



Fifth Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(Hansard)

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	NDP
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	Liberal
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	NDP
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	NDP
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	PC
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
DUCHARME, Gerry, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	Liberal
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	NDP
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	PC
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	NDP
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Liberal
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	PC
GRAY, Avis	Crescentwood	Liberal
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	NDP
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Liberal
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Liberal
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	NDP
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	PC
MACKINTOSH, Gord	St. Johns	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	NDP
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	PC
McCORMICK, Norma	Osborne	Liberal
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
ROBINSON, Eric	Rupertsland	NDP
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ROSE, Bob	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	NDP
SHELLENBERG, Harry	Rossmere	NDP
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	NDP
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	PC
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	PC
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	NDP

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 14, 1994

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Committee of Supply

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairperson of Committees): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted certain resolutions, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinsson), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Housing): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review, the 1994-95 Departmental Expenditure Estimates for Manitoba Housing. As well, I am tabling the Annual Report 1992-93 for Housing, the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation and the Manitoba Housing Authority. I am pleased to table both of those at this time.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the Supplementary Estimates for Consumer and Corporate Affairs and the Fitness and Sport Directorates.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 215—The Private Vocational Schools Amendment Act

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that leave be given to introduce Bill 215, The Private Vocational Schools

Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles professionnelles privées, and that the same now be received and read a first time.

Motion presented.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Speaker, very briefly, we are aware that The Private Vocational Schools Act regulates private vocational schools, but we also know that individual contracts between the schools and government departments and agencies are not monitored.

This amendment act would require that schools which provide training have a better accounting to the Department of Education for the fees that they charge in the provision of their training. This will ensure that training which is offered to all Manitobans is of course valuable and cost-effective.

I would recommend this piece of legislation to all members of the Legislative Assembly.

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery, where we have with us this afternoon from the Souris School forty-five Grade 5 students under the direction of Mr. Glen Wallman and Ms. Theresa O'Brien. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose).

From the Rapid City School, we have twenty-two Grades 7 and 8 students under the direction of Mr. John Warkentin. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mr. Gilleshammer).

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

* (1335)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Winnipeg Development Agreement Economic Indicators

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey).

The planning document which I will table for the renewed Winnipeg Development Agreement has a number of very, very dramatic economic statements to it. I will quote: Given the slow economic growth of the Manitoba and Winnipeg economies, job prospects have been bleak for many newcomers, and the city has especially had many difficulties in terms of getting the necessary job skills.

It talks about the slow employment growth in Winnipeg as reflected in the high rates of out-migration. As many as 41,000 people have been part of out-migration from the province of Manitoba in the last five years in terms of when this government has been in office. Yet, when the government sent out their public relations document, there was very little mention of the economic realities. It is a very antiseptic document dealing with the challenges for the Winnipeg economy and the Manitoba economy.

I would like to ask the Deputy Premier, why have they omitted key economic data and the key economic factors that would be part of the public consultation process for the renewal of a new Core Area or Winnipeg Development Agreement?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Well, again, Mr. Speaker, I think everybody recognizes that over the last several years all of Canada has been struggling with job creation and struggling with unemployment rates and so on. The important point for the Leader of the Opposition to recognize is that in a relative sense Manitoba is doing quite well when we look at last year's job creation numbers, having the third highest job creation growth in all of Canada, and when we look at the number of full-time jobs created in Manitoba since April and May of last year, approximately 16,000 jobs.

Mr. Speaker, that document that the Leader of the Opposition is referring to is the basis of public consultations that the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh) will be co-chairing with the federal and municipal governments, and it is a part of preparing the discussions.

There are many, many economic indicators, many pieces of economic information that can be provided and certainly upon request will be provided. We are more than prepared to always talk about the traditional economic indicators and how Manitoba is faring because, in a relative sense, we are faring very well in Manitoba when it comes to job creation, unemployment rates, the limited number of bankruptcies and on and on.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, there are less people working today than when the government was sworn in in 1988. Those are the facts.

The document talks about the erosion of Manitoba's economy and erosion of Winnipeg's economy. It goes on to talk about the very, very high unemployment rate for aboriginal people. It talks about the job prospects, which have been bleak for many newcomers in this city of Winnipeg, and it talks about the fact that the overall unemployment rate in 1991 for Winnipeg was 8.7 percent. It is well over 10 percent now. This unemployment rate among aboriginal people was an alarming 30.3 percent. Yet, the document released by the three levels of government has as an assumption that we will have a program that will be city-wide. Now, we know the majority of aboriginal people in the city of Winnipeg live in the so-called inner city of the city of Winnipeg.

Why has this government dictated to the public that it will be a city-wide mandate? Why have they excluded key economic factors and key social factors in terms of the public consultation process, so that all of us can be involved in meeting the challenge that obviously is not being met by this government?

Mr. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, I will gladly debate economic indicators with the Leader of the Opposition on any occasion in terms of how Manitoba is faring and particularly how we are faring within Canada. I suggest to him that when

he makes suggestions about the job levels in April of 1988 to the job levels in 1994 that he check his facts and be very careful with what he is saying in terms of how jobs are today in Manitoba relative to that particular month.

We have had two previous agreements with two other levels of government, with the City of Winnipeg and with the federal government, that have dealt with a series of initiatives in certain physical parts of the city of Winnipeg. This one, in many elements, is broadening that to create opportunities throughout the city of Winnipeg for economic opportunities, for community opportunities and so on, and I gather from the Leader of the Opposition that he opposes that. He opposes seeing other regions within Winnipeg benefit as well from this agreement, which is something I would think that most Manitobans, most Winnipeggers would want to see.

That is not to suggest that good and worthwhile programs that benefit the core area in Winnipeg, that benefit the aboriginal community—they will be part of any ultimate agreement. We are offering opportunities for all Winnipeggers to participate in this agreement along with two other levels of government.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, if the minister will care to look at the May statistics that were out last Friday, he will find that we are correct and he is wrong.

Public Consultations

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): We have asked, on three or four previous occasions, through 1991, 1992, 1993 about the issue of public consultations. The government has said repeatedly that those public consultations are just around the corner. Finally, last week, we found that the public will be consulted for a day and a half, and they will get two weeks notice to be involved in this consultation process, unlike the consultations that went on with the initial Forks agreement, that went on for four months and numbers of public presentations. This is a very limited type of public consultation, with very limited time for the public to get ready.

Why has the government waited so long to get ready for public consultations and given the public so little time to get ready to present their positions to the government?

* (1340)

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, this is a three-level exercise we are going through. There are three levels of government. At the same time, the three levels of government have also been working very hard and very co-operatively on the infrastructure program. The infrastructure program is now up, announced and underway.

Our attention is now turned to the Winnipeg Development Agreement. Public hearings will be held this month, and contrary to what the Leader of the Opposition is saying, there will not just be a day and a half. There are also going to be special invitations—

An Honourable Member: That is what I said.

Mrs. McIntosh: You are talking about one aspect of the public consultation, one aspect only. You should do your homework. You know, you should never get up and ask a question unless you know the answer. [interjection]

If they would like to hear the answer, I would be pleased to provide it. There is one aspect of the public consultation process which will be the hearing the Leader of the Opposition has referred to. There will also be three special groups of people invited in by the three levels of government in different sectors of the city to discuss ideas and options that should be done in terms of community development, labour force development and economic development for the city.

CN Rail/CP Rail Merger Communication Strategy

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I have in my hands a copy of the Canadian National Railway Strategic Communications Plan dated May 24, 1994. In this plan, and I will read from the plan, this communications plan has been prepared at CN's request. It is intended to promote the company's projects for renewal and neutralize the

campaign launched against the possibility of a merger of the activities between CN and CP Rail.

My question is for the Minister of Highways and Transportation. Is this minister aware of this document which recommends limiting public debate on the merger and for CN to avoid meeting with various community groups, including the media?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, we well know that CN and CP are in some kind of negotiation process. I have told the member that we are doing an analysis of the three prairie provinces to determine the impact. What CN is saying in terms of how they are going to conduct the process is information that the member obviously has that I have not seen yet.

