



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

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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS  
(HANSARD)**

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42 Elizabeth II

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**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 |
| CEFILLI, Marianne          | Radisson           | NDP     |
| CHOMIAK, Dave              | Kildonan           | NDP     |
| CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.       | St. 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, Cliff               | Interlake          | NDP     |
| EVANS, Leonard S.          | Brandon East       | NDP     |
| FILMON, Gary, Hon.         | Tuxedo             | PC      |
| FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.        | Springfield        | PC      |
| FRIESEN, Jean              | Wolsley            | 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     |
| MANNES, 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      |
| 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     |
| <i>Vacant</i>              | Rossmere           |         |
| <i>Vacant</i>              | Rupertsland        |         |
| <i>Vacant</i>              | The Maples         |         |

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, July 5, 1993

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

**PRAYERS****ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS****PRESENTING PETITIONS**

**Mr. Jerry Storle (Flin Flon):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Patricia Weese, Marilyn Randall, Karen Crozier and others requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to consider making as a major priority the establishment of a solvent abuse treatment facility in northern Manitoba.

**Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Brian Johnson, Pam Berthelette, Edna Hudson and others requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to consider making as a major priority the establishment of a solvent abuse treatment facility in northern Manitoba.

**Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Ralph Flett, Angele Flett, Charlene Mason and others requesting the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to consider making as a major priority the establishment of a solvent abuse treatment facility in northern Manitoba.

\* \* \*

**Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Vern Tocher, Anne Peterson, Terri Rampton and others requesting the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) consider restoring the Children's Dental Program to the level it was prior to the 1993-94 budget.

**Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Joyce Fraser, Clifford Morris, Leah Link and others requesting the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) consider restoring the Children's Dental Program to the level it was prior to the 1993-1994 budget.

**Mr. Cliff Evans (Interlake):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Therese Vandale, Penny Auch, Dennis Auch and others requesting the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) consider restoring the Children's Dental Program to the level it was prior to the 1993-94 budget.

**READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS**

**Mr. Speaker:** I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Hickes). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules (by leave). 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 there is a very serious solvent abuse problem in northern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS according to the RCMP over 100 crimes in Thompson alone in 1992 were linked to solvent abuse; and

WHEREAS there are no facilities to deal with solvent abuse victims in northern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS for over three years, the provincial government failed to proclaim the private member's anti-sniff bill passed by the Legislature and is now proposing to criminalize minors buying solvents even though there are no treatment facilities in northern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS for nine years, the 25 Chiefs who comprise the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, supported by medical officials, police and the area Member of Parliament, have proposed a pilot treatment project known as the Native Youth Medicine Lodge; and

WHEREAS successive federal Ministers of Health have failed to respond to this issue with a commitment; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba provincial government has a responsibility to ensure that there is adequate treatment for solvent abuse.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier to consider making as a major priority, the establishment of a solvent abuse treatment facility in northern Manitoba.

**PRESENTING REPORTS BY  
STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

**Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairperson of Committees):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the Third Report of the Committee on Law Amendments.

**Mr. Clerk (William Remnant):** Your Standing Committee on Law Amendments presents the following as its Third Report.

Your committee met on Tuesday, June 29, 1993, at 7 p.m. in Room 254 of the Legislative Building to consider bills referred.

Your committee has considered:

Bill 14—The Personal Property Security and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi concernant les sûretés relatives aux biens personnels et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois

and has agreed to report the same with the following amendments:

**MOTION:**

THAT subsection 24(1) of the bill be amended

(a) in the part preceding clause (a), by striking out "or repossession" and substituting ", repossession or seizure"; and

(b) in the part following clause (f), by striking out "or repossession" and substituting ", repossession or seizure".

**MOTION:**

THAT subsection 49(3) of the bill be amended by striking out "or the condominium plan".

**MOTION:**

THAT subsection 49(4) of the bill be amended by striking out "or condominium plan".

Your committee has also considered:

Bill 39—The Provincial Court Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Cour provinciale

and has agreed to report the same without amendment.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

**Mrs. Dacquay:** I move, seconded by the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that the report of the committee be received.

**Motion agreed to.**

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

**Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Government Services):** I have a statement for the House.

Mr. Speaker, I have a statement in regard to EMO weekend operations.

Heavy rains totalling over 210 millimetres or more than 8 inches in parts of the Porcupine Provincial Forest and Duck Mountain Provincial Park areas yesterday produced flash flooding and caused the evacuation of some communities.

I declared a state of emergency for those affected areas at approximately 10:30 last night. Our primary concern was and is the lives of the residents. By declaring an emergency, we were able to quickly bring together all necessary resources from the provincial government department to meet the immediate needs of the residents. Provincial officials are presently working through the provincial emergency co-ordination centre that was established last night in Swan River.

\* (1335)

As a result of the flooding, residents who were at Deer Lake were moved to nearby Barrows, and Indian Birch and Minitonas residents went to Swan River. As of this morning, residents of the town of Minitonas are being allowed to return home. Manitoba Telephone System reports that limited telecommunications service has been restored to most of northern Manitoba. However, within the affected area, the communities of Mafeking, Minitonas, Bellsite, Barrows and Pelican Rapids are still without telephone service.

Communities north of Porcupine Forest along Highway 77 are also reporting hydro problems. Manitoba Telephone System and Manitoba Hydro crews are using helicopters to try and restore and maintain services. Helicopters and aircraft will also be used to fly over farms in the area and provide assistance if needed.

Information on exact flooding details is difficult to pin down at this time because of the telecommunication problems and lack of access to flooded areas. Natural Resources personnel in the area report that major flooding problems appear to be presently confined to roads and bridges. Showers are continuing in the region, but there is no further word on additional communities evacuating. The

provincial air service is on standby to provide aircraft if any airlifts are necessary.

Mr. Speaker, Highway 10 is closed between Bowsman and Highway 60 in between Ashville and Cowan. Highway 20 is closed between Camperville and Cowan, and Highway 83 is closed from Roblin to Swan River for all emergency traffic. Several other smaller roads in the region are also flooding. At least seven bridges in the area have washed out, and due to these highway closures, anyone travelling to The Pas must use Highways 6 and 60 through the Interlake. Access through Saskatchewan is not possible.

Details of damage to communities are preliminary, and it will likely take several days before complete assessments can be made. I would like to add, however, that as soon as it is practical, I and some of my colleagues will tour the area to get a first-hand look at the situation.

A general inquiry line has been established at the EMO command centre in Swan River. General public inquiries can be made by calling 734-9269, and I will repeat that. That is 734-9269.

I would also at this time, Mr. Speaker, like to update the House on the Lynn Lake fire situation. The community of Lynn Lake remains evacuated due to forest fires. Essential personnel have returned to the community to prepare for re-entry. However, a fire east of Lynn Lake is presently being watched, and exact re-entry time will depend on that fire's status. Hydro has been restored to the community.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme) for providing us with an update of this situation, which is indeed a very serious situation in the Swan River area.

It is unfortunate that there is such poor communication and such uncertainty amongst many of the communities, particularly since there is no telephone service in many of the areas, and with a number of bridges washed out, there are many families who are very concerned about their families and are unable to get any information into these areas.

I have to wonder whether cutbacks in Government Services and in various departments has had any impact, particularly in the area of communications and whether if there were those

people who were in place—the other area being water resources—whether some of these communication problems might not be there.

There is going to be a tremendous impact on the area with the loss of bridges. The minister says seven bridges, and there are communities that are completely isolated right now which causes a lot of problems, and there is going to be a tremendous burden on municipalities. There is no way that the people in the area can afford the costs of what has been created by this downpour of rain.

I guess I have to reflect on the time when we were looking very seriously at headwater storages in both the Porcupine and in the Duck Mountain, and it was this government that put an end to those headwater storages. Had we gone ahead with those, there may not—this would have not addressed all the problems, but there would have been areas that would have been addressed if one of those headwater storages would have been put in place, Mr. Speaker.

I wish that the government would reconsider, and when this is all over, re-evaluate whether or not those headwater storages should have been in place. I hope that they will put in all the necessary services so that the people who are affected by this high water, and, also, the people affected in the forest fire areas—that this government will really re-evaluate what their government cutbacks have done and what their cutbacks in services have done to people in rural and northern Manitoba.

\* (1340)

**Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister responsible for the Emergency Measures Organization for his report today.

We, of course, all in this House are extremely concerned that these residents in these communities be treated as efficiently as possible and that the unfortunate circumstances be minimized for them. Anything that we as, I think, members of this Legislature can do we should do to ensure that these naturally created problems do not cause any further dislocation for these people, or inconvenience, than possible.

Mr. Speaker, we will look forward to further reports from the minister. I am sure from time to time as this problem is solved, he will report. We look forward to that, and we want to assure him of our co-operation in this House from our party in

ensuring that these individuals are given every opportunity that we can offer them to minimize the effects of this very serious problem. That goes both for the flooding as well as for the forest fires in Lynn Lake.

I note that the minister indicates here that showers are continuing in the region. I guess we can all hope that maybe that will end and make things go a little quicker in terms of getting these people back to their homes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Department of Justice I am tabling today Supplementary Information for Legislative Review of our 1993-94 Departmental Expenditure Estimates.

### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have with us today Mr. Sergio Aguilera, who is the Consul General of Mexico.

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

### ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

#### Children's Dental Health Program Cost Benefits

**Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, last week, some 45 staff were laid off by the provincial government, working in the Children's Dental Program. This represents 90 percent of the former program for children in rural and northern Manitoba and remote communities in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, we have raised a number of questions before to the Minister of Health without receiving any answers, quite frankly, as to the rationale of this decision.

The Premier (Mr. Filmon) was copied on a letter, on May 8 of this year, saying that this will not in fact save money but in fact will cost some \$22 million for an \$11-million saving over three years. The government has a copy of that study from Dr. Cooney, who is the president of the Canadian

Society of Public Health Dentists. The Premier has a copy of that.

I would like to ask the Premier: Has he received a response from his own Minister of Health about the fact that people are saying it is going to cost more because kids, with parents, will have to be moved out of remote communities to see the dentist, as opposed to the dental health nurses and the dental hygienists going into the community?

**Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, that discussion has been subject to a number of discussions I have had with individuals currently delivering the program. We hope over the next period of time that in collaboration and co-operation with school divisions, with the Manitoba Dental Association and the Manitoba Dental Auxiliaries, they may well come to an equitable solution given the fact, Sir, that we have made the decision to eliminate the funding for the treatment portion of the program and maintain the preventative funding, the maintenance of good dental health funding throughout the province.

Mr. Speaker, I would expect that over the next number of weeks, the respective organizations might have an opportunity to craft a program much on the line of correspondence I know my honourable friend the Leader of the New Democrats has received, wherein a superintendent of a school division has expressed interest in whether there can be maintenance of a similarly delivered program paid for by the parents of students who are receiving that treatment service.

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health did not answer the question about savings versus cost, the issue of remote communities, the cost of transferring people to the dentist as opposed to staff going to the communities.

The minister has received a letter, which I have received a copy of, from the Cree Nation tribal health centre where they talk about the offloading—offloading, of course, which is also criticized by many school divisions across Manitoba as another offloading onto the provincial school divisions. It says in the letter: The provincial government, by cutting funding to our program, will incur the expense of transporting non-Treaty people in Moose Lake, Easterville, Pelican Rapids, Grand Rapids, Indian Birch long distance for dental treatment. This expense will probably be greater

than the cuts to our program. It does not make any sense.

The letter goes on to say that this does not make any sense from a cost perspective or a dentistry perspective for the people in these communities.

I would like to ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon): Has he received any assurance from his Minister of Health that these cuts, the savings of some \$11 million in three years, will not in fact incur greater costs in other departments of government which will in fact be higher than the alleged savings that the government is making, also reducing dramatically the services to children in rural and remote communities, many of whom do not have the same kind of facilities for children for prevention as we have in some of the urban centres?

\* (1345)

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend has the same correspondence that I have received at the ministry, and we are working with those organizations to assure a smooth transition so they can continue to offer the education, the prevention program.

Now, Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend makes the case that there will be a cost to individual parents. We have never denied that fact, that in terms of now having the treatment program discontinued and only the very important maintenance, education and prevention program sustained, that parents whose children need treatment such as a cavity filled, it will now be at the parents' expense, the same as it is currently in Winnipeg, in Brandon and in other parts of the province that did not have complete access to the program that most of rural and northern Manitoba did.

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, the Premier received correspondence in early May. When I asked the question, the minister, who had received the same correspondence on June 9, had said that he had just received the information and he would look at it shortly. Well, he had received it four weeks earlier.

Mr. Speaker, the question is: Is it going to be more expensive with less quality of dental services to remote communities and rural communities? The program is cut. The head of the preventative services for dental services, Dr. Cooney, is saying he has calculated it will cost more. Groups in the communities and remote communities are now saying it is going to cost more. School divisions

are saying you are offloading this program on us and we cannot do it anymore.

**Mr. Speaker,** my question to the Premier (Mr. Filmon): Has he received any empirical evidence that this in fact will save money for the government? Will it not cost more money to the government and provide much less quality of service for remote children and children in rural Manitoba who do not have fluoride treatments necessarily that we have in the city of Winnipeg?

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend keeps talking about no savings in the program. The taxpayers of Manitoba will not be expending \$3 million on the treatment program that was formerly made available. That responsibility, as is the case now in the city of Winnipeg, the city of Brandon, will now be assumed by parents whose children need those kinds of treatments.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the taxpayers of Manitoba, whether they be the single parents that my honourable friends the New Democrats advocate for more spending on, will not have to face the additional taxes necessary to maintain a \$3-million program in treatment. The same people that my honourable friend advocates for will not be asked to pay taxes to deliver this program only to rural and northern Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, the important component of treatment, education and prevention will be maintained. The parents in each of those jurisdictions will now be responsible for maintaining treatment of active caries or other treatments that were formerly undertaken under the program. The prevention, education, the fluoridation, the fluoride rinse will remain.

\* (1350)

### **Forest Fires Lynn Lake, Manitoba**

**Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon):** First of all, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister responsible for the Emergency Measures Organization for his update with respect to, particularly in my case, the fire in Flin Flon.

Mr. Speaker, the minister and his department acknowledged earlier this week that the firefighting effort in Lynn Lake is going to cost hundreds of thousands of dollars on a daily basis. We also know that the Department of Natural Resources and the minister responsible decided, made a

conscious decision, not to action a fire which started on June 17.

Mr. Speaker, there are many in Lynn Lake and surrounding communities who are particularly concerned that this government, because of budget constraints, because of cutbacks in Natural Resources, are not actioning fires that could be prevented and which could be contained very easily.

My question to the Minister of Natural Resources: Will he now review the departmental policy which prevented the actioning of this fire and which ultimately is going to cost the taxpayers in the province of Manitoba millions and millions of dollars?

**Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources):** Mr. Speaker, let me in the strongest possible terms categorically deny the implication of the honourable member for Flin Flon.

The Department of Natural Resources has never, I repeat, never been denied the necessary fiscal resources to combat the forest fire situation or indeed the kind of situation that we will face now with flood situations in certain parts of the country.

The decisions that were made with respect to that fire are the kinds of decisions made by very capable, professional firefighters. A judgment call was made, as we make many judgment calls. For the benefit of the honourable member, who really knows better, having represented a northern seat for many years, we do not action every fire. There are many fires we do not action, and the former Minister of Natural Resources knows that.

These are judgment calls made by professional firefighters. They are made with the best information at hand on the day. As in anything, it is easy to second-guess with the benefit of hindsight, but I categorically deny that there were any budgetary reasons for the actions that we took with respect to the fire that he refers to at Lynn Lake.

**Mr. Storle:** Mr. Speaker, people in the minister's department predicted this a year ago.

Mr. Speaker, the question is: Why was the fire action not—given its proximity to a community, given its proximity to power lines which are essential for the operation of the community, why was this decision made?

Will the minister now acknowledge that it was made because of the policies of the government,

the cutbacks in the Department of Natural Resources, and it is now going to cost taxpayers five or 10 times as much because of the minister's decision?

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Speaker, for the better part, certainly for all of the part of the '80s that this gentleman, the member for Flin Flon was part of the administration, the base fire budget, the fire department, was some \$6 million. This government raised that to \$8 million. That is the base minimum pay, and that is in effect today, 20 or 30 percent more than what it was during the entire time that he was in administration.

In addition to that, of course, the extra suppression fund comes in, which is drawn upon without any restrictions when faced with emergency situations, as we faced, Mr. Speaker, in '89 when we had the very terrific and horrendous fire situation throughout Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I refute absolutely the suggestion—and I suspect, and I am rather disappointed that a former minister of the Crown would make that kind of an accusation with respect to those people who are making their best judgment calls in different situations. It is very difficult to predict the action of a fire when the countryside is dry and when you have 40- to 50-miles-an-hour winds blowing up. They can alter the nature of a fire within a 12- or 24-hour period.

**Mr. Storle:** Mr. Speaker, for a minister who carried the hatchet for his department for the last three years, I am surprised at that defence.

\* (1355)

### **Forest Fires Impact of Reduced Workweek**

**Mr. Jerry Storle (Flin Flon):** My question is to the minister of the Emergency Measures Organization.

Given the fact that community residents, relatives, friends, people who are concerned about the community of Lynn Lake, have not been able to get in touch with EMO officials, with departmental officials, with the registration centres, because of the complete lack of a communications network, will the minister responsible for EMO be now asking for an interdepartmental investigation as to what impact the days off—this is the first Friday that the civil servants were told to take the day off—what impact those reductions in service have had to the people of Lynn Lake and the people of Leaf Rapids



in terms of the disastrous fire that took place near Lynn Lake?

**Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Government Services):** Without accepting any of the member's preamble—too bad the member does not know what was going on up there, Mr. Speaker.

EMO itself—if he wants to read other than newspapers or whatever he wants to read, our department up there has conducted a very good evacuation.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the people in the surrounding areas for coming forward and volunteering their efforts to make these people as comfortable as possible. These people will be back very, very shortly. I expressed in my ministerial statement today the reason for the partial delay. Does he want me to have those people come back to Lynn Lake before it is safe to do so?

### North American Free Trade Agreement Government Position

**Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier.

Yesterday, the Premier met with the Prime Minister. He indicated, going into the meeting and in fact leaving the meeting, that trade issues were high on his agenda for discussion.

Two years ago, the government released a very strong and clear position that unless six conditions were met they would not support the North American Free Trade Agreement. The minister at the time said the province would not support a North American Free Trade Agreement unless all six conditions are met. If these conditions are not met, the agreement will be opposed. They are our bottom line.

Mr. Speaker, clearly, at least three of those conditions have not been met in the agreement recently ratified by the House of Commons.

Did the First Minister communicate unequivocally this government's rejection of the North American Free Trade Agreement, as currently written, to the Prime Minister?

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, if the Leader of the Liberal Party had listened to my comments, they were with respect to issues that will come up at the G-7 conference which is

primarily the GATT round. In that respect, I urged the Prime Minister to make that her No. 1 priority because a resolution to the GATT round would help farmers of Manitoba, in particular, and in western Canada to once again have a secure living for their efforts on the family farms of western Canada.

I might say that in that respect, that recommendation got the support of every First Minister around the table from the provinces and territories, and the Prime Minister agreed that it ought to be her No. 1 priority in her discussions with the G-7 nations in Tokyo.

**Mr. Edwards:** This minister and in fact all members of this House have repeatedly indicated the importance of the North American Free Trade negotiations and now the agreement. This minister felt it was so important that he articulated a position and went on to say that if any agreement fails to meet any one of these conditions, it is an agreement we will oppose.

Now, very recently, that agreement was ratified in the House of Commons, just weeks ago. This was an opportunity to express, if nothing else, that this government now rejects that agreement.

Is the First Minister saying he did not take the time and make the effort to communicate to the Prime Minister of this country that he and this government and we in this Legislature reject that agreement as currently written?

**Mr. Filmon:** Mr. Speaker, I have said publicly, even as recently as 10 days ago in Tucson at the Western Governors', that without the fulfillment of our six conditions, we are not supportive of NAFTA.

In specific, I spoke at some length about President Clinton's initiatives on the two sidebar agreements on labour force standards and environment, that those are critical to our support of any agreement with respect to NAFTA, that as things stand, we do not support NAFTA without those sidebar agreements and without addressing the issues we have laid out in those six points.

That remains the position we take. It is a position that is communicated every time we talk about NAFTA to those in the federal government, Mr. Speaker.

\* (1400)

**Mr. Edwards:** Mr. Speaker, obviously not every time, because the minister has yet to tell us he told the Prime Minister that. It is interesting he

communicates this to the western governors but not to our Prime Minister.

**Mr. Speaker,** my question for the Premier: Did he communicate that very sentiment he has just communicated in this House to the new Prime Minister, and if so, what was her response? If he has not communicated that clearly, will he? Will he table some letter where he has set it out to her? Will he communicate it to her immediately that this province does not support that agreement as currently written?

**Mr. Fillmon:** Mr. Speaker, the federal government, including the new Prime Minister, is very much aware of our position on this issue. It has not changed.

### **Forest Fires Firefighter Employment Policy**

**Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas):** Mr. Speaker, my questions are directed to the Minister of Natural Resources.

Northerners in this province have for a long time now some of the highest unemployment rates in the country. Nowhere is this more common than in communities like Moose Lake, Grand Rapids, Easterville and so on. Over 80 percent of those people, mostly aboriginal people living in those communities, are unemployed. This is the same for most other northern aboriginal communities.

My question is: Why did this government fly up people from southern Manitoba to go up north and fight the forest fires?

**Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources):** Mr. Speaker, currently we have only the particular fires in Lynn Lake and Barrington Lake that are a serious concern to the department. I am pleased to report that there is no other fire activity taking place in other parts of the province, including some of the southern parts of the province.

We have, Mr. Speaker, an accomplished and dedicated group of what we call fire attack groups that are on full-time staff with the department during the fire season, and they are employed where they can be most efficiently used. Now, some of them, no doubt—because that is the nature of this department, we bring together our foresters where they are required.

I remind the honourable member for The Pas that fully 75 to 80 percent of the full-time fire attack

firefighters are of aboriginal background, although some of them, as he points out, no doubt come from some of the southern reserves.

**Mr. Lathlin:** Mr. Speaker, can the minister provide the House with a breakout of the firefighters, what regions they came from in the province, and what percentage of those firefighters come from the North and how many are aboriginal people?

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Speaker, I would be very pleased to do that. I would suggest that the appropriate time of doing that would be in the discussion of my Estimates that I hope we will come to shortly.

**Mr. Lathlin:** Mr. Speaker, I knew the minister would not answer the question, but I decided to ask anyway.

### **Firefighter Transportation Costs**

**Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas):** My last question is: Can the minister then advise the House, by way of a report, how much government is spending on airfares shipping those people from southern Manitoba to go up north to fight the fires in the Lynn Lake and in the Wabowden area?

**Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources):** Mr. Speaker, these are all appropriate questions to be asked during the consideration of the department's Estimates. I will have officials with me at that time to answer those questions.

### **Disaster Areas Emergency Medical Services**

**Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River):** Mr. Speaker, the minister indicated in his statement that there is a serious situation that has developed in the Swan River area because of the flooding. Many bridges have been washed out. Many municipal roads are gone. The minister talked about some communities being evacuated. However, there are several communities that have no access and no telephone service. I speak particularly about Pelican Rapids, Dawson Bay, Mafeking and those areas. There is no access.

What steps is this government taking to be sure that there are emergency medical services provided in those areas? Is anybody going into those communities to see that the proper services are provided, particularly since there are no telephone services in those areas?

**Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Government Services):** Mr. Speaker, I can say to the individual, yes, that is the job of EMO, for the care of the people in that particular area.

I just had my briefing at 12:30, and I am inviting the member across the way to sit in on the director of EMO and he will also brief her on the different areas and the different things they are doing in those particular areas to make sure those people are looked after.

### **Disaster Areas Bridge/Highway Repairs**

**Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River):** Mr. Speaker, my next question is to the Minister of Highways.

The No. 10 highway is a main road. Since several bridges have been taken out of that road and completely crippled the area, I want to ask the Minister of Highways if he is going to put in place emergency crews to help put those bridges and repair to the No. 10 highway in place as soon as possible so we can have access from that area. How soon can we see some extra help in that area?

**Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation):** Mr. Speaker, we have very capable people working in the various departments and once the emergency actually developed yesterday, our crews were all in place and have been working around the clock to try and assess what is happening. We are having meetings that are ongoing right at the present time to see exactly what course of action we can take to provide the immediate service to be able to get access into the area.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the member though that it is still raining out there and that the problem has not ceased at this stage of the game. It is still escalating. We are tracking it, trying to find out. I think it is upwards of 12 structures that basically have been washed out.

Further to the comments from the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme), we have helicopters flying around checking out to see whether there are isolated spots where people have been isolated, where there are problems. We will continue to do that, and we will be updating the House as further action is required.

### **Disaster Areas Bridge/Highway Repairs**

**Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River):** Mr. Speaker, I guess I will ask the Minister of Highways or the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) then: What steps will be taken to help municipalities? Municipalities will not be able to afford the extra costs of repairing all of these roads that are damaged. Will there be emergency funding put in place to help the municipalities? Will there be funding put in place to help those farmers who at the present time are having difficulty moving stock and those kinds of things? What kinds of emergency services are put in place for that?

**Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Government Services):** First of all, to the member across the way, the municipalities have declared different areas and that is why I as minister stepped in. There is funding available to those municipalities. During that process of assessment of the damages with all the departments, that will be taken into consideration, Mr. Speaker.

### **No-Fault Auto Insurance Tillinghast Report Tabling Request**

**Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne):** Mr. Speaker, as part of the examination of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation's plans to move to a no-fault program, the corporation asked the Tillinghast company to review the existing data to see whether a modified form of tort would meet the same needs. That report was prepared for the corporation. We are now about to enter into a significant public debate on this question. I asked the House two weeks ago if the minister would table that report. That question was taken as notice at the time with an assurance from the minister responsible for transportation that he felt that the minister would be prepared to table a document.

I would like to ask the minister today if that document is forthcoming.

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act):** Mr. Speaker, the report was prepared based on a number of assumptions. I suppose that the question immediately arises, as is often the case in comparison between work that is done by actuarial people, as to whether or not you agree with the initial assumptions. Certainly, the work that was

done was done for the corporation to provide advice to the government, and I do not believe that there is information there that would be particularly useful to the debate.

**Mr. Alcock:** That is a rather incredible statement. It is not up to the minister to make that decision. There is a public debate about to take place as this minister attempts to deprive people in this province of their benefits under the insurance program.

