he could provide it in a number of weeks to follow that would be fine as well as long as we have it sometime maybe before the summer.

Also, it indicates here that there are expected results in the detection and elimination of safety and health hazards. What successes have we had in reducing workplace injuries in the minister's department, since that is their expected result?

**Mr. Driedger:** I had indicated before that we have a reduction of about 40 percent of injuries for '92-93, and we think that our training programs have a lot to do with it.

Mr. Acting Chairperson, with the amount of detailed information that the member is asking here all the time, I am very prepared to get that information. I have no difficulty with that, but I almost get the impression that the member is thinking that someday he will be the Minister of Highways and Transportation. That makes me terribly nervous.

**Mr. Edwards:** I will not touch that last comment from the minister. The two positions which were cut from Administrative Support, can the minister give descriptions of those jobs?

**Mr. Driedger:** Is the member referring to page 31, the reduction from 5 to 3?

**Mr. Edwards:** If you go up to Administrative Support, from 4 to 2.

**Mr. Driedger:** I had thought I had clarified that those are two positions that we have moved to the regional offices—the Occupational Hazard office occupational health officers. They have been moved, one to Steinbach and one to Portage. We now have one safety officer in each of our regions. Actually we have an increase instead of a decrease.

**Mr. Edwards:** I am sorry. I misunderstood then. The note then means that the positions were transferred—not two of the positions of the three but two of the five so that there in fact is no decrease. That is what the minister seems to be saying.

**Mr. Driedger:** There is actually an increase in the amount of safety officers that we will have available. We will have five—one in each region and plus we will still have three operating out of Winnipeg.

\* (1650)

**Mr. Edwards:** Thank you for that clarification. One of the things that occurs in this department is the



reintegration of injured workers into the workplace, into the workforce. That is a very interesting challenge for all departments but of course this one in particular.

There are many other departments I am sure where there is a lot of manual labour involved and there are going to be injured workers. I think particularly of Natural Resources as another department in which this would be a challenge.

What is the philosophy of the government? Firstly, is this done within each department separately or is there an overall governmental strategy towards modified duties and reintegration of injured workers?

**Mr. Driedger:** I cannot answer for other departments. I am told that we operate our own function, and the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), who used to be my critic and got fired, for obvious reasons, is now trying to get into the fray here.

**Mr. Edwards:** Does the department—it says works with the Workers Compensation Board and things, I am sure, to deal with injured workers. Of course, a lot of workers are injured not because of compensable accidents, oftentimes injuries occur outside of the workplace, but nevertheless there is a worker who is injured. Is the position of the department to create, wherever possible, modified duties and thereby give the injured workers priority on other jobs maybe that they can do, not the job they were hired for?

**Mr. Driedger:** Mr. Acting Chairperson, first of all, if you are injured on a job we would make an extra effort, I suppose, to try and accommodate them on lighter duties and rehabilitate them. If they have been injured off the job, let us say at home, I would like to think, without having full guarantee, that we would be relatively compassionate in terms of trying to keep them employed and get them back into the work stream. But, you know, I am making that assumption that we are doing that because I would like to think that my department by and large is a very proud, close-knit group so that where there is this kind of a misfortune taking place that compassion would be used in terms of trying to accommodate these people.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Reimer):** Item 1.(g)(1) Salaries \$113,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$44,500—pass.

We will set aside item 1 to review the Minister's Salary at a later time, and we will move on to item 2. Operations and Maintenance, (a) Maintenance Program \$48,075,000. Shall the item pass?

**Mr. Reid:** Those big numbers scare me, Mr. Acting Chairperson, every time I see those. We seem to spend so much time on the tens of thousands of dollars and gloss over the millions. It is something I still have not gotten used to, how we can spend so much time on the, what appears to be, relatively minor expenditure amounts.

Under this section, the Maintenance Program, can the minister give me some indication on what he anticipates his department will be able to maintain by way of service through the Maintenance Program during the course of the coming year now that we have gone to this reduced workweek? How is this going to impact upon the Maintenance Program for his department?

**Mr. Driedger:** Mr. Acting Chairperson, first of all if the member looks on page 33, which basically is a breakdown of our Maintenance Program, what comes under Operations and Maintenance. In the Maintenance Program we have a reduction of approximately \$5 million just in straight maintenance, and that of course is a matter of grave concern. Part of the reason for that—and staff is not necessarily that pleased with me—but offered up some of the maintenance money just to keep my capital program up, and you know that bears a lot of concern and possibly some discussion on that.

If the member turns over to page 35, it will show him exactly where we are cutting in terms of the maintenance itself. Coming back to page 33 it shows the reductions in each one of the categories. Under Operations and Maintenance he will see reductions throughout the whole area, and we have also the five regions, the expenditures as affiliated with the regions, which we changed from the 13 districts to the five regions, so we related the expenditures comparatively there.

I just want to raise that if the member looks on page 35, this is the impact it will have, by and large. We will be doing less summer maintenance, cutting back on our gravel supply to some degree, dragging and dust control, roadside mowing. Where we did pretty extensive mowing, we will only be making one or two cuts now, even on our major PTHs.

These are all part of the difficult things that are going to be impacting visually for the public and is a

matter of concern. Our maintenance is going to be less than the way I would desire it, and certainly maybe the people of Manitoba, but that is part of the process that we went through in the budgetary Estimates process.