Headquarters

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Since the proposed merger would include assets from Winnipeg east, including to Chicago, Mr. Speaker, is the Minister of Highways and Transportation aware that NewCo, the name of the new company proposed, could possibly have its headquarters in the United States?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, if CN and CP have any plan that they want to have accepted in Canada, they have to go before the competition bureau in Ottawa, and they have to go before the National Transportation Agency which will hold public hearings, so they have a long process before there are any approvals in Canada. It is a process that will not be easy and will give the opportunity for significant public input by provincial governments and citizens at large and anybody who is interested in the issue. That process cannot be avoided.

Government Position

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, this issue is very important to the citizens of Manitoba, not only those who are employed but those who utilize the services.

My final question is for the same minister or for his Premier (Mr. Filmon). Why has the minister or

the Premier not spoken up or spoken out on the issue of the merger between CN and CP, considering the CN communications plan which also states that a great many communities which owe the basis of their quality of life to the railway activity will probably be hard hit by CN's measures to cut costs?

* (1345)

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I think the member has not had his hearing aid on because we have been speaking out in this House and other forums on the issue that is in front of us. The federal government has said the national dream is dead. The federal government has said they are going to eliminate subsidies every which way you look, and the provincial Liberals are supporting them it seems. They seem to be answering for them.

We have a lot of questions in front of us. It is not an issue of just saying everything has to stand still. We want to be in a process of negotiation and consultation with the federal government. At this point in time, the federal government has laid out no plan of how they are going to handle the transportation issues in the future. They are just making statements to the press with no plan, no substance to it, and the provincial Liberals seem to be supporting it at this time. That is very unfortunate.

Manitoba Health Services Commission Bond Policy

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, we were pleased with the decision of the Immigrant and Refugee Appeal Board in regard to the fact that Roxana Gretchen can be reunited with her family here in Canada. What has come to light through the issue is that, in fact, some of the regulations of the Department of Health are definitely out of sync with what goes on in some of the rest of Canada.

My question is for the Minister of Health, if he could possibly answer. When this case first came to light in the department, was the minister's office given a briefing as to the reasons behind the

department's decision to insist that there be a bond issue for this family?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I join with the honourable member and others in expressing our pleasure on behalf of the Gretchen family for the outcome that was arrived at before the federal Immigration Appeal Board. If you understand the commitment of that family, as I do, and the compassion of that family for the situation it found itself in, as I do, then you will understand why I say that.

The decision was the federal government's decision to make about the medical admissibility of Roxana, and the decision was made on compassionate and humanitarian grounds. I have not yet seen the reasons for the decision given by the Immigration Appeal Board.

The question, however, of the Gretchen family and their chance now to be united and to be together, placed to one side, does raise issues as the honourable member suggests, raises issues of how the federal government proposes to proceed from this point forward in terms of other children and families who might find themselves in similar circumstances.

Last fall, for my part, I met repeatedly with the Gretchens and with their lawyer and it was never a question with them. They accepted then their responsibility with respect to costs. It was a question of what everybody felt would be necessary for Roxana's treatment—and I am sorry to be a little bit lengthier with my response, but the federal government is now faced, I suggest, with the question of what will be its policy in the future with respect to this matter, because I dare say in this world of ours, there may be millions of children in similar circumstances and compassionate grounds and humanitarian grounds I am sure exist for those people too.

So our policy is not unlike the policy followed in Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island or Ontario—I am sorry, it is unlike the policy followed in those provinces, but it is similar to the policies in Saskatchewan and Newfoundland.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question to the Minister of Health. My question is

related to policy of this provincial government and this Department of Health.

Is the minister—because I seem to get from his comments that he is supportive of his department's policy—prepared to look at the policy established through the old Manitoba Health Services Commission which is some 20-years-old and have that policy reviewed to ensure that future families do not go through the trauma, the stress and the financial hardship that this particular family has gone through? Is he prepared to undertake that review?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, as I understand the situation, the decision made by the Immigration Appeal Board technically and virtually renders Roxana Gretchen medically admissible now. Now, that is a whole different situation. Once a person is medically admissible and so deemed by the federal government, our province picks up 100 percent of the costs of the care of that person. That is the same as in other provinces except for Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island or Ontario where they still charge various levels of cost to the families involved in those particular provinces.

So there is basically a different scenario existing in each and every province. I am not averse at all to looking at policies that have the wrong kind of impact, but as I said last fall when I was discussing this with the Gretchens on a repeated basis, Mr. Speaker, my job in this situation is extremely difficult, because there is a balance to be drawn here between a humanitarian and compassionate approach which I think I want to take at every opportunity I can. On the other hand, Manitobans want to ensure that health care services are preserved for the people who are resident here as well.

Ms. Gray: I have a final supplementary to the Minister of Health.

I think the Minister of Health's role in this case is very clear, and as the Minister of Health, he has a responsibility to ensure that policies and regulations within his department are in fact current, up to date, and serve the needs of Manitobans.

I would again ask the Minister of Health, is he prepared to immediately undertake a review of this particular policy within his department and some of the other regulations within the old MHSC to ensure that we are reflecting the needs of Manitobans and that we are current with our policy and that the needs of Manitobans are met as in this particular situation?

* (1350)

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly the process I was in last fall when dealing so closely with the Gretchen family and their lawyer, reviewing very, very carefully the policy in existence in Manitoba.

It becomes an extremely hypothetical situation. The federal government on the one hand says this child is medically inadmissible, but if we were to find otherwise, what would you do in Manitoba? It becomes that kind of a hypothetical situation, Mr. Speaker.

We are governed by the decisions made by the Immigration department. If someone is found to be medically admissible, the Manitoba plan registers and looks after all of the costs involved. That will be the case for Roxana, and we are pleased for the family.

There are extremely important national issues at stake here, too. We think the federal government needs to be cognizant of that. In light of shrinking contributions from the federal government over the years, any decision, any review that we would do would have to be done in lock step with the federal government. We have been doing that with our own immigration department, Citizenship department, our Family Services department, my department and the federal government, too, Mr. Speaker.

Manitoba Health Services Commission Bond Policy

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, we are also very pleased about the decision regarding the Gretchen family.

When we asked this question five times last session, and in the two letters that I wrote to the minister on this particular issue, the minister did,

in some of his responses, and the former minister, what the minister is doing today—federal government responsibility and trying to offload it and go back and forth.

At issue was a situation where the provincial government was imposing a policy and then throwing it and saying it is not our responsibility. This child and this family had to go through a year of turmoil trying to resolve it, and they had to go to court to try to resolve the issue. That is not the best way to resolve these issues.

My question for the minister is: Why could the minister not resolve the issue without the family having to spend a year, go to court and all the legal costs when there were alternatives that could have been imposed in this situation?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, when this matter was so very current last fall, indeed I made it very clear that I was not sloughing this off to the federal government. Neither am I doing that today. I accepted my responsibility as a provincial Minister of Health working with the federal government and working with the Gretchen family.

So it is not a question of offloading responsibility. I refuse to do that. The question at the time, given the family's acceptance of the principle that it was their responsibility to pay for the costs, given that acceptance on their part, the issue became what is the right thing to do in these circumstances.

The child had been ruled medically inadmissible by the federal Immigration department. Now the federal Immigration Appeal Board has ruled otherwise. That is their ruling to make, Mr. Speaker. Our government will respond in appropriate fashion to that ruling and respect it.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, will the minister undertake to go back to his department and examine every single process and every step of the way, because there were mistakes made, in my opinion, by the Department of Health?

Will he undertake to use this as a case example to review it and investigate it, as he did on Bill 22 when there were mistakes regarding Bill 22? Will

he review completely all of the actions in order to ensure that this kind of dilemma and problem does not occur again?

* (1355)

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, I am assuming both honourable members have the permission of the family to discuss these matters in the Legislature. On the basis of that assumption that I have been discussing this matter today, the honourable member wants a review done. I can tell the honourable member I have reviewed this very carefully, and I am quite willing to do it again if my review has not been complete.

But you see there are two adoption desks in this country, too. There is an adoption desk at the provincial level and an adoption desk at the federal level. I do not know all of the considerations that went into the Immigration Appeal Board's ruling, but perhaps on the basis that this child has been a legally adopted child, that came into the equation.