I would like to ask him what he is afraid of. Get the information on the table.

**Mr. Cummings:** Mr. Speaker, it is not a matter of being afraid of debating the issue. I would hope that perhaps we could begin that debate in this Chamber. If fellow members would be prepared to put their concerns on the table, I would be most anxious to debate those issues.

**Mr. Alcock:** Mr. Speaker, a public corporation paid for this. I am prepared to debate this bill anytime, as soon as the minister tables the information that he has based his decision on.

**Mr. Cummings:** Mr. Speaker, the member says he is prepared to debate. I hope that when the bill is called he will put his concerns on the table and I will respond to that debate.

\* (1410)

### Home Care Program Impact Service Reduction

**Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health is cutting off \$3 million of homemaking services to the weakest and the most vulnerable in our society. He talks about how he will be increasing services in health care through provision of more nursing services and attendant services, but he does not tell us that is because he has closed hundreds and hundreds of beds and more of these services will be required in the community.

Can the minister stop playing politics with this issue and tell us, Mr. Speaker, how many Manitobans are going to be cut off as a result of this \$3-million cutoff to homemaking services, and how many hours are going to be lost by those Home Care support workers who provide that service?

**Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, you know, I would appreciate it if my honourable friend would take some of his own advice and come clean with information on this

because this is now about, oh, I do not know, maybe the fifteenth time in Question Period I have dealt with this same issue. I dealt with it immediately after the budget and several times during the Estimates process.

Now, Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend the New Democrat, of course, does not want to acknowledge that the policy we are carrying forward is the same one put in place in 1985 by Howard Pawley and the NDP. That is not convenient for the disinformation campaign the NDP want to try and run to get into government next time.

But, Mr. Speaker, let me tell my honourable friend how Home Care is changing. Home Care is moving services away from the less intensive, i.e., housekeeping, i.e., simple meal preparation, i.e., laundry, as was started in 1985 by the New Democrats, and we are now able to provide more nursing services, more Home Care assistant services, more Victorian Order of Nurses services.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me tell my honourable friend just how much more: 1992 over 1991, 7.2 percent increase in home care attendants, registered nursing up 15.5 percent, LPN up 20.7 percent, Victorian Order of Nurses up by 4.7 percent—an increase, not a decrease.

**Mr. Chomiak:** Mr. Speaker, that is the fifteenth time the minister has refused to answer the question.

Mr. Speaker, my supplementary: As part of this expanded service, can the minister advise whether the co-ordinators of the Continuing Care Program will now authorize only limited services to clients, so that if a dressing is required to be changed twice a day, the nurse will only be required to do it once, and family members will have to do it now the second time? Is that part of the continuing changes of this so-called expanded service?

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Speaker, again, the Continuing Care Program, since its inception in the mid-'70s, has been to be a service of provision where there is not family able to undertake those services, where there is not supportive services in the community able to help that individual. Home Care has been since its inception a service of last resource after family has been called upon.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that has been consistent since Home Care came in in the mid-'70s. It was consistent during the Howard Pawley years. That

is why we have increased nursing services by 20 percent, '92 over '91, in terms of the LPN service, by 15 percent in registered nursing services, and this year, we expect to have further increases in nursing services to assist people living independently in their homes.

### **APM Management Consultants Home Care Program**

**Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan):** My final supplementary for the minister who has now confirmed another cutback in Home Care: Can the minister advise this House whether or not his \$3.9 million plus \$800,000 in expenses, tax-free consultant whom he has hired—will he confirm to this House whether or not she will be dealing with Home Care which is one of the four or five projects, and whether or not these cutbacks are being made before he signs the final contract so he can do the same thing with Home Care that they did with St. Boniface—cut out the program or parts of the program, and then she will take credit for the cuts?

**Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, if someone watching this Question Period was to listen to my honourable friend's preamble, they might conclude, an outside observer might conclude that my honourable friend is quite dishonest in the way he presents his questions, but, Sir, of course, we cannot do that in the House.

### **Point of Order**

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, it is very clear, in fact Beauchesne has many citations, and under 489, the use of the word "dishonest" is most definitely unparliamentary.

I would like to ask that you not only call him to order on that but also ask that for once he answer a question put forward by members of our caucus about Home Care, and not resort to those kinds of unparliamentary tactics instead of answering the question.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable member is quite correct. On the point of order raised, "dishonest," by the way, has been ruled unparliamentary, one, two, three—

**An Honourable Member:** And?

**Mr. Speaker:** I will tell you "and" how many other times in a minute.

It has been ruled unparliamentary seven times, and it has been ruled parliamentary once, so it is not often members have an opportunity to get away with it. It is on both lists.

Again, I will caution the members to pick and choose your words very carefully for the fact that the viewing public is paying attention.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Orchard:** Mr. Speaker, that is exactly the point I was trying to make, because my honourable friend, in now repudiating the policies, the assessment that professionals have undertaken since the mid-'70s in establishing home care services by following that policy set up originally by the NDP, re-enforced by our government in the late '70s, continued by the Pawley administration, with changes as I mentioned in 1985, my honourable friend stands up on his hind legs and concludes that is another cutback. That is always what the program has done.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell my honourable friend that nursing services have increased—

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

### **Child Protection Centre Surplus Restoration**

**Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows):** Mr. Speaker, when the Minister of Family Services released his budget Estimates in March, I predicted that the first consequence of a 4 percent reduction to Child and Family Services agencies would be that preventative programs would be cut.

The latest example of this is the Child Protection Centre, where, when this government clawed back their surplus, they cut staff in the area of education and training on abuse.

I would like to ask the Minister of Family Services whether he is going to restore this funding, especially when he meets with their staff this week, or whether he believes that it is not necessary and he does not believe in prevention and, therefore, puts children at risk.

**Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services):** Mr. Speaker, the member has forgotten over the weekend that I answered this question last Wednesday. I indicated that the surplus, which appears to be different than was first reported, will be positively addressed, and we will restore that money.

**Mr. MartIndale:** Could the Minister of Family Services tell the House if he plans to restore all the accumulated surplus that was clawed back and if then they will be able to rehire staff that have been laid off or hire new staff to replace them?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Mr. Speaker, in making very difficult budget decisions across government and within this department, there have been occasions when we are asking groups that receive funding from the government, as part of their funding for the current year, to use up their surplus, a surplus in this case which has been in place there since 1988.

**Mr. MartIndale:** Mr. Speaker, I believe the minister is indicating that all of it will not be restored.

I would like to ask the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) whether the decisions around the Child Protection Centre are being made by Treasury Board or by the Minister of Family Services since the Family Support branch had an agreement with the Child Protection Centre as to how this surplus money would be spent. Who is making decisions around the Child Protection Centre? What is going to be the result? Are they going to restore these unfair decisions?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Mr. Speaker, I indicated last week, that we place a tremendous value on the work that the Child Protection Centre does in the continuum of services between the agencies and the department. The issue that was raised was an error over the amount of the surplus. We are now determining that surplus was not at the level that it was first reported to us, and we have indicated that we will make up that shortfall.

### Northern Manitoba Emergency Phone Service

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson):** Mr. Speaker, the last week members of the community in Thompson have been working very hard as hosts for the many dislocated people from Lynn Lake. I would like to certainly commend everybody throughout northern Manitoba for pitching in at a very difficult time. Some questions have arisen in terms of emergency preparedness, and there have also been some other impacts of the recent events.

I would like to ask the minister responsible for EMO if he has reviewed the circumstances surrounding the cutoff of emergency phone service in many northern communities. Operator service,

which is the equivalent of 911 for northern communities, has not been in place certainly since yesterday. Can the minister indicate whether there are any backup plans in place to provide that kind of service in the communities that as of this morning still did not have that emergency phone service?

\* (1420)

**Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Government Services):** First of all, Mr. Speaker, these were unusual circumstances. The optics that go into area—the fibre optics were damaged. There was a temporary system set up to accommodate that. I again, on behalf of the member, thank the people of Thompson. As the member knows, each community develops its own emergency preparedness. There is a contract between the government and individual municipalities, and Thompson worked very well.

However, as indicated, the people will be back in Lynn Lake shortly. Yes, we have looked at alternates in case of emergencies. There is an ongoing mobile study now for telecommunications that has been going on for approximately three or four months. I am waiting for that report. When I receive that, then I will pass that on to the members.

We are always a little leery of this type of thing happening and the unusual circumstances. In this particular case, it did happen.

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Speaker, MTS recently changed the switching system to move exchanges from switching in on operator service in northern communities to a province-wide system that results in operator service being provided from southern Manitoba.

I would like to ask the Minister of Government Services whether this in any way, shape or form led to the circumstances whereby there was no, and I repeat, no emergency service, no operator service, the equivalent of 911 in northern communities yesterday or today. In fact, Mr. Speaker, all that northerners received in the way of an indication there was a problem, was a recorded message from MTS saying that lines were busy when in fact those lines were not in place to operators.

I would like to ask what the situation is, how that developed, Mr. Speaker, in northern Manitoba.

**Mr. Ducharme:** First of all, it was the fibre optic cable that went down, Mr. Speaker. It severed, and there was temporary service for those people in the area. As he knows, a temporary service, you call in and you might get a busy or a no answer. I suggest to the people in the area, keep trying that number because of that temporary service, but there is a temporary service in the area.

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Speaker, I tried 25 times last night to get operator service, which is the emergency service, and could not get through.

I would like to ask the minister again—and I repeat again to the minister that operator service in northern communities is the equivalent of 911—why were there no contingency plans put in place to inform residents of northern communities who might have faced an emergency circumstance, of how to communicate with those providing emergency services, to provide a backup to the equivalent of 911, Mr. Speaker?

**Mr. Ducharme:** Mr. Speaker, it is too bad the member for Thompson did not think about that previous to 1988.

First of all, we have a temporary backup system. Mr. Speaker, I just finished explaining to him that there is a study on telecommunications. [interjection] It is unusual the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) is questioning from his seat, who did not show any concern at all or ask me any questions this morning in regard to his particular area.

Mr. Speaker, there was a temporary system set up. It was an unusual circumstance, and we have looked after that situation.

**Mr. Speaker:** Time for Oral Questions has expired.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

**Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if there is a willingness to waive private members' hour?

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it the will of the House to waive private members' hour? Is there leave?

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** No. Leave is denied.

### House Business

**Mr. Manness:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to announce a number of standing committee times.

On House business, I would like to announce that the Standing Committee on Economic Development will meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow in Room 254 to consider Manitoba Mineral Resources; that the Standing Committee on Law Amendments will meet tomorrow at 9 a.m., Room 255, to consider Bill 16; that tomorrow at 7 p.m., the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources will meet to consider the Annual Report of the Crown Corporations Council. That is in Room 254.

Also tomorrow, at 7 p.m., the Standing Committee on Economic Development will meet in Room 255 to consider the Annual Report of the Manitoba Development Corporation.

Wednesday, July 7, at 7 p.m., in Room 254, the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources will meet to consider the Annual Report of the Liquor Control Commission. Also that evening at that same time, in Room 255, the Standing Committee on Law Amendments will meet to consider Bills 3 and 29.

Thursday, 9 a.m. Room 255, the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources will meet to consider the Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation; and at nine, that same morning in Room 254, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts will meet to consider the Annual Report of the Public Accounts '91-92, '92-93.

**Mr. Speaker:** I would like to thank the honourable government House leader for that information.

**Mr. Manness:** I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to her Majesty.

**Motion presented.**

### MATTER OF GRIEVANCE

**Ms. Avls Gray (Crescentwood):** Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I in the Liberal caucus have attempted to be supportive of this government's health care reform and, certainly, have attempted to provide constructive criticism where possible.

My former colleague, the member for Kildonan, Dr. Gulzar Cheema, did a lot in endorsing this government on their reform initiatives. My other

colleagues and I have done the same in an attempt to provide constructive criticism.

Mr. Speaker, the record of the Legislature will show some very positive comments, some praise, and support of not only the initiatives of the health care reform, but certainly of all of the principles of the reform as started by this government. Those principles are outlined in Quality Health for Manitobans, The Action Plan.

I rise today, Mr. Speaker, because I cannot in good conscience continue to listen to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) attempt to justify his change in policy in the Home Care Program, and I cannot continue to listen to this Minister of Health not answer questions posed by the opposition and deal with the real issues respecting Home Care and the change in policy.

I am not only concerned about this actual change in policy of homemaking services within the program, but I am also concerned because this change in policy, I believe, contravenes the spirit and intent of the health reform action plan as laid out by this government.

I am also concerned, because of the minister's apparent unwillingness to answer some of our questions throughout the Estimates process and in Question Period, about the impact of these changes to the program, about any type of analysis of what these program changes will require and also his apparent willingness to not deal with the issues but, rather, to skirt around the issues and to sidetrack them.

Mr. Speaker, I rise on a grievance, and I wanted to begin to talk just very briefly about the history of the Home Care Program. Not to go into a lot of detail, but suffice it to say, the Home Care Program here in Manitoba was considered to be one of the best home care programs across North America and throughout North America.

In 1972, it was referred to as Care Services. It was a centralized program in the city of Winnipeg and also throughout rural Manitoba. In 1975, that Care Services was moved into what was called community-based home care services and case co-ordinators, social workers, nurses moved into community-based offices within the city of Winnipeg and throughout rural Manitoba, and at least in the city of Winnipeg functioned within a multidisciplinary team structure.

\* (1430)

The idea was to develop a continuum of services that could allow the aged and infirm and some younger disabled to remain in their homes, in their communities, by having some support services.

Now, I know the minister has mentioned in this House—and he is correct—says that home care is to be seen as an alternative, as a last resort to assistance from family. That is true, Mr. Speaker. That has always been the case in the Home Care Program, where we ask that family provide services and support to the aged and infirm, to the younger disabled and then Home Care, as a program, kicks in when that is no longer possible.

The approach to home care services is certainly seen over the last 10 years as a trend, where now we are providing services to more and more complicated, more and more complex cases in the community, whether those complex cases be medically fragile children, where we are now providing services in the community. Five years ago, 10 years ago, those children did not survive very long in hospital, so there was no need to provide a service. Now those medically fragile children are not only surviving longer, they are moving home from hospital and are able to be supported in the community.

We have also seen a trend toward more of the younger disabled individuals, again, who are able to move out of institutions, not be in personal care homes, and to live semi-independently in the community.

We have also seen a trend, Mr. Speaker, of course, of people who are living longer. People now are wanting to spend longer in their homes. We are starting to see fewer individuals who are wanting to move into personal care homes at a younger age, and we are seeing people who want to remain in their homes. They are able to do that with the supports of the Home Care Program.

In 1985—and the minister certainly has indicated this himself time and time and time again—the Support Services to Seniors Program was a program that was developed by the former administration, by the New Democratic government. This was a service that was basically developed by the government where a number of staff would work with community groups, and they would assist community groups in developing nonprofit support services in the community.



In fact, Mr. Speaker, it was really rural Manitoba who had a headstart or really moved ahead in that area in terms of developing a number of nonprofit services, whether those services be home maintenance services, yard cleaning, whether those services be meal programs such as congregate meal programs or whether those support services be friendly visiting and those types of social support services. Rural Manitoba developed a lot of those services.

The City of Winnipeg came on stream a little bit later, and they, as well, started to look at the various support services that could be developed throughout the city of Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, the northwest part of the city of Winnipeg was the first to really look at Support Services to Seniors. A group of people developed a northwest seniors council and decided to expand a number of services and programs for the elderly. Some of those programs and services included congregate meal programs, some transportation services, and the third program that was developed at that time, in 1985-86, was a home maintenance, housecleaning, yard maintenance type of service for the elderly.

Now, at that same time, when those support services were developed—and the services in rural Manitoba, the same nonprofit services were well on their way—it was determined by the then administration, the NDP government, and by the senior bureaucrats that there should be a careful review of all of the individuals who were currently on home care who basically received a minimum amount of service, and that minimum amount of service was basically defined as receiving homemaking services every other week or once a week or once a month. There was a careful review and analysis of all of those particular cases.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, we also saw a move of the senior management of the Department of Health to encourage, to support and to ensure that the case co-ordinators who were spending time in the community working with the elderly were doing a good job of assessing people as to whether they were actually eligible for the Home Care Program, even for the homemaking service.

So there was actually quite a bit of review done, and it was felt in a number of situations that individuals who were receiving homemaking services in fact could receive that service through

family, through relatives, and they were taken off the Home Care Program. So that process was in place in 1985 or '86.

At the same time, with the advent in the north part of the city of the Support Services to Seniors, there was a deliberate move—and I do not use that word “deliberate” negatively, but there was a deliberate move to look at that home maintenance program, and for those individuals who were on home care and did not have family, did not have supports, that we would suggest to those individuals that they receive the services of this nonprofit Support Services program, which basically provided yard maintenance, housecleaning, some meal preparation, some assistance in laundry, et cetera. So that began in 1986.

The minister has certainly talked about that in his comments in Estimates and in response to questions in the House, and what he says is very correct. What we have seen occur, however, in 1993, is another shift in policy direction on the part of this government, and I think to some extent the minister recognizes this, although I am not sure he is really prepared to come out and say exactly that there has been a change. The minister likes to say, well, it is the same; we are still providing services for complex care, and where people only need a homemaking service, we are referring them to the Support Services to Seniors.

Well, that is correct to some extent, Mr. Speaker, but what has happened is now, actually throughout the city of Winnipeg and certainly in rural Manitoba, the minister has indicated that he wants to correct an inconsistency and the unfairness that currently exists in that system.

The unfairness and inconsistency the minister points out, and he is correct in this inconsistency, is that individuals in three of the four quadrants, for example, of the city of Winnipeg, were receiving homemaking services through the Home Care Program, whereas people in the north part of the city were not receiving that service. They were, in fact, being told they were not eligible for home care and that they should avail themselves of the nonprofit homemaking service through the Support Services to Seniors Program. So the minister is correct that there was an inconsistency.

Now, the minister's response and the change or shift in policy that the minister has looked at is to take away that inconsistency. He is suggesting

that those individuals in the other three quadrants of the city and in areas in rural Manitoba, as well, should no longer be eligible or receive the home-making services through the Home Care Program, but that they should avail themselves of some other alternative service.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when we asked the minister what type of services, he again talks in glowing words about the Support Services to Seniors Program which he says has developed more programs over the last year, and in answer to questions in the House about has there been an increase in the budget, he very nicely skirts the answer to that question by saying, well, we have more programs in Support Services to Seniors, which is true.

But when we ask the minister a very direct question in the Estimates process and we say—well, for example, I represent Crescentwood-Fort Rouge. I have other colleagues who represent other parts of the city that are in the south area. What services do we tell these people are now available for them? In fact, in talking to intake staff with the Department of Health, we have asked those staff the same questions as to what services are available, and they do not have a comprehensive list because those services have not yet been developed.

So one thinks, well, perhaps these people can avail themselves of the Support Services to Seniors programs in the north part of the city, but when we talk to the Gwen Sexter retirement program which now has taken over home maintenance services in the north part of the city, they say that if there was an increase in referrals to their program, particularly from people who are outside the geographical area of the northern part of the city, they would not be able to handle those requests.

So what we are left with is, in fact, the indication that there is no Support Services to Seniors throughout the city of Winnipeg, so these people who are now going to be reassessed and are told they will no longer be eligible for home care will not have alternatives to draw on with the exception of private, for-profit cleaning services. Now the one difficulty with those services is that we are going to have individuals, people who are requiring those services, of every income level of the entire spectrum of incomes who will be having to avail themselves of those kinds of services.

\* (1440)

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

So we are going to have some individuals, some elderly in particular, who do not have the support of family or friends who, because they are on a fixed income, cannot afford those services, who will in fact potentially deteriorate in their homes because they are not able to keep themselves safe in their homes which has always been the basis behind any type of home support service. They will probably utilize hospitals more, and there is a chance that they will be institutionalized sooner.

That is the concern about this shift in policy in the Home Care Program, Mr. Acting Speaker. My concern and the concern of the Liberal caucus in regard to this is when you look at the shift in policy, it appears to contravene every principle that is outlined in Quality Health for Manitobans, The Action Plan, and that is the concern of our caucus.

If the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) were able or was prepared to stand up either in Question Period or when we asked these questions in Estimates and explain exactly what the shift in policy means, tell us what analysis he has done or his department has done in regard to the impact—[interjection] Well, the Minister of Health is talking from his seat and says, read Hansard. I have read Hansard. I sat through the Estimates. We still were not able to get direct answers to some of our questions from this minister.

Mr. Acting Speaker, when we look at The First Foundation: Developing a Broad Government Focus on "Healthy Public Policy," one of the statements is and I quote: "... every major action and policy of government will be evaluated in terms of its implications for the health of Manitobans."

An excellent statement, a statement we support, Mr. Acting Speaker. We asked the Minister of Health questions about what analysis was done as to the impact of this shift in policy, because perhaps it is a good shift. We do not know that, because there has not been an analysis. He either has the answers and refuses to tell us, or he has not done analysis on this.

He oftentimes talks about what other provinces are doing, and I begin to wonder if in fact this government is not governing by association. It seems to be that what goes on in other provinces is a good enough reason to decide on what should be done here in Manitoba.

We also have asked the minister questions on the Home Care equipment program and the changes in that policy. I specifically asked the Minister of Health in Estimates, had there been any type of analysis done on the impact of the changes in the Home Care equipment policy and, again, the answer was no.

The minister is sitting from his seat telling the member for Crescentwood that in fact all I am doing is playing politics. Well, that is not true because grievances are very serious. It is very important—[interjection] Mr. Acting Speaker, I would be quite pleased for the minister to stand up once I am finished and correct the record. Let us know what analysis has been done—[interjection] Well, the minister tells us to read Hansard, and I will respond to this one comment. I have read Hansard twice. I read through all of the Estimates, and I have yet to find answers to some of our questions, and, in fact, what is important here is that individuals here in Manitoba know that they have a home care system and program they can rely on.

The First Foundation of this Healthy Public Policy in regard to looking at evaluation and analysis has not been done in the case of this shift in home care policy.

The Second Foundation, the second principle in this action plan talks about Partnerships for Health. Again, this is a very famous principle that the minister likes to espouse time and time again. Again, we would ask, who has the minister consulted in regard to this shift in policy in the Home Care Program? Perhaps he has consulted the bureaucrats in the department. Occupational therapists, nonprofit organizations such as Support Services to Seniors and the Gwen Selter retirement program, a number of these programs, again, in discussions with them, wonder about the direction and the impact of this particular shift in policy in the Home Care Program.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

I would ask the Minister of Health—he had a perfect opportunity to review the changes in the north part of the city of Winnipeg as they started to remove people from the Home Care Program and refer them to the nonprofit services in the north part of the city. He could have reviewed that to see what positives and negatives there were from that policy program.

He has not done that, but what he has now said is, okay, everyone in the city of Winnipeg and throughout the province will no longer receive the homemaking services. They will be referred to other services and programs. Then he says, that is because the Support Services to Seniors Program has been so successful, yet when we asked the minister to indicate which of those services are now available in three-quarters of the city of Winnipeg, he either refuses to name them or he cannot, because in fact they do not exist, Mr. Speaker.

The Third Foundation of the action plan is Building and Managing a Full Continuum of Health Services for Manitobans. Again, the minister and his government espouse the fact that community support programs are very, very important. Again, they talk about that, but have they actually used that principle as they have shifted the home care policy?

Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote on page 15 of The Action Plan where it says: "Put another way - if, by providing home care services, we can reduce the length of time a person has to stay in an acute care hospital by a single day, we save enough to pay for several weeks of home care. The potential returns from investments in lower cost and community-oriented services are huge and experience elsewhere suggests that these services also contribute to improved health outcomes."

That is probably true, Mr. Speaker. Again, the minister, in Estimates and in Question Period, talks about the increases in the home care services and he talks about increases with LPN services, R.N. services and home care attendant services. That is all true, but in fact what he neglects to tell us is that there has been a decrease in the number of home support worker services. So the question remains, what is going to be the impact of removing those people from home care who are receiving a less intensive, lesser service from home care?

Again, Mr. Speaker, if the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) could show us some analysis, either from this province or other provinces or even in North America, to suggest that people can still be maintained in their community and their home without having those services, at least we would have some information to look at and to reconsider our concerns about the shift in the home care policy, but we have not seen any analysis or information from this minister.

In the health care reform, Mr. Speaker, the conclusion is the basic management dilemma. They indicate that cost savings, they are never really saved. They basically talk about how when you move towards community-based services you oftentimes do not save dollars. That is very true.

Again, I question what is the actual reason behind this continued shift of policy in the Home Care Program. Is it really the saving of \$3 million, and will those dollars be saved in the long term?

The minister indicates in his reform that it is very important that all sectors work together. There is a definite need to manage the changes in health care. It was certainly very interesting, Mr. Speaker, in talking about partnership and working co-operatively—and management, when we talked with the Support Services to Seniors, some of the programs that were in existence, they seemed to be unaware of the changes and the shifts in this home care policy. Again, they are wondering what is the impact going to be on their service in the north end. Will people in Fort Rouge and St. James and East Kildonan and Transcona be able to access those nonprofit support services in the north part of Winnipeg?

Mr. Speaker, in summary, I want to basically state that we are aware that there is a Support Services to Seniors Program. We are aware that in the north part of the city people were not brought onto home care because they were referred to that nonprofit cleaning service. We are aware that the intent of the government has been to increase the number of support services in the community. If we have those services and resources available, then people do not necessarily need to be on the Home Care Program.

\* (1450)

The difficulty with what the government has done in this case is that they have not ensured that the resources and the nonprofit services are already in place in most of the communities. That is where the policy with this government has failed, Mr. Speaker. I am concerned not only because of this policy shift but because of the fact we have been unable to get from this Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) any indication of what analysis has been done about this impact and what the potential will be. Also, I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, about the political doublespeak that this minister does sometimes in Estimates but more so in Question

Period, when in fact we ask him about the impact of this reduction in services he does not have an answer. When we ask him about the home support workers and in fact would staff be losing their jobs, when we asked that in Estimates, he said no. Then we find out that staff had received letters later on to say that in fact their hours might be reduced.

We recognize the fact, Mr. Speaker, that he is saying that the \$3 million is going to be moving in to provide care and service in the more intense cases. Yes, it is important that we provide that complicated and complex care, but the question remains, what about the low-end service? What about the homemaking services? If in fact there are no nonprofit services available, will those elderly, will those individuals be able to remain in their own homes or will they end up on the doorsteps of the emergency wards or end up in personal care homes?