If you look under the second category, Extraordinary Maintenance, that is our patching and crack-filling, we have quite a reduction in there as well. Then under Winter Maintenance, we have cut that back as well in terms of trying to just hit the targets that were expected from my department. So there is going to be, I make no bones about it, a dramatic impact when you have a reduction of this nature in our total maintenance program. For example, under the Winter Maintenance, what we actually implemented already for part of the last year was the snow clean-up at intersections and towns, villages, snow fencing, drainage, all these things, sanding and salting, we are cutting back on that. Ultimately there is going to be criticism coming forward because of what we are doing in that regard.

**Mr. Reid:** Well, I recall the minister saying in the last Estimates, I believe it was, that he was cutting back his summer maintenance program and that they were only going to do the roadside mowing. They were cutting back, I think, from three to two, if I am correct in that. Now he is saying that he is going to cut back further in the roadside mowing. To some that might be just for aesthetics, but I think it also has something to do with safety as well. Continued maintenance of the road support services, where we do not provide that type of maintenance to allow proper drainage that is necessary for any of the roads in the province, if you are going to cut back on that you are going to have water retention. Is this going to create problems for future maintenance costs?

How is that decision that he is making now to cut back on that type of program going to impact him and his department somewhere down the road?

**Mr. Driedger:** Mr. Acting Chairperson, naturally there is going to be a downside of the cutbacks that we are doing in maintenance. When the member made reference to the roadside mowing, on certain of our major arteries we still did total mowing, mowed the total ditches. We will not be doing that anymore. We are still trying to address the aspects of safety—safety will not be affected, but certainly the quality of maintenance is not going to be there in roadside mowing and grading, and the dust control. Even in the aesthetics that we have, for example on

the Trans-Canada where we have our planted trees and hedges and stuff of that nature, where we took some pride in making sure that they looked relatively proper, that kind of care is not going to be there anymore.

So there will be a very visual impact in terms of the cutback in our maintenance throughout the province, and I expect to hear criticism coming, and rightfully so. However, these were some of the decisions that we had to make in terms of meeting certain targets within my department.

**Mr. Reid:** I suppose there will be some criticisms, probably from the municipalities around the province through which these roads would run. I am sure the municipalities will come forward with those complaints and the minister will probably hear about them.

Can the minister give me an indication—

\* (1700)

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Reimer):** Order, please. The hour being five o'clock and time for private members' hour, committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

## IN SESSION

### Committee Report

**Mr. Jack Reimer (Acting Chairperson of Committees):** I move, seconded by the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that the Committee of Supply has considered certain resolutions, directs me to report our progress and asks leave to sit again.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

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

### House Business

**Hon. Harry Enns (Acting Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the House Leader (Mr. Manness), just a bit of traditional House Business.

The Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources will meet on Monday, April 26, 1993, at 10 a.m. to consider the annual reports of the Workers Compensation Board for the years

ended December 31, 1991 and '92, and their respective five-year operating plans. This replaces the announcement that the House leader made earlier today.

**Mr. Speaker:** I would like to thank the honourable acting government House leader for that information.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

### DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

#### Bill 200—The Child and Family Services Amendment Act

**Mr. Speaker:** On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), Bill 200, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfant et à la famille, standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer). Stand?

**An Honourable Member:** Stand.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there leave that that matter remain standing? [agreed]

Also standing in the name of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), who has seven minutes remaining—stand? Is there leave for that matter also to remain standing? [agreed]

#### Bill 203—The Health Care Records Act

**Mr. Speaker:** On the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylcia-Leis), Bill 203, The Health Care Records Act; Loi sur les dossiers médicaux, standing in the name of the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Penner). Stand?

Is there leave that this matter remain standing? [agreed]

#### Bill 205—The Ombudsman Amendment Act

**Mr. Speaker:** On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), Bill 205, The Ombudsman Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'ombudsman, standing in the name of the honourable member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer). Stand?

Is there leave that that matter remain standing? [agreed]

## SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

### Bill 202—The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act

**Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows):** I move, seconded by the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), that Bill 202, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la location à usage d'habitation, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

**Motion presented.**

**Mr. Martindale:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak on this bill which is a very short bill indeed. It consists of two paragraphs. It provides for the right of tenants to be protected in order to organize tenants' associations in either public housing or private rental housing. It protects tenants from being harassed by landlords.

I believe that this is something that is necessary because, if you look at landlords and tenants, you see that there is an imbalance in what is basically a relationship of power, that is, that landlords have more power than tenants. Landlords normally have the financial capacity to hire lawyers so their interests are always protected. Tenants frequently do not have the financial capacity to hire lawyers so frequently their interests are not protected.

We have many, many low-income tenants, especially in the inner city of Winnipeg, who are living in substandard housing. We have a piece of legislation called The Residential Tenancies Act and there are also City of Winnipeg by-laws, which are there to protect the interests of tenants.

I would have to say that The Residential Tenancies Act, which was passed when the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme) was the Minister of Housing, is an excellent piece of legislation. It was approved by all three parties in the House. It was supported by all sides. That legislation was about six years in the making and was passed on December 14, 1990. As far as we know, it is a good piece of legislation and no one has suggested any amendments to it up until now. We hope that it is providing the kind of increased protection for both landlords and tenants that it was originally envisaged to have.

However, people are still living in substandard accommodation and need to make improvements. One of the problems now, as to why they are living in substandard accommodation, is that the system

at the Residential Tenancies Branch is complaint driven. That is, unless the branch receives a complaint, they do not do an investigation. If they do not do an investigation, charges are not laid, or landlords are not told to fix up their premises. If they are not told, then frequently they do not do it, and tenants are left to their own devices or are left living in substandard accommodation.