That is one area that needs to be reviewed, and I certainly accept that. I will be very happy to take that up with the federal government and with the department here. I have already done that to some extent, but it may be that with a new federal government, there is an opportunity to address this.

It seems to me that at some point there should have been better co-ordination between the federal and provincial adoption desks. If Roxana was indeed medically inadmissible, as the federal government has taken that position which is now only changed by the Immigration Appeal Board, if indeed that was the case, then the question arises, how come the two adoption desks were not co-ordinated on that point?

I have asked those questions, and I would like to see—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Chomiak: We asked that precise question on June 21 last year. We asked the minister to look at that very point, so I am pleased the minister will take a look at it.

My final supplementary to the minister is: Will he tell us now what the government's policy is

presently in Manitoba with respect to the issuance of bonds?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, if a person is medically inadmissible, then the only way by which they can be registered in Manitoba is through, I forget the proper name for it, but the bond we are talking about here, and that was the situation that existed, and now that Roxana has technically been found to be medically admissible, then those rules do not apply.

It is for people who are not admissible medically speaking that the bond exists. In other provinces, Mr. Speaker, if they are medically inadmissible, there is no coverage whatsoever. They are not accepted; they are not registered.

In this case, we looked at that issue several times. It had been the medical opinion that the bond ought to be at the level of about \$300,000, and after review and after urging by myself and my predecessor, that matter was looked at repeatedly, and the bond level was reduced. So the need for a bond is there for those who are medically inadmissible, not for those who are medically admissible, because those who are medically admissible have coverage like every other Manitoban.

Norwood Bridge Public Hearing

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, I have been asking questions related to the Norwood bridge project, a hundred-million-dollar construction project of major importance to The Forks, to the areas of southeast Winnipeg and downtown. There are numerous issues related to this project in terms of traffic planning, green space, community development and safety.

I want to ask the Minister of Environment: Why are the at least nine letters sent to the civic and provincial governments on behalf of organizations representing well over 100 people not sufficient to warrant a public hearing for the community on this development?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I am not sure what letters the member is referring to. During

the period when the director was soliciting public input into this project, he received one letter of communication that raised a concern and was interested in seeing further public input. He has not recommended a hearing. At this point, I believe I now have two letters of appeal in the process that are asking that I not accept that recommendation and call a hearing.

So, Mr. Speaker, if there are other letters that are on their way or perhaps have not been forwarded to me appropriately, I would be more than interested in seeing them. I simply indicate, as I have indicated a number of times, the director only received one letter of request that would indicate the need for a hearing. We are now in the appeal process until the end of the week, and I presume we may get some letters now that the issue has been raised in this forum.

* (1400)

Ms. Cerilli: Why was there a hearing held for the Charleswood bridge and not this bridge in the downtown area which affects The Forks, a community school, bike paths, the traffic flow to Osborne Street and the access to the riverbank?

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, I recognize that for the community this is a very important issue, but there is a significant difference between the process that occurred around the Charleswood bridge and around the Norwood bridge. First of all, the Charleswood bridge was deemed not to be captured within the requirement of The Environment Act and it was excluded from the process. The question was whether or not the department had received appropriate advice in that respect.

With the Norwood bridge, we have put it through the process. It is in the process. The only problem is there have not been any requests of any magnitude that, in the opinion of the director, were not answered within the process requesting a public hearing.

We are now in the appeal process and have been for three weeks. We wrote a letter to every organization that had expressed an interest in it, telling them what the director's decision was and inviting them to appeal. They may now appeal, and

I would encourage those, if they feel motivated in that respect, to exercise that option.

Ms. Cerilli: Mr. Speaker, so will the local community now have a chance to respond and comment on this environmental impact assessment report? Will there be open public hearings likely on this project?

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, this is an abuse. This is an abuse of the process. The bridge is in the environmental licensing process. It was advertised. For her to imply that in some way we are trying to circumvent the process is absolutely wrong. If there are concerned citizens who believe that there are good and valid reasons and if the City Council—some councillors are on record as wanting a public airing. Perhaps they want that public airing so the province's process will help them with their decision making, but if the City Council believes that in their own best interests they would like this to go to a further public process, then I would encourage the council to write.

Manitoba Hydro Water Levels—Communication Strategy

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Mr. Speaker, my questions are also directed to the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro.

As the minister knows, there have been numerous problems over the past two years with Hydro dams increasing or lowering the water levels up north without notifying those communities that are nearby. Commercial fishermen at Poplar Point have contacted our office recently, Mr. Speaker, concerning the water level at the forebay.

I want to ask the minister: What is the official policy of Hydro on changing the water levels in terms of notifying the residents and the fishermen's organizations in the area?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act): Mr. Speaker, Hydro attempts to advise those communities affected to sudden change.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Speaker, I am trying to give the minister some work here.

My second question, Mr. Speaker, is again to the Minister responsible for Hydro.

Would he check with staff up north, the Hydro people, and make sure that all Hydro stations up there update their lists to ensure that all appropriate people are notified about changing those water levels?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, when my honourable friend speaks about giving people work, I think the member for The Pas might look forward to the next election where the people, the voters there maybe want to give him a real job again. [interjection] Three or four, maybe some more.

My honourable friend indicates that someone from Hydro should be contacting the appropriate people. To the best of my knowledge, Hydro has the list of bands and councils so that appropriate notification can take place.

If my honourable friend is saying that the list is not complete, the list is the one as provided by those affected communities. Should there be a requirement for additional individuals to be notified, the band would have that opportunity when they are so notified.

Mr. Lathlin: My last question, Mr. Speaker, is again to the Minister responsible for Hydro.

Would the minister be prepared to consider compensation for those fishermen whose equipment gets damaged when these water levels are changed without notifying the affected communities?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, in the past where damage to fishing equipment has occurred, there is a process of application. If the damage is mitigatable, those compensations are made. That process has been in place for a number of years now.

Drug Program Information Network Systemhouse Proposal

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, we are anxiously awaiting, as I am sure the minister is, the implementation of the Drug Program Information Network. We know that companies were asked to submit proposals to the minister so

that they would be up and running for April 1, 1994.

Can the Minister of Health tell us, did the proposal from Systemhouse, which is the successful bidder in this tendering process, outline penalties that the company would have to pay if in fact they were not able to meet the government's deadline?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, in arrangements like this, those are the kinds of things that find their way into contractual terms. The penalties or sanctions are acted on to the extent that it is deemed appropriate to do so, given the performance of the contract.

It is important for us—and the honourable member has already agreed with this, I am glad to say—to ensure that all of the pharmacists in the province are ready and on line before we, as they say, go live, with respect to this automated pharmaceutical system. So there is general agreement there, but I do not think we have to wait very many more days longer before we can give the honourable member an update as to where we are.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary for the Minister of Health.

My question would be in regard to the proposals of Systemhouse. There are deadlines that have been missed. Have they actually been told that they are required to pay those penalties, or what is the status of that?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, to the extent that deadlines missed are missed because of somebody's negligence, we would be acting on the terms of the contract as they are laid out. There are also some 247 pharmacists with whom we are working in a very co-operative way, and they have specific needs. So I am not able to say whose fault this was or that was at this point to the extent that there is a problem or negligence. The contract allows for us to take action pursuant to that.

Start-up Date

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, with a final supplementary for the Minister of Health, can the minister indicate—he talks about

this system being up and running soon—does he have a definitive date as to when we will see this system in place?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Well, Mr. Speaker, I will be very forthcoming about this. We have given definitive dates before and not met them. So if I give the honourable member another definitive date and do not meet it, one of these days she is going to come back and say you do not meet your commitments.

We are working very closely with all of the pharmacists, with the contractor, and it may be that within a short time I can be more definitive with the honourable member.

Francophone Schools Governance Legal Opinion—Notre Dame de Lourdes

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, I have again met with the parents from Notre Dame, parents for a fair education in Notre Dame who continue to be ignored by this minister and by this government.