I would like to conclude, Mr. Speaker, by indicating that I hope that the minister would reconsider his program and his shift in the policy or, if not, he would at least indicate to this House, allow individuals in the opposition to feel more comfortable with the policy shift if he could table some analysis, give us some information to indicate that in fact people will not fall through the cracks and that there will not be a negative impact on the shift in this policy direction. That is what we would ask on behalf of Manitobans, on behalf of individuals who have used the Home Care Program in the past, on behalf of families who have elderly and people who are younger disabled who utilize the Home Care Program.

We would ask the minister to do that and to not spend his time talking in the House about political doublespeak and about all these wonderful programs and services, but if he could really get to the heart of the issue and really deal with the policy shift and talk about the impacts. I would ask that the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) do that, Mr. Speaker.

**An Honourable Member:** You are dishonest, Avis, and you are smiling about it.

**Ms. Gray:** The Minister of Health is sitting from his seat saying that I am dishonest. There is not one thing that I have said in the last 20 to 25 minutes that is dishonest. I also know that the Minister of Health knows that, he recognizes that.

So I would ask that the Minister of Health reconsider his policy, look at the impact of eliminating these homemaking services without having the resources and the other services and programs in place in the community. I would ask that the minister do that. I would ask that his colleagues in government who are listening to this and who are probably getting very many calls from individuals in their community also talk to the Minister of Health, ask him about his policy, ask him about the reasons behind the shift in the policy direction and perhaps we could get a change in this policy and ensure that the Home Care Program in Manitoba continues to remain one of the best in North America. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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**Mr. Speaker:** On the question of the honourable government House leader, that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty. Agreed?

**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 Northern Affairs, and the Civil Service Commission; and the honourable member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) in the Chair for the Department of Housing.

\* (1500)

### COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

#### NORTHERN AFFAIRS

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau):** When this section of the Committee of Supply last met on Monday evening, June 28, 1993, this committee agreed to pass all line items relating to the Department of Northern Affairs with the exception of the Minister's Salary. The committee agreed to ask questions of the departmental matters under this item, and allow the minister's staff to be present at the table during this discussion.

The committee will now come to order. This afternoon this section of the Committee of Supply, meeting in Room 255, will resume consideration of the Estimates of Northern Affairs. When the

committee last sat, it had been considering 1.(a) on page 126 of the Estimates book.

**Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs):** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, at the beginning of the Estimates today, I want, first of all, to acknowledge the work of the Northern Affairs and Native Affairs staff and all individuals within the department over the last few days who have been working in northern Manitoba as it relates to the forest fire activities in Lynn Lake, and as well the difficulties that have been encountered with the amounts of rainfall and the emergency measures activities that have been put in place over the last few hours—to acknowledge the work which they are doing on behalf of the people of Manitoba. They go above and beyond the call of duty in situations like this, and I want to recognize them for that.

I want to as well say that, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the reason that I have my deputy minister here and no other staff is that most senior staff are, in fact, involved in our northern communities assisting with the communities in their time of difficulties with the amounts of rainfall they are getting, and so that is why I am here today with just my deputy minister and other staff are not available. So I would appreciate the members of the opposition understanding the situation. I am sure that they do, being the very honourable members that they are, and that is all I have to say at this time.

**Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas):** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, at the outset, I want to say I do not quite understand the remarks he made right at the beginning. However, I will ask some clarification afterwards.

Secondly, I want to thank the committee and the minister for having decided to put off the Department of Northern Affairs so that I could be here. I think the minister understands well enough why I was not able to be here last Tuesday. I was involved with some constituency work in The Pas, and the reason I could not come down Monday night was that I was bound and determined this year to make it to the MBCI grad up in The Pas, because last year we were caught up in the same kind of scheduling problems. Because I had missed it last year, I did not want to miss it this year, so it was for that reason that I told our people that I was not going to make it. Whether the Estimates

process was going to go ahead or not, I was not going to make it.

Thirdly, I guess, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would also like to go on record as acknowledging the work of government officials and staff for the work that is currently being carried out as a result of the forest fires that have been going on up north and now as a result of having received too much rain. You know, two weeks ago we were all praying for a lot of moisture and cool weather. I did not do the rain dance. I could do a sun dance—no, I am just being silly there.

Yes, two weeks ago, we were hoping that there would be a lot of moisture in the northern area because of the situation of the fires and so for that reason I also would like to acknowledge the hard work of the officials and staff in trying to remedy the situation and put operations back to order and so on.

I was telling our people this afternoon, I went to my mailbox and I am not getting any phone messages, and so I tried phoning The Pas and I cannot get through. The operator says their lines are tied up, so obviously the problems are still there and hopefully they will be rectified as soon as possible.

I would like to have some clarification, however, on the agreement that was reached last week as to how the Estimates are going to be carried out as far as Northern Affairs is concerned.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** What we have agreed to do as of last week, the committee decided we would pass all the lines within the Department of Northern Affairs, except for the Minister's Salary. We would allow you to ask any questions throughout the department on any line at that level and the minister's staff would be present during the questioning during the Minister's Salary. That was basically the one option that was given to us. Does that clarify it for the member?

**Mr. Lathlin:** Am I to understand that I can ask questions of the minister on anything?

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** Anything within the department.

**Mr. Lathlin:** Okay. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Nell Gaudry (St. Boniface):** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would also like to acknowledge the fact that I was not here last week to be part of the—I was not golfing, not down where I was.

The minister might note that this time I have not asked for his resignation, so we might pass his salary. No, I would like to acknowledge his opening remarks in regard to what is happening in the North right now, and I think we all have concerns here, all members of the Legislature and acknowledge what the staff is doing. I feel very comfortable at any time when I write the minister and he has responded to my letters. I feel that the staff have done the work there, and as I say, it is—I cannot say anything nasty about the minister because I praised him when I first started.

\* (1510)

We will keep the comments short because the fact that we are down to 30 hours in the Estimates, and there are quite a few other departments that we would like to go through. We will question the minister today in regard to concerns that we have. With these, I would like to conclude and say thank you to the staff and to the minister for his co-operation in the last session. Thank you.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** I thank the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) for those opening remarks. Does the honourable member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) have any questions?

**Mr. Lathlin:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would like to start off by asking the minister to perhaps give us an update as to where the Northern Economic Development Commission is at. I know there have been benchmark reports that have been done and distributed and so forth. I am now interested in finding out from the minister as to exactly where we are at in terms of the commission, its progress, and what we might be expecting in the immediate future.

I remember in probably two Estimates processes ago that I made the remark that this commission was taking far too long in getting off the ground. I also made the remark at that time about the 18 months, I believe, 18 months to 24 months, the time frame that was given to the commission. First of all, the timing was off, in my estimation, because it was going to take approximately 18 months; I forget how many months now that the commission has been doing its work, but I know it is less than 18 months. Then the report would be finished, and then at that time I said that by then we would probably be heading into another election and what would happen after the election and so forth.

Really my question at that time was the timing of the launching of the actual work of the commission, and so that is why today I am quite interested in knowing exactly where the commission is at, also knowing that I did receive two reports from the minister. As I said, one is a benchmark, sort of a report, a snapshot picture of what was there in northern Manitoba at the time, and then the other report that came out not all that long ago.

**Mr. Downey:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, if I do not cover quite enough area, then I want the member to tell me. He may find in some of the Hansard of last week, I covered a little bit of the Northern Affairs with the Native Affairs portion of it, so there may be further explanation in that part, but I will try to deal with it as precisely as possible because I do have the Energy and Mines Estimates coming up following these in the House after we are finished. So I will try and cover the points as briefly as possible, but yet get the adequate information on the record.

The commission has completed its work. It has reported to me with its final report, and it is now being assessed by the government and the government departments, and I would expect that a public communication of the document will take place later on this summer. As far as the timing is concerned, we estimated at the outset it would take approximately 18 months. I believe that is in fact what has happened. We look forward to publicly discussing the recommendations and actions that may be taken as it flows from the Northern Affairs report.

Let me say as well that I think that there never has been in the history of Manitoba such an extensive grassroots input as there has been on the Northern Economic Development Commission report. It has been total community involvement, and I am extremely pleased with the community input that has been part of the development of this document.

**Mr. Lathlin:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would like to ask the minister then if the final report has been finished and it is now within the department being assessed by officials and staff and so on—and I realize that the minister is committing himself to publicize the report later on this summer. Perhaps he could though share some of the more major recommendations that would be contained in the report. I know the last report that came out, not that I was surprised, but I recognize that there were

certain themes already emerging from the last report, and even from the first report, even though the first report was merely a snapshot picture of what was there. I myself, having lived in The Pas all my life, started to recognize that there were certain themes or certain ideas, major items, that were not coming out, and I am just wondering if the minister would be willing to elaborate on some of those emerging themes that I recognize as coming from the report, the two reports.

**Mr. Downey:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, let me be brief. I do not think there will be any surprises for the member. He is pretty much aware of a lot of the ambitions and the desires of the grassroots people of the North. I have not at this point had an in-detail review of it yet. It has just been a first glance. I think it is about a week ago that I received the document, and it is my intention to fully disclose and to discuss it publicly later on this summer. I would ask for the patience of the member now that we are almost one week into July. It will be upon us before we know it, and at that time he will have a full package of information as it relates to the report.

**Mr. Lathlin:** I ask the minister then, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, whether such items as northern heritage fund, northern post-secondary education centre, more enhanced women's programs, particularly as they relate to aboriginal women, are included in the report. Could he recollect seeing those kinds of items as standing out in the report, for example?

**Mr. Downey:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I think the member is trying to draw me out as to what is in the report. Although I am anxious to get the information out, I think it should be done as we had initially planned, and that the time in which we make the information public, the commissioners will be, as well, available to make comment as it relates to their report. After all, it is not a government report; it is a commission report that was commissioned by this government. I think it would be more appropriate to have the commissioners available to speak to it at that time.

I think the member will find it most interesting, the recommendations that come forward, and hope to be able to entice him to support the activities of northern Manitoba.

**Mr. Lathlin:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I recollect exactly those words of the Minister of Justice (Mr.

McCrae) when he was responding to my queries in the House in regard to AJI. I believe his words were: The member of the Pas will be pleasantly surprised when he gets to read the report of the AJI.

Yes, I was pleasantly surprised, I might say, except that I was not prepared for the subsequent lack of action on the part of government in terms of implementing the very important recommendations that were put forth by the two commissioners, Justice Hamilton and Judge Sinclair.

Now the minister is saying the same thing to me: The member will be surprised and interested in what the report will have to say. You know, which is why I have been asking the minister throughout the term of the commission's work, interested in finding out what sorts of major items were emerging from the work of the commissioners so that we could start discussing, perhaps, some of the more important ones, the bigger ones, the major items as I refer to them.

However, I still would like to get a feeling from the minister as to, are there three or four main items? He knows full well, for when he used to visit my community when I was a chief there, we used to talk about items such as a northern university setting. I remember him attending an MKO conference at one time in Thompson, and the northern university setting was one of the items being discussed by our assembly at the time.

\* (1520)

I also remember every now and then talking to ministers in regard to a northern university setting. I remember talking to government ministers about hydro projects, about treaty land entitlement. I also remember talking to ministers about justice issues, particularly the Minister of Northern Affairs whenever he would visit The Pas, also whenever I would run into him at meetings where I was at in my capacity as chief at the time.

Perhaps, then, would he like to elaborate just a little bit more as to any major initiatives that we might expect as a result of the commission's work?

**Mr. Downey:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I know my colleague is a very patient man, and I want to, as well, acknowledge the days that he was chief of The Pas Band, and we had what I consider a very positive working relationship. In fact, there were certain areas where I thought we were pretty much philosophically on the same track.

Talking about surprises—and I do not think I used the word surprised in my earlier comments. I thought he said he would be pleased, interested and pleased, but talk about surprised, I was the one that was shocked and surprised when the member decided to run for the New Democratic Party for the Manitoba Legislature. That is when the real shock and surprise came about.

I say that in a nonvicious way because I know that in this country, everybody has the choice to attach themselves philosophically to the party they feel is the most advantageous to them and to their thoughts, but I say genuinely, the member is a patient man. He did do a good job as chief of his community. We did have some excellent discussions.

I look forward to having those excellent discussions in the future, sometime this summer—which, by the way, summer is going on very quickly—that we will be releasing that report which we will be able to fully discuss both privately and publicly, and he will be able to make his comments at that time.

But until that time, I think it is in fairness to the commissioners who were part of it, whose agendas are now set, as well as mine, to have our department go over and discuss with different departments that are going to be impacted what we are doing and what we may be able to do as it relates to the report, and that will take place later this summer.

**Mr. Gaudry:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, my question is in regard to Pelican Harbour resort in Manigotagan. I wrote to the minister some time ago and you did reply. I was wondering what has developed since then.

**Mr. Downey:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am advised that it is in process. There is an ongoing process that is dealing with that matter. It has not been completed at this particular time, but it is still being dealt with.

**Mr. Gaudry:** Can we be updated, not necessarily today here, but can we get an update, both critics, in regard to this situation at Pelican Harbour?

**Mr. Downey:** Yes, I am advised that my deputy is prepared to give an update to them.

**Mr. Gaudry:** Another concern that they had was a new sewage treatment plant in Manigotagan which the community was opposing.



**Mr. Downey:** It is my understanding that that issue has been resolved, and I will, as well, get an update for the member so that he is fully informed on that matter.

**Mr. Gaudry:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I do not know if there have been any questions—if there have been, I will look through Hansard at that point—in regard to the Northern Flood Agreement. Have there been any questions asked last week? If not, can we have an update of what is happening?

**Mr. Downey:** Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I dealt, to some degree, with the Northern Flood in my opening comments which are in Hansard and which I can make available to the second opposition party, but I do not mind putting it on the record.

I think there has been progress. What I am encouraged by is that we have resolved, to a large extent, the Split Lake portion of the agreement, that we have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Nelson House. We have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with York Landing, and it is my hope that we are able to do the same thing with both Cross Lake and Norway House.

It takes time. The communities have to feel comfortable that they are accomplishing what losses they have incurred and that they are, in fact, comfortable that, in resolving through a comprehensive way, the people who will follow them are going to be treated fairly as to the terms and conditions of the agreement which was signed. I can appreciate the time that it has taken.

I guess I continue to negotiate with the hope that some day we will be able to have all of the outstanding agreements resolved. As well, I want to acknowledge—and I think the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) would want me to do this—that this government was the first government to acknowledge that there was, if not a legal obligation, a moral obligation to pay compensation to the communities of Chemawawin, Cormorant, Moose Lake, Easterville, I believe The Pas even was part of it, and Grand Rapids. The Premier (Mr. Filmon) of this province directed that Hydro should, in fact, look at not only the legal side of it, but the moral side.

I am pretty proud to be a member of a government and a cabinet that were able to resolve what could not be resolved by the former

administrations of this province. I would hope the member—and I know he is an honourable, upstanding citizen in his community—that he will, when he is in those communities, remind the citizens that it was Premier Gary Filmon and this government that are currently here, that heard those communities when they came forward asking for some form of compensation as it related to the past activities of Manitoba Hydro. I know that he will do that when he is travelling throughout those communities, and I would thank him in advance for that.

**Mr. Gaudry:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, now my other question is in regard to the Camperville community where they had discussed incorporation. The minister did reply to my letter. I was wondering, what is the status on this issue at the present time?

**Mr. Downey:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, again, let me express how concerned we are about the difficulties, in the short term, of people living in Camperville and through the Pine Creek area and all those communities that are devastated with excess rain water and the flooding conditions. Not only are the staff working hard, but it is our objective to make sure that we do not have loss of life or limb, that we do what we can to facilitate them during these devastating times and hope that we can do what is necessary to make sure that their lives are as least disrupted as possible during this tough time.

\* (1530)

I am really encouraged when I talk to people from Camperville and that area. I see it as a community that has some pretty good potential opportunity in an economic way. They are determined to get some business activities going. They certainly have tourism opportunities. They have small business development opportunities, and I think they are properly located for it to be a growth community within that region.

As it relates specifically to the incorporation, they are extremely interested in incorporating and becoming more of an entity to themselves as far as decision making is concerned. We are supportive of it from a government level, and we will continue to meet with them and help them through the process, so that hopefully they can accomplish their goals of being self-administrative through incorporation and receive that kind of status.

**Mr. Gaudry:** Yes, I appreciate the minister saying that he is supportive of their initiative, but in the letter from the minister he mentions that Camperville was experiencing difficulty in two main areas of planning for incorporation: balanced budgets for operating and capital expenditures; secondly, monitoring and auditing reports that meet auditing standards.

What has the department done to help the Camperville town in regard to these two issues?

**Mr. Downey:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we have staff of the Department of Northern Affairs working closely with the community of Camperville to try to resolve those outstanding issues.

**Mr. Gaudry:** I know you mentioned also before that you were supportive. But what are you doing in regard to giving support and in regard to these two issues that I have just mentioned?

**Mr. Downey:** It is a matter of trying to upgrade the staff and work with the administrators of the community to make sure that they have the allocation of adequate funds to do the job that they have to do.

The other thing is, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, is to give some assurance that if, on incorporation, that they would not automatically lose some of the traditional supports that they receive from the province. So it is a matter of time. Let us remember that it was about 22 years ago now that The Northern Affairs Act was brought forward.

If I understand, talking to some of the pioneers in the activities that took place, it was the intention of government and the communities of that time that before long they would become incorporated, self-sufficient and self-directed through an incorporated style of community.

So that has been a long time getting there, but I think we will see progress in the near future. Again, the specifics that the member is talking to, we are working with staff to try and resolve them, and I do not see any reason, if one works hard enough, why they cannot be resolved.

**Mr. Gaudry:** You mentioned that you want to see that they have adequate funds to do their incorporation. Has the government given them any funds in regard to helping them out in incorporation?

**Mr. Downey:** We have allocated staff time; as far as additional funds, no. What we have said,

though—and that has been the concern from Day One when people talked about incorporating—would they lose the kind of government support programs they currently are enjoying? We have said to them at the initial stages that they would not, that we would work with them to provide some support in the initial stages as they had been getting under The Northern Affairs Act, that they would not be left on their own without traditional support. There is a matter of making sure all the legal work is done, and I can tell you that there is a matter of insurance and some costs. Let us face it, I think that we are going to have to give a little in certain areas when it comes to getting these communities on their own. Again, I think it is a matter of people talking about self-determination and forms of self-government. This is a form of self-government that I am trying to encourage.

**Mr. Lathlin:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the other thing that I wanted to ask questions of the minister is in the area of—recently, there has been staffing action that has taken place at the ADM level, particularly as it relates to the position of Ms. Kustra—I believe her name is Brenda Kustra—the position that she formerly occupied. I want to see if I can get some information from the minister as to how the staffing activities at that level are carried out by his department.

**Mr. Downey:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the member may not be aware, but at the ADM and the deputy minister's level, the hiring is taken place by Order-in-Council. That is the approval mechanism. What we have done is to fill that position that Brenda had, and Brenda has moved on to the director-general with the federal government of the department of northern and native affairs.

Let me say at the outset that the individual that was chosen in the person of Loretta Clarke is no stranger to northern Manitoba. She is very qualified. She is a lifetime resident of northern Manitoba. She has worked very successfully as the general manager of Communities Economic Development Fund. So it is not a new revelation that she is working for another department of government. She has been put in place in an acting position for this particular time, in charge of Northern Development and Co-ordination Division of the Department of Northern Affairs.

It is not, as some in his party would portray it, a political hiring. That is not the case at all. She has never been elected to the Manitoba Legislature, as

I referred to some of his colleagues when they made an approach, or making accusations, as to the fact that it was political, and that it did not have concurrence of the civil service. I just want to remind him that the party which he now sits with hired two well-knowns, not people who were not involved in politics: one Terry Sargeant, who is a former NDP member of the House of Commons, that was hired within the department without competition; as well, Phil Eyer, who was the NDP member of the Legislature for one of the city ridings, an NDP member of the government that was defeated, again hired within the civil service without competition.

So I do not need to get into a political debate, but anytime the member wants to or his party wants to I am quite prepared to do so. But the individual is hired based on competence, based on experience; quite frankly, I am quite pleased to see her in that position. I would anticipate—and I say this at the outset, I wanted an individual like Loretta Clarke in an ADM position when the Northern Economic Commission report is tabled—that the recommendations that are there will be able to be assessed by her and the department.

I think that with her background, both sitting as a manager of the Communities Economic Development Fund, having been involved in many organizations, the Norman Regional Development corporation, and having a good understanding of the North, she will do a very good job. On the salary side, she is at the same classification as Brenda Kustra was, and I think the salary range is from \$70,000 to \$80,000. I think she is in the \$75,000 range, exactly the same place as where Brenda Kustra would have been.

**Mr. Lathlin:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister is right. I particularly do not like going into this type of questioning during Estimates, because it gets very partisan, it gets very political, and I think my role here as a Northern Affairs critic is to ask questions of the minister. At the outset of this meeting, I was advised, and I was very grateful for being given the opportunity, to stay with the line that deals with the Minister's Salary and therefore giving me quite an open line of questioning. For that, I am appreciative, but I find it sometimes difficult to sit here asking questions, and the minister starts off by saying: The member is honourable; he is a fine member of his community; the member is very patient and all of those things; I

do not want to get political. Then he goes on to do exactly that.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that is frustrating for me, and here I am as the critic that is supposed to be here on behalf of our party trying to do my job, asking a question as to the type of staffing activity that is carried out at the ADM level. That is all I wanted to know. I did not want the minister to go on and on and say the party that he represents, this is what they used to do. I am not interested in that. I am interested in what is happening today, sir. That is all I am interested in.

\* (1540)

Now, let me be like the minister then. Let me make it perfectly clear to the minister that, although I do not have any quarrels as to the qualifications of one Loretta Clarke from Thompson, who, I understand, has taken the position of Assistant Deputy Minister of Northern Affairs working out of Thompson, I think.

What I find difficult, and that is the reason that I ask the question, is that, although she was not elected to a position in the Legislature, she was, however, a defeated candidate in the last election. She ran for the Conservatives in the last election and, unfortunately for the minister, could not unseat our member for Thompson. That is the reason why I am asking the question. How is that staffing activity carried out at that level?

The Department of Northern Affairs is responsible for carrying out government activities in an area of Manitoba that is quite vast an area. Also, the area that the Department of Northern Affairs works in has a population that is primarily aboriginal people.

The other question that I was going to ask was: Did you have any potential candidates that were of aboriginal descent that could have maybe filled the position just as ably as one Ms. Clarke, or was the recruitment process based strictly on—I know he says, I want somebody that is going to implement the recommendations of the Economic Development Commission, but you know when you look at the whole thing, you cannot help but wonder on what basis the appointment was made.

I ask the minister, did you consider hiring or looking at the potential of any aboriginal people in the North to serve in that capacity? If so, what was the difference in the qualifications? I know we have a lot of aboriginal people from the North who

are just as capable, that could have served in that department that services primarily aboriginal communities.

**Mr. Downey:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the honourable member, I know, does not want to get into this kind of debate and discussion. I will accommodate him, and we will move on to another portion of it after I answer this, if he would so desire.

First of all, let me indicate to him that it is an Order-in-Council employment activity. I have indicated that there will be an open competition for the job. She is in place in an acting position. The member is well aware that she has been working for the Communities Economic Development Fund and has done an excellent job in that capacity and has worked very well with the native community and northern community.

I want to, as well, remind the member that the qualifications were the first thing that we were looking at and will look for.

As it relates to native employment within the Department of Northern and Native Affairs, some 30 percent of our workforce is of aboriginal background—30 percent in the department. In fact, in Native Affairs, it is higher than that, but of the total Department of Northern and Native Affairs, we have a workforce of approximately 30 percent aboriginal background. That is on the record from the other night as well.

We also have 56 percent of our workforce as female. Of course, hiring Loretta in that position certainly helps to give more senior management positions to females in our workforce, which, I think, is extremely important, and indicates that we consider the qualifications and the individuals like that for those jobs.

Again, I do appreciate the member coming forward and asking questions in this area. If it were not for a little political debate back and forth, then the public may question what side either of us is on. I think it is helpful to keep that line of distinction drawn between us. So I thank the member for his questions.

**Mr. Lathlin:** There are just a few other questions that I was going to ask, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, but one—

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

**Mr. Downey:** I do not want to mislead the committee, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. I did make a

mistake. It is 29 percent aboriginal, not 30. It was 29 percent, and I apologize to the committee. My trusty staff here brought forward the actual number.

**Mr. Lathlin:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, as I said earlier, there are just only a few questions I wanted to ask on the other sections, but I would like to ask the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) a general question, one that I have been pondering. It is not a political question. It is a question that I have been pondering for quite a while now as I try to understand how the government system works.

As the minister knows, every once in a while, in response to my questions in the House, he will start off by saying that perhaps the member does not understand, and it is probably true. I admit that I do not understand a whole lot of other things. Maybe he does; I do not. There are certain systems in government that I do not have complete understanding of, and I am not ashamed to admit that.

But, with the Ministry of Northern Affairs, I have always looked at that ministry as being one of the key ministries. Although it is a small ministry, I have always looked at it as being a key ministry because it has to do with northern Manitoba.

A lot of times I am wondering, in caucus or in cabinet meetings, just exactly what role the minister plays in terms of what I would say, as the minister is speaking on behalf of his department, and really, essentially, speaking on behalf of northern Manitoba. I think of areas like the roads, and I have asked questions in the House and have written letters to the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger). I have asked questions of the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and so on, Education, concerns that affect my constituency.

I guess this is as good a time as any to ask the minister exactly what role he plays in cabinet in terms of fulfilling his duties as the Minister responsible for Northern Affairs. Maybe this is where I am naive; I do not have that experience that he has and most government members. But, when I think of a Minister of Northern Affairs, I sort of parallel this with when I was a chief. I was chief of my band, but I was also chairperson of the Swampy Creek Tribal Council, so whenever I was at national meetings, of course, my first commitment was to my home reserve, but I also had the responsibility

of speaking on behalf of our tribal council, and then on top of that I had the responsibility of speaking for MKO.

If I was the only Manitoba chief attending a national meeting, I had the responsibility, along with the provincial chief, speaking on behalf of Manitoba chiefs. I sometimes wonder if that is going too far in my trying to figure out, understand the minister's role as the Minister of Northern Affairs. When it comes to program cuts, services, does he not say, hey, that will affect my department and I will not have that?