One of the reasons that there continues to be problems, another reason, is that there are no inspection programs. Now there used to be an excellent inspection program known by the acronym of CARUMP, which stands for the Core Area Residential Upgrading and Maintenance Program. It was jointly funded under the Core Area Initiative by three levels of government, and the service was delivered by the City of Winnipeg. They had an excellent staff and an excellent program. It consisted of social workers and homemakers and others who went—and housing inspectors. That is the most important component I almost left out.

The housing inspectors went door to door and checked on rental accommodation. If there were a need for repairs, then they would issue repair orders under city by-laws. If there were a need for tenants to relocate because the place was so bad that it was condemned, then the social workers on the staff would help people find another place to live.

The teacher-homemakers were there to help people with skills in order to be good tenants and good homemakers so they did not contribute to the deterioration of their rented premises.

This was an excellent program that was in place until the funding ran out from the Core Area Initiative. So one of the current problems is that there is no inspection program and so the system is entirely complaint driven. If somebody phones The Residential Tenancies branch, then the process begins to investigate and/or to issue repair orders or whatever the problem is that needs rectifying.

Consequently, in the absence of an inspection program, when I go door to door and when my colleagues—and I would have to say that the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) has far more rental accommodation in her constituency and far worse accommodation in the private-rental market, and the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) and the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos) all have much more rental accommodation in their constituencies and much more that is substandard.

I have been in some of those places and I have seen them, but nonetheless it still exists as well in the constituency of Burrows. So I recently went door to door in an entire apartment building and almost everybody had a complaint. So I obtained work order repair forms from The Residential Tenancies branch and gave them to the tenants. I told them how to fill them out and where to send them in and even offered to help fill them out.

The kinds of problems that we find are very, very sad. We had a family with an infant living in an apartment that was terribly cold in the month of January this year. The baby had been sick two or three times since October, had been to seek medical attention for their illness, and every time the baby was sick the mother was missing classes at Red River Community College. They were so fed up that they were going to move out. I said, please do not move out because some other family who is on social assistance, perhaps another family with children, is going to move into the same cold apartment, and the children are going to get sick and the parents are going to miss school or not be able to look for employment. It just perpetuates the problem.

\* (1710)

I reminded them of the slogan of the housing concerns group that I was involved with for about 10 years and that was, do not move, stay and fight. We always encouraged people to stay and fight for their rights. That is what I encouraged my constituents, the tenants on Winnipeg Avenue, to do, was to fill out the repair order forms and send them into the branch so that the landlord would be ordered to make repairs.

Well, I also contacted the landlord myself. I talked to the property manager. I was told that everything would be taken care of. I went back a couple of weeks later and knocked on every door in the apartment building and nothing had been done. I talked to the caretaker, and the caretaker was quite forthcoming in telling me that this landlord had no intention of spending money on the apartment. What was the landlord doing while children were sick and people were freezing in his apartment block? He was in Florida taking a holiday, did not give a damn about what was happening to his tenants, would not authorize the caretaker to hire a plumber and spend any money on making the needed improvements. In fact, many of the things were violations of either The Residential Tenancies

Act or city by-laws or the Health Act. One of those is that the temperature in an apartment must be a certain temperature for a certain number of hours every day, and clearly that was not happening.

So what happened when the landlord found out that I as an MLA was going door to door to organize and to assist the tenants? Well, the landlord went to see the caretaker and wrote out a statement and asked the caretaker to take it from door to door and get people to sign it. This is what it said: On February 4, I was approached by a man named Doug Martindale and he identified himself as an MLA for the province. The reason he was apparently visiting myself was that he wanted to leave a repair order form with me and that if I had any problems living here or problems regarding my apartment that I could fill out the form and return it to his address. He specified that he was handing out the form due to apparent complaints. End of statement.

So what was the landlord doing? The landlord was intimidating and harassing his tenants and encouraging them not to fill out complaint forms and not to co-operate with me as the MLA, so that he would not have to spend any money turning the heat on and making necessary repairs. So this proves the need for this bill. I thought up this bill, and I put it in the hopper way before this happened to me with the tenants on Winnipeg Avenue.

I submitted the text for this last fall, and this happened in January and February this year. That is why my bill amending The Residential Tenancies Act says that no person shall knowingly hinder, obstruct or interfere with a tenant in the exercise of the right to organize or participate in an organization, the purpose of which is to secure and enforce rights established under this act. It also says that no person shall knowingly harass a tenant with the intent to prevent or discourage the tenant from securing or enforcing rights under this act.

So that was the suggested amendment that I had and this is the proof as to why it is needed—the kind of harassment and intimidation that the tenants in that block were experiencing when they tried to enforce their rights. So I believe that this legislation is necessary. I have not had a chance to talk to the minister yet, but I am hoping that the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh) will agree with my suggested amendment and that it will pass.

I know that the minister is a very co-operative person and actually agreed to an amendment submitted by the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickey) which actually passed in the last session. So private members' bills actually do get into legislation from time to time. I will be looking forward to, first of all, talking to the minister responsible for The Residential Tenancies Act and asking her to participate in the debate on this bill, and to accept this amendment to The Residential Tenancies Act so that it can become law and so that there will be enforced protection for tenants, especially in the inner city of Winnipeg.

Now I would like to talk about a slightly different aspect to this problem because the members of the government are always saying, well, what are your suggestions to us as opposition members, and how would you save money? How would you do it differently? What would you do? [interjection] So I am being asked, how would we do it differently?

Well, I have a suggestion to save money. It is estimated that something like \$60 million goes to people on social assistance for rental accommodation in the inner city of Winnipeg. I believe that the taxpayers of Manitoba are not getting good value for their money because much of that money is going to pay for substandard accommodation—rental apartments that do not even meet the requirements of The Residential Tenancies Act and the Health Act and the City of Winnipeg by-laws. I believe it is a waste of government money.