The minister has refused to consider the needs of at least 108 students as a result of the implementation of Bill 34. The Francophone parents there who represent these 108 students desperately want a compromised resolution to the problem that is dividing the community of Notre Dame. The minister says that Bill 34 was so rigid that he cannot direct a compromise solution to the problems by way of a regulation or arbitration.

I want to ask the minister today whether he has sought legal opinion as to his ability to act under Section 21(43)(c)(f)(g) and (h) in the act which gives him sweeping powers, Mr. Speaker, to enact regulations on Bill 34, in order either to specify an arbitration process for the Notre Dame situation or provide more time for the settlement before a transfer would take place.

I want to ask the minister whether, in fact, he has sought legal opinion and whether he would table that legal opinion here today.

* (1410)

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, the short answer to

the question is yes. I have sought legal opinion, and the opinion states in no uncertain terms that the government would be working outside the full intent of the bill were it to bring in an amendment in keeping with what the member for Dauphin indicates.

Mr. Speaker, the member asks that we make public that legal opinion. That is not usually the case. These are not often shared in a public sense, and the member well knows that.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, I asked the minister whether he has referenced those specific sections in his legal opinion, 21(43)(c)(f) and (g), as well as (h); (c) refers to the date of transfer of property, for example, set by regulation.

The minister answered in a blanket way that, yes, he sought legal opinion, and he cannot deal with this issue. I know for a fact he can, and I want to ask him to confirm that he can, in fact, deal with the issue of transfer of property.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I guess then what the NDP party is advocating is a policy that they supported from the beginning, indeed, that there be a cut-off date, July 1, for transference of properties, particularly schools to the new school division, that that now be set aside. On some basis the provincial government is to choose as between which communities should see a transfer of properties and which should not. What then would happen in those communities, knowing now that they have a second chance? Would they then also approach the government to have their date changed alternatively?

Mr. Speaker, I know it is very easy when you are in opposition just to make a change in pure isolation and have the ability to ignore the impact or the implication of that on the whole issue. In reality, government does not have that licence. At times, I wish it did.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, the minister has to realize that because of his failure to act, the time is running out and this is a potentially explosive situation that can develop, and it is developing.

I ask the minister whether he would consider this unique situation. He does not have to change the regulation for the whole province. He can deal

with this unique situation in Notre Dame. This regulation provides him with the powers to do that.

Why will he not act with this unique situation because of the circumstances that have developed?

Mr. Manness: The member answers his own question. He talks about unique. He talks about specific. The reality is, there are unique situations elsewhere also. Had there been an opportunity or a belief that the government at the last moment could waive the deadline for other locations, I dare say other locations would have probably come forward to the ministry and come forward to the office of the department seeking that they too see waived their date for transfer.

Mr. Speaker: The member has been in the public policy arena for many, many years now. He knows that when you make unilateral decisions to affect one location, obviously there is an outcome that may flow over to other locations, causing yet once again further decisions.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

TABLING OF REPORTS (continued)

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): **Mr. Speaker,** I wonder if I could have leave to table a couple of letters that I said I would table yesterday in Question Period and also in Estimates last night, as it refers to the Immigrant Investor Program.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave for the honourable minister to table said documents? [agreed]

Mr. Downey: Thank you, **Mr. Speaker.** I did not want to take the time in Question Period.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

House Business

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): **Mr. Speaker,** I wonder if you would seek unanimous consent of the House to set aside the Estimates of the Department of Justice in the Chamber in order to continue with the Estimates of the Department of Highways and Transportation.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave to set aside the Department of Justice to allow the Department of

Highways and Transportation in the Chamber? Leave? [agreed]

Mr. Ernst: **Mr. Speaker,** last night, at the conclusion of the consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism, the committee voted on item 1.(a) Minister's Salary, but inadvertently did not vote on Resolution 10.1, Administration and Finance, containing that item.

Therefore, I am seeking unanimous consent of the House for that section of the Committee of Supply sitting in the Chamber to conduct the vote on Resolution 10.1 before resuming consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Highways and Transportation.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to bring forward the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism in the committee? Apparently they inadvertently did not vote on Resolution 10.1, so I understand you want to come in with Industry, Trade and Tourism and deal specifically with that item.

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Yes. Is there leave to allow I, T and T to come back in to deal with 10.1? [agreed]

Mr. Ernst: **Mr. Speaker,** I move, seconded by the Minister of Government Services (**Mr. Ducharme**), 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.

Mr. Speaker: For clarification, I will ask the government House leader if we are setting aside the Department of Justice for today.

Mr. Ernst: The change, **Mr. Speaker,** with respect to Estimates consideration in the House is for today only.

Mr. Speaker: For today only, okay.

Mr. Ernst: **Mr. Speaker,** I also advise that in the committee room now it will be the Department of Northern Affairs.

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 honourable member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) in the Chair for the Departments of Industry, Trade and Tourism, and Highways and Transportation.

* (1420)

**COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY
(Concurrent Sections)
NORTHERN AFFAIRS**

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255 will be considering the Estimates of the Department of Northern Affairs.

Does the honourable Minister of Northern Affairs have an opening statement?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Northern Affairs): Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson.

I am going to try to make my statement fairly brief because I know members of the committee, particularly our northern members, will want to get into a host of questions about specific issues, and that is probably the best way to approach the discussion of these Estimates of the department.

* (1430)

I am very pleased to have this first opportunity to discuss the Estimates of the Department of Northern Affairs since my appointment to this post last September. This past year has been very gratifying for me in this new and very challenging portfolio. New challenges, a large spectrum of issues, unique issues of development in the North, a special need to develop partnerships with a wide variety of communities, the special challenges faced by the North in the search for an enhancement of their way of life have all been presented to myself and my staff in the last number of months since coming into this portfolio.

I am grateful for the opportunities to have travelled to many northern communities. I might point out that the new deputy, Mr. Tom Farrell, and myself both spent a complete week in the North in January, in probably the most difficult time in terms of travel, just to get a better understanding of some of those issues related to

weather that the northern MLAs raise from time to time. We have had opportunity to talk both formally and informally with many northern residents and organizations, local government, et cetera, about their concerns. Staff in the department have worked hard to help me learn about the challenges and responsibilities of the portfolio and have done an outstanding job in serving the needs of northern Manitoba. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their accomplishments and commitment to the province.

In introducing the Estimates for Northern Affairs, I would like to highlight two events of major importance for northern Manitoba. The most important was the signing in March of a treaty land entitlement agreement that enables treaty obligations to the Island Lake Tribal Council to be fulfilled. This historic agreement culminated two years of tripartite negotiations with the federal government and the tribal council. We were very satisfied with both this process and the outcome which took into consideration the needs of all parties involved in the process.

Our obligations were to transfer uninhabited Crown land to the federal government under the Manitoba Natural Resources Agreement of 1930, which Ottawa will use to fulfill its treaty obligations. We are also providing to the First Nations involved the option to buy an additional approximately 100,000 acres of Crown land in the vicinity of their communities for \$25 an acre. That option stands for two years, and I understand discussions are underway currently as to which particular property would be exercised under the option.

The significance of this provision is that additional land, if the First Nations want it, can be an important source of economic activity. This land will remain titled land in the province of Manitoba and allow those First Nations to use various financing vehicles for economic development projects with that land as security. It was an innovative way of closing a set of negotiations, and one that I think presents a unique

opportunity for development for those First Nations involved.

A few weeks ago, I was privileged to announce six infrastructure projects for northern Manitoba under the Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Works Agreement. The six projects in Brochet, Churchill, Gillam, Lynn Lake, South Indian Lake and Thompson are worth approximately \$4.3 million, of which the funding costs are split evenly between the municipalities involved, the federal government and the province of Manitoba. In the case of the Northern Affairs communities, the department will be funding the municipal share.

These projects will provide an important injection of capital into the communities involved and the North generally and will generate approximately 80 new jobs during their construction period. Most important of all, they addressed outstanding local needs in the six communities, and they allow us, in terms of the Northern Affairs communities, to stretch our regular capital budget much farther.