\* (1550)

**An Honourable Member:** Does he stand for the people?

**Mr. Lathlin:** Yes, in other words, is that his role?

**Mr. Downey:** A fair question, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, and let me at the outset say to my honourable friend and representative from northern Manitoba that answering the question, which I do, is in no way trying to diminish or demean the member or might reference to the fact that he should know. I think he is legitimately asking this question as to how the process works. I may, by example, try to point out to him some of the things that I think are important for people in northern Manitoba.

I say genuinely I have certain direct responsibilities: No. 1 is the administration of The Northern Affairs Act; secondly, the administration of the Northern Flood Agreement and those agreements that were signed many years ago but never accomplished.

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

Within the department we also have an administrative section that works closely with the communities and in other areas as it relates to emergency measures as we are in today, and also within the Native Affairs Secretariat in dealing with some of the issues that relate to the aboriginal community in a broader sense of the words, like the AJI working with the Attorney General's office. Whether it is education, the member is familiar with the work that we did in supporting the northern nurses program in The Pas.

Those are the kinds of things we do, and yes, I say genuinely we do try to have input on other areas that will affect our northern citizens, again

taking in balance the capability that government has or has not got. I say genuinely, I am very supportive of those areas in the North that we have the capability of supporting; and, whether it is through Hydro or whether it is through other departments, I want to be involved.

To give an example, the Ministry of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, in co-operation with the Department of Northern Affairs, saw the need when we were elected to move with the young people to develop a program in the area of recreation directors. We then went forward with money and co-operated with that department to put a pilot project in place. We have had a very successful program which has now led from a pilot project to a permanent program of government where the young people are going to be working with communities to assist them in areas of recreation, to try to keep them from using their time and their lifestyles in nonproductive ways. Recreation, I believe, is a motivating activity. Organized sports, organized activities will enhance and character build, rather than some of the other activities that are less than desirable.

Just using that as an example, I think it paid off, and I am getting nothing but excellent reports. There was a University of Manitoba study recently done that has fully endorsed the program; the RCMP, the many organizations that structured it say, this is it.

In cabinet it is my job to speak on behalf of our northern communities and try to represent them to my best ability, and also advance things like the Northern Flood Agreements, like the Treaty Land Entitlement, like the young recreation program. As well, we have put \$50,000 forward this year for the northern camp program that will impact some 500 young people in giving them opportunities this summer to help them build a better way of life. So I see it as all encompassing.

Of course, the member knows that I do not have any responsibilities directly on reserves, but certainly have the responsibility to work with those communities to enhance the opportunities. Again, let us say I would like to continue to endeavour to support, and he can use Repap, he can use Moose Lake. We have now proceeded to have the Moose Lake community take over the Moose Lake Loggers program, which, I think, will more reflect the community's desires and employment opportunities.

The member keeps raising it, and I do not disagree with him: one of our major objectives has to be employment creation in our northern communities. We need to develop the private sector and government programs that will employ people, and that would be a major objective. We do not pretend that we have not been totally successful, but I think as we look back at the history, who has been? We can talk about building of Conawapa, and that was a major project. He is certainly aware of the work that was done with Limestone.

Again, one of the biggest criticisms that I had come forward about the development and building of Limestone was the fact they did not use northern Manitobans, that there was construction people brought in from B.C. and all other parts of Canada, denying the northern people. It was not this government that built Limestone. It was the former administration. Again, the objective has to be to create meaningful employment opportunities.

That is why I have been so strong, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, about succeeding to resolve the long outstanding Northern Flood Agreement issues so that communities like Split Lake can get a pool of resources, can get a resource base on which to make decisions with and can help their people. The answers in economic development do not only come from government. They come from the people who are living in the communities and working with government, and working with Hydro, and working with the mining sector, working with tourism industry, working with all the private initiative that is out there to create employment.

I say very genuinely, I look forward to input from the member who sits across the table in not only a critical way, and I genuinely mean that. I think he has been positive in a lot of his approach. Now he sometimes has a pretty strong attack on some of my colleagues, but I think they genuinely are trying to advance the government policies in the interest of the northern Manitobans as well, and we will continue to do so.

I thank the member for that question.

**Mr. Lathlin:** I was asking that question in trying to—for example, in the area of health, education, and family services, those are the areas where I feel that the minister should have a much more in-depth understanding of the way the North is, because he has been there.

At least for elections times, he is there; he is there quite a bit. I know when I was a chief there, I was getting tired of him actually, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson. Hell, he would show up every Thursday, and I am wondering what kind of gift to give him next. So finally one day I told him, after this you do not come back.

Anyway, when I think about health services, education and family services, for example, the user fee. I know that when I live in the city of Winnipeg, when I am here doing my work as a member of the Legislative Assembly, if I want to go and see a doctor, I might drive there. It will take me five, 10 minutes. If I do not have a vehicle, I will jump on a bus—I think it will cost me a dollar and a quarter, or something like that—and I am there. If I am not able to see that physician or that service, if I am not able to access that particular service, I have how many other places that I can go to?

\* (1600)

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

Okay, and if I keep transferring from one bus to another, or keep taking buses all day to finally access whatever service I am looking for, it still does not cost me anything other than maybe lunch money or bus fares. But, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, when you are living in Cormorant or Moose Lake or Cross Lake, Norway House, for example, or Easterville, Grand Rapids, even in Wanless, when you have to see—there are a whole host of programs and services that are not operating in those communities, not like Winnipeg or even in The Pas.

So what do those people do whenever they want to access a particular service? They have to get out, and in order to get out, it costs money. It is not like jumping on a bus in St. Norbert or even in Transcona and being in the heart of the city within 30 minutes, and being able to access those services. It does not work like that, and that is where sometimes I am hopeful that the minister will talk on behalf of the North in that light, when it comes to the budget process and so on, because I would think that he would be the one to understand it because he works with the northern communities as a Minister of Northern Affairs.

So that is why I asked that question. He can talk about Northern Flood and so on, I mean those things are contracts that were to have come to those people legitimately anyway, okay? They are

not programs and services that are applicable to any other citizens of Manitoba, but those people only.

Now, when we start looking at health services, education services, family services, those are services that are available to every citizen of Manitoba just by the mere fact that they are citizens of Manitoba, not by way of special agreements like the Northern Flood or things like that. They are available to you and to me, sir. They are also supposed to be available to the person living in Moose Lake, Cormorant or Easterville or the one living in Transcona or St. Norbert, but what generally happens is, when these program cuts are being made, it puts those people way, way behind the starting line, as I see it.

That is where sometimes I think the minister, in trying to understand his role as a Northern Affairs minister, would be quite vocal when it comes to talking about northern programs and services, northern people and so on. That is why I asked that question—for no other reason.

Now I would like to go through some other programs, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. Maybe my first one is—again, just out of not understanding, there is a line here under Northern Affairs Fund where it says: "To administer the property taxation system within Northern Affairs jurisdiction. To administer the Northern Affairs Fund which holds money in trust for Northern Affairs communities according to The Northern Affairs Act."

I guess my question there would be to ask the minister to maybe again explain just exactly what this Northern Affairs Fund is, what it is supposed to do and so on, because it has three person years expending \$115,000. It has some overhead expenses, and the total expenditure is \$129,000. So just exactly what is that fund? Does it ever get out of the trust account, or where does it go? How is it administered? What is it used for?

**Mr. Downey:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would just like to conclude my answer on the additional input and involvement, just so the record is clear.

The member makes reference to a user pay. I am sure he is using the example of the \$50 maximum charge that is charged to northern residents if in fact they elect to go to services that are not available to them; not if the doctor says you should go to Winnipeg, or you should go for those services, I believe it is all paid, but it is a matter of

elective, they elect to go on their own for those services.

By the way, the member does not need to feel that other people are not impacted the same way. Whether you are coming from Melita, Manitoba, or Deloraine or Oak Lake, you have to come for the services as well and pay your way. People at Swan River do not get any transportation. So it is not any different.

The other thing is, if the doctor says you shall go and see a doctor and get treatment, it is all paid. So this is just on the elective portion of it that there was a \$50 charge put in place, maximum of \$50, not any more than \$50 but a maximum of \$50. If you have to go, it is totally paid for, is my understanding of it.

And yes, I raised concerns, but at the end of the day when I am asked the question all the time as to where are we going to continue to get the funds to make sure the services are there, the hospital beds are there—in fact, we have put a dialysis machine in Thompson to try to help some of our northern people. They do not have to travel so far, something that was wanting for many years and finally accomplished. That is where the money goes to, to try and help continue to provide the essential services.

Now, dealing with the fund, we have several communities that are considered—they are operated basically by the Department of Northern Affairs. There are taxes that are held in trust for those communities, the taxes which are drawn from the communities are used to support some of those activities. There are 19 trust communities that we are dealing with. It is not unlike the operation of a municipal government with monies being held in trust.

**Mr. Lathlin:** Why would those 19 communities then be—their tax funds be administered by the department?

**Mr. Downey:** Again, there are different levels of community service or community self-governance administration. It is basically, the communities can, by request, move into any category that they like. If they are bigger communities, then they can move to an incorporated position, or if they are smaller communities that do not have the ability to provide some of the administrative services, then this is the kind of situation that they find themselves in.

It has been that way for many, many years. As to the origin of it and why it is that way, I would have to get more information for the member, but it is nothing that has developed over the past year or even the past five years that I have been minister. This is the way it has been for a considerable length of time.

**Mr. Lathlin:** If the objective of the Department of Northern Affairs then is to eventually get all Northern Affairs communities to be self-supporting, autonomous units, self-government units, I am just wondering, are there any plans in the department that would see the communities eventually being self-governing, as he puts it, and how is that done?

**Mr. Downey:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, let me say, I think it would be extremely ambitious to think that some day all of the communities would be incorporated and self-governing to the maximum type of municipal level of which we see throughout the province. Again, when I became minister, The Northern Affairs Act had been in place for something like 20 years, and we had seen relatively very little movement in that direction.

\* (1610)

We are now ready to see a few of them move in that direction, and it is a staged process, that they reach a level contact and more government support in helping them administer. As they grow and develop, then they move into another stage. It is an evolutionary process. I guess we do not want to be the deterrent; we want to be the supporter of the activity.

**Mr. Lathlin:** If the minister's department is in the developmental role, education and evolution, as he puts it, eventually there would be plans, though, to have 19 communities go on like the others. Would that not make sense?

**Mr. Downey:** Yes.

**Mr. Lathlin:** So are there plans, for example, to have some of the 19 communities be self-governing, say, within the foreseeable planning documents of the department?

**Mr. Downey:** Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, as the communities advance, develop and are ready to move, we want to be there to help them do so.

**Mr. Lathlin:** Who decides when these communities are advanced?

**Mr. Downey:** Communities do.

**Mr. Lathlin:** And what criteria does the minister use to deem a community as having advanced?

**Mr. Downey:** The community makes that decision. If they feel comfortable and want to move to another stage, then they are quite free to do so.

**Mr. Lathlin:** Would not the community have to convince you, though?

**Mr. Downey:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, when it comes to seeing communities develop, grow, expand and become more self-sufficient, I am an easy sell. It does not take a lot of talking me into it. I am pretty supportive of the communities.

They have to be able to deal with the finances, complete audits, make sure their receivables and their whole operation is able to be managed. I can tell you, we have probably got four to five that are very aggressively, at this particular time, looking at fully incorporating their activities. I am encouraging them. If they feel that they are in a position to move to that, we want to be there to assist them.

**Mr. Lathlin:** So, given that evolutionary, developmental role the department has, what about training and education programs and stuff like that? I know in the last Estimates process I was asking the minister to explain how the staff training and development program is being carried out. It was my understanding, from the last Estimates process, that primarily all of the training is being conducted and paid for by the departmental staff themselves. Nothing is devolved to the community themselves as to what types of training they may be able to conduct for themselves. Is that still the same situation today?

**Mr. Downey:** The type of training is determined between the department and the community that wants the training.

**Mr. Lathlin:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I want to move to Northern Flood. I do not have a whole lot of questions left, but I still want to ask the minister. In '92-93 there were four SYs, and '93-94 we have two SYs. We still have quite a bit of overhead expenses, and, thirdly, there is this item called Northern Flood Program. I believe that says \$2 million on both columns.

Can I ask the minister to clarify those three areas: the four SYs to two, then the accompanying overhead, and the Northern Flood Program that says \$2 million?



**Mr. Downey:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the reason for the reduction in SYs is that one was a vacant position, and the other reason for sizing down is that we are, in fact, getting some work completed. The need to continue on with individuals was deemed of not needing that extra position. The \$2 million is to pay for some of the claims that are being settled by the province, not the total, but some of the agreements that have been reached prior to this.

**Mr. Lathlin:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, so this \$2 million would strictly be provincial, and then there would be more from Hydro.

**Mr. Downey:** The answer is yes.

**Mr. Lathlin:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, in Economic Development, it has eight SYs maintained, quite a bit of overhead, and then there is Grants/Transfer Payments.

I would like to ask the minister—I know the objective says: "To provide coordinated financial and entrepreneurial support services to local business initiatives in Northern Affairs communities." As an example, during this last fiscal year, how many entrepreneurial start-ups would there have been in the Northern Affairs communities? How many units of entrepreneurial support services might have been provided in response to my question in maintaining the eight SYs? Secondly, there is still Transportation, Communication, Other Operating expenses and so on and, thirdly, Grants/Transfer Payments. What is that?

**Mr. Downey:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the staff complement is to work with communities throughout the northern and the native community to assist them in developing of projects. I am being told by the department that there are probably over one hundred projects that are being worked on within the Department of Northern Affairs, Economic Development unit, such things as the transference of Moose Lake Loggers to the community, that type of initiative, Channel Area Loggers. Also, I know one of the projects that they worked on was working with the Birdtail Sioux Band to put forward a proposal as it relates to the PMU opportunities with the Ayerst Organics in Brandon. Contrary to his colleague the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli), who would like to see that industry stopped, there are many of the aboriginal

communities that would like to participate in that activity.

So those are the types of things that they do. As I said, I can get a more complete list of projects that have been accomplished. I know the one that is extremely successful to this point, and that has been the transference of the Moose Lake Loggers to the community. Again, those are the kinds of things. I know the department worked closely with CEDF, and there have been quite a few entrepreneurs developed in the area which the member represents, in the Wabowden area, where some people bought product through CEDF and have started their own wood chipping and hauling companies as private entrepreneurs. I think there is certainly a list of success opportunities out there. Again, they are working in co-operation with CEDF, and that is the type of business and activity they carry out.

**Mr. Lathlin:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, what about the Northern Manitoba Economic Development Commission? I know we talked about it in a general way at the start of the meeting. I know the minister has stated that the work has been finished, and the final report is now being assessed by departmental staff.

What is the expenditure about, then, under Other Expenditures, \$120,000?

**Mr. Downey:** Finalizing of the Northern Development Commission meetings, wrapping-up costs, printing and that type of thing.

\* (1620)

The other question I did not answer earlier, and that was the question that relates to grants. That was the payment to Abitibi to continue with their development of a resource road into the Channel area, what was former Channel Area Loggers area. We, in the selling of it to the community, part of the commitment was to provide funds for a resource development road, and there is another \$100,000 as it related to the transference of the Moose Lake Loggers to the community. We were there with the community, and we have some financial resources to support them.

**Mr. Lathlin:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Communities Economic Development Fund, an expenditure item there of \$1,643,000; however, the program, of course, is not there anymore. We do not have a manager or professional-technical administrative support.

**Mr. Downey:** The member—I want to help sort it out for him—is confusing the Northern Economic Development Commission. [interjection] No, what he is referring to in this, as I understand, is that the Communities Economic Development Commission is still there, and it has \$1.6 million in operating—[interjection] That is what I said.

The Communities Economic Development Fund is \$1.6. We are continuing to operate it. Any reductions that the member is referring to are in the Northern Economic Development Commission. It is no longer going to be carried on, so we do not need staff for it.

**Mr. Lathlin:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, why do we not have any staff for CEDF? How does it operate then? I know there have been changes to CEDF. For example, the fishermen do not go to CEDF anymore. They go to—no, they go to CEDF now rather than being with MACC last time around. How is this program being operated if we do not have any support services?

**Mr. Downey:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, if the member is talking on the Estimates book—and I will go to the Estimates book on page 128. If he goes to Communities Economic Development Fund, last year, 1992-93, there was \$1,858,800. That was for the employing of people and for interest costs and for the overhead operating costs of CEDF. That has dropped to \$1.6 million this year, and it is because they are operating it more efficiently.

The member refers to fishermen's loans. The Fishermen's Loan Program has expanded. There are more fisherpeople coming in for loans than there were previously when it was under MACC, so I think, all in all, it has been productive.

Again, the manager who was able to do this was Loretta Clarke, who will now be moving over to the ADM position within Northern Affairs.

**Mr. Lathlin:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the program still has support staff.

**Mr. Downey:** Yes, it is my understanding, the same as last year.

**Mr. Lathlin:** Where is it recorded then, Mr. Deputy Chairperson?

**Mr. Downey:** The reason for the confusion is that we give one lump payment to Communities Economic Development Fund. Where the detail that he is talking about as to the number of

employees and all the details would come in are in the Annual Report of the Communities Economic Development Fund, which comes before a committee of the Legislature.

Our funding is recorded not as support staff, not as a breakdown other than a general lump sum of money, which this year is \$1,643,800, which is down by over \$200,000. I think it is because it is being operated more efficiently, and the demand on government has not been there to the extent it was last year.

Again, the detail which the member is referring to, support staff and all the other information, would come from the Annual Report of the Communities Economic Development Fund.

**Mr. Lathlin:** Mr. Deputy Chair, why do we not have the CEDF presented in the same way as the others, for example, the Northern Economic Development Commission? We have a hard time following that one, but I sure as hell have a hard time following CEDF because all it says is \$1,643,800. Are we covering two staff, 20 staff, and how much of it is loan and so on?

**Mr. Downey:** Again, that detail comes in the reporting to the Legislature in our Annual Report of Communities Economic Development Fund. To help the member, I could have attached the Communities Economic Development Fund to a system, but I do apologize for the confusion. If he wants to discuss it further, I am quite prepared to do so.

**Mr. Lathlin:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I just have a couple of last questions I want to ask the minister, and that is in terms of the Treaty Land Entitlement process. Could the minister perhaps update us as to where that issue stands now? Is it active, is it standing still, or are we come to a stalemate, or what is happening in terms of Treaty Land Entitlement?

**Mr. Downey:** Yes, the discussions are going on in an active way with the department and some of the communities that have treaty land entitlement. That is my desire and hope that we are able to conclude successfully some of the outstanding Treaty Land Entitlements. As I have said to him many times, I think it is important to show and to demonstrate that we are serious about resolving some of the long outstanding issues, and we are in active discussions with some of the bands at this particular time.

**Mr. Lathlin:** I know the Treaty Land Entitlement discussions have been going for quite a while now, and I know that at one time there was some sort of an agreement at the provincial level; however, it was blocked or something happened at the federal level that the process could not continue. I would like to ask the minister, then, what seems to be the biggest issue as far as Treaty Land Entitlement today, and what is the biggest stumbling block?

**Mr. Downey:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I again have to compliment my colleague when he makes reference; I think he is understating the fact when he said the discussions have been going on for some time now. It has probably been going on for in excess of 100 years, and so I acknowledge that he is a very patient man in the way in which he presents this on behalf of the aboriginal community.

I take it seriously. Treaty Land Entitlement is to me the outstanding issue that will resolve a lot of the tensions that develop between the aboriginal and the nonaboriginal community. There is a debt owed, and it is at this time we as provincial and working with the federal government—and, by the way, what happened a few years ago was that the federal government walked away from the table when there was, in fact, close to a resolve. I hope that we are back now in a position where the federal government—and I think from recent meetings and indications from them that they are back in a meaningful way, we are there in a meaningful way, and I think the communities that we are talking to are there in a meaningful way. I hope, and I cannot negotiate here, but I can tell you it is the will of the government to try to resolve these as fairly and equitably as possible.

\* (1630)

**Mr. Gaudry:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I understand we want to go into Civil Service after this, but I have one question here in regards to the Native Affairs Secretariat where it says, to support development of policies and programs to improve socioeconomic conditions for native people.

I look at the Estimates in the Aboriginal Development Programs. It is approximately half of what it was the year before. Can the minister give us details?

**Mr. Downey:** Yes, I can, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. There was a reduction of 10 percent to the majority of the different organizations that we support and, in fact, there was a total elimination of the support

to the Assembly of Chiefs and also to several other organizations. I went through it, if he wants to read it in Hansard, but I will repeat it for the member's benefit.

It was the decision taken by government that when the grants to the organizations were to be reduced by 10 percent, these were organizations that are not able or capable of receiving funds from other areas. That is the basis.

When we looked at the Assembly of Chiefs, the Assembly is able to derive funds or solicit funds from the individual bands throughout the province. There are 61 bands in the province. If they were to maintain the funding the province gave them, it would mean that each band would have to forward approximately \$5,000 to the Assembly to support them and they may do that. It was felt they had the capability of doing that. It is in Hansard from the other evening.

We continued our support for the Indigenous Women's Collective which is the first time ever there was support for the native women of this province. The Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg received funding, less 10 percent. The Manitoba Metis Federation received funding, less 10 percent.

So that is the basis for the decisions, and I have put that on the record in our previous Estimates process.

**Mr. Gaudry:** I would like to conclude. I would like to thank the minister and his staff for the information they have provided us here. [interjection] Not necessarily, but thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Chairperson.

**Mr. Lathlin:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would also like to finish off by again thanking the minister and his staff for being patient with us. I know this did not take long, a mere hour and a half.

I asked the minister in Question Period the other day to—we were going to come and talk about all the things he has done in Northern Affairs, and I told him that it would only take five minutes, but it took an hour and a half. Again, thank you very much.

**Mr. Downey:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I want to thank the, I would say, constructive criticism. Sometimes it slipped a little bit, but basically fairly genuinely and sincerely put, the questions. With comments like that, I can tell you, the member for The Pas is going to see me in his community a lot

more often. He made reference to my trips there. In fact, he said I was there so often he did not want me to come back because he was running out of gifts to give me, but I do say genuinely though that I think it will be demonstrated that when one has such a large area of the province with sparse population and mixed-industrial communities, resource-collecting activities, that there are some opportunities.

I really believe there are some positive opportunities to work together. Yes, there will always be political differences, but I think the genuineness of the members that have come here, I would hope, and the members, when given responsibility, my colleagues, the support I have had, I appreciate it. It is my job to try to speak on behalf of northern communities.

I say, I find that the comments from the critic for the New Democratic Party and the former chief from The Pas Band, whether I was there too often or not, I still felt helpful. It has not done me any harm in working to accomplish better things for the communities in northern Manitoba. Also, the second opposition critic is very fair. I tried to respond to him with correspondence and at any time they know they are quite free to approach me or my department for information. It may not be what they want to hear but they will hear it.

**An Honourable Member:** Good staff.

**Mr. Downey:** That is right.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairperson.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** 1.(a) Minister's Salary \$10,300—pass.

Resolution 19.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,149,200 for Northern Affairs, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1994.

That concludes the Department of Northern and Native Affairs. We will recess for five minutes and then carry on with the Civil Service Commission, I believe it is.

\* (1640)

## CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau):** Order, please. 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 the Civil Service Commission.

Does the honourable minister have an opening statement?

**Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission):** Yes, Mr. Deputy Chair, I do.

In introducing the 1993-94 budget Estimates for the Civil Service Commission, I wish to draw attention to the Supplementary Estimates Information which has been provided and contains a good deal of background, organizational, program and financial information designed to assist the members with the Estimates review now before us.

For the second year, the Estimates for the Civil Service Commission are tabled in two parts: one containing information relative to the operation of the Civil Service Commission; and the second, dealing with Employment Benefits and Other Payments.

We are dealing today with the expenditures under the heading Civil Service, which represent the discretionary salary and operating expenditures related to the department of the Civil Service Commission.

Members will note a change from previous years through the inclusion in these Estimates of an appropriation for the French Language Services Secretariat. This follows from the transfer of responsibility for French Language Services from the Premier to myself, as announced on March 23 of this year.

The appropriation for French Language Services has been included within the Civil Service Commission to facilitate administration. The secretariat reports directly to myself and will continue to work closely with all central agencies, including Executive Council, as implementation proceeds.

The 1993-94 Estimates also reflect a degree of organizational realignment within the Civil Service Commission itself which results in layering of management levels and reorganization of program areas toward more efficient and cost-effective service delivery.

With the resignation and transfer of the former assistant deputy minister of Human Resources Management and his taking up a position at the

Workers Compensation Board, the commission has taken the opportunity to reorganize responsibilities within the Human Resources Management Division.

The former six program areas reporting within that division have been amalgamated into four and now report directly to the Civil Service Commissioner, Mr. Paul Hart. This organizational realignment has achieved cost saving to government, delayering of management levels and a more effective and economical utilization of remaining resources.

The 1993-94 Estimates for the Civil Service Commission again recognize the requirement to provide central co-ordination and support to deal with staffing and workforce adjustment issues resulting from the 1993-94 budget.

In January of 1993, notice was given under The Employment Standards Act for a group layoff effective April 28, 1993, with an estimated 285 employees being potentially impacted. As a result of aggressive workforce adjustment and application of the Voluntary Separation Incentive Program, the actual number of layoff notices issued on March 31, 1993, were reduced to 41 with a final result of 29 employees being issued layoff notices effective April 28, 1993.

Of these 29 employees, five were not available for work, two are working in a term capacity and two declined alternative job opportunities, leaving only 20 employees available for work with no redeployment opportunity. I am sure members of the committee would agree that given the difficult times that we are encountering that is quite an accomplishment in itself.

Notice has also been served regarding additional layoffs effective June 30 impacting approximately 117 employees in the departments of Health, Education and Natural Resources. It is expected that the number of employees actually impacted will again be significantly reduced as a result of our redeployment and workforce adjustment efforts.

Early application of the Voluntary Separation Incentive Program has again proved successful in allowing the creation of redeployment opportunities for employees who would otherwise have been impacted by budget decisions.

In addition, ongoing consultation has occurred with employee representatives through the Joint Union-Management Workforce Adjustment

Committee as required under The Employment Standards Act.

Over 400 applications were received for the VSIP program this year. Of those, 214 were accepted, including 178 retirements and 36 voluntary terminations.

In order to further reduce the need for layoffs, the reduced workweek program was introduced as a new initiative this year. On April 27, I communicated to all government employees through a letter advising them of the government's intentions regarding the 10-day office closure, which will involve seven Fridays during the summer and three days during the Christmas break.