One of the proposals that I would have is that the social assistance staff not be allowed to rent accommodation if it is substandard. I believe this kind of economic boycott—because really that is what it would be, an economic boycott—would force landlords to fix up their premises in order to get tenants.

Now I would have thought that the last couple of years that landlords would do that voluntarily because the vacancy rate is so high. Indeed maybe some have, because they are so desperate for tenants that they may indeed be forced to fix up their premises in order to attract a tenant, but I believe it is unfair to the taxpayers of Manitoba to have all this money going out into the community to purchase substandard housing for tenants. If The Social Allowances Act could be changed or the regulations could be changed, then it is possible to boycott slum accommodation so that social assistance tenants

can purchase better quality housing especially in the inner city and so that the interests of taxpayers in Manitoba are better protected.

Mr. Speaker, I have a report by Prairie Research Associates Inc. entitled Tenant Organizations in Canada, Six Site Studies: The Final Report. This is a fairly recent report. It was published on August 1, 1991, and it refers mainly to public housing. I would have to point out that there are major differences between organizing tenants in public housing and in private housing and there are many benefits for tenants living in public housing when it comes to organizing because, for example, under Manitoba Housing Authority tenants organizations, if they are recognized by Manitoba Housing Authority, can actually get a grant from the Housing Authority, from public housing, to help run their tenants organization.

I hope that every MLA is aware of this and that they encourage their tenants to become organized and apply for this money, because it is there. This is a right that tenants in public housing enjoy, and many of them have taken advantage of it and many of them have made good suggestions to management and to boards and made improvements in their housing.

One example would be the tenants at Lord Selkirk development. Another would be Gilbert Park public housing. They became a pressure group and they worked with Manitoba Housing and they co-operated with them and were able to make substantial improvements in their housing. They are to be commended for their initiative and I would even commend the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ernst) for him and his staff co-operating with these tenants to make improvements, including very expensive capital improvements which are quite visible. If you go to Lord Selkirk development in the north end, you can see where the Minister of Housing and CMHC have spent money to make improvements.

One of the main reasons for that is, the tenants were able to organize to fight for their interests and, at one time, they actually got elected people on the board of directors. Regrettably, they were only there for three meetings, and then this Minister of Housing (Mr. Ernst) abolished all the public housing authorities in Manitoba—98 public housing authorities. He fired 600 volunteer board members with one Order-in-Council. So now tenants are not on the board of any housing authority in Manitoba, which is very regrettable and on which I have spent

lots of time criticizing this Minister of Housing for in the past.

The point I am making is that tenants in public housing have many more rights and they enjoy them, and it is to their advantage to organize as tenant's organizations and to fight for those rights. This is not a privilege and it is not a right that is enjoyed by tenants in private housing, and that is where I believe a great majority of the problems are, with low-income people renting substandard accommodation, mostly in the inner city of Winnipeg, and they need this kind of protection. They need the protection of the law because, when people have rights, they can insist on the rights, they can use the rights, they can take advantage of them. When people know they have a right it encourages them to take advantage of it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Brian Pallister (Portage la Prairie):** I move, seconded by the member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer), that debate be now adjourned.

**Motion agreed to.**

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**Mr. Speaker:** Are we proceeding with Bill 208?

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** No. Are we proceeding with Bill 209?

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** No. Bill 211?

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** No. Bill 214?

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** No. Okay.

## PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

### Res. 15—Permanent Stubble Burning Solution

**Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the député de St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), that

WHEREAS stubble burning is still widely practised in the province of Manitoba; and

WHEREAS stubble burning has been recognized by the Manitoba Department of Agriculture and other major farming organizations as counterproductive to the long-term productivity of soil; and

WHEREAS stubble burning can cause thick smoke to travel up to 50 kilometres before dispersing; and

WHEREAS stubble burning can cause serious health and safety dangers for thousands of Manitobans caught downwind of stubble fires each year; and

WHEREAS stubble burning has repeatedly attracted unfavourable attention to the Manitoba farm community; and

WHEREAS many Manitobans, including Manitoba farm organizations and the Manitoba Lung Association have repeatedly called for a permanent solution to these problems; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba government has recently recognized the many concerns associated with stubble burning.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recommend that the Ministers of Health, Agriculture and Environment consider striking a committee of interested Manitobans to work together to formulate a permanent solution to this long-standing and serious problem.

**Motion presented.**

**Mr. Edwards:** Now, Mr. Speaker, some members have come forward prior to this coming to the fore today and said, well, have we not done what the resolution called for? I want to acknowledge at the outset of my comments that in fact a committee was struck I think—and I do not want to be overly humble about this—as a result of some of the efforts of myself and others in our party who have over five years brought this issue up every single year asking for some sort of solution to stubble burning.

Now a committee was struck and the committee published a report which was made public or it came out March 9, 1993. That committee has now come forward with recommendations which the government has, in fact, agreed to put in place for the 1993 year. The biggest problem, of course, occurs in the fall—August, September and October of each year. I wanted to go forward today with this resolution and bring this to the floor and have some further discussion, because I want to discuss this report. I want to have the government understand that the key to this whole process is going to be enforcement.

You can come forward with recommendations and talk about solutions and put things in place, but what we learned when the emergency measures had to step in last year was without enforcement the whole exercise is undercut. Let me remind the government of the final conclusion of the committee.

The conclusion was this: To achieve the desired impact of these recommendations it is the opinion of the committee—and the committee represented two members from the Keystone Agricultural producers; it included, in addition, representatives from the farm community; it included representatives from the Manitoba Department of Agriculture. So this includes the four representatives from the agricultural community. They agreed that the key to this was timely and consistent enforcement of regulations to deal with infractions.