Several other major issues on which we have continued to work over the last year include generally treaty land entitlement. Beside the Island Lake agreement, we have made important progress in working with Manitoba bands and the federal government toward resolving other outstanding treaty land entitlement claims. The province signed a protocol agreement in October with the treaty land entitlement chiefs representing 22 First Nations. The agreement provides for negotiations towards the signing of a treaty land entitlement agreement in principle. Manitoba considers treaty land entitlement issues to be a priority, and we will continue to work with Canada, who has the prime responsibility, and our First Nations communities towards an early, equitable and final settlement of these outstanding obligations.

The Northern Flood Agreement is also an area that has occupied a great deal of time for the department, and I am pleased to report that we have made substantial progress in resolving claim settlements under the Northern Flood Agreement. We have signed a comprehensive agreement with the Split Lake Cree First Nation as a full and final

settlement of our obligations under the Hydro flooding issue. Memorandums of Understanding for comprehensive implementation of settlements have been signed with the Nelson House, York Factory and Cross Lake First Nations. We expect the comprehensive agreement with Nelson House, we hope will be completed by next fall.

The four parties to the Northern Flood Agreement continue to negotiate with the Norway House First Nation on a claim-by-claim basis, but we also continue to promote final comprehensive implementation of settlements as the best way to resolve this issue. The comprehensive implementation agreements help ensure that First Nations have more control over their own affairs and decision making. We expect the settlements to have a major impact on economic and social development in the five communities that are parties to the agreement.

Just as my department co-ordinates government activities in northern Manitoba, our Native Affairs Secretariat co-ordinates Manitoba government interests in matters affecting aboriginal people. They will co-ordinate Manitoba's role in the process of dismantling the Manitoba region of the federal Department of Indian Affairs.

I might add that there are matters involving some critical work with other governments across Canada in the field of fiscal, financial, jurisdictional responsibilities which relate to the self-government issue.

I would point out to members, I am sure we will have opportunity to get into this discussion further as that line of the Estimates comes forward. It is certainly probably the most fascinating area in this particular portfolio at the current time because Manitoba, due to the work of Grand Chief Fontaine, is probably poised on being one of the leaders in the development of self-government issues in Canada. So it is certainly an exciting time to be working in this particular area.

* (1440)

Twenty-one First Nations now have gaming agreements and 12 have VLT agreements with the province. Negotiations continue with other First Nations who have expressed an interest. I would

just point out again that our involvement in gaming stems from the Criminal Code of Canada, which provides or calls for licensing under provincial licensing in order to be exempt from the illegality of gaming as prescribed by the national Criminal Code. So that is the basis for Manitoba's involvement.

The Native Affairs Secretariat is working with Manitoba's friendship centres to try to develop ways for them to participate in the proposed federal reform of social services. I know we have had opportunities to discuss this before in Question Period. There are some tremendous opportunities that exist for our friendship centres to be worked into this reform process, and I hope we can discuss those in greater detail when we come to that particular area in our Estimates.

A more specific objective is to find a way for the centres to participate in a variety of pilot projects that could arise during this review. One project that we have been delighted to support again this year is the Northern Fly-In Sports Camps, which provide sports and recreational programs to northern and native communities, a most worthwhile project. We are again very happy to participate in that area.

Mr. Deputy Chair, that concludes my opening remarks. I look forward to the questions and the exchanges that we will get into shortly with members of the committee. I am sure this will be a very interesting set of discussions.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We thank the Minister of Northern Affairs for those comments.

Does the critic for the official opposition party, the honourable member for The Pas, have an opening statement?

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Mr. Deputy Chair, I also would like to make a few remarks at the outset. I welcome again this opportunity to go through the Estimates of Northern Affairs.

Firstly, I want to welcome and congratulate the new Minister of Northern Affairs to the Department of Northern Affairs.

As the minister says, the Department of Northern Affairs is indeed a challenging

department in that I have always seen the department as being a department that although we have other departments that are quite substantial and they are quite comprehensive and they have big budgets, Northern Affairs, I have always viewed it as being a department that would service an advocacy department for northern Manitoba as the minister sits in a cabinet room meeting with colleagues and so on.

In the last session, I tried to get the former Minister of Northern Affairs to define for us what he saw his role being as Minister of Northern Affairs. I tried to use the analogy where, when I was chief of my band, not only was I responsible for our members at the Opaskwayak Cree Nation, but I also served in the Swampy Cree Tribal Council, where I served in committees. I was also a chairperson of that tribal council for a few years.

Then, of course, we have the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okemakanak, MKO, where also I sat as an executive member of that organization, and then further up, at the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs organization, I served in various committees, the justice committee. Probably the former Minister of Northern Affairs will remember. I chaired the AMC justice committee for a few years and then up to Assembly of First Nations.

So the point I was trying to make at that time was, whether I was sitting at the Assembly of First Nations committee or board or at the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs committee or at MKO or at Swampy Cree Tribal Council, my responsibilities included that of being an advocate for, not only The Pas band, Opaskwayak Cree Nation as it is called now, but for all of aboriginal people in northern Manitoba and southern Manitoba.

That is how I have always looked at Northern Affairs. It is a department that in my mind is supposed to speak for northerners. Whether we are dealing with education, health, natural resources or justice, I have always viewed the Department of Northern Affairs as being a department that would co-ordinate all of these issues and speak on them on behalf of northern Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister is right. Northern Manitoba, indeed, has special needs. That is why I have always advocated in the House that the North, in my view, is always behind the starting gate as it were. When it comes to allocating resources, I have always said in the House and in forums like this that Manitoba warrants special consideration, maybe not all the time, but certainly most of the time, northern Manitoba, because it does not have the population, it does not have all the resources that we have here in southern Manitoba. So I have always advocated that northern Manitoba in general has a lot of special needs.

I also want to welcome the new Deputy Minister of Northern Affairs, who has been around for a while. I knew him when he was mayor of Thompson.

I spoke a little bit about the role, because I read the role and mission statement. It has a lot of nice words but, again I say to the minister, we need more than just nice words. For example, the dismantling of Indian Affairs he has referenced as being a fascinating exercise or a fascinating activity. Mr. Deputy Chair, I want to say to the minister that the dismantling of Indian Affairs is more than just—the government has to view it as more than just a fascinating exercise.

The government has to view the dismantling of Indian Affairs as an opportunity for the provincial government to be more proactive in its dealings with aboriginal people because in my mind—and I am not being nasty or negative, I am just trying to be realistic in terms of how I see this government in its dealings with aboriginal people in the four years I have been here—we need to be more than just fascinated, I am afraid. We need to be more committed. We need to be more action oriented. We need to be more responsive to the needs and aspirations of aboriginal people.

I am glad the minister is saying he is fascinated by this whole process, but I am also hoping that he will get on board in very real terms. By that I mean it would be tragic if all this activity was going on on the route to self-government by the aboriginal people—the federal government is willing to have

a good look at self-government. It would be tragic, I repeat, if this government were to just sit by and become an island unto itself amongst all this activity that is going on in the area of aboriginal self-government here in Manitoba. We need more action. We need more proactivity.

I am also reminded by the minister's comments regarding friendship centres. The minister remembers our questions in the House a year ago, a year and a half ago now, I guess, when it cut funding to friendship centres. At that time, the response from ministers to our questions on the funding issue was that they viewed the friendship centres as being—I cannot remember exactly how they viewed them—as playing the advocacy role. It seems quite ironic that the government is now going back to the friendship centres to solicit their input or support in its endeavours to develop some kind of social reform, as he puts it.

* (1450)

I welcome that initiative on the part of the provincial government. Certainly any positive development that may come about as a result of the friendship centres having an input into this social reform process, I welcome it. It is a positive step if it means that in the end people will realize real benefits and not just pre-election maneuvers and things like that. I hope that in the end they will come to realize that their input will not have been in vain.

The last thing that I wanted to say in my opening remarks is to reference the Northern Economic Development Commission. Now I know the former Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) and I used to sit here and talk about the Northern Economic Development Commission. Every time he would assure me that work was getting done, and that it was going to be very exciting and northern Manitobans will be—how did he say it?—pleasantly surprised is what the former Minister of Northern Affairs told me at one of the sessions we had here.