Through consultation with the bargaining agents we are attempting to minimize the impact on employees in areas such as pay and benefits. For example, we hope to spread the impact. In fact, we are in the process of spreading the impact on pay cheques over an extended period by beginning deductions in June and continuing for 20 pay periods. This would result in a one-half day reduction per biweekly pay check.

It should be noted, however, that the impact of this reduction will be further moderated through the application of annual merit increases where applicable and the negotiated salary adjustments under the third year of the collective agreement scheduled for implementation on September 18, 1993.

Through these various initiatives, the government remains committed to achieving its expenditure targets without having to resort to significant layoffs or legislated rollbacks of salary.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, with these very brief opening remarks, I now welcome comments and questions from the committee members on the Estimates material now before us.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** We thank the minister. Does the official opposition critic, the honourable member for Thompson, have any opening comments?

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson):** Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, thank you very much. I would like to, first of all, indicate, there are a number of issues we will be raising during the upcoming period of time. In terms of the Civil Service Commission, I would like to point out that given the limited number of hours left for Estimates, there are many questions,

I am sure, that could be asked in addition to the ones I will ask, and I am sure the Liberal critic will, that I will raise. In fact, I will raise them in writing with the minister if necessary.

I just want to touch on some of the areas that we will be raising, obviously, the impact of Bill 22, which the minister just referenced. By the way, without getting into the details of the debate, I will be asking questions about the implementation of it, also whether the government will be following through on a proposed amendment this morning, which was ruled out of order but which is within the prerogative of the government to introduce itself, dealing with Bill 22, which would not have Bill 22 in any way, shape or form affect the pensions of civil servants and the public sector workers, and there will be a number of questions of that nature.

I will be asking a number of questions in terms of affirmative action, what progress or lack thereof there has been since last year when we saw, in some cases, actually a worsened situation in terms of employment of those within targeted groups.

I will be asking a number of questions about decentralization in the context of the number of employees currently in rural Manitoba and northern Manitoba. I would note that I did ask for some detailed information last year, and I am still waiting for it in terms of numbers of employees. I would like to put that on notice now, that I would be requesting that, and hopefully, that can be provided later on tonight if it is available.

\* (1650)

I will be asking some questions about civil service hiring. How many competitions have been held? How many positions have been routed in other ways? We note one particular case recently where a position that was held vacant, a senior position was held vacant since June, and then it was described in the Order-in-Council that it was impracticable to hold a competition and that a person had to be appointed to the position, who just happened to be a Tory candidate in northern Manitoba.

I will be requesting information on other competitions to determine what will happen in terms of that, because there are other nonsenior positions where a concern has been expressed about their hiring process.

I will be asking questions about the impact of the positions that have been eliminated, particularly in

terms of training and retraining and particularly in the context of the 117 people who are affected by the current round of layoffs and/or position eliminations, because I know a number of concerns have been expressed about training and retraining, and in general dealing with the future direction of the civil service in the upcoming year, pointing obviously to the very controversial nature of Bill 22 and the ongoing impact of the various positions that have been eliminated and civil service layoffs.

With those few remarks, I am sure, following the comments of the Liberal critic, we will get straight into questions.

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

Does the critic from the second opposition party, the honourable member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray), have any opening comments?

**Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood):** I would basically like to defer some comments and get right into the questions, particularly because the number of hours that we have left in the Estimates process is so few. So I am quite prepared to begin that and save some, perhaps, summary remarks for the end of the Estimates.

Thank you.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** We thank the critic for those short remarks.

Under the 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 consideration of the next line.

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

We will be dealing with line 1.(a) on page 19.

**Mr. Praznik:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I think I should just point out, you made comments with reference to the minister's salary, this particular set of Estimates does not have a line for minister's salary.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would now like to introduce my—

**An Honourable Member:** We cannot vote against your salary in this . . .

**Mr. Praznlk:** I point out to the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) that I do this job for free.

It is my pleasure to introduce the staff from the commission: Mr. Paul Hart, who is the Civil Service Commissioner; Mr. Bob Pruden, who is the director of Negotiation Services in the Labour Relations Division; Ms. Jan Sanderson, who is director of the employment services branch; Mr. Bob Pollock, who is the secretary to the Civil Service Commission Board; and Mr. Rob Armstrong, who is the director of Compensation Services.

We also have Jacqueline Blay, who is with us, who is with the French Language Services Secretariat. She is second in command in that secretariat. Our director was not able to be here today.

**Ms. Gray:** I would ask the minister a two-part question actually, because I know we will be resuming Estimates at eight o'clock. I am wondering over the last fiscal year, firstly, how many appeals have the Civil Service commissioners heard? That is my first question, if that information happens to be quickly available.

**Mr. Praznlk:** Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am advised that the Civil Service Commission Board for '92-93 has heard nine appeals.

**Ms. Gray:** I am glad it is a reasonable number. I am wondering if it would be possible for our eight o'clock sitting for the minister to have copies of the decisions of those appeals.

**Mr. Praznlk:** Yes.

**Ms. Gray:** Moving to a topic of the reduced workweek, let us start with that subject. I am wondering if the Civil Service Commission, the staff, and the minister had a role to play in regard to looking at potential impacts, positive or negative, of the workweek reduction program?

**Mr. Praznlk:** Mr. Deputy Chair, in my capacity both as Minister of Labour and as Minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission, I sit as a member of the public sector compensation committee of cabinet, which was the cabinet committee that, of course, was involved in the development of Bill 22 and the reduced workweek program. So, yes, I was very much involved with that program.

**Ms. Gray:** Did the minister have his staff prepare any type of analysis looking at the impacts of the workweek reduction?

**Mr. Praznlk:** Yes, the staff of the commission were very much involved. They provide the secretariat support to that particular committee of cabinet, particularly the Labour Relations Division of the branch represented by Mr. Pruden today. We did a fair bit of work in terms of developing that particular plan out of the civil service branch. If the member is asking for a formal analysis on impact, no, one was not prepared in a formal way that I could table today.

I can assure the member that there was a great deal of work done in terms of consultation with various parts of the civil service, discussions held with senior management throughout the civil service, to ascertain whether or not the option was possible before myself as Minister of Labour and minister responsible presented that option to the committee and worked with the committee to implement it and bring it forward to cabinet. So there was a great deal of consultation that took place with senior management across government.

**Ms. Gray:** I know the minister has publicly talked about—initially when this was talked about, the workweek reduction—looking at staff volunteering to take time off or that was an option that was looked at as opposed to having an across-the-board layoff or workweek reduction, that the departments might look at some programs that staff could take more time off. I am wondering, was that actually pursued and was that seen as a viable option?

**Mr. Praznlk:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, although in theory that option sounds like an attractive one, always better to look for volunteers than it is to have to implement a general program, we had some brief discussions on it with management across the system and internally. I think, very logically, it presents a couple of problems. One, of course, is that there is a fairness issue on how you apply it across government, and secondly, there is the difficulty of one never knows where you are going to get the volunteers and what effects that will have on service delivery.

There are a host of very practical difficulties with that type of program, and it was also felt, from a quick, I think, analysis by senior managers, that it would not result in the kind of savings that we had to try to find in this year's budget process. Although it sounds very appealing, in practice it just was not an option that at preliminary analysis would lend itself to achieving our targets.

**Ms. Gray:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister referred to in his comments a fairness issue across government. I did not quite understand what he means by that. Perhaps he could elaborate.

**Mr. Praznik:** Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, simply this. That if you had, for example, in a particular branch of a department a number of people who wanted to take long periods of leaves of absence without pay, then maybe their fellow employees would not be affected at all, would have straight time, whereas across the hallway in another branch where you did not have that happening, how would you deal with that? Would you have to impose days on them?

\* (1700)

So in order to have an even application across the civil service as much as you could possibly do, it was felt that that kind of system would not lend itself to that kind of fairness. As well, just because someone is prepared to take a longer leave of absence does not necessarily mean that that position can be done without for that period of time. So it creates a host of other administrative issues.

**Ms. Gray:** Mr. Deputy Chairperson, well, firstly, if any type of program was to be looked at on a voluntary basis, obviously any LOAs without pay would have to be subject to an employing authority's approval, because obviously there would have to be an assurance that the service delivery or particular program was still able to be maintained with long absences from work.

The minister mentions uneven application of this type of program. Well, in fact we have systems in place right now in the government that basically allow for uneven application, and that is the leave of absences with pay and without. It is also subject to discretionary measures by employing authorities or depending on what a department may be doing. Whether you can even get an LOA is oftentimes subject to a number of variables which are oftentimes very subjective.

The minister indicates that basically it was looked at by senior management. I am sure when we get into fuller discussion this evening, we will have an opportunity to get into a bit more detail about exactly what analysis was done or what more of the pros and cons were.

**Mr. Praznik:** Just very quickly—I know we will get into this more later on this evening—but very simply, we have not, first of all, had a great deal of

applications. We have had no applications for deferred salary leave in two years, I know a little bit different, but it gives an indication. Secondly, to achieve the kind of savings that we had to achieve in this year's budget, we did not think that kind of plan would really produce the kind of savings that we required.

**Mr. Deputy Chairperson:** The time is now 5 p.m. and time for private members' hour. I am interrupting the proceedings of the committee.

The Committee of Supply will resume at 8 p.m. Thank you.

## HOUSING

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

This section of the Committee of Supply is dealing with the Estimates for the Department of Housing. Does the minister wish to make an opening statement?

**Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Housing):** Madam Chairperson, there is an absence, I note, of critics of both parties here in the House with regard to my Estimates. I wonder if it is in order to proceed without those people being here. I understand that the committee was called and the motion for Committee of Supply has gone into and passed and we are in fact in Committee of Supply.

I am a little reluctant to proceed too far without having anybody, with the exception of the member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs), from the opposition parties of the House. [interjection] I qualified that. I said, with the exception of the member for River Heights, who can instantly become the Housing critic if she wishes.

\* (1500)

Well, without having those critics here, I will at least proceed with making my opening comments in the hope that somewhere along the line they will come.

I am pleased today to present the 1993-94 spending Estimates for Manitoba Housing. During 1993-94, we expect to spend just under \$50 million on a variety of housing programs for Manitobans. My department looks forward to meeting the challenges of building new housing and maintaining current projects in line with fiscal realities. My staff are committed to work with



Manitobans to meet their housing needs, and I would like to talk about two of those.

Madam Chairperson, we work closely with a variety of community groups to turn viable housing proposals into reality from conception through to occupancy. We also consult carefully with tenants and the community to ensure that they have input into the operation of housing projects.

I would like to begin by discussing some departmental highlights from the 1992-93 fiscal year which might be of interest should anybody be here. I am pleased to report that the transition from the former local housing authorities to the Manitoba Housing Authority is complete, and the Manitoba Housing Authority now is fully operational. We are continuing to iron out the last few bugs, so to speak, in the new authority and continue to refine MHA operations to achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness. The Manitoba Housing Authority continues to emphasize community involvement and consultation in its programs and its operations.

We have strong regional representation on the board of directors, Madam Chairperson, from the rural districts as well as members from across Winnipeg. Staff and board members have been meeting with local representatives and district managers to hear regional concerns and give local residents an opportunity to express their views on housing matters.

These meetings also enable the Manitoba Housing Authority staff to keep residents apprised of the agency's plans and its operations and how they will differ from the way matters operated previously.

In addition, board committees have met with district staff, residents from a variety of centres across the province and others from several regions to hear presentations on specific housing issues. For example, Madam Chairperson, in Selkirk, representatives of tenants groups were invited to present their views and concerns. In Swan River, board members met with a municipal group concerned with housing in the area, as well as with several area mayors, reeves and the RCMP.

In Portage la Prairie, the mayors of Portage and Carman were invited to meet with the board, along with community service providers such as Child and Family Services, home care workers and again the RCMP locally. We intend to continue these

types of meetings again this year to solicit further input at this important stage of the Manitoba Housing Authority's development.

Maintenance and renovation work is one area where consultations and communications with residents are especially critical. For this reason, the Manitoba Housing Authority has a policy and procedures manual in place. When maintenance or a renovation project is needed, the information on plans is given to the tenants so that they will have an opportunity to respond and to comment. When such work is approved, a special communications procedure is set up with the residents affected to ensure their concerns and their questions are addressed effectively.

Madam Chair, I am pleased to announce that several new tenants associations have been formed recently, with the support and encouragement of the Manitoba Housing Authority. These groups are an excellent vehicle for tenants to have an effective voice in the operation of buildings and to convey community concerns to authority management.

We are also working more closely with municipal authorities. In a new procedure to be implemented this summer, when maintenance or renovation work is to be done on rural MHA buildings, the district manager will give details in advance to the municipal council.

As members know, Manitoba's social housing rental stock is getting older, generating increasing pressure in maintenance and modernization. I am pleased to report that the MHA staff have finished a complete inspection and review of all of the housing units under our control, some 22,000 in total.

We have also developed a long-range plan to meet the continuing challenges of maintenance and renovation. This includes introduction of a three-year preventative maintenance program for our units. To prepare for this latter program, senior Manitoba Housing Authority managers have met with district staff and board members to review specific maintenance needs and plans for every district. Each district, Madam Chair, was approached individually to allow for maximum input from district board representatives.

Although the consolidation of housing authorities was a major step forward, we did not want to stand still with respect to the structure of Manitoba

Housing itself. We continue to look for more operational efficiencies wherever they can be generated within our overall operations.

I am pleased to inform members that the Deputy Minister of Family Services has been appointed to the Board of the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation, as well as the former deputy minister of Labour, now the president of the Economic Innovation and Technology Council. These appointments will strengthen the ties among government departments and programs connected with Manitoba Housing.

The participation of these two senior advisers will increase the board's awareness of the wide range of issues, programs and departments that affect social housing in Manitoba. As well, I believe, the presence of these two individuals will increase the board's sensitivity to the community, as both, in one case their department and the other their former department, have a strong community orientation in operations and decision making.

Madam Chair, I would like to turn now to some future challenges facing Manitoba Housing, the most significant of which is the withdrawal of the federal government from funding for social housing programs.

As I said before, for several years now, we have been facing serious reductions in a number of federal social housing programs, and those continue to be experienced in '93-94.

The federal government has also served notice that all agreements with provinces providing new social housing commitments will end as of December 31, 1993. This means that Ottawa will withdraw from the current form of fiscal arrangement. Any future commitment for social housing would now have to be funded under a different arrangement, which would have to be negotiated. Manitoba is particularly disappointed that Ottawa announced this highly significant decision with no consultation at all with the provinces.

Manitoba will be hosting the federal-provincial Housing Ministers' conference starting tomorrow, and I will certainly bring Manitoba's concerns about federal housing intentions to the table. I have little doubt that our concerns will be shared and supported by all other provinces and territories.

In recognition, Madam Chair, of the fiscal realities we all must operate under in every

province and territory in this country, for provinces to continue on their own for the full subsidy cost is not realistic and not affordable. In the absence of any federal commitment, we all must rethink our roles, our roles in the context of being a provider of affordable housing for our individual jurisdictions.

The Housing Ministers' conference will present an opportunity for Ottawa and the provinces to discuss new ways to co-operate in the provision of social housing, and I hope, Madam Chair, that the federal minister brings some ideas and some new programs and potential opportunities to the table. I am not holding my breath, however, that that will be the case. If it is not, then we will have to look at ways and means of trying to address the ongoing needs of affordable housing in our province.

My department has had very good results from a program announcement I announced last year for senior citizens nonprofit housing, Madam Chair. This program covers housing for seniors who need or wish nonprofit, congregate-type housing, but who do not meet the federal-provincial criteria for low-income assistance.

\* (1510)

I think all of us are aware that over the past decade or so seniors have been progressively getting better off than they used to be in many cases, and now no longer can meet the income qualifications for existing low-income housing units, but they still in many cases want to live together, particularly in rural Manitoba, where very often the only show in town is the MHRC senior citizens housing unit. We have had a number of problems in trying to deal with those over the past period of time.

By replacing the previous RentalStart program, this new program retains, I think, its best features, subsidies to eligible seniors when needed, and housing units priced at market levels, which makes for good mixed-income communities and does not set out any kind of a stigma attached to where people live. This program replaces grant subsidies and direct low-interest financing with limited, short-term partial loan guarantees to lenders for the maximum exposure to the province of 10 percent of the project cost.

We have seen in the last year, Madam Chair, two projects being completed: the Neepawa Elks Manor, occupied in March; and the Riverview Legion Place in Carman, occupied in last April.

Both projects have 15 income-rent units. Elks Manor has 35 market-value units, and Riverview Legion Place, 20 units. Construction of the Marshall Memorial Centre in Carberry began March 15, and the building will be occupied sometime in September. It will have two subsidized units and three market units. Sod turning at the Transcona Place project, which will have 19 subsidized and 20 market units, took place on June 12, and it is scheduled to be occupied sometime in the spring of 1994.

Finally, Madam Chair, Parkview Place in Charleswood, sponsored by the Royal Canadian Legion, has construction set to begin in August. It will have 30 subsidized units and the same number of market rent units in that project as well. This new arrangement forms part of my department's private and nonprofit housing program.

Madam Chair, we are doing everything we can to obtain maximum effect in benefits from available resources. We are examining all of our options for achieving savings on the cost side and hope to use such savings to maintain and upgrade our current housing stock. In pursuit of this goal, my staff are working closely with the Department of Finance in the hope of taking advantage of current low interest rates to refinance some of our existing projects during this particular advantageous time.

That concludes, Madam Chair, my opening remarks, and I look forward to questions from my critics with respect to the Department of Housing.

**Madam Chairperson:** Does the critic for the official opposition wish to make an opening statement?

**Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas):** Madam Chairperson, before I get into opening comments, I would just like to thank the minister and his Special Assistant Bruce Verry and the staff of Manitoba Housing, because I have had nothing but co-operation from his staff and from the minister. Through that co-operation, it has solved a lot of problems for a lot of the tenants. By doing that, it alleviates a lot of the worry and a lot of the red tape that tenants usually go through, so I would like to thank the minister and his staff for that.

Some of the questions that I will be raising on behalf of the tenants pertain to Lord Selkirk and Gilbert Park. They have raised some issues there and some questions that they have asked me to bring forward for them.

Some of the issues that they are concerned about in the Lord Selkirk area are the whole safety aspect of the area and the dollars that are spent in damages and stuff through vandalism, if in some way the minister could look at addressing that and maybe look at some kind of a security program for the area, especially in the evenings and weekends, so that way, hopefully, the vandalism would drop.

The other area that we will be raising some questions in is the whole co-op housing area. I was really glad that the minister had stated he would be bringing Manitobans' concerns forward to the federal government because, by cutting off a lot of the programs that we had available through the federal government, it has cut our housing projects down. When you look at the needs of Manitoba, it is increasing daily where you have more people who are losing their jobs and going on social assistance and who need assistance in subsidized housing units.

We will be raising some of those questions, and I look forward to some of the responses from the minister. Like I said, I have had full co-operation, and it has been a very good relationship for me as the critic. I look toward the same out of this Estimates period. Thank you.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Madam Chairperson, I have a few words that I was wanting to put on the record. As the former critic for Housing—actually this is the first time as the Housing critic that we will be going through since 1990, but prior to that, I was the Housing critic, at which point in time I got to enter into a considerable amount of dialogue with the former minister with respect to a number of different issues dealing with nonprofit housing, the Genstar, Ladco deal, things of that nature, housing co-ops, the capital dollars necessary in order to upbring some of the 20,000-plus nonprofit units that are scattered throughout the province and so forth.

Those are the type of things which I would like to bring up during this year's Estimates. I look forward to hearing the minister's response.

I did want to give a general overview, because I know the Minister of Housing was commenting toward the tail end of his speech with respect to the federal government's role.

While he was commenting on that, the thought that was going across my mind was the old Charlottetown agreement. In the Charlottetown

agreement, as the minister I am sure is quite aware, there was an agreement that would have seen housing, the responsibility of housing, go to the provinces—one of the reasons as to why it is we felt that it was not an appropriate deal for Manitobans, in fact for Canadians.

I want to recognize right up-front, the national government and the provincial government both have a role to play in nonprofit housing and in maintaining housing stock and so forth, and any potential future negotiations that the minister or whoever replaces this minister down the years realizes what the Minister of Housing today has said on the record—the importance of having some of those federal dollars coming. Because housing affects each and every one of us, Madam Chairperson, and the numbers speak for themselves.

Housing co-ops is something that I have always been a major supporter of. Ever since I was first elected, I often talked about the importance of housing co-ops as an alternative to the status quo landlord-versus-tenant relationship that government has, with its tenants scattered, again, throughout the province. In fact, Madam Chairperson, we had passed a resolution—and when I say we—the Liberal Party had passed a resolution that would have seen a significant percentage of the current housing stock that is owned by the Manitoba government converted into housing co-ops.

\* (1520)

This is something in which again I really want to see where this particular minister is coming from, because I know the former minister did indicate some soft support, if you like. I am hoping to get some sort of a response in terms of where this government is going with respect to housing co-ops, because I do believe that it provides a very good positive alternative to the housing units that are currently out there.

The member for Point Douglas made reference to Gilbert Park and Lord Selkirk. Gilbert Park happens to be in the riding that I represent. Over the last number of years, we have been building a very strong tenants association. I should give the credit to Amie Chartrand and I am sure, if not the minister, some of the minister's staff know of Amie. He has put in a phenomenal amount of volunteer hours to get a tenants association active and

involved in the everyday decisions that are being made.

I have often thought how nice it would be to see some of these housing units being converted into housing co-ops. I can appreciate the difficulty, because you have federal contributions that are going towards it and provincial contributions and how one would take care of the share equity when you establish a co-op and so forth, many different issues that would have to be looked at and dealt with prior to any form of a conversion into a housing co-op.

I believe, Madam Chairperson, that if the political will of the government was to take that sort of action of converting these nonprofit housing units into housing co-ops and they could do it on a trial basis, I would be more than happy to see it being done in Gilbert Park, in the riding that I happen to represent, because I know there is such a very strong tenants association that would no doubt be glad to see something of that nature where they control more of the everyday operations and are, in fact, getting a sense of ownership out of it. I would be very glad to see the government move ahead.

Time after time, through the Estimates, we hear—or not even just during the Estimates, debates, Question Periods, concurrence and so forth—from the government benches: Well, let us hear some alternatives. What would you do if you were in government? It is easy to say spend, spend, spend.

Well, Madam Chairperson, this is something which I believe government could do, and it is not going to cost them any dollars. In the long term, I would argue that you could end up saving dollars. I believe you would help get individuals off the reliance of social assistance, give them some hope to, as I say, become a resident as opposed to a tenant. That sense of ownership I think would do wonders for them. We will enter into a bit more of a discussion during the questions with respect to the housing co-ops.

Another big issue at the time when I was formerly the critic for Housing and the current Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme) was the Minister of Housing, we talked a lot about infill housing. I can recall asking a question shortly after getting elected with respect to that particular program. The Minister of Housing indicated that he still believed in the program, that there were not

going to be any houses built in that fiscal year but they were looking forward to the future.

A number of months later, after again asking some questions, the then-minister indicated that Weston and other areas of the city would in fact be receiving some infill housing. I do not believe they ever did materialize. I do not know what the current status of that program is, in fact the government believes that some of the older neighbourhoods—not only just in the city of Winnipeg but outside in other urban centres, Madam Chairperson, if there is a role for government to play.

One of the positive things that seemed to have really caught on and it is nice to see so many individuals getting involved in is Habitat for Humanity and the establishment of volunteers that are building homes for individuals that would otherwise not necessarily be able to afford the opportunity to own a home.

Infill housing did something nowhere near, in my opinion, as positive in terms of community involvement, but it did provide individuals the opportunity to be able to own their home. It also had many other positive spin-offs for the communities in which they were built.

This is where I want to continue on, when we talked about the RRAP, the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program. The first one that the federal government had cut back on was the RRAP for the landlords. Now they have been cutting back for residential homeowners. The costs of those particular cuts are very significant, because there are a lot of jobs that are created through renovations and so forth, and it also again does wonderful things for the communities that are the major benefactors of a program of this nature. It has positive spin-offs in the sense that once you see an area starting to improve other homeowners that are not necessarily receiving government grants will improve their own homes, revitalize their own homes and so forth.

I think that those are the types of programs that the government should be in, in particular, in the province of Manitoba. We are somewhat unique in western Canada. I believe that we were one of the major recipients under RRAP, Madam Chairperson, and we have cities that have more character, should I say. Our requirements are to have a lot of renovations. For those who can afford it, it is wonderful, but for those individuals who

might need some form of assistance in order to maintain the housing, there should be some form of a program available.

If there is not, then they end up going to the Emergency Home Repair Program, and quite often the damage that is done to the home is that much more severe. It could have been curtailed under a program such as RRAP so that it does not have to be put into an emergency situation for wiring, upgrading one's windows, roofs, foundations. This, at least, allowed for less of a future reliance on the Critical Home Repair Program, or the Emergency Home Repair Program, as it was being called when I was the critic for Housing prior.

I also was wanting to talk, as I say, about the Genstar, Ladco, Manitoba Housing Renewal Corporation and the deal that they entered into. Actually, I should exclude Genstar. Genstar did not win out in that particular deal, but there were a number of time lines that were given. I am interested to know where the government is coming from with respect to the land banking that we currently have, the land that we have in stock. Is the government still attempting to sell off the land? Are they entertaining bids for this land? Hopefully, time will allow for me to ask what I believe are some very legitimate questions with respect to what is the government doing.

**An Honourable Member:** You have 30 hours, Kevin.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Actually, 15 hours because we are in one committee. But, Madam Chairperson, I was disappointed when Ladco and MHRC entered into an agreement and there really was not anything established for nonprofit housing.

So it is the broader picture in terms of the land banking and what the government's intentions are with the land banks, and a specific issue dealing with Ladco-MHRC. We are entering that fifth year, and I have not had the opportunity—I half expected us to go into bills this afternoon, so I did not get to go through the contract, but I did manage to pull the file I have had for a few years and would like to go through with the Minister of Housing some of the details of it.

I know that the Minister of Housing at the time boasted to me on how wonderful a program this is: it is not going to cost government any money at all; in fact, it is going to be raising money. I believe, and I do not want to misquote him or anything, but

he definitely left the impression that I should be happy with that particular deal because maybe some of the proceeds that come from that agreement could be funnelled back into other nonprofit housing units. When we had talked about the many different housing issues that were out there, at least I was of the opinion that there was a general agreement that there needed to be more investment into the current housing stock at the very least in order to maintain standards.