\* (1720)

They went on to say, this will be the critical factor. I agree. That will be the critical factor. Does the government have the courage of its convictions, and will it go out to enforce these regulations? I think these regulations—I would have preferred that they be stronger, but the point is they are here. Frankly, if they are enforced adequately, I believe there will be a major improvement in the environmental quality, the quality of health of citizens of this province and, I believe, in the agricultural community as well.

Mr. Speaker, I want to briefly draw to members' attentions what the regulations are going to be. It is going to be restriction mostly on nighttime burning. The restrictions are more onerous during the season, August 1 to November 15. In fact, daytime burning is going to be allowed almost on an unrestricted basis outside of that August 1 to November 15 period. It is going to be interesting to see whether or not there is burning outside of that period which occurs from those who are intransigent on this issue in the farming community, but there is going to be regulation in place August 1 to November 15. There is going to be a ban from two hours after sunset to 11 a.m., and in addition to that, there is going to be this regulation during the daytime.

The way it is going to work is that there is going to be notice given, before 11 a.m., each day is the hope, that this is an okay day for people to stubble-burn in this quadrant or in this section. The

idea is that people in the community, farmers, are going to hear this, listen to it as a normal report, that they would be interested to listen to it if they wanted to stubble-burn. If it is okay in their area, they will burn, and if it is not okay, then they will not. That is the idea. Now, how well that is going to work, Mr. Speaker, we are going to find out. It is going to depend on the co-operation of the farm community, quite frankly.

I would have preferred a licensing as opposed to a notice system, and I advocated that. That is in place in other jurisdictions, most notably in Saskatchewan, jurisdictions in Saskatchewan, where we are not reliant on the weather forecasters and mass media and the radio. Rather there, if a farmer wants to burn, he or she calls and there is—it is not a formal licence. You do not have to fill out any forms; there is no fee, but they get oral approval from a designated office that you can burn in your location during these hours. It is a very efficient licensing system.

The word "licensing" throws people off because they think, oh, I got forms and fees and time delays and bureaucracy. That is not the way it works in other jurisdictions. That is the system I would have preferred because then the person is more accountable, that is, there is no difficulty in proving that you did or did not have authority to do it. The problem in enforcement that I foresee is that people will say, "Well, my radio broke," or "I was not listening," or "I did not have notice, sorry." Meanwhile the fire is started.

My concern is that when you move to the notice, there is less accountability on the individual farmer. I would have preferred to have what is done in other jurisdictions, which is a one on one with an appropriate 1-800 number—and that is what they do in other jurisdictions—where the farmer simply calls in and gets approval right there or approval for another time of day. The conversation is recorded so that it is verifiable if there is a question as to whether or not or what the person was told. That is the way they do it.

So, Mr. Speaker, that was something I preferred, but I am willing to see if this system works. This committee worked long and hard, and if they have come up with something that they think is going to work, I am prepared to take their advice and see what happens this year. But we will be watching closely.

It has been five years that I have been on this issue, every year, consistently. It is interesting to me, and it is the classic case of how government works. Government reacts to crisis apparently in this province, and that is what happened last year. It was bad in prior years. Oh, people got sick. Seniors complained. There were the normal complaints that came in, and people like me, opposition politicians, got up in the House and raised it. The government said year after year after year, you do not know anything about farming; you are out to get the farmers; sit down. That is what they said four years in a row.

The fifth year, it was so bad, there was a crisis, and they started hearing from some of their constituents this time. I think the numbers increased, and they decided they had to do something. It is a form of crisis management, but the point is, after five years, it worked.

Now, was it an emergency last fall? Well, I am happy Emergency Measures stepped in because I think it was, but emergency is defined as an unpredictable event. It is an act of God, or an earthquake or something. That is generally what people think of in terms of emergency.

This was an entirely predictable incident last fall. Everybody who was watching the situation—and it is on the record in this House and from the agricultural people—knew that this was going to come. Designated as an emergency, certainly. Unpredictable, no, it was purely predictable. It had happened the last four years past and the last 40 before that. It was just that it was worse this year, and people's environmental and health and safety consciousness has raised to a point where they just did not want to take it anymore. They were tired of taking their asthmatic children or seniors with emphysema were tired of going to emergency departments. It is not a fictitious thing, Mr. Speaker.

I am fortunate enough not to suffer from those medical ailments, but as a child I did. I had asthma for the first 13 years of my life. I went to the hospital two, three, four times a year with it and stayed in one of these tents where oxygen is pumped in for three or four days.

I know that irritants like this, the rest of us, it is a smell irritant. You know, it gets in your house or something, it is double, it is not that bad. For people with those ailments, they are in the hospital and they are still there when the smoke has cleared. Their



ailments are still with them. They generally have reacted. If they have sensitive lungs, and thousands and thousands of Manitobans and Winnipeggers do have those ailments, they are suffering before you or I or others are detecting that there is a problem in the air. So we have to remember that there is indeed a health risk, and it is not just a handful of people.

Dr. Chochinov, head of emergency at Grace Hospital in my area, every year calls me up with the statistics. It is not a handful. It is hundreds of people go to the emergency departments unable to breathe. So it is a reality and I am glad that it has finally been recognized.

I was first and foremost, and I recognize here in this resolution, wanting to include always the agricultural community. I think that they needed to understand that there was a problem that had to be dealt with. Nobody was asking for unrealistic solutions that the farming community would not be able to live with.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that this proposal which came forward from this committee is implemented. I hope that it is enforced, that fines are levied and they are stiff, and that the police and authorities are vigilant in enforcing it. Because this is the critical year. If it is not enforced right off the mark, the wrong message will be sent, it will continue and it will get worse, and people will abuse it.