Well, the Northern Economic Development Commission report is sitting right here. A lot of paper, a lot of money was spent on it. A lot of travelling was done in northern Manitoba. People

were actually very sincere in coming to those hearings and voicing their concerns on the state of northern development.

Again, just as I was talking about the friendship centres, these people actually thought that finally there was something that was going to be done in terms of northern economic development. I believe it is over a year ago now that this report has been finished, and it was tabled by the government in the House. So far, of course, we have not seen much activity in terms of implementing those recommendations that are contained in the report.

A lot of those recommendations, I should also add, deal with issues that had been there for a long, long time, way before this commission was convened, issues that northern Manitobans had been talking about for quite some time. Now finally they are contained in an official government commission, in a report.

But it is almost like the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry report and all those fine recommendations that were contained in the AJI report. This report is sitting there collecting dust. What has been implemented? None. And that is over a year ago.

Again, I want to impress upon the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Praznik), because of the special needs aspect of northern Manitoba, the transportation system, the educational system, the economic development that is lacking, the unemployment, the geographical locations of most communities in the North, that is why I agree with the minister that his new job is certainly very challenging. I agree with him wholeheartedly.

My job as a chief was most challenging. My job, when I sat in those committees at Swampy Cree, MKO, AMC and AFN, was very challenging. The commission was convened, I would hope, to try to address those very special needs that the minister referenced, the challenge that the Department of Northern Affairs presents to the new Minister of Northern Affairs, but whatever the minister is going to do in the Department of Northern Affairs, in my view, he will have to do things that are responsive to reports like the AJI, to reports like the Economic Development Commission. We cannot afford to not do anything from these

reports, because, as the minister says, northern Manitoba has a lot of special needs.

I want to conclude by repeating one of the statements that I made in the House recently when I was responding to the throne speech, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, and that was the North only wants what other Manitobans take for granted. That is all I have been saying since I have come here, nearly four years ago now. We just want what other Manitobans take for granted. They are there already, and we just wanted to be treated in a fair and equitable way for those of us who were born and raised in the North, and for those of us who moved to the North either for employment or recreation and have decided to stay there.

So we are citizens of Manitoba, regardless of whether we are living in Tadoule Lake or The Pas or Moose Lake or Cross Lake or Norway House. We are citizens, just like that citizen that lives in Transcona, River Heights or Tuxedo, we are all citizens of Manitoba, and that is why I have always said in my speeches in the House that we need to be given due consideration. It is time that we did that.

I also wanted to mention, and I will close right after that. You see, when I was chief I used to come to negotiate with whichever party was in government at the time, and the response that I invariably received from people, ministers and government officials was that I was a federal responsibility, because I was a treaty Indian, and that I should go and knock on the doors of the federal government.

Well, I noticed something similar when I came here and I took on the job as critic of Northern Affairs for our party. It seemed to me that every time I asked a question in the House I was given a response which usually gave me the impression that you are a northern problem. That always sat with me, Mr. Deputy Chair, because we do not look at ourselves as a northern problem. We look at ourselves as being citizens of Manitoba.

With those comments I will turn the floor back to the Chair. I am glad to be here, and hopefully we will be able to provide meaningful input into this discussion here today.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I thank the honourable member for The Pas for those remarks.

Does the critic from the second opposition party, the honourable member for Osborne, have an opening statement?

Ms. Norma McCormick (Osborne): Mr. Deputy Chair, I understand the member for Rupertsland wishes to speak as well. Did you wish for him to go first or for me? Okay.

I am sitting in this afternoon then for the member for St. Boniface and have acquired a file with respect to some of the issues that he intended to raise in this Estimates debate.

We will be asking questions about the entitlement of aboriginal people living on reserves to the benefits of the 55 Plus program. We also have questions on the proposal by the Buffalo Point First Nations community on taxation and resource sharing and the province's approach to this First Nation sovereignty issue. We will also be asking for information with respect to the Norway House First Nations to be fully informed and involved in decision-making processes regarding the restructuring of the Northern Flood committee. It is their hope that a restructured process will bring the Norway House First Nations claims under the NFA and to amicable resolution.

* (1500)

As well, if time and my participation in this Estimates committee permits, I would like to raise some special issues with respect to issues affecting women. As we come to grips with issues of violence towards women and children we have come to recognize that the interventions and solutions we develop for southern and urban communities are not necessarily effective as we move to support families and protect women in northern and isolated communities. The strategies we have evolved are not as necessarily powerful and effective as they are contemplated for implementation in northern and isolated communities.

I will be seeking an opportunity to explore the ways which we can explore this important social issue and the ways in which it can best be

addressed, what supports and initiatives are or should be contemplated.

Perhaps it will be necessary to broaden our discussions of infrastructure programs beyond capital initiatives to discuss the importance of social infrastructure. If the opportunity does not permit the discussion in this forum, I will find another opportunity to do it.

That is my opening statement.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I thank the honourable member for Osborne for those remarks.

Is there leave of the committee to allow the honourable member for Rupertsland to finish up and use the other 15 minutes left over by the honourable member for The Pas? [agreed]

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupertsland): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would like to thank the minister for his opening remarks on this day of dialogue with respect to the Estimates of this department. I also want to congratulate the minister and welcome him to his new portfolio. It is, I would say, indeed a challenging job and certainly I think that he has done his best to address the many and varied issues that have been talked about by my colleague from The Pas, who is our designated critic for Northern Affairs. I being the Native Affairs critic for our party, I certainly have some interest in the affairs of this department that the honourable minister is in charge of.

I too would like to welcome the deputy minister to this job, Mr. Farrell. I have known Mr. Farrell for a number of years, and as my colleague, Mr. Lathlin, said, I knew him when he was mayor of Thompson. Certainly, he is well needed in this department and his familiarity with northern Manitoba will certainly come in handy in the time to come.

We talked about many issues that are close to our hearts, being from northern communities. Having been born and raised in northern communities, we certainly know the situation of our people in northern Manitoba, and not excluding nonaboriginal people that have been born there and have been raised there, such as aboriginal people have. We are certainly aware of

the socioeconomic situation of northern Manitoba where we have in certain instances 98 percent unemployment in some communities. We want to work in a constructive way with this department and with this minister in addressing the many outstanding issues that do exist.

I was interested to hear about the Native Affairs Secretariat, of this department, working with the First Nations governments of this province in the dismantling process that has been undertaken by the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and the federal government through the Department of Indian Affairs, the Northern Flood Agreement. We know that there is some unfinished business there as well.

We regard that certainly as a modern-day treaty, and being a First Nations member from one of those communities of the affected bands we have all along since the signing of the treaty have regarded it as a modern-day treaty, the Northern Flood Agreement, and regard it no differently than the other numbered treaties, Treaty No. 1, Treaty No. 2, No. 3, No. 4, No. 5, and the other treaties in the province of Manitoba, and the treaty groupings throughout.

We supported the friendship centres when the cuts were made last year. We still believe, and we had a healthy debate on this matter through a private members' resolution, Mr. Dewar of Selkirk's resolution last week on friendship centres, and certainly I welcome the remarks of the minister then when he said that there is a role for friendship centres. Further investigation will be done as to exactly what that role will be in the time to come.

As far as the gaming arrangements are concerned, I commend the government for that, the agreements that have been signed with certain First Nations. We have a long way to go in this regard as well, and I look forward to further discussion on that, further dialogue to enable communities to perhaps remove the shackles of poverty that they have lived under over the years, and allow them to carry on and be prouder members of this province.

The National Association of Friendship Centres, again, I would like to mention, held a meeting here

this spring, quite recently, in fact, to talk about self-government initiatives for off-reserve people, and we want to revisit that whole idea. We also want to revisit the previous minister's efforts with respect to an Urban Aboriginal Strategy that was talked about some years ago.

We want to talk about the whole situation of off-reserve aboriginal people and people that do not necessarily come from a First Nation community but nevertheless are resident in off-reserve environments.

We have some questions about the Northern Fly-In Sports Camps. We believe it is a good initiative, and I think it was one of the programs that was recognized by the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry. We certainly hold it in high regard.