Another issue that I think is very important that should at least be made reference to is our seniors housing. The minister, I will be asking him for some specific numbers and failing at my getting the specific numbers, I trust he has his staff; maybe they will get back to me with the specific numbers in terms of the number of units for seniors, 55 Plus, that are available.

I know for example like the Bluebird, the Annex, and there are a number of units, from what I understand, that have been vacant for quite a while. It is primarily because, I believe, that there was a bad policy decision back in the '70s when these buildings were being planned. Hopefully, the government has some ideas in terms of what it is that they plan on doing with some of these buildings, if in fact they have any ideas on how we can utilize the space that is there in some form of a feasible fashion.

\* (1530)

Lastly, what I was wanting to comment on was with respect to the landlord and tenants bill. We now have that under the responsibility of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh), but again, I can recall the discussions that the then-Minister of Housing and I had on that particular bill. I can recall that it was brought forward to the Chamber, then it was withdrawn. Then after the election, it came back, type of thing, a bit changed, actually a considerable change to it. Then we end up seeing it going over to Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

I would be interested in knowing why it would have gone over to Consumer and Corporate Affairs, what input, if any, the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ernst) and his staff have had in the decision with respect to this particular bill that we now have before us today.

Having said those very few words, Madam Chairperson, I am quite prepared to go on into committee.

**Madam Chairperson:** Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

**Mr. Ernst:** If I could, Madam Chair, introduce staff here: firstly, on my far right, Mr. Jim Beaulieu, who is the acting deputy minister of Housing; next to him, Mr. Gary Julius, who is the executive director of Finance and Administration; on your left, Mr. Ken Cassin, who is the director of Program Development and Support; and finally, Mr. Ron Hall, who is the Winnipeg area manager for the Manitoba Housing Authority.

**Madam Chairperson:** We are on page 95 of the Estimates manual.

**Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition):** I just have a few brief questions under this line, if I might, to the minister. I thank our critic for allowing me to ask these questions. We all have people to represent.

Madam Chairperson, I have had a couple of meetings with the Elmwood housing co-operative, a group that has submitted a proposal to the provincial government dealing with co-op housing. They have provided to the government, as early as '92, a proposal on co-op housing in the Elmwood area.

It is a community-based group of people, Madam Chairperson, provided a presentation in October '92. They have had a number of community applications, about 105. Certainly it is an area similar to the Weston area in terms of demographics, I would suggest. They have also conducted a density study of citizens' needs and demand study, that they have, I believe, forwarded to the department as well.

I would like to ask the minister and his department: What is the status of that community-based program, and what advice would he give me to report back to the citizens of that community?

**Mr. Ernst:** I would like to respond to the Leader of the Opposition. That proposal, along with I believe 49 others, came in as a result of the October 1992 proposal call for the 1993 program year.

For better or for worse, what happens in this process is that the applications come in for that program. If we have any units left over in the '92 year, we can sometimes meet the demand for

those proposal call units, if they are almost ready to go. If they are not, then we have to refer them to the '93 program year.

The '93 program year, as in every year, generally speaking, is delayed by federal commitments as to the numbers of units for every province across Canada. So once we have that delineation, what allocation they are going to make as far as Manitoba is concerned, then we can proceed to deal with all the proposals.

We are in the final stages of that at the moment, so that we would expect some time in the next month or so to be able to indicate to those who are successful.

I might say that we will have about 125, maybe, units available this year province-wide under the Non-profit Housing Program. We have had applications for 10 times that many units. So somebody is going to be disappointed in the process. It is not something that any of us take any glee in, because by and large these community groups that have come forward have been excellent in terms of their willingness to work toward development of these kinds of projects.

I see I am getting passed a message here, that it is 171 units for 1993. But still, considerably down, maybe 10 or 15 percent of what was available even five years ago. So we are significantly reduced in our ability to meet the demands of these kinds of groups, but we do not discourage them at all. We want to try and encourage them as much as possible, and hopefully after 1993 we will have some form of program to try and address their needs.

**Mr. Doer:** I am glad the number of units increased by 36 in the period of time the minister answered the question. That is almost as many units as we would need for the Elmwood community, so I am delighted to hear that.

Of course, the minister and I attended the opening of the auto workers co-op in the St. James community recently—

**An Honourable Member:** It was a unique experience for me.

**Mr. Doer:** Yes, I was impressed to see you singing Solidarity Forever, I might say. It was quite a wonderful sight I must add, and I even paid tribute to the minister at that occasion.

**An Honourable Member:** It was all in Greek.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, it is a good co-op.

I am also aware of the revitalization efforts in Weston, the community revitalization. Part and parcel of that was the revitalization for co-op housing in that area. I think it has been very successful. Other projects have been in a positive cash flow situation. I think the St. Vital seniors project has a surplus right now, Madam Chairperson, and are doing quite well financially.

Would the minister be considering the demographics of the Elmwood area, the consistency of the urban renewal goals? He is also minister of urban renewal, with the community programs that are in place in terms of the consideration of this project?

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

**Mr. Doer:** Thank you very much. I have met with the nonprofit community group. I was very impressed with the work they have done, the efforts they have, the vision they have to keep the housing consistent with the community itself, of Elmwood. I know that the government department must review these projects on their own merit. I am in no way suggesting that any—I am just suggesting that I was very impressed with the project, and I respect the decisions the government will have to undertake in this project, and I would commend the project to it.

I have one last question to the minister. Can the minister indicate to us the vacancy rate in low-income housing units that the government is operating right now?

\* (1540)

**Mr. Ernst:** I can, Madam Chairperson. I can give it to you chapter and verse, or if you have a specific area that you are interested in, we might deal with that.

**Mr. Doer:** In the community of Winnipeg, please.

**Mr. Ernst:** Winnipeg in general, the average vacancy rate as of December 31, 1992, was 8.8 percent. You might say that the vast majority of those are seniors bachelor units.

We have some projects also that are out of commission. For instance, we have 23 units on Country Club Blvd. that are presently not occupied and have been held pending decision as to whether to renovate them or demolish them.

We have, I believe, 17 units at Gilbert Park that are unoccupied at the present time as a result of structural damage. We are again trying to determine whether it is more economical to repair them or to demolish them.

There will be some others here and there that are either not available or—and also what happens, too, is very often over a month-end you will get one that is vacant and will be filled on January 1 but shows up as vacant on December 31, things of that nature, but that is roughly what it is.

**Mr. Doer:** I have one last question. Is there any way of getting a breakdown between the units in terms of the 8.8 percent in terms of—and I do not expect it now, but if we could get it perhaps from the staff through to the minister later on—how many would be bachelor, how many would be multiperson units in the city of Winnipeg, I would appreciate it.

**Mr. Ernst:** That should not be a problem, Madam Chair.

**Mr. Hickes:** Madam Chairperson, if the critic for the Liberal Party does not mind, I have a couple of colleagues that have a few very short questions. I would just like them to ask, and they will be completed. Then I would like to get into the few questions I have. So if I could pass it on to our member for Selkirk for just a couple of very brief questions.

**Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk):** Madam Chairperson, I just want to ask the minister, could he provide myself and residents of Selkirk with an update of his department's renovations of the Alfred apartment block in Selkirk?

**Mr. Ernst:** As the member knows, the building is in very poor condition as a result of some practices that went on prior to it being taken over by the Manitoba Housing Authority. In any event, the building is in poor condition.

We are consulting with Canada Mortgage and Housing, who are the major funding partner in this project, as they are in every project that we have, to determine our best course of action. It is very close either way as to which course of action should be taken.

We are having discussions with CMHC at the present time as to which way they think we should be going. So, hopefully, we will have a response of

an indication of what will occur in the not-too-distant future, but in the meantime, that is where we are at.

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson):** Madam Chairperson, I just had a very brief question of the minister. Housing is a major concern in many northern communities, particularly in many remote communities, and one of the concerns that has arisen—it is one I have raised in Question Period and also directly with the minister—is in regard to the shift-over that is taking place in terms of provincial and federal housing programs.

A number of people in communities that I represent, in particular in Thicket Portage and Pikwitonei, have expressed concern about the fact that they are now faced with a major increase in the amount of rent they pay because it has now shifted from a fixed amount, by agreement, to a percent of income. Many people feel it is unfair, given the additional costs that people face in northern communities.

In addition to that, there is concern about the degrees of maintenance, and I can testify, having been in the communities on numerous occasions, to the poor conditions of housing. I was just in Thicket Portage recently, had the opportunity to visit many residents of Thicket Portage, and saw first-hand problems with maintenance. Maintenance had been promised, has not been completed to this point in time.

Also, concerns have been expressed by people in the communities about the fact that they, under the new programs, will no longer have ownership rights, Madam Chairperson. I understand some of the shifts that have taken place. I was wondering if the minister can indicate whether he has listened to any of these particular concerns, whether he has raised these issues and whether he is willing to look at the concerns that have been expressed.

As I said, people feel they are paying quite a bit in a lot of cases for pretty substandard housing. I can say in some cases, Madam Chairperson, that the housing that I have seen, in any other community would be condemned. It is in that poor shape.

I ask for some commitment from the minister despite any shift-overs it may take in terms of jurisdiction to either deal with these matters directly or at least to raise them with the federal government, because, as I said, many people in those communities—and those are just two



communities, there are many other northern communities that are affected, particularly Northern Affairs communities—they are very concerned about housing conditions. I would appreciate any action the minister could take on their behalf.

**Mr. Ernst:** Madam Chairperson, I think the member for Thompson is aware that these units were turned over to CMHC a year and a half ago for direct administration by CMHC. What happened previously is there were two administrations. The CMHC administered one either through the MMF or directly, and the other was Manitoba Housing, so you had two managers in the same community of relatively small import. In any event, for whatever the reasons, all of it went back to CMHC on April 1, 1992.

This is the first, actually, that I have heard of the concerns raised by the member for Thompson. I can raise the question with CMHC if he wishes, although I understand just recently he received a letter from the manager of CMHC inviting him to raise any of those questions with him directly. I do not mind doing it, but I know the member for Thompson has an invitation directly from Mr. Roy Nichol, who is the manager of CMHC, to raise any of those questions. I know that CMHC does in fact monitor actions here, Question Period, Hansard, and so on, because if there are certain problems with CMHC then they are the ones who want to, by all means, get on to it and see if they cannot be addressed.

I will be happy to raise that with Mr. Nichol. I will no doubt be seeing him in the next day or so with the Housing ministers' conference on and will try and have him respond directly to the member for Thompson.

\* (1550)

**Mr. Hlckes:** Madam Chairperson, I would like to ask the minister—I was at a meeting with the Lord Selkirk resident association just within the last couple of weeks and one of the issues they had asked me if I could raise with the minister is the whole idea of the tenants association. They get support from the government through access to one of the units for their meetings and stuff. They were wondering if it is possible to get some sort of funding for this association through the government and then they could rent that unit out and then they in turn could rent some space at Turtle Island Community Centre.

They are trying to look at ways of raising funds for Turtle Island to bring more money and to deliver programs for the kids in that area. Their funding they feel right now for programming for the children is not adequate and they are looking at ways of trying to generate some revenues through ideas like this. Could the minister respond to that?

**Mr. Ernst:** Madam Chairperson, I just consulted briefly with the staff available here. We are not aware of any proposal by tenants of Lord Selkirk Park in this area, that is, either through the department directly or through the management of the MHA. I am not prepared to give a commitment yes or no or maybe even to the member for Point Douglas today, but if those people are in fact interested in conducting some kinds of activities then they should do basically what the people of Gilbert Park did and that is have the tenant association approach us or representatives of the community there approach us.

In the case of Gilbert Park, we provide I believe two units plus a significant contribution towards a community centre that I believe is under construction and/or just about complete. So we have gone the whole nine yards, shall we say, with respect to Gilbert Park and if we can get the same kind of reaction out of Lord Selkirk Park, then terrific, but let us sit down and talk about it.

Those matters have not, as far as we are aware, been raised with any part of our organization. So I look forward to hearing from those tenants at Lord Selkirk Park that raised the issue with the member for Point Douglas, and we would be happy to discuss it with them.

**Mr. Hlckes:** Madam Chairperson, I will follow up on that with the tenants association, and I will get back to the minister on that. It is very encouraging that the minister is willing to dialogue with the tenants association and hopefully positive things will come out of that meeting.

The other question I have is the vacancy rate of Lord Selkirk and also the vacancy rate of Gilbert Park. How many empty units are there?

**Mr. Ernst:** Madam Chairperson, we are just obtaining the information here. We were not sure that we had it specifically broken down that finely. I am just having it addressed. As of March 31, we have 17 that I previously mentioned that are out of commission at Gilbert Park and 28 that were vacant as of March 31 at Gilbert Park. Lord Selkirk Park,

we had 39 vacancies out of 314, and I do not have the number there out of commission because of serious damage and repair they require.

**Mr. Hickes:** The reason I raised that is some of the people that I visit in Point Douglas live in like slum housing, and they do not get much co-operation, very little co-operation, from their landlords. If we have empty units, we could get more people that need the assistance into housing when there are empty units. That was the reason that I was raising it to just see how many were vacant at any given time. If you look at percentages, it is pretty low on an ongoing basis, but if we could get more people that I run across to apply—when I am door knocking in the area, I will ask them to apply to the housing units. Hopefully, they will be looked upon favourably.

The other area that I want to cover briefly is what I had mentioned in my opening remarks: the whole safety aspect of Lord Selkirk. What they had been raising was the possibility of providing security services for the area, because they were saying the damages to the units, some of the empty units and some of the not-so-empty units, damages that are caused amount to quite a few dollars.

If you look at the residents of Lord Selkirk, it is such a high unemployment rate, and they were wondering and were asking me to ask the minister if there is a possibility of a way that the government could incorporate some of the residents from those areas to follow along the same line as the member for Inkster was saying: more ownership and more involvement in the community. They are saying that, if they could be put through a proper training program and hired as security for the area by the people that live in the area, and also to look at the possibility of doing some of the maintenance work and the painting and stuff that goes on in those units by the residents, at least it would give them some form of employment and some pride and ownership. Has that ever been discussed in the minister's office with his staff?

**Mr. Ernst:** With respect to the question of vacancies and potential tenants, I can tell the honourable member that we have pads of application forms we would be happy to provide to him. The office of the Manitoba Housing Authority is at 700-294 Portage Avenue, Somerset building next to Eaton's, on the seventh floor. We would encourage anyone who is interested in a public housing unit by all means to apply there. We have

units available, and obviously we would be happy to accommodate particularly low-income families wherever possible. Also, we have, of course, a wide variety of seniors units all over Winnipeg as are family units all over Winnipeg.

So not only are there units available, but there is also the question of selection as well. In fact, that has created some vacancies in the Lord Selkirk Park and Gilbert Park in recent times because of the—once the CMHA came into being, the horizons of the potential tenants for those areas expanded considerably when they started looking at what other units were available across Winnipeg. All of a sudden, they had a selection that they did not have before with the old City of Winnipeg Housing Authority. The old City of Winnipeg Housing Authority had pretty confined numbers of units, principally, the two projects Lord Selkirk and Gilbert Park.

So we are available, and we would be happy to hear from them at any time. If we can provide any assistance to the member for Point Douglas, we would be happy to do that. Short of paying a commission for these tenancies, we would be happy to try and accommodate as many people as he would like.

**Mr. Hickes:** Madam Chairperson, would the minister be able to supply a dollar figure on what was spent on damages and vandalism for Lord Selkirk and Gilbert Park? Is he able to come up with a figure?

\* (1600)

**Mr. Ernst:** I suppose; we do not have those numbers. We do not have the MHA computer system yet fully operational which would be able to give those numbers kind of a touch to the button, or at least that is what they tell me. In any event, we do not have those specific numbers.

I will undertake to look and see if they are readily available, and if they are I would be happy to provide them. If it entails a whole pile of work, I will converse again with the member for Point Douglas to see how badly he wants those numbers, whether I need to put the staff through a big exercise here.

**Mr. Hickes:** Maybe I could explain the rationale for that question. The reason I was raising it is because, like I mentioned earlier, through the residents association in Lord Selkirk, they want to try and make a comparison of dollars spent on vandalism and damage and compare it to hopefully

the savings there would be to train some local residents and to employ them as security guards in their own areas. This way, when there are figures available, then it should lend to their argument and the fact for government to save badly needed dollars. So that was the reason for that.

If a meeting is hopefully developed with the tenants association and the minister's office, if someone could just remind the staff that are going to bring along those figures, because that is one of the questions that they will be asking, just to show the comparison that, yes, there is hopefully a lot of dollars to be saved and also the chance to employ some local people that live in the area.

One of the discussions we had at that resident association, which was a good feeling, was the amount of work and dollars that had been spent at Lord Selkirk pertaining to the whole renovations program. They renovated the doors, the windows, put in shower stalls, and they were very pleased about that.

One question that came out of that was the quality of the doorknobs. They say they are having problems with the quality of the doorknobs. So if that is the only problem they have through all of those renovations, I think they are doing very well. So they raised that on a more positive note of all the work that had gone in. What they were saying was if that kind of assistance could continue on to make the homes better places to live, and that is what they were looking forward to.

The other area that they were looking at was the whole area of the groundskeeping to maintain and pick up the litter and maintain the grounds and stuff, and they were saying that is the kind of work that we as residents could be doing instead of contracting it out or bringing someone else in. They are saying that the unemployment rate is so high.

I would like to just move into a different area, and then I would like to just pass it over to the Liberal critic. I got some phone calls, through a story that appeared in the paper, from quite a few concerned seniors when there were discussions of the possibility of moving students into seniors blocks. I would just like to know where that is at today, and if any of the seniors organizations or the seniors tenants have been consulted about this.

**Mr. Ernst:** Madam Chairperson, there may be two issues that are being brought to the attention of the

member. We have, in fact, a tenant at the singles in nonsenior singles in two projects, Nassau and Jessie Avenue, I think, on a trial basis to see how it works. I mean we are very cognizant of the fact that you have 85-year-old people in a seniors residence. They do not want to have 24-year-old, young, virile gentlemen, full of vim and vigour, carrying on significant socializing in the same building. It does create potential for conflict. We are very cognizant of that, and we are trying to monitor the situation and we will see.

There is, quite frankly, a need for housing of nonelderly singles, low-income people in particular. In fact, if you look at the City of Winnipeg's welfare rolls, the vast majority of the people on their welfare rolls are single, employable people, well, under the age of 30. There is significant need at the present time for housing for those kinds of people.

We have had some discussions with respect to a single building downtown. We have had discussions with one of these seniors buildings where we may consider selling the building to student housing arrangement for natives coming from outside of Winnipeg.

What happens, I gather, is that very often students coming from outside to attend school in Winnipeg have little opportunity in the way of comradeship with their fellow students on a social type of basis, that they do not have a central living facility where they can congregate and socialize together and the benefits of residence type of situation.

We are considering looking at that, and whether we take the existing seniors from that building and ask them if they would prefer to go to another building in the immediate area at our expense so that we could accommodate this student native housing project or not, that is still a ways off, and we are not yet in a position of confirming one way or another. However, that no doubt has caused great rumour occurring in some apartment buildings. I know our Heidelberg Villa over here in the downtown is also another one where they had some concerns about the tenanting of the building.

We are very cognizant of the concerns, and we are also cognizant of trying to provide—and the contract for those housing units says not just seniors, but in fact those who demonstrate the lifestyle of a senior. There are some, for instance, who might be 40 or 45 years old, who demonstrate

the life of a senior who might well be easily accommodated without any great disruption in the kind of activity that goes on in those kinds of buildings.

That is as much as I can tell the member unless he has some specifics which we can investigate.

**Mr. Hickes:** I thank the minister for that answer, because, yes, it did raise a lot of fears, and a lot of the seniors started to call and they were very concerned and worried.

I only have a couple more questions. I would just like to ask the minister if there is anything being planned for home repair programs to replace some of the ones that we have lost to try and keep people in their own homes that are low-income earners and give them some form of assistance to do that.

**Mr. Ernst:** The RRAP, Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program, which is delivered by Canada Mortgage and Housing is continuing until the end of this year so that, for the present at least, applications can be taken under that program. We presently operate the Emergency Home Repair Program under our jurisdiction directly, and we do provide, under limited circumstance, assistance in that area. Those are the only two available at the present time.

**Mr. Hickes:** I would like to ask the minister what involvement the government has with Habitat. Is the government involved in any form of assisting Habitat to build the homes?

**Mr. Ernst:** We have had an ongoing relationship with the people from Habitat for Humanity that seems to be escalating as we go along. We have provided in the past, in part through the Core Area Initiative and as a partner in other ways, infill lots for them to build on. We have presently under consideration support for infrastructure dealing with the current 18-lot Jimmy Carter work project that I am reasonably confident we will be able to deliver on.

\* (1610)

We have provided in the past—if you will remember, during the Manitoba Home Builder Association Home Show, they built two houses over in the Convention Centre as demonstration projects built on behalf of Habitat for Humanity, and what they did is they moved those houses to Meadows West, where Manitoba Housing provided the land upon which they erected the houses.

Then two houses were sold in an attempt to provide funding for Habitat's other operations.

In addition to that, of course, we have provided from time to time access to used building materials and things of that nature coming out of projects that are either going to be demolished or whatever as required. So we have had an ongoing relationship, and I intend, along with the Premier, to be part of the Jimmy Carter work project. We are also providing some assistance to Habitat by providing the reception here in the Legislative Building for the major sponsors of Habitat for Humanity, recognition of their outstanding effort in providing the funding. For instance, the Winnipeg Real Estate Board will provide, I believe, something like \$50,000 for the building of a complete house in the celebration of their 90th anniversary. It is going to be the 90th house, I believe, that Habitat has constructed.

We view Habitat as a very good opportunity. As a matter of fact, I would invite the member to buy a ticket to the Habitat dinner. In fact, I will invite all members of the House, including the member for Inkster, to buy a ticket to attend that fundraising dinner, because this is important and worthwhile work. I would be happy to take the member's \$75 any time he so wishes.

**An Honourable Member:** Are you paying for yours, Jim?

**Mr. Ernst:** Yes, I am.

**An Honourable Member:** Then I guess I will have to pay for mine.

**Mr. Ernst:** I am not aware that there are any free ones around.

As a matter of fact, while we are at it, Madam Chairperson, I might inquire if the New Democrats would like a table and perhaps the Liberal Party would like a table as well. My deputy minister is responsible for selling tickets inside the building here, and he has been passing me these notes saying, you know, please invite them to buy a table.

**An Honourable Member:** Can more than six people sit at a table?

**Mr. Ernst:** I believe it is eight to a table.

**An Honourable Member:** Are there that many Liberals in the province?

**Mr. Ernst:** In the case of the second opposition party, they could have their caucus, plus two guests.

**Mr. Cliff Evans (Interlake):** I just have a few quick questions for the minister. During Question Period a few weeks back, I had asked the minister, with regard to the departments moving to Gimli, what rationale he had to move the offices to Gimli and also to spend money on renovating a building to accommodate the staff in Gimli?

I would like to hear a little further, a little more, from the minister as to why he chose Gimli, what kind of costs in renovating a building to have for his staff there, and why, when there are government buildings available, would we want to go and spend money on renovating a different building when we have buildings available, and space?

**Mr. Ernst:** Madam Chairperson, the first issue is the question of where you locate your Interlake office. I mean, we looked at having the only Interlake office in Selkirk; we looked at splitting it between Selkirk and somewhere else in the Interlake, went around the mulberry bush for a long period of time until ultimately we settled upon Gimli as the location for the office of the Manitoba Housing Authority for the Interlake area.

As a result of that, Selkirk picked up the east side of the province north of No. 1 highway in their operations. So, given that we have determined as a housing authority that Gimli is the location where the office should be, then Government Services takes over and provides space for us to occupy. We tell them what our program of requirements are. We required so many square feet of space to accommodate so many staff. There are government guidelines to deal with that, and that is where they take over and provide us with the space. They sign the lease and simply turn it over to us.

The details of that we do not have, Government Services has. Whether they considered some other space in Gimli, whether they considered recommending to us that we reconsider our location in Gimli, maybe we should move to Arborg, I do not know. We provide them with a program of requirements and they locate us accordingly.

I guess at some point it is an arbitrary decision whether you locate in one location or another, whether there are more units in one area or another, whether it is better service in one area or another. It becomes a matter of subjective judgment. The determination, in the overall analysis of where we located rural MHA offices a

year or more ago, was a question of looking at all of those factors and then making a determination. So we made the determination it was going to be Gimli; when it was, then Government Services went to find us office space.

**Mr. Cliff Evans:** Madam Chairperson, I will certainly request those numbers from the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme) then, as far as costs.

What I would like from the Minister of Housing is if he could provide me with some detailed information on the number of housing units that are within the Interlake constituency, where they are, how many are occupied, how many are not occupied in each area that there is housing. If he could provide me with that I would appreciate it, basically for my general information and for when I deal with constituents on matters when they call about a housing problem. If I could have all the details as to what is available, where it is available, how many in each area and the percentage of occupancy, I would appreciate that from the minister.

**Mr. Ernst:** I do not see us having a problem in providing the units. The question of occupancy, it may be occupied today and not tomorrow, so I really cannot guarantee that we are going to have very accurate information. I can give it to you as of a specific date, but certainly we can provide the units, where they are and that type of information.

**Mr. Cliff Evans:** Thank you to the minister. I will look forward to seeing those numbers. The latest would be fine. It does not have to be specific, just what is available and what is there.

I have a final comment to the minister. A few weeks back when I called his office with regard to the Moosehorn villa and the water problems that they were having out there, I just want to say to the minister that I appreciate the response from his office and the response of getting out there and taking care of the watering system.

\* (1620)

I would say and would request that the minister's office stay in touch with that particular villa, because there are still problems there and I would appreciate that it would be monitored. I am in contact with the people at least once every 10 days or two weeks, and even after the new water system has been put in, there are still some problems out there. We would appreciate the department

following up and making sure that there are no other further problems for these people with their drinking water.

**Mr. Ernst:** Madam Chair, I will be certain that that compliment is passed along to appropriate staff who were involved in that matter. When you deal with 22,000 housing units in a province and they are scattered from Churchill to the U.S. border, from the Ontario border to the Saskatchewan border, it is difficult to keep your finger on every single thing that happens, particularly with about 150 or so permanent operational staff. Nonetheless, we do try. When something is raised with us, we will certainly try and respond as quickly as we can.