The government has made all this big fuss and the press conferences about this, which is good. It is publicized that it is going to happen. It is now up to them to follow through.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to them doing that. I will certainly be present in this city and in this province during those months. I will be looking forward to a new era in terms of relationship between the farm community and the urban community on this issue because it is one that divides the community. That is not good. There needed to be compromise.

I hope that we have reached a solution that will work. It will only work if this government's commitment follows through. I am, I must say, skeptical, but I am willing to give the government the benefit of the doubt, and this will be the most important year in proving that. So I look forward to the government's following through on their spoken commitments in the course of this last six or eight month process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin):** I am pleased to speak today on an important issue, one that has gained the attention of most Manitobans and certainly people in the city of Winnipeg and surrounding areas over the last year because of the unusual year that occurred last fall with the burning and the severity of the problem of stubble burning last year and its impact on people with respiratory health problems, particularly elderly people and others suffering from asthma and other respiratory conditions. It was a very serious problem for many people, and even those who were not suffering from particular diseases of the respiratory system were in a great deal of discomfort as a result of what was happening. So the issue is very serious and was particularly serious last year.

\* (1730)

The resolution, as I see it, simply on the surface would seem to support what the government has done, that is, form a committee and come to a decision about recommendations and how this could be limited and reduce this problem in the future.

The member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) said this is the telling year, this is the year that is going to determine whether this is working or not. I do not say that is necessarily true because it depends what kind of a year it is for stubble burning. It may be a very limited problem this year depending on the conditions, the weather conditions, at that time of the year.

So I do not think we can judge this on one year. I think it may be that it would take several years before the effectiveness of this regulation and new policy can be judged, but I do agree with the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) when he says that he has some concerns about the enforceability of this kind of a regulation as it now stands. I think that when it really is a problem in the future, we will see if in fact the government is able to carry out what it has announced in the recent announcement of April 15 with regard to stubble burning.

The committee that was set up did hear from a lot of different groups in the province before making its recommendations and the government seems to have adopted many of those resolutions or those recommendations, but it has also left out some major areas. If I was going to take this resolution and make it more reflective of the problem, I think I would amend it and include that the government

should deal with the issues of alternatives to burning, to look at other ways of utilizing straw, of other ways of treating that straw so that it could be worked into the soil more easily, and research on products that could be developed, machines that could be used, and so on.

There are a lot of different things that have to be done to deal with this problem other than just regulating the time of burning. It could certainly include the whole issue of education and slowly changing the normal practices of farmers throughout the province. That takes time, and over years a lot of people will carry on the same practice that their fathers and grandparents and others have done over the years and may not necessarily change those practices until they have been exposed to other alternatives.

But this resolution does not deal with that aspect at all, and unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the policy that was announced on April 15 does not deal with that. The committee made some very direct recommendations to the government that were not even dealt with in this announcement. One was that a committee oversee the implementation of this policy, that they monitor how the policy is enforced over a period of time and the effectiveness of this policy and make recommendations for changes. So, in other words, there would be an implementation committee in place. That implementation committee is not mentioned in the announcement by the minister on April 15. There is no reference to an advisory committee to continue its work.

As well, there is no reference in the announcement of April 15 by the minister dealing with the issue of projects and other activities in promoting crop residue management practices that are acceptable, safer, and sustainable, than burning. In other words, it recommends to the minister that other alternatives be looked at as well as dealing with the issue of burning, when burning should take place.

I think that it is a major oversight if the government is not going to deal with that aspect of it and was indeed, on April 15, silent on that part of the issue. So we should see the commitment by the minister to research on machines that might be developed or attachments that might be developed to attach to combines or a separate machine that would be able to pulverize this straw to break down the fibres more

completely so that it could be incorporated into the soil much more quickly.

One member is saying, well, we have lots of those things, but the fact is, he is not aware of some proposals, I do not believe, that are being made now, of using a hammer mill type of technology that pulverizes the straw. [interjection] No. Much more effective than that—to pulverize it to the extent that it is actually, really, a dust, if that is possible to that extent. It is a separate machine that is being proposed.

\* (1740)

The member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) should be aware that the proposal is for a separate operation, a separate machine, because of the power—the member for Emerson is not aware—that it takes to actually pulverize the straw with the hammer mill technology. It takes a lot of power and, therefore, maybe a separate machine and operation would be required, but it is something that is being proposed by some people. I think that is something that is not being dealt with in this policy.

In addition to that, they have not dealt with the research for other uses of straw. For example, there is a proposal and pilot project going on in Saskatchewan that would see particle board made out of straw, the fibre being used. That should be explored because this is a tremendous resource that we have, obviously, if it could be used.

I think that we should, in fact, be looking at that aspect of it for building materials or whatever, because there certainly would be a market for particle board to be made. I think that is another aspect that should be looked at.

In addition to that, there should be more research done, at least a mention of it in the government's policy, with regard to varieties that do not produce as much straw, in other words, less straw-heavy varieties. As we get into the situation now, most of these varieties produce a lot of straw, and it is impossible to incorporate it into the soil with present technology in an efficient way, and so burning is required.

We need to do more research in this area. Again, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), who announced this policy—[interjection] It was the Minister of Agriculture who announced this even though they mention The Environment Act. I know the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) was involved in this as well, but the Minister of

Agriculture and the Minister of Environment were both involved in the announcement. That is true.