For many of our communities, this is something that we really need. I know that six communities in northern Manitoba have been approved for a sports camp this year, and I know that there are eleven that applied, or perhaps a dozen. We believe that is very important.

We have been also in discussion with many communities that are under the jurisdiction of the Northern Affairs Community Councils, with respect to their capital budgets.

In Berens River we were told about the capital budget there being \$13,000 per annum, and that is unrealistic for the work that has to be done for snow removal and all of the other work in that community.

We look forward to a good dialogue with respect to that with this minister, Mr. Deputy Chairperson.

We believe as well that the Manitoba government has to be a willing partner in all issues relating to self-government for First Nations people. The initiatives that they are taking, and also Metis people, they have their own aspirations of how they view self-government. We want to talk about that at some length.

My colleague, the member for The Pas, also talked about the Northern Economic Development Commission. We certainly hope, unlike the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, which is just shy of its third anniversary since it was tabled, that it will not

simply be another good work that will just go by the wayside and be put on the shelf to collect dust. We want to be proactive.

I think that the member for The Pas and myself have been, during Question Period and other business of this government and this structure, positive in our remarks toward this government, perhaps too polite sometimes, but nevertheless, we want to co-operate. We are not in any way trying to be adversarial. We are not trying to cause commotion as well.

* (1510)

We view the Department of Northern Affairs—and I think that both the member for The Pas and I remember when the Department of Northern Affairs was not quite a department in the early '70s, when it was still a commission. We remember those days, and we also remember the time the transition took place for the commission to become an overall department.

I want to conclude by saying as well the aboriginal women of this province have made a presentation to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. I think that the presentation that was made to the Royal Commission is truly commendable.

I want to outline here that 51 percent of the aboriginal population in Manitoba is women. Certainly they have a role to play in the affairs of any self-government initiatives. I believe that also women that have been involved in the recent conference, aboriginal women in the workforce also made good recommendations.

I know a member of your staff, Mr. Minister, has been actively involved in that, Ms. Von Ramin. Certainly we want to be able to address those in a constructive way.

I do believe that my colleague from The Pas has touched a lot of areas. We certainly do not want to prolong opening dialogue, but we feel that it is important to bring these matters and raise these matters and bring them to record as northern members sitting in this Legislature. It would have been unheard of a few years ago to have two treaty Indians sitting in a Manitoba Legislature, but that

is a reality of today's polity in Manitoba, and we are certainly wanting to make our contribution. We view northern Manitobans as no different than other Manitobans.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairperson.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I thank the honourable member for Rupertsland. Under Manitoba practice, debate of the Minister's Salary is traditionally the last item considered for the Estimates of the department. Accordingly, we shall defer the consideration of this item. We will now proceed with the consideration of the next line.

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

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Deputy Chair, it is my pleasure to introduce the Deputy Minister of Northern Affairs, and Labour, who is new to this portfolio, like myself, but no stranger to the two northern members who are here with us today, Mr. Tom Farrell. He comes to this department with experience of being a northerner, having been mayor of the City of Thompson, a long-time employee Inco, a former director of Workplace Safety and Health, former acting chief executive officer of the Workers Compensation Board, I am very pleased to have him back as Deputy Minister of Labour, and Northern Affairs.

We also have Mr. Oliver Boulette, who is our Assistant Deputy Minister of Northern Affairs, with special responsibility for the local government division. Mr. Boulette is based in Thompson, in northern Manitoba. He would be the highest ranking provincial government official in northern Manitoba. I think it is important to note that one of the most senior people in this department operates out of the North, where it is most appropriate to be.

We also have Mr. Jeff Polakoff, who is a director of our Northern Development and Co-ordination Unit. Mr. Joe Morrisseau, who is an analyst with the Native Affairs Secretariat. He is here on behalf of Mr. Harvey Bostrom, who has been away temporarily because of illness and we expect to have him back very shortly.

We have Mr. Merv McKay, who is the manager of the Northern Flood Agreement; and Mr. Rene Gagnon, who our director of Administration and Finance.

We are now prepared, Mr. Deputy Chair, for any questions. Should any member of the committee wish a cold drink on this very warm day, we have them available here for members of the committee.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I thank the honourable minister. We will now move on to line 1.(b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$291,400. I will be following the Estimates book, the Main Estimates. I do believe some of the members will be dealing with the Supplementary Information. At this time it is Executive Support and it is Salaries and Employee Benefits, which is included in the subappropriation 19.1 on page 14.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I just want to suggest so we are all out of the same hymnal here because I have both. I believe my colleagues have the supplementary benefits. Perhaps if we could get the Clerk to get a copy of this because this is more succinct and easier to follow through, just so we are directing questions at the appropriate time. The supplementary benefits are not quite as clear. We could have our staff—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Do the honourable members need a copy of this? If I could just get the honourable minister's copy for just a minute. Anyway, we can start now.

Mr. Lathlin: We are on Minister's Salary and Executive Support?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: No. Just go beyond the Minister's Salary and we are in the deputy minister's salary and Executive Support.

Mr. Praznik: I just might ask colleagues if they would have a particular way in which they would like to handle this in order to get into specific areas, or do they want to have a free-ranging discussion and then pass it? I am not sure how they want to handle it.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: What is the will of the committee?

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the process that I am more familiar with—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. Can I ask you to bring the mike on this side, Oscar? It will make it easier for Hansard.

Mr. Lathlin: The process that I am more comfortable with and I think that is what we have been using in past sessions and that is—we used to have a combination, like general questions and then we got into the line by line. If I have a question, I will ask a question, but I would not mind just going into general questions and answers.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Okay, then. The normal practice of the committee is to deal line by line, but if it is the will of the committee, we can deal with the entire department at once and then we will pass the entire department, each line, as we get to it.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, my only concern is there are members who might have an interest who come in after we have—I had this experience with one of our annual reports where we went over a whole host of issues and then we were joined by another member who sort of reinvented the wheel. So perhaps if we could, on the deputy minister's salary, use those lines to have a general discussion of issues and then get on to each specific area because there are specific blocks in this department, Northern Affairs communities being our government services, where members will have specific questions.

Native Affairs Secretariat, it was a different critic of the official opposition. So perhaps if we could have our general questions and discussions on this administrative support, and then we have the general areas of local government development which are 56 communities and then followed by the various agreements we administer. We will make sure we are dealing with those blocks and moving them through. This department in particular has a habit of being all over and it makes it difficult to have the right staff concentrating on replies. So if we could do our general stuff now, that would be just excellent.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Minister. At this time, then, we will be dealing with blocks of appropriations. We will deal with Appropriation 19.1 and then we will proceed on to 19.2 after we have passed each resolution. Is it the will of the committee? [agreed]

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Deputy Chair, now that we all have, I guess, the same hymn book here, if you look at the division in the department, area 2, subappropriation 19.2 is Local Government. So we may want to do all of our discussions on Local Government in that general area because those are the Northern Affairs communities and then move through line by line.

Northern Development and Co-ordination include a host of things: Northern Flood Agreements, the Communities Economic Development Fund, the Northern Development Commission would be in there. That would be one area.

Then we have the Native Affairs Secretariat, and, of course, our capital appropriations which relate to our northern communities we will probably discuss under that headline. So I know we are jumping around a bit, but if we could kind of discuss things in those blocks, that would allow us to keep focused, and then once we have completed a block we could pass line by line.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Deputy Chair, on 19.1(b)(1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$291,400—I looked at the Organizational Chart—first of all, it has gone up from 275 to 291. That would be my first question; you know, the nature of the increase. As well, secondly, I would ask the minister perhaps to break out the \$291,400, like which positions and what expenditures, what areas does it cover?

* (1520)

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Deputy Chair, one of the reasons for this difference, and I will get some specific information for you on who is in those positions, but what happened with the cabinet shuffle last year was that previously the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs was also the Minister of Energy and Mines, and there was then a sharing of staff and costs between those

departments for the operation of that ministerial suite.

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

This has now moved over to us where we have the Department of Labour and the Civil Service Commission. So we do an assignment of those costs between various departments, depending on salary and assignment so there was an untangling with one department and then a moving over to another and entangling with Labour and the Civil Service Commission.