We have had some circumstances where staff have performed exceptionally well and deserve every bit of compliment that they get. So I will certainly undertake to pass that along. I am sure that they will be monitoring the process, but if they are not, I am sure that Mr. Hall, when he goes back to the office tomorrow morning, will ensure that that takes place.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Madam Chairperson, I wanted to start off by asking questions with respect to what I was talking about in my opening remarks with Ladco and the MHRC deal that the former minister, who is here now and might be listening in in terms of he might even be helping the minister and possibly give an answer or two on this particular deal, because I am sure he is well aware of it, as I am sure Gary is.

I am going back to a news service on May 25, 1989, where the government released the fact that there is going to be 476 acres that are going to be jointly developed, that we are looking at \$10-million profit as a partner in this multiyear development, that we were approximately looking at 1,900 lots. What I will do is just ask the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ernst) if he can in fact just give us an update.

**Mr. Ernst:** I can advise, Madam Chair, that the development agreement with the City of Winnipeg—appreciating that in 1989 you have a piece of raw land with no subdivision, no zoning, no development agreement, basically just a piece of raw land—you have to go through the process of rezoning, subdivision, and anybody who is in this Chamber who has been a member of City Council knows how long that can take.

It seems forever and ever that it is how long it can take, and for some reason, in certain communities, longer than in others. Nonetheless, those kinds of things take a considerable amount of time. In any event, there was no mad rush because the market was not great. There were considerable numbers of lots available throughout the city for the purposes of new home construction.

In any event, finally the development agreement was signed just recently with respect to the City of Winnipeg. The Mylars, as a matter of fact, were released on Tuesday, June 29. The underground servicing for Stage I and Stage II, which are a total of 157 and 56, or 213 lots, has been completed. The paving is about 80 percent complete or thereabouts. The drainage lake was dug last fall as the first stage in developing this particular property.

I know the member had his leader raise some questions with respect to this and whether we should proceed with it or not. Let me state that at the outset, this costs us about \$40,000 a month to hold this property, and it grows every month because all additional costs are capitalized against the property as it is held. So the longer you hold it the more it costs, and your costs continue to escalate. Almost half a million bucks a year now in costs associated with that development, and so the sooner we can sell it, get rid of it, market it, and get some revenue back from it, the better off the taxpayer is going to be in this province.

In any event we have now commitments for 74 lots. We have signed-land purchase agreements and deposits received for 29 lots to date, the balance to be finalized during the first week of July, the show homes proposed to be built to be ready for the Fall Parade of Homes this year.

We get 75 percent of the net cash proceeds during the current time period, the first five years of the agreement, so we do not put up any money but we get 75 percent of the proceeds right away during the first five years of this agreement. So the more lots we sell now the quicker it is to give us that accelerated cash flow. So with significant overhead facing us from carrying costs from this property, which was purchased in the early 1970s, the sooner we can get out of it the better.

So that is basically where we are at. I can table for the interest of the member, this development is called Royale Wood. It is a brochure put forward

by the developer, Ladco, with our concurrence, and I will give that copy to the member for his interest.

I will undertake a further question if the member has one.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Madam Chairperson, I remember a number of questions that we were asking the then-minister in terms of questioning the timing, and the timing was very important because the timing allowed for this so-called \$10 million that was going to materialize. I am not sure, and hopefully we will get some more details in terms of some of the finances of this, and seek the minister's current projection on what type of profits are going to be made from this venture.

I recall, we had asked a question, and this was the then Leader of the Liberal Party, what guarantees has the minister obtained from Ladco that they will not stall the project until the market is right for them, rather than the people in the province of Manitoba, and the minister's response in his last sentence was it would be ludicrous to suggest that the housing market is going to drop, that you could not get rid of 120 lots in a particular area. The minister himself was, as is the current minister, a former city councillor and I am sure was well aware of what had to be overcome before you started paving and digging for the homes to be put in and so forth.

I want to go back to the original commitment from this government that there would be approximately \$10 million made, because that was the biggest selling point to accepting the Ladco deal from what I understood, that we were going to generate all this money, it was not going to cost the province anything. We do not know what would have happened had Genstar, in fact, won out on that particular contract.

So let me first ask the minister: Is the ministry still projecting \$10 million in profit?

**Mr. Ernst:** Madam Chairperson, we are in Year 1 of a 13-year agreement to develop a large piece of property in south Winnipeg.

The first lands to be developed are those owned by us, owned by the government; at the second stage, is land owned by Ladco. Now, Ladco has historically been joint-venture partners with governments in a variety of projects over the years. I mean, they were the joint-venture partner, for instance, with respect to Fort Richmond, Fort Garry, and with the City of Winnipeg, a very

successful development, ultimately produced great benefit financially for the City of Winnipeg.

So we have no reason to doubt that it will not change, but let us just look roughly at what we are talking about. If you have 100 lots at \$40,000 a lot, that is \$4 million. If you can do 100 lots a year for five years, that is \$20 million. Assuming your costs are 50 percent, that is a \$10-million profit. But I mean those are awfully rough numbers and not terribly scientific, just really off the top of my head.

But the fact of the matter is that Ladco has been a very successful developer for 30 years or more in the city of Winnipeg. They developed Windsor Park; they developed Southdale; they developed Fort Richmond; they developed Richmond Lakes, I think it is called, or Richmond West. So historically, they have a lot of expertise with respect to land development in the city of Winnipeg.

\* (1630)

That is why we entered into a joint-venture agreement, to capitalize on their expertise. I mean, I do not have staff who are expert in marketing residential property in the city of Winnipeg. That is not their function. We are not about to go out and hire that expertise for a very short period of time either, and if it is available from someone like Ladco, then we should take advantage of it. Historically, that has been very successful certainly for the City of Winnipeg, and we have no reason to believe that it will not be successful for the provincial government with respect to this property.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Madam Chairperson, I am in full agreement with the joint-venture agreements, and that is the best way to develop these land banks that in fact we do have, because you do gain from the expertise.

But I am going to go back to the arguments in terms of: Did Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation get what at least we at the time deemed as the best deal? We were not convinced of it. The minister talks or had mentioned the fact that, well, there are projections, and Ladco has an excellent track record, and we are still anticipating, and then in fact went into some hard numbers as to how he can justify the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation still coming out with a considerable amount of profit.

We do know that, because the minister himself said so, every year you carry and not develop that land, it is costing you roughly about a half million

dollars a year. We do know that the housing prices and land prices have not gone through the roof in the province of Manitoba. It has actually gone the opposite way in some areas or sectors of the city of Winnipeg.

I am not entirely convinced that we are still going to see that \$10 million. At the time, the then-Minister of Housing provided us a spreadsheet. The spreadsheet said, from Year 1 to Year 5, when MMRC was going to be receiving its largest sum of money, this is how much we can anticipate. This is going to be—following that is going to be some dry years, if you like, but then at the tail end, we will come in and we are expecting to get this \$10 million.

Has the current Minister of Housing entered into any new agreements or have there been any changes to the old agreement? Does the minister have those tables that were provided to us previously?

**Mr. Ernst:** The only changes, Madam Chairperson, from the original agreement are with respect to the trustee and nominee company, which is a technical change, if you like. It does not materially affect what happens, only who is the appropriate person and so on. I suppose we have the spreadsheet somewhere in the files. I do not have them with me with respect to that subdivision.

The fact of the matter is that an agreement was entered into, whether the member likes it or not, before I became the minister some three or four years ago. The fact of the matter is now that I am the minister, I am charged with the responsibility of trying to deal with this property in an appropriate manner. That is what we believe we are doing.

Both ourselves and our joint venture partners see this as an opportunity. We have had significant interest from the building community for this particular property. We are hopeful that it is going to be wildly successful, but it is a gamble. It is like anything else when you undertake something for profit; there is a risk involved. The member for Inkster has the benefit of hindsight as a member of the opposition as to what has happened as opposed to what might happen in the future.

From our point of view, we have the responsibility to have some foresight, to try and plan, to try and do what is expected to be able to return the best value for this property, property that collectively this government inherited from previous governments.

Whether the acquisition of the property at the time was a good idea or not, whether ultimately what can be made from this property will prove to be financially desirable in the long term or not, who knows?

A lot of that has to do with the fact that the original reason it was purchased was as a hedge against inflating housing prices in the city of Winnipeg. It was not intended for social housing projects. It was intended to be a hedge against lot prices that were inflating dramatically during the early 1970s. We still have significant acreage in south Winnipeg, particularly in the Fort Garry area, probably a thousand acres or more in that area still. We are attempting from time to time to sell isolated parcels. We have not attempted to market that because of its very significant size and the fact that ultimately at some point when Whyte Ridge is full and Lindenwoods is full, it is the next logical area to develop. So if we are the majority property owner in that area, then we might do a joint venture agreement as the City of Winnipeg did on Lindenwoods.

I am not sure whether the member is aware that City of Winnipeg owned 50 percent of the property that is contained in Lindenwoods and Genstar is the joint venture partner on that property. Ultimately, we will see what will happen in that area, but in this particular area indications are so far at least that it is looking good. We anticipate to be on track ultimately with what we are anticipating receiving from the development.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Madam Chairperson, the minister is quite right when he says hindsight is a wonderful thing to be able to go from. I can recall when we were giving these same very warnings to the then Minister of Housing and we do not want to say an "I told you so" of sorts, but in fact the bottom line is the government then made a commitment about the land banks and the divestiture of these land banks.

At that time, we were not convinced that the government was in fact proceeding in a favourable fashion in terms of some of the tendering and the manners in which they had gone out—or I should say, this particular one was approved. There was a big question mark that was put on it which then caused us to ask a number of questions as to why Genstar was turned down.



I believe, in listening to the minister's remarks today, he is talking about the land bank in a positive way in terms of joint ventures. Again, we encourage the joint ventures, but we need to hear the assurances from this government in terms of how it plans to proceed with a number of potential joint ventures.

Before I leave the Ladco deal and go on to other usages of the land banks that we currently have, I would ask the minister, at any point in time, would Ladco have been in violation of the old agreement for putting it off? Did the government have any control over pushing it ahead, had the government or MHRC decided that those lots could have been developed?

**Mr. Ernst:** Madam Chair, we have a management committee with two representatives from Ladco and two representatives from MHRC. That committee meets regularly to discuss and plan and do the things that are necessary to implement the joint venture agreement.

From Day One, this has moved diligently forward. It did take a considerable length of time before the City of Winnipeg to get the zoning and subdivision, as I indicated earlier, development agreement put together. That is not unusual. Private sector developments, in fact, routinely complain about the length of time it takes to get through that process, and it can take upwards of two and three years to do that. We have seen some that have taken 10 years, I can remember, having served on City Council for some time. In any event, the whole thing has been proceeding as it should.

\* (1640)

The question of whether proceeding with the development—now, the servicing of the development was a joint-venture decision that took place last year. It was determined by all information available to the joint-venture partnership, and the advice of the joint-venture operating partner, Ladco, that it was time to start and this is how we should do it. We should do it on a limited basis on just a small number of lots in the initial phases to see how it is going to go, but to go with anything requires a certain basic infrastructure to be put into place. That is what has occurred and is occurring at the present time.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Finally, Madam Chairperson, can the minister provide the servicing cost of

not—because we did not go ahead with it back in 1990, between then and now by not developing, that particular cost, and also provide, if not to the House, to myself, an updated table indicating in terms of what the projections are?

**Mr. Ernst:** Madam Chairperson, I have no idea what the costs would have been in 1990. We would not know what the costs would have been in 1990 because they were not tendered in 1990. So for us to provide the difference between what it might have been in 1990 and the cost today is almost impossible to provide to the member.

With respect to the potential for an updated spreadsheet, I will inquire as to what is associated with that and I can assess the matter further for the member for Inkster when I get that information.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Just to confirm, the Minister of Housing is saying that there is no maintenance cost for holding the land.

**Mr. Ernst:** I am sorry, I guess I misunderstood the question. I thought he asked what the cost would have been if we developed it in 1990 as opposed to now.

The carrying cost of the land over that period of time we can provide.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** I would like to move on in terms of the land banking and the policy of the government with respect to land banking, the number of acres in particular within the city of Winnipeg, because I believe that is where most of the land banking was done from the former administration and give us some sort of an update in terms of acreage that we have and if in fact there have been any other deals entered into.

**Mr. Ernst:** I do not have details with respect to total acreages and locations and so on, with the exception of the Fort Garry lands which are located south of Island Lakes, by and large, or Whyte Ridge Industrial Park area, which is a large consolidated piece of land. Apart from that and the Leaf Rapids property, I do not think we have very many others left. We have sold off most of the parcels of land within the city of Winnipeg over the past several years. We had some isolated parcels here and there that have ultimately been sold.

With respect to potential developments, we are in discussions at the moment with respect to a joint venture agreement on lands in the Meadows West, Stage II, in the member's constituency, I believe.

So we are in discussions with regard to that development, and hopefully we are going to be in a position to get on with that project in the not too distant future.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Madam Chairperson, does the minister have at hand a listing of those properties in the city of Winnipeg where there is, let us say, more than five acres that the province owns for residential.

**Mr. Ernst:** I am sure we do, but I do not have it here. I can undertake to provide that to the member. I am sure we have one.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** The reason why I want to know is I want to try to establish in terms of how much this government has been in terms of divesting the land that we have banked through the '70s, specifically dealing with the Meadows West. When are we anticipating the development of that particular project?

**Mr. Ernst:** We are in the process of negotiations at the moment with respect to a joint venture partner. So ultimately once that is established then we will have to examine where we go from there and what the potential is for return on our investment, projected sales and things of that nature. There is some preliminary information at the moment, but we are in the process of negotiating the joint venture partnership at the moment, and so I am not able yet to provide final details with respect to that.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** I know that Genstar was interested in that particular property. In fact, they were wanting to develop south Winnipeg along with the Meadows West piece of property. Can I ask the minister was there a tendering process that went out for that particular project?

**Mr. Ernst:** We had, Madam Chairperson, a public proposal call in May of 1992 for that property. We had five proposals being submitted from four different proponents. One proponent filed two different offers, but none of them was Genstar.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** I know—at least I had thought that Genstar had a rather major plot of land right beside it. It somewhat surprises me that they would not have submitted a proposal call for that, but to each their own. If they do not want to, they do not have to.

Can the minister indicate, since his government was first elected back in 1988, how many proposal

calls they have had on different plots for residential development?

**Mr. Ernst:** Four, Madam Chairperson: two in Winnipeg, that is the St. Boniface property, Royale Wood, and Meadows West; and two in Selkirk on the same property, Woodlands, I believe it is called, two separate proposal calls on that property.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** I am wondering if the minister can indicate why it is, again, when the former Minister of Housing talked very highly of divesting some of the land banks and the positive aspects of these joint ventures, if we have had four—I know that in the city of Winnipeg there are a number of properties and it ranges from the five acres to the 200-plus acre plots of land. Is the government at all looking in any major way of divesting itself of other land banks at this point in time?

**Mr. Ernst:** We have, Madam Chairperson, viewed these parcels, the two proposal calls that we have had in Winnipeg, as the only ones that are kind of immediately developable in terms of subdivision and sale of lots. We have a number of other parcels inside Winnipeg which have been sold on an individual basis, not on a joint venture, simply saying, here it is, you know; if you want to buy it, we can put an ad in the paper, advertise it, get bids on it. If the bids are good enough, we sell it, and if they are not, we do not.

I can think of 20 acres here, 10 acres there. It was five acres, for instance, in Charleswood that were sold within the last couple of years. There was I think 20 acres in south Transcona. I am just going from memory at the moment. We have had a number of parcels of those kinds of things we have sold.

\* (1650)

We have other lands, significant holdings elsewhere, but they are outside the urban limit line. So in terms of development, it is not imminent, and for us to sell it is questionable, I guess. First of all, if you can find anybody to buy it for any kind of reasonable price at all, and then if you did, should you sell it for \$2,000 or \$3,000 an acre for kind of long 15-, 20-year development purposes or whether you hang on to it and continue to mount those costs.

Up to this point there has not been a lot of interest so that even if you did advertise a thousand acres in south Fort Garry, who is going to buy it, unless somebody like Genstar came along and

offered you \$500 an acre or something for it, which is unlikely that we would have accepted. So it is one of those things you monitor as the market progresses and we see what is happening in the marketplace. If there is an opportunity to jump in, we jump in.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** It is interesting, Madam Chairperson, the minister says, who is going to buy it when he could quite easily say in terms of who is going to sell it. Many individuals in fact do not sell property, because it is in such a depressed market. It begs the question in terms of, how are these parcels of land being held accountable to the taxpayers? You know, you put in an advertisement, what controls are in place to ensure that there is a reasonable, even market value? Like, if you want to sell one of the vacant lots in Meadows West, you are not going to get very much for it. If in fact the government decided that it was going to go into divestiture of all these little, relatively small, vacant lots it could in fact assist in keeping down the lot prices potentially, and it is a question in terms of, when is in fact the best time to sell?

Maybe what I should be asking the minister, is he selling properties today, or does he feel or is it government policy to hold off on selling property until market value increases? So I would ask him those two questions. The one is dealing with the whole question of accountability, other than the fact that you have an advertisement in the newspaper—how is it, if he can just kind of walk me through it, how are we assured? Like, we would not see an O/C, I take it, Order-in-Council, if a piece of property was sold and who the buyer is and so forth.

**Mr. Ernst:** In terms of the sale of individual parcels of MHRC property, they are first of all identified by MHRC as being surplus to our needs or not surplus to our needs. If they are declared by MHRC Board to be surplus to our needs, then they are circulated amongst City of Winnipeg, if it is in Winnipeg, and all government departments, to determine if they have any need for the property.

If they have no need, then it is put up for public tender. If we determine what a current fair market value of the property is either by appraisal or by internal staff considerations, and if the prices coming from any proposed tender are in the vicinity of our expectations, then the property is negotiated and sold.

The Provincial Auditor regularly audits all of these transactions and so on to determine whether or not the act is being followed and appropriate accounting practices are being followed and things of that nature. We do that on a regular basis. There is a formula in place.

I give an example. We had a proposal from the Islamic Association of Manitoba to buy nine acres of land out of the Fort Garry land bank on Waverley Street, outside the urban limit line, for the purposes of constructing a temple, a mosque I believe. So initially, when the offer came in, we said, hold on, let us find out what it is worth. So we did that, went through that process. Our appraisal, I believe, at the time determined what the property was worth.

Then we consulted extensively with the City of Winnipeg to determine, because this property is outside the urban limit line, it is on the west side of Waverley Street, what are the proprieties of allowing a development to take place here? We have seen that there is a Sikh temple, for instance, on Sturgeon Road, north of Saskatchewan Avenue, out kind of in the middle of a farmer's field there, that has presented some problems from time to time to the City of Winnipeg in terms of how do you service things like that and so on.

So we consulted extensively with the city to determine, if we did sell it to these people, how would you view it? How are you going to service it? Is it a problem? How do you deal with sewer and water? How do you deal with a variety of issues related to traffic—Waverley is a very busy street in that area—to provide curb cuts and things of that nature? All of those kinds of things we considered.

When that was all cleared through the City of Winnipeg, then we said, fine, okay. It really does not affect our overall land holdings in that area. It is kind of on one little corner. So we sold it, took the offer. Again, there are a variety of processes that are in place, and it really has to deal with the issue of, ultimately, best business practice related to the sale of the property.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Madam Chairperson, I see we are getting close to five o'clock, and maybe what I can do is just talk in terms of this nonprofit housing. It is estimated that we have, as I say, I believe it is in excess of 20,000 nonprofit housing units. What I would like to be able to have is some form of a breakdown between now, let us say, and eight o'clock.

For example, the nonprofit housing units, how many of those would be housing co-op units? How many of them would be jointly funded if you have, for example, the Life Lease program, in terms of number of units, that sort of thing—something I would think that you would have maybe even published in one of the annual reports, so at least at eight o'clock we can enter into a discussion on alternatives to nonprofit housing. So I would ask if, in fact, the minister would be able to get those numbers.

**Mr. Ernst:** Madam Chairperson, that is absolutely ridiculous that the member would come in here at five minutes to five or two minutes to five and suggest by eight o'clock tonight that the government should provide a complete breakdown of 20,000 public housing units plus all of the ones that are not public housing, but have had some kind of involvement under the RentalStart program or Life Lease units or anything like that.

We have been in Estimates, we have been in session here since March. He could have easily asked me at any time, for Estimates, would you provide this kind of information? I did not get any of that. Now at two minutes to five he is asking me to provide that. That is not possible.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Madam Chairperson, I guess we will pick it up at eight o'clock, no doubt. I do not think it is that cumbersome to have asked a question in terms of—I am not saying, we have 342 housing co-op units in such and such location. I do not believe it is an unreasonable request whatsoever. If the minister wants questions to be put forward to him well in advance of the Estimates, maybe we should do away with the Estimates process and then the minister should just table the responses to the questions that have been given to him.

The idea behind the Estimates is to be able to ask questions of the minister when the minister has his staff available. I believe that the numbers are in fact available, that it is not a cumbersome job for the minister to ask a question of the department heads, to be able to respond to legitimate questions so that we can have a dialogue, whether it is on policy or whether it is on a breakdown of finer numbers so that in fact we can tell if government dollars are being spent appropriately and where it is possible to find out where there are alternatives to nonprofit housing, in how government can spend

its money better so the taxpayers will benefit and also the recipients that live in nonprofit housing.

I do not believe that the request was absolutely unreasonable, that the Minister of Housing does have some form of numbers. If he does not have a general idea on it, then I do not believe he is doing his homework as the Minister of Housing.

I would ask again if the Minister of Housing, for example—

**Madam Chairperson:** Order, please. The hour being 5 p.m. and time for private members' hour, committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

## IN SESSION

### Committee Changes

**Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development be amended as follows: Thompson (Mr. Ashton) for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen); Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), for Tuesday, July 6, 9 a.m.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Mr. Jack Reimer (Niakwa):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development, sitting tomorrow at 9 a.m., be amended as follows: Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey) for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik); Steinbach (Mr. Driedger) for Riel (Mr. Ducharme).

Also, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments, sitting tomorrow at 9 a.m., be amended as follows: Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister); and Riel (Mr. Ducharme) for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay).

**Motions agreed to.**

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

**Mr. Speaker:** The hour being 5 p.m., it is time for Private Member's Business.

## PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

### Res. 39—Volunteer RCMP

**Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner),

WHEREAS Auxiliary Policing Programs were initially developed to provide an auxiliary force of trained volunteers to assist regular RCMP members in the event of natural disasters; and

WHEREAS the emphasis of the Auxiliary Policing Programs has gradually shifted toward viewing the program as an extension of the community-based policing concept; and

WHEREAS community-based policing programs have proven successful in Alberta, British Columbia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland; and

WHEREAS the introduction of the Auxiliary Constable Program in Manitoba will mean that eight rural Manitoba communities will benefit from an additional 27 auxiliary constables; and

WHEREAS these 27 auxiliary constables will assist regular RCMP members with crime prevention programs, traffic control, protection of crime scenes and emergency situations; and

WHEREAS this program will not replace regular RCMP members, but rather directly involve community members in crime prevention and foster a positive attitude between community members and law enforcement officials.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba commend the government of Manitoba for introducing the Auxiliary Constable Program in Manitoba; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba support the efforts of the auxiliary constables in Manitoba.

#### **Motion presented.**

**Mr. McAlpine:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to stand in the Chamber here this afternoon to speak on the volunteer Auxiliary Constable Program.

The Auxiliary Policing Programs were initially developed to provide an auxiliary force of trained volunteers to be called upon in the event of natural disasters such as floods and forest fires. I think we experienced that in the last week with the forest fires in Lynn Lake and the flooding out in the northwestern part of the province this past week.

Emphasis has gradually shifted more towards viewing the program as the logical extension of the community-based policing concept.

Auxiliaries are not meant to be replacements for regular force members; rather they are public-spirited volunteer citizens performing duties which complement and assist those performed by the RCMP regular members.

An auxiliary constable, Mr. Speaker, accompanies RCMP officers on their daily patrols and has peace officer status while with an on-duty police officer, with the exception of carrying firearms. That is the case in Manitoba. In some provinces—I think one in particular, British Columbia—voluntary auxiliary RCMP, after a certain amount of training, are permitted to carry firearms. This is something that is also of concern to regular members of the RCMP where the auxiliary constable or the auxiliary volunteer would serve as a backup in the case of an emergency and going into an unknown situation where the RCMP member or the regular constable would require somebody to serve as a backup in certain situations.

The auxiliary constables assist in the performance of all normal duties, from highway traffic violations to impaired-driving spot checks, et cetera, directing traffic, all things that will assist the regular members in their duties as RCMP constables.

Participation in the program is voluntary and the volunteers are not paid in any way for what they do. Their time that they do serve is also voluntary. They would tell the staff sergeant or the person who is in charge of the detachment when they would be available, and in some cases they are given a schedule or a shift schedule and in other cases they merely volunteer when they show up on a particular evening or on a particular day. Consequently there is no requirement on their part to do anything other than that and to do as they are asked to do as far as serving the constable in the performing of their normal duties.

Participation in the program, as I indicated, is strictly voluntary, and all other members that wish to participate in this program can do so and there is no restriction in terms of age or anything like that.

All other western provinces as well as New Brunswick and Newfoundland have existing RCMP auxiliary policing programs which have provided a

successful and effective means of improving police service to the public and enhancing the quality of police-community relations. Certainly this is an opportunity where people may not have an appreciation for what an RCMP officer does have, but where in fact a volunteer in a community would be able to relate more with the community in some cases because they would be looked on a little differently than, say, an RCMP officer.

The interaction between the police and the citizens promotes greater understanding and open communication, and as a result the community becomes an active agent and consultative partner in promoting security rather than a passive recipient of policing services.

Although there are no age restrictions, as I indicated, on the volunteer constable, male or female, in most cases the individuals will be in their younger adult years. However, I am told that there is at least one exception, in one case a former Justice of the Peace who is engaged in this volunteer experience. He has volunteered to gain further knowledge and first-hand understanding and experience of law enforcement, and he wishes to get to this level of the grassroots in dealing with the people, so he has a complete understanding of what police officers are faced with and what they will have to do and what they will encounter in their normal day-to-day duties.

\* (1710)

The commitment by the individual in every case is strictly voluntary. In this particular instance, I understand that the volunteer member, who is the justice of the peace, has contributed greatly with the hours that he has put in.

The program offers lots of potential for anyone who is considering police work or as a career, for example, or someone who just wants to gain an appreciation for police work or to do volunteer work in a meaningful way and to gain some understanding and knowledge at the same time.

This, from that aspect, could be very worthwhile, not only for the community, but for the individual. So there will be a reciprocal kind of appreciation and understanding that these, both parties, would benefit.

Both sides will benefit from the involvement of an RCMP constable and a volunteer auxiliary who is serving as a backup. These volunteers, as you can appreciate, can be very valuable and cost-

effective. Although they will not serve as a full-fledged member of the force, they will still be able to do things that a member would be able to do at no cost to the province or no cost to the force.

So I think this is a valuable opportunity for us to take advantage of auxiliary police officers. The training that these people will gain as a result of that will be invaluable, not something that is going to only last for a short time, but these people will have an appreciation for police work and the work that they are going to do for the community for the rest of their lives.

As a matter of fact, I am told that this can save the province a considerable amount of money in terms of the numbers when you add up the number of hours that these volunteers will put in. That is something that we maybe do not have a complete appreciation and understanding of what our volunteer component is about in this province. I think we are very rich in the province of Manitoba with the volunteer spirit and the volunteer involvement in whatever volunteers will participate and that we have experienced with the different games that have come to the province and the success that these people have had in doing the work as the volunteers are capable of doing.

The individual is given, with the case of the RCMP auxiliary, the basic training of the work of the police officer. They do not go into the same extent that they would as a member, say in Saskatchewan, where they go through a very strict and disciplined training program in I think it is something like 11 months. In the case of the volunteer, I think it is only a matter of a couple of weeks, and then it is hands-on experience from there on.

They are trained on how the law works, the importance of exhibits in terms of investigative work and the responsibilities of achieving and gaining these exhibits, say like on an impaired driving charge of being able to have something that they can use in court as an exhibit and the objectives of the police work in terms of fulfilling a charge or completing a charge through to completion and of the violation and the charge being successful.

These volunteers are more than good will ambassadors as a lot of people might think that they are. Although this is important, it is also our times placed in circumstances as a normal constable. As you can well appreciate in instances

where we—maybe a volunteer and serving as a backup for that individual member, there are many instances where you could go into a situation as a result, say, a domestic situation where it becomes violent and this auxiliary volunteer would have to serve as a backup for that member until other assistance could be found and come to the scene.

So I think that this is certainly an opportunity for us in Manitoba to take full advantage of the volunteer auxiliary police constable. Not only are we going to benefit as legislators, but the RCMP as well as the volunteers themselves, I think there is a tremendous amount of experience that they can gain as a result of this.

I am told that the auxiliary constables—the first year of the program a total of 27 auxiliary constables will be introduced in the following communities: Gimli will have three; Steinbach will have three; Beausejour, three; Lac du Bonnet, four; Stonewall, four; Selkirk, four; St. Pierre, three; and The Pas, three.

In the second year, they are looking at increasing the numbers from 27 to 60, so this is going to be a significant contribution on the part of volunteers in the province and throughout the communities as far as our province is concerned. I really commend all the parties that are working with this part of the volunteer program. I commend the RCMP for their involvement. I commend the volunteers for the contribution that they are making and the risks that they are taking, because there are many times when they are probably putting their lives on the line, just like members are. I think it is important that we continue to do these sort of things and to get back to the grassroots as far as the members on a volunteer basis. I do not think we can underestimate the volunteer component of our province here.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to the resolution, the private member's resolution as brought forward by the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) this evening.

It is a very interesting resolution and one that, unlike a lot of the resolutions and the bills and the legislation that this government brings forward, is not one that is on the surface easy to criticize. However, I will do my best to be very constructive in my criticism and to compliment and to be positive in

the areas that I think it is important where that is justified.

This resolution speaks of volunteerism in many ways, and we on this side of the House fully ascribe to the importance of volunteers in our community lives. I think that virtually every single person in this Legislative Chamber has participated in volunteer activities throughout their lives, maybe not as frequently now as they are members of the Legislature as they would be able to before they were members of the Legislative Assembly, which shuts down a lot of extra time that members have.

We all have our personal experiences with volunteerism and we all have our sense of the role of volunteers and the important role that volunteers play in our society and in our lives. So as far as the concept of volunteer is concerned, we on this side of the House heartily join in the congratulations and the importance that this private member's resolution places on the roles that volunteers have in our society.

However, in this particular context I have some problems with the program, and I do not mean to categorically state that this is a program without redeeming features because that is not my feeling nor is it my position. I do think that we have to be very careful when we talk about the use of volunteers in law enforcement, particularly when we talk about the use of volunteers in areas such as—the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) used as an example—domestic violence, as a backup to domestic violence incidents.

\* (1720)

I really need to be very much reassured, more than I have been by the information placed before us today, that this program provides an adequate level of training and supervision to these volunteers and these auxiliary members that will not place themselves or the RCMP officers that they are with or the people that they come in contact with into any jeopardy. I am frankly not convinced at this point that that situation is currently what takes place within the program.

The training, according to the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), is two weeks, whereas the training in the Saskatchewan program is 11 months. Now, there is no doubt in my mind that useful jobs can be performed after two weeks of training, no question about that, but the member

for Sturgeon Creek talks about an example of an auxiliary RCMP officer after two weeks of training going in and being a backup in a domestic incident. Now that, Mr. Speaker, sends up alarm bells in my thinking, and I think should send up some alarm bells in the rest of us as well. I think you need to be very careful and you need to structure very carefully the parameters of the training and the parameters of the duties and jobs that these volunteers will be assigned.

There is no age restriction, Mr. Speaker. So a volunteer, I am assuming, would be someone who was at least—well, I do not know what the lower age restriction would be. I guess I would question the program and ask for clarification as to why there is no lower age restriction. We are not talking about a candy striper who goes into a hospital setting, who is very closely supervised, who has very specific duties to do in a hospital setting which are duties that have virtually no direct contact with the health care system basically. They are not there to do nurses' work. They are not there to do orderly work. They are not there to do doctor work. They are not there to do any of the work of the health care professionals. They are there to provide an extra service to make the quality of life for the people in the hospital better.

Now, that kind of auxiliary, it seems to me, is something that is perfectly legitimate and acceptable and an excellent use of volunteer hours. I frankly have a hard time equating the kind of auxiliary work that is done in a hospital setting with the potentially very dangerous work that is being looked at for the RCMP auxiliary police, particularly if there is a small amount of training, very short amount of training, particularly if there are no age restrictions.

Back to training—it talks about two weeks of training for the auxiliary RCMP officers. There is nowhere mentioned, either in the resolution nor in the member for Sturgeon Creek's (Mr. McAlpine) speaking to that resolution, any information about training of the RCMP officers themselves to supervise these auxiliary members.

I think this is something that we sometimes forget when we are talking in terms of volunteers. Volunteers are a very positive resource, but they are not free. They are not free in the sense that you must spend resources, human and financial, to train them. You must spend resources, human and financial, to ensure that the people that they are

working with understand their role and know how to work with them.

I can see where it is a very different situation if an RCMP officer who has gone through the years of training that he or she must do is working with another RCMP officer who has also gone through that same training. That team, if you will, Mr. Speaker, understands each other, they come from the same major training components, they work together as a team.

When you put an auxiliary person, who is potentially a 16- or 17-year-old with two weeks of training, into a situation working with, in a very unstructured way, perhaps, an RCMP officer, you have potentially, and I am speaking only potentially, the recipe for some very negative occurrences to take place.

I am not saying this is actually what is going to happen. I am just saying that the resolution, as it is being put forward and as the member has spoken to it, is very unclear, and there are questions that we would need to have answered, Mr. Speaker, before we could wholeheartedly support this resolution.

The whole issue of screening for the volunteers—you just do not ever in any situation take without question anybody who comes to your organization or into your group as a volunteer. We have seen, to all of our horror, Mr. Speaker, incidents where people have been placed in situations of trust working with children in a volunteer capacity where they have shown that they are incapable of fulfilling that trust role. We have all learned, and I am thankful that we have, I think, learned that you have to be very careful to screen volunteers in many situations.

I would suggest that this is a particularly important kind of program to have a very good screening system in place, because you are asking these auxiliary members to go into a range of kinds of events, you are asking them to do a number of things with a very small amount of training, and you are also asking the RCMP officers to work with these people knowing that they have limited training and background in this situation.

I think it is essential that you have a good screening process in place as well for this program to work. I would like to see, as well, an age restriction, not an upper-age restriction, but a lower-age restriction. You are putting people into



situations where there is potential for danger, where there is an enormous amount of judgment involved. You do not hire, and you do not put RCMP or police officers on the street or in their cars or in the community without a very long and strenuous screening and orientation and training process. Auxiliaries, even though they are volunteers, should have maybe not the complete equivalent of screening and training, but certainly more screening and training and restrictions than would appear to be the case in this situation.

Again, Mr. Speaker, the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) talks about the fact that this program will not replace regular RCMP officers. He made that point not only in the resolution but in his discussing the resolution several times, which I think is an essential point that must be taken into account in this situation. These auxiliary personnel should not be seen as replacing the work of the RCMP officers. They should be seen as enhancing the work of the RCMP, just as a candy stripper or a volunteer in a hospital setting under no circumstances is seen by anyone in that situation, neither the patient nor the volunteer his or herself nor the hospital staff, as anything but an augmenting of the services provided to the patient. So, in this case, it should be absolutely clear at all times that these volunteers are additional, not instead of the regular RCMP.

I make that point very clearly, Mr. Speaker, or I hope I am making it very clearly, because while the resolution itself says that very clearly, the member for Sturgeon Creek in his comments reflected a slightly different view of this whole situation and one that really rings the alarm bells for me, and I think I speak for the members of my caucus. That is he talks about the fact that this is a cost-effective measure and that it will provide no cost, it will be done with no cost.

Now, as I stated earlier, you never have a volunteer program in place with no cost. You must, if you are going to have a well-run volunteer program and certainly one that is in as an essential and potentially sensitive area as RCMP work, that program has to have costs attached to it. It has to have training costs attached to it. It has to have enough staff to do an effective screening, an effective orientation, effective training and effective follow-up, Mr. Speaker, because you put these people into situations where neither they, at the beginning, nor the RCMP officers themselves know

exactly what is going to happen. Some people will make it, others will not. That is the way of the world.

\* (1730)

So if you do not have those supports in place, which cost, then you are not having an effective program, and you run the risk of replacing rather than augmenting essential services, and services that relate very closely to our health and well-being and, in some cases, to our lives. We are talking critical instances here.

So it is not a no-cost program. The member for Sturgeon Creek may not have meant that when he said it, but I want to make it very clear that for this to be effective, there is a cost attached to it. It can be, Mr. Speaker, cost-effective, again, if the program is seen in the proper light, I believe. It is cost-effective if it does the sorts of things that the final WHEREAS states, which is: directly involve community members in crime prevention and foster a positive attitude between community members and law enforcement officials.

This can be a very cost-effective part of this program and one that we would very clearly support, because we are on record as talking a great deal in this House about the importance of prevention and the importance of community acceptance of the RCMP, the police, the justice system in general.

So the last thing we want to do is to broaden that gulf. We want to narrow it, and there is the potential for that narrowing to happen here, but only if there are certain safeguards and structures and constrictions placed on this.

So with those comments, I end my comments.

### House Business

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Prior to recognizing the honourable member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie), I will recognize the honourable government House leader (Mr. Manness) with committee changes, I believe.

**Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader):** House business, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to have the unanimous consent of the House to transfer Bill 3, The Oil and Gas and Consequential Amendments Act, from the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural

Resources to the Standing Committee on Law Amendments.

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the honourable government House leader have leave to switch that bill from one committee to the next? Leave? Just transferring from one committee to another. Is there leave? [agreed]

**Mr. Manness:** Mr. Speaker, I also would ask whether there is unanimous consent to waive the rules to allow new departments to be introduced after ten o'clock tonight.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there leave to allow new departments to be introduced after 10 p.m. Leave? Denied.

### Committee Change

**Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface):** I move, seconded by the member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development be amended as follows: River Heights for Osborne (Mr. Alcock).

**Mr. Speaker:** Agreed? [agreed]

\* \* \*

**Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to spend a few minutes discussing the resolution that is proposed by the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine).

As my colleague before me suggested, there is certainly a great deal of sympathy on this side for the intent behind this resolution. In fact, the program itself, I think everyone recognizes, has the potential for significant benefit to some of our communities.

But, Mr. Speaker, on the other hand, as my colleague did suggest, there are some areas of concern. Whether you raise the concern from the perspective of potential RCMP officers, those who are concerned about the impact that this auxiliary force might have on the duties, the obligations, the need for additional police officers, whether it is the RCMP or others, I think, is a question that has to be raised.

I want to talk about the principle behind the resolution, first of all. [interjection] The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), of course, from his seat continues to chirp, and he will have an opportunity to put his thoughts, regardless of how meaningless,

on the record at a time of his choosing. We will all listen with bated breath to his counsel.

Mr. Speaker, the problem that I have in general with resolutions of this kind is that the government continues to serve these up on a consistent basis from members of the back bench to applaud itself, to pat itself on the back. I wanted to spend a few minutes of time suggesting that what we really need from the back bench of this government is some independent thinking. What we really need, instead of the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) saying to the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), to suggest that maybe he has a legitimate concern in his constituency, an issue which the government is not raising, an issue which is of concern to the Legislature, that he bring that forward, the government writes a resolution for the member and says here, Mr. Member, Mr. Backbencher, why do you not present this and pat the government on the back?

Mr. Speaker, that is what we have seen from government backbenchers for the last three years. Instead of thoughtful, important resolutions, we have backslapping resolutions from the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) and for other members of the back bench. The question is: Where is the independent thinking? Where is the critical analysis?

Mr. Speaker, this government has failed in virtually every economic initiative it has begun. Those have been few and far between. Where is the member for Sturgeon Creek on a resolution calling on the government to get busy and correct the problems that exist, for example, in the Grow Bond program? Where are the members for rural Manitoba calling on the government to correct some of the deficiencies in the REDI program, flaws and deficiencies that are self-evident, flaws that have been recognized and commented upon by the chambers of commerce, by every group in the province of Manitoba?

Instead, we get—

**An Honourable Member:** Every group in the province of Manitoba?

**Mr. Storie:** Every group that is studying economic development, every group that is interested in economic development. The fact of the matter is—

### Point of Order

**Mr. McAlpine:** Mr. Speaker, I think the member is straying off the track of the resolution. He is talking about economic development and everything like that. I think that the member clearly understands that we are talking about volunteer auxiliary RCMP, and I think you might suggest that he get back on the topic, please.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable member, I do not believe, has a point of order. I believe the honourable member for Flin Fion (Mr. Storie) is being relevant.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Storie:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The point I was trying to make—and I appreciate the issue that is raised by the member for Sturgeon Creek—is that this resolution, the resolution that we are talking about here, Resolution 39, could have been more constructive.

Mr. Speaker, instead of being the kind of resolution that simply pats the government on the back, there are hundreds and hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of issues that require the attention of the government, and all the back-benchers have to do is to use their imagination, to use a modicum of independent thinking to raise those issues in the Legislature.

I suggest that the member for Sturgeon Creek consider withdrawing this resolution. Perhaps the member for Sturgeon Creek should consider reviewing some of the resolutions that have been put forward by my colleagues the Liberals and the opposition that have attempted to identify real issues, attempted to propose real solutions instead of this backslapping.

\* (1740)

I did want to spend also some time on the principle, the principle of volunteerism, which is the principle behind this resolution. I want to say that we on this side support the importance of having volunteers participate in one way or another in our society. There can be no doubt that volunteers contribute immensely to the well-being of our province. Whether you are talking about the volunteers who support recreational activities, the many hundreds and hundreds of people who coach, who are assistant coaches, who spend time supporting our young people in their recreational endeavours; whether you are talking about the

hundreds and hundreds of hours that are spent by groups like the chambers of commerce, the regional economic development groups, economic development commissions, there is virtually every municipal council in the province, they are contributing immensely to the well-being of our province, to our development.

**An Honourable Member:** Volunteer fire departments.

**Mr. Storie:** The member for Portage (Mr. Pallister) talks about volunteer fire departments. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, coming from northern Manitoba, the communities that I represent by and large rely on volunteer fire departments. They rely on the support of friends and neighbours when there is a fire. So there is nothing wrong with the principle.

The difficulty comes when you assume that is the first recourse and not the last recourse, when it assumes or suggests that this volunteer activity usurps some of the essential services that are currently being provided by firemen, by policemen, by law enforcement officers, Mr. Speaker, that we have an obligation as a society to provide a level of service that is roughly equivalent across the province, just as constitutionally we have that obligation as a nation.

What happens here is the obligation that falls on volunteers is disproportionate in smaller communities. In communities across the province where there is no fire department, there is no municipal police force, where there are limited government services, the obligations increasingly fall on individuals. Some of us on this side are concerned that that in itself is a dangerous direction, that the government can simply absolve itself of responsibility to deliver services by saying it is being taken care of by the volunteer sector.

That is true in terms of policing. It is as true there as it is in many other areas of service. While I respect, and members on this side respect the contribution that these volunteers in the Auxiliary Policing Program may contribute, their contribution is recognized, we should not equate that with policing services. We should not necessarily equate that with the level and the quality and the professionalism that you are going to get from the police forces in other parts of the province. The people in Winnipeg take it for granted. The people in Brandon take it for granted that there is a fire department that will look after their needs.

Mr. Speaker, people in South Indian Lake, people in Herb Lake, people in Sherridon do not take that for granted at all. There are volunteers doing that work.

So, the principle is fine. What we are concerned about is the sly, from some people's perspective anyway, that is occurring in the delivery of service across Manitoba. The intention of the government to provide an equal level of service is not apparent certainly to many people in rural Manitoba, to many people in northern Manitoba. We believe that has to be the first and foremost principle that the government has to accept.

When we get down to the RESOLVED in this resolution, when we get down to the resolution, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba commend the government of Manitoba for introducing the Auxiliary Constable Program in Manitoba—Mr. Speaker, I do not think it requires the member for Sturgeon Creek to submit a resolution to this House commending the government for doing something like that.

Mr. Speaker, we would all hope that the government would not require that kind of backslapping. I do not know any member of this Legislature who has stood up and opposed the Auxiliary Policing Program. I do not know of any member of the Legislature who has criticized that, so why do we require to spend the time of the Legislature debating this kind of intellectual pap?

I said before, and I await a correction from the member for Sturgeon Creek, that the member did not even prepare this. The Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) said, well, you know, the policing program is pretty good, why do you not submit a resolution saying what a wonderful job I have done on the policing program?

Mr. Speaker, there are legitimate problems out there facing Manitobans, legitimate problems. As much as we all love and admire the intention behind the Auxiliary Policing Program, I do not believe the member for Sturgeon Creek needs to be commended for introducing this kind of resolution.

It is self-serving in the worst. It abuses the time of private members' hour. It abuses the rights of the opposition parties in this Legislature, in particular, and it trivializes the whole process.

So I do not want to finish my remarks by suggesting in any way that my remarks should be construed as condemning or attempting to undermine this program. I am simply saying that the member did not have to introduce a resolution to get my approbation. The member could have asked me privately. In fact, if the member had been doing some independent thinking, had been concerned about the real issues, the issues that are affecting literally tens of thousands of young people, of unemployed, of people on social assistance, we could have had a resolution that would have had some meat to it and been worthy of everyone participating in the debate.

**Mr. George Hicketts (Point Douglas):** I just want to put a few comments on record here. The whole resolution on the surface looks like an excellent idea. It sounds good, and if it was workable it would be okay. But the only thing is that there are some things that are lacking in this, and it is very scary.

When you have a person that only has two weeks training, and you are putting him working with an RCMP officer, and all of a sudden if they are thrown into a dangerous situation, what you are actually doing is asking the RCMP to look out for themselves and also whoever they are supposed to be taking along. So if you look at the whole idea of volunteerism, like my colleague for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) was saying, when you look at the whole resolution and look at volunteers, you need to make sure that you have an adequate screening process, because a lot of times some volunteers get into volunteerism for the wrong reasons.

You have to make sure that you have adequate volunteer screening processes to make sure that the volunteers that you are recruiting have the adequate background in order to go into training and help the officers fulfill their duties.

Also, where would this stop when you have volunteer RCMP officers? If you go into a northern community that has 90 percent unemployment, how do you ask people to volunteer their time when they could be replacing an employment opportunity for someone out of that community? As you know, the RCMP deal with many issues, and when you stop someone on a highway, or stop somebody in a community, you do not really know what is going to happen and what to expect.

A lot of times when you pull someone over, it could be just a traffic violation, when you go approach that vehicle, if you have a confrontation, how will that individual with two weeks training react?

There are too many questions that are unanswered, and I think it has to be sort of looked at a lot more closely. If it was a volunteer position where you are recruiting young individuals, say 16, 17 years old, to work with the RCMP, and hopefully would look at it as a career opportunity to get the exposure of being an RCMP officer, that would be okay. But then they would have to pick and choose where these volunteers would attend with an RCMP officer, because you never know what is going to happen as soon as you stop someone. You never know.

\* (1750)

You do not know if they have a gun beside them or if they are going to attack the individual. Two weeks training, I just do not think is adequate, because when you are dealing with individuals, even the whole stress factor, how do these volunteers deal with that? The RCMP officers, the city police officers, they get this kind of training, so that they can deal with their stress. So when you talk about auxiliary constables, I do not know how that would really work. [interjection] Well, it is a volunteer service, and when you are depending on volunteers, you do not know what you are getting. What happens to the individuals?

Some are very impressive, and if they put the wrong person in that kind of position, without adequate training, that person could be very, very dangerous. That is how vigilantes start up. They say I will try to right the wrongs of the earth, and if you get one or two of those individuals as volunteer RCMP officers, with the authority given to them by the community or the government, anything can happen.

It is easy to say it will never happen, but my colleague was talking about volunteers that work with children, and she was saying that what happens with the volunteers that do work with children, a lot of times they are in it for the wrong reasons. You do get people that have abused children that they are supposed to be working with. So what would happen if you had a "Rambo" out there running loose that is given permission to do what they want? I do not know. Two weeks

training is not going to give you enough time to screen people out. [interjection]

The member wants to put a few things on record, so I will just end on that note.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, in essence what we have before us is a concept that I think is valid, but a concept which needs further exploration and further development. That is not what appears to be in place for this program at this particular point in time.

If one looks at the idea of a volunteer working with an RCMP officer in such programs as crime prevention, then it would appear that a limited training process may be all that is necessary. But if we are looking at a broadening of those duties, then I think a two-week training program is a very limited time for a young person to be given the kind of knowledge and expertise that RCMP officers themselves take years to learn.

I want to address a number of issues in this particular issue. First of all, let us begin with the screening of these individuals. If we are looking at a screening process necessary for an individual to work hand in hand and side by side with an RCMP officer, we are looking at a relatively costly process. Screening is not inexpensive. Screening requires making use of facilities at the national level as well as the provincial level in order to put these individuals through a computer system to make sure just what their past experiences have been. Have they had any infractions with the law? Do they have any summary convictions?

It is also necessary to get character witnesses for these particular individuals. It is also important to take a look at their own educational background and their school record and their pattern of behaviour, their attendance and that type of thing. I see nothing within this resolution or indeed the program itself to put into place that kind of screening procedure.

Then we look at the training. The member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) indicated quite clearly and quite accurately that training does not come cheaply. If you are going to train individuals so that they are going to act with appropriate protocols, then it takes time and effort to provide that training and a great deal of expertise. When you are talking about someone working in a field of traffic control, protection of crime scenes, emergency situations,

you are not looking at somebody who has little or no training. You are looking at somebody who should be given a great deal of training, and that training is going to have to be given by individuals who are also knowledgeable in the field.

Who is going to pay for those trainers? Who is going to provide the classrooms for that training to take place? Who is going to ensure that that training is followed up, not just in that two-week period, but on an ongoing basis to make sure that as these recruits are exposed to new and varied situations, they are also given the appropriate training along the way.

One thing that has not been mentioned, which I think is equally as important as the screening and the training, is the evaluation. Nowhere in this resolution do we talk about evaluation. How do we make sure that this individual, who has accepted a very significant and important volunteer function, is carrying out that volunteer function in an appropriate manner?

What we have heard of complaints in a number of nontrained personnel—and one of the reasons why the RCMP has such a first-class reputation in this country is that there is always, in addition to the training, a constant evaluation of their performance. One of the weaknesses that we have seen often in services—for example, the Quebec police—one of the criticisms that has been made time and time again through inquest after inquest has been their inadequacy of training, and that inadequacy of training has been coupled with an evaluation process that has been weak if it exists at all.

So if you are going to take these young people and you are going to turn them into volunteers, you not only have to provide them with training, but you have to make sure that they are constantly evaluated. You know, power can be a very dangerous thing, and when you put power in the hands of individuals without training, then you can have a very explosive situation.

I think all of us have looked sometimes with some amusement at people who, when they see a traffic, will take it upon themselves to get out of their car and start directing traffic. Whether they have any knowledge or expertise whatsoever, there they

are, and you can almost see the puffery growing in those individuals as they direct cars to the right and to the left and through. That is the kind of thing that can happen to a young person who has not been provided with the appropriate training to deal with this.

Mr. Speaker, one of the issues with which I will examine Hansard very carefully, because I did not hear the member say it, was the member for Wellington's (Ms. Barrett) comment that the member made reference to the volunteer being a backup in a domestic violence situation. That I find absolutely appalling. I cannot imagine putting someone with two weeks of training into a domestic violence situation. I mean we have a situation in which a woman has been beaten, or perhaps a child has been sexually or physically assaulted, and we are going to put someone with two weeks training as a backup for an RCMP officer in that kind of particular situation.

It is not mentioned in the resolution, but if the member did indeed mention it in his remarks, then I would suggest to him that was not his original intent or purpose in his resolution, or I would hope it was not his original intent and purpose, because it certainly should not be part of the function of a volunteer person to be on the scene in that kind of situation.

The other issue in the resolution which I also found some difficulty with was the protection of crime scenes. Now, on the surface, that may appear to be a very simple thing. The yellow lines or ribbons go up and you bring in a volunteer to be on the scene, but what happens if the person who has committed the crime returns to the scene of the crime in order to dislocate the evidence?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs) will have eight minutes remaining.

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**Mr. Speaker:** The hour being 6 p.m., I am leaving the Chair with the understanding that the House will resume at 8 p.m. in Committee of Supply.