I would think that both of those ministers should have included those aspects—the commitment by the government to develop alternative varieties, the commitment to develop alternate technologies and, of course, the commitment to look at research for products that could be made from straw. Particle board comes in many different shapes and sizes. One member mentioned two-by-fours. I do not know whether sheeting of some kind could be made, but certainly for use in agricultural construction, loose housing, and livestock barns and housing, these are all uses that do not require a high grade of fibre and could be commercially viable.

I think the minister should have dealt with those aspects in the policy. Having said that, I think that the resolution deals with the recommendations, basically, that the government has implemented. The government has fallen short in not following all of the recommendations of the advisory committee. The monitoring aspects that were recommended, I would draw to the attention of the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) Section C of the report to the advisory committee. Number 1 was introduced here and implemented it seems, but No. 2 was not implemented, Mr. Speaker.

I think that that is a major shortcoming of the government's actions and would urge the government, the minister, to follow through with both of those aspects in the near future because it is very important to have that monitoring as to the effectiveness of this policy.

Clearly the major shortcoming is the ability to enforce this kind of a policy and that is why the whole issue of continued emphasis on communication and education of farmers as to the need to deal with this problem other than by burning, and to co-operate in a co-operative atmosphere with the people that live around them. I think that is a major challenge for the policy. Although I believe that most farmers want to co-operate, and rural people are trying to co-operate on this issue, there is still a need to do more in that area in terms of education and so on.

I know the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) is going to introduce an amendment to this resolution. I think we have the topic on the floor here, on the floor of the Legislature. It is for discussion purposes, and probably the idea of the making some amendments that will simply pat the

government on the back or whatever are not really necessary here to have a discussion about this issue.

It is a useful issue. It is an important one. It is good that we have an opportunity to raise these issues with the government, and I hope that they will heed some of the suggestions that have come across. They are always saying that there are no ideas, there are no concrete suggestions, no positive suggestions from the opposition. There certainly are in a number of areas. This is one example.

I believe that the policy that was announced can be made much better if it includes some of the things that I just mentioned and some of the aspects. I would urge the government to relook at that, revisit that, and review it from time to time, not just leave it and say, well, we dealt with and now we have something in place, because there are going to be problems in the future. They should try to foresee them and to ensure that action is taken that would make them as small in terms of the severity as possible in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment):** I would like to keep with the general approach that the two opposition critics have taken. That is that this is a matter of some considerable concern and substance, and it does need to be debated in a rational and a sensitive way.

The member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) had indicated I would introduce an amendment, and I will, Mr. Speaker, but that amendment will simply ask that this Legislative Assembly support the actions that government has taken in response to the issue.

I would like to put on the record before I propose that amendment, however, some thoughts that I think are pertinent in how the government responded to the issues that we were faced with last year and over an extended period of time.

I might have to say that the Liberal Party has been fairly consistent in their view that this should be a permitted system. That would be the way they would recommend handling this problem where there is a desire by some to burn and a need for others to be protected from the impacts that would come from that practice. I would clearly want to say that that was an option that was looked at, but it was one

that I think was somewhat impractical in its ability to be implemented.

The City of Winnipeg has a no-burn policy, or by permit only, within the perimeters of the city. They have been unwilling and, I would suspect in some cases, unable to enforce that sort of a regulation without a broader framework within which it could fit. The fact is that what we have done over the course of the winter, as a result of last fall's situation, is through the Ministry of Agriculture, and through the departmental officials in my Department of Environment and the Ministry of Health, worked with an advisory committee that was struck to very quickly bring forward some strong recommendations as to how this could best be dealt with for future situations that would arise in this province.

The conclusion that we came to very quickly, and that was recommended by this committee, is that there has to be a predictable regime. There has to be a regime that protects the health of those who feel impacted, or could be impacted, by the result of careless crop-residue burning and, at the same time, recognize that during a transition period there will be a need for the agricultural community to have some access to this practice.

\* (1750)

I use the word "transitional" because I believe that following on the educational program the Department of Education has been working actively with over the last three to four years, combined with what is now seen in a much more sensitive light some of the problems that can come as a result of any kind of unregulated crop-residual burning, that we were charged to strike a regulation and a regulatory format that would address those primary concerns. The introduction of that regulation occurred last week. Members of the House have copies of the announcement as it was made.

For the record, Mr. Speaker, what we have is a regulated situation primarily during the August 1 to November 15 period when specific regulations for the burning of crop residue would be in place. Those regulations would require only daytime burning, that burns be properly managed, fire guarded, and that all fires be out within two hours of sunset.

That seems fairly simplistic in its approach, but it is far broader and reaches far further than probably just the casual observer would realize because

attaching these regulations to The Environment Act means that they can be extended.

One reason we made the announcement last week, in conjunction with the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), was that we wanted to be in a position, if a situation arose where spring burning was of the nature and under the conditions that would lead to a repeat of thick smoke drifting into heavily populated areas and putting some of the population who are high risk at risk again, to implement on six-hours notice a regulatory regime that would require: (a) that burning not occur if the climatic conditions are wrong, or (b) that if it occurs, it occurs during a time frame and during the time of day and under proper climatic conditions that would have the least possible impact on the urban community and on the rural residential community as well, as far as that goes.

Mr. Speaker, something that goes with the implementation of these regulations, and I am not sure if it is something that is very much appreciated by the members opposite, is the very heavy responsibility in terms of working with the agricultural community to do everything we can to make their operations practical, reasonable, and the operation in conjunction with these regs something that is in fact capable of having a practical application.