In terms of staffing I, as minister, have the same staffing complement that I had previously except that I have two shared staff in one staff year where I previously had one staff and a full-time staff position. I had staff leave. We reshuffled in my office and had two part-time people on the same salary where we had a full time.

I am just looking to my director of Finance. Is there any other accounting as to why there was an increase there? I will just have that for the member.

Yes, because we have reorganized somewhat among the departments, there were some changes in classifications which resulted in a higher salary because of an added workload.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Acting Deputy Chair, so the 291 would cover the deputy minister, the assistant. Am I correct, or I am not following you?

Mr. Praznik: I can say to the member for The Pas that I feel just as confused over this as he does, and I wish that my director of Finance could respond directly.

I do not believe that the deputy minister's salary is allotted to this department. It is allotted to Labour. Included in that \$291.4 would be the one assistant to the minister, an executive assistant to the minister, an executive assistant to the deputy, and five administrative support staff or sharing of that salary which would be the secretaries in both the minister's and the deputy minister's office.

Prior to this situation we had in my own minister's office, for example, two secretaries who handled the—and they are both here today to watch the Estimates—the Civil Service, Workers

Compensation and Labour. With the change in ministries we acquired an additional secretarial position to handle the Northern and Native Affairs work within the office. So we now have three administrative supports where we had two. There was a juggling of responsibility. I believe the deputy minister's is up, as well. There were some areas where the costs were reduced but the total overall is up those few thousands of dollars.

Ms. McCormick: I am interested in asking questions with respect to the issue identification around policy, development and implementation. Can you tell me what specific policy initiatives are being given priority within the department at this time?

Mr. Praznik: Generally speaking, one of the things I have learned about this department, and I think our colleagues from northern Manitoba appreciate it, there are always a host of issues that are developing in northern Manitoba that are out of your control, for which you are having to react or develop policy because of events that are out of control or out of your control to determine.

Just one, for example, is the decision made by the federal minister with Grand Chief Fontaine to enter into the dismantling process. That has to be a First Nations and federal government initiative. It is in their control jurisdictionally but because that has come into play, that particular area has taken on a very top priority in my department as we currently are planning our particular positions on a host of issues and have entered into some very unofficial negotiations with both parties to get a sense about the process of how this is going to work. So that issue has taken on a top priority, again, because of the relationship. It was not one that was expected eight or nine months ago, but because it is happening, we are going to be there and we are putting resource time into it.

Ongoing priorities have been the treaty land entitlement processes which are really two bilateral sets of negotiations: One between the treaty chiefs with claims and the federal government to whom the responsibility to turn over land is owed, and a bilateral between the federal government and the province in making

land available were all at the same table, but that is the process. That has been a top priority because we want to move those to settlement. So, again, we are not the lead in that; we have been there and pushing.

The third area, of course, is Northern Flood which is a provincial jurisdictional issue. We have been moving on that one and spending a great deal of resources and starting to see some light at the end of the tunnel.

Another area that we have put effort into is the North Central power line where we have worked as a co-ordinating unit, and that has been a priority because the opportunity has been there. As well, we have ongoing responsibilities with local government, certainly social-policy reform initiated by Minister Axworthy. Our department has a role in that. So we are often responding because we are more of a co-ordinating department. We are responding in those policy areas, and so we divert resources to them. It is rare that we get to be the initiator of a major area because we have so limited jurisdiction, and the areas in which we do, we have taken a role, the North Central hydro line being one of them.

Ms. McCormick: Mr. Acting Deputy Chair, one policy initiative that I was hoping to hear in your list is referenced on page 16. The Activity Identification is "Implements and monitors affirmative action policies to meet the departmental affirmative action goals and objectives."

Can you describe to me what your Affirmative Action program consists of on your progress towards meeting those objectives?

Mr. Praznik: I must say to the member, when you are in this portfolio, again, sometimes we have to be careful in listening to what we are saying or other people are saying and understanding where they are coming from. I do not want to leave the impression that affirmative action, in terms of ensuring that we have northerners and particularly aboriginal people employed in this department is not a priority with us. It is, but it is one of the things we do that has become so ingrained in what we do that we do not necessarily talk about it a great deal.

As I think the member can appreciate, we have a large number of aboriginal people working in our department. One of our areas in terms of initiatives in local government that we do not specifically view as aboriginal because our Northern Affairs communities, although they are populated largely by Metis people and aboriginal people, they are not entirely aboriginal communities. Developing opportunities there and local administration there is an area where we have put a fair bit of effort. So we do it without even thinking about it, I guess, is the point that I want to make.

* (1530)

If I can tell you, though, within our department we have—I just want to check these numbers for the honourable member—yes, just for the member's interest, in our department approximately one-third of this department now is individuals who declared themselves to be aboriginal.

Ms. McCormick: Mr. Acting Deputy Chair, also in preparation for the Status of Women Estimates, I have been reviewing the Hay report. Can you advise me how many of the aboriginal employees of the department are women?

Mr. Praznik: I can tell the member that 54 percent of the departmental staff is female, and I do not have a cross-reference for the member. We can endeavour to get that for the member if she would so wish.

Ms. McCormick: Thank you. I would appreciate having that information. As well, if we could look at the organizational chart that is contained in the Supplementary Estimates, I was wondering if you could identify the box for me in which the senior woman would be found in your department.

Mr. Praznik: That would be our Director of Personnel.

Ms. McCormick: Thank you very much. I will turn it back to the member for The Pas.

Mr. Lathlin: I do not have any more on 19.1.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): 1. Administration and Finance (b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$291,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$142,100—pass.

1.(c) Financial and Administrative Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$435,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$133,700—pass.

2. Local Government Development (a) Programs and Operational Support.

Just for clarification, it was my understanding that the committee agreed to consider 19.2 as a total block, in other words, 19.2 (a) to (j). Is that correct?

Mr. Praznik: Yes, and, Mr. Acting Deputy Chair, I would just reference members of the committee as well, not showing up here is our Capital Appropriations, which would include northern communities and community access and resource roads, particularly the northern communities. That is our capital budget for the 56 Northern Affairs communities, so we may want to consider that as well in discussion.

Mr. Lathlin: Just a general question at first, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, regarding the statement, providing services to northern and remote communities which assist in the attainment of local self-government, and this service is provided in the form of giving financial and technical assistance. I would like to ask the minister, first of all, according to the minister's definition of local self-government, how many of those communities would have attained local self-government as per his definition of what local self-government is?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, just for the interest of other members of the committee, I should point out that on Northern Affairs, I know the two members from the North are well aware of this issue, but the Northern Affairs communities are communities that are neither First Nations communities nor large enough to be municipalities. Back when this department was created, it was felt that there was a need to establish some administrative unit to start building local systems or processes or institutions of local control over the affairs in those communities.

We have 56 communities on our list of Northern Affairs communities that have been identified and so labelled. They range in population from about

1,700-1,800 people in Wabowden, which would be our largest; or Sherridon; South Indian Lake would be about a thousand to no people in Warren Landing which—[interjection] That was some member's laugh. That was a question I had when I was briefed on the department. It is still a fishing station that has some population in the summer and has not lost its designation but probably will at some point.

The system evolves a little bit as some new communities are created. I think Rock Ridge was one that was a newer community that was created. What we try to do is, in communities with a large enough population to warrant an election, we try to move them toward electing councils who administer the affairs of the communities. Those communities that are not large enough for councils, we appoint a local person to be the spokesperson for the community. Often it is because there are 30 or 40 or 50 people, and they are all of the same family. They sort of get together and decide who is going to be the leader.

Our ultimate goal for the larger communities who are ready and able and willing and so developed is to move them into municipal status, where they truly are responsible under The Municipals Affairs Act and have the tax based to support it.

Currently, of the 56 communities, and this is more specific to the question of the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin), there are 38 of those communities who have elected councils which we appoint. I, as minister under the act, have the authority to administer their communities. Eleven of those communities are on what we call the block funding method. They have advanced to the point where their funding comes in block form, and they determine how they are going to spend it within the block. The others still, by and large, work