One of the concerns that the agricultural community has is that some future government might use these regulations to arbitrarily create a situation where essentially agriculture would be handcuffed or handicapped in its operations. Frankly, we are putting a handicap in terms of agricultural operations, because they will now have to be sensitive to the climatic conditions that occur during a time which they might burn.

The province will be divided into zones that will—obviously, the zone that surrounds the city of Winnipeg will attract the most attention and the most regulatory response. Nevertheless, each zone will be monitored in terms of wind conditions, climatic conditions, and announcements will be made to the farm community as to what will be the best time for them to do the deed, if you will, if they consider this to be something that is necessary to the accomplishing of their workload.

I say that with some sensitivity, because there are large parts of the province that simply do not agree that burning should occur at all. There are

occasions when, for example, as we are right now, and I look to the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), there is heavy straw that was not combined last fall, probably will have to be combined this year. Unless the conditions are ripe, there is going to be a very extreme shortage of time. So while the farmers in the Red River Valley felt somewhat picked upon and felt that maybe the regulations were being written only for their edification, the fact is that we have a good part of the province north of Highway 16 that could well be impacted as well, if spring burning regulations have to be brought into place.

So the sensitivity and the co-operation of all communities in dealing with this will be important. Nevertheless, what occurred last fall was recognized, and I would take some strong disagreement with the characterization that the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) gave this in terms of whether or not it could have been predicted that there would have been a burning problem last fall.

Obviously, I do not think anyone up until the last three to four weeks could have predicted the volume of smoke. Certainly, looking at the crops standing in the summertime, you could have predicted there was going to be lots of volume of straw, but sometimes, given proper conditions, that straw will break up given the equipment that we have today, and the burning does not become necessary because the ground at the same time may be dry enough or receptive enough to having the straw worked in. We had a combination this last fall that mitigated against both of those situations, compounded by pressures of time, we had a situation that was simply getting out of control.

Mr. Speaker, this is probably one of those examples where a combination of events and unforeseen problems does lead, through necessity, to the implementation of action and/or frameworks that will have some long-term benefit.

If you were to ask me when I came into government, Mr. Speaker, if I would ever be responsible for regulating farm residue burning as a member of the Legislature, I would have said no. If you would have asked me a year ago, I would have said very unlikely. If you asked me last fall, I say you bet. That is, frankly, the result of having seen what can happen when a combination of too many wrong events culminate at one time.

I have talked about the regulations that we have imposed. I have talked about how enforcing them will not be easy. It will require the co-operation of a number of departments, including Natural Resources, Agriculture. The only reason that enforcement is a concern is that if we have a situation where enforcement has to be used in order to enforce these regulations, it will still require some considerable co-operation on the part of the agricultural community. I can tell you that I am confident that we will get that co-operation because every farm group that I hold discussions with does believe that it was unfortunate what happened last year, that it does point to a better way of doing things.

I believe that equipment will be developed, and certainly we are involved in discussions about certain equipment modifications that people would like to see. We are also involved in, through the Ministry of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) and university research, the development of additional short-stemmed straw varieties that would be suitable for the Red River Valley.

So, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that Resolution 15 be amended by deleting all words following the first WHEREAS and replacing them with the following:

The government of Manitoba has recognized increasing concern of Manitobans about the impact of smoke from the burning of crop residue, has responded accordingly by establishing the Crop Residue Burning Advisory Committee to carry out a consultative process with stakeholder groups and the public to review and recommend regulatory and enforcement measures to control burning; and

WHEREAS the government of Manitoba has implemented two additional committees to recommend long-term measures regarding residue handling, equipment and protection of soil quality, as well as alternate uses of cereal and flax straw to minimize the necessity for burning; and

WHEREAS the government of Manitoba has implemented regulation under The Environment Act to control and regulate stubble burning.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba support the government actions to respond to the Crop Residue Burning Advisory Committee recommendation.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I will take the honourable minister's amendment under advisement, because the hour is 6 p.m.

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

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 20, 1993

## CONTENTS

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### Reading and Receiving Petitions

Restoration of Friendship Centre Funding	
Wowchuk	1840
Santos	1840

#### Oral Questions

Canadian Wheat Board	
Wowchuk; Findlay	1841
Hunger Prevention Programs	
Wasylycia-Leis; Gilleshammer;	
Filmon; Orchard	1842
Manitoba Sugar Co.	
Alcock; Stefanson	1843
Manufacturing Industry	
Storie; Stefanson	1844
Furniture Manufacturing Plant	
Cerilli; Cummings	1845
Dial-A-Life Housing Project	
Hickes; Orchard	1845
Splash Child Care Inc.	
Lamoureux; Gilleshammer	1846
Gas Leaks	
Maloway; Cummings	1847
Environmental Concerns	
Maloway; Cummings	1848
Break and Enters	
Edwards; McCrae	1848
Headingley Correctional Facility	
Edwards; McCrae	1849
Manitoba Lotteries Foundation	
Santos; Mitchelson	1849

### Nonpolitical Statements

Glenlawn Collegiate Student Achievements	
Render	1849
Death of former Chief Justice	
George Tritschler	
McCrae	1850

### Matter of Urgent Public Importance

Removal of Barley Marketing from	
Canadian Wheat Board Jurisdiction	
Wowchuk	1850
Lamoureux	1851
Manness	1851
Speaker's Ruling	1852
Martindale	1852

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### Committee of Supply

Family Services	1853
Highways and Transportation	1873

#### Private Members' Business

#### Second Readings - Public Bills

Bill 202, Residential Tenancies	
Amendment Act	
Martindale	1896

#### Proposed Resolutions

Res. 15,	
Permanent Stubble Burning Solution	
Edwards	1899
Plohman	1902
Amendment	
Cummings	1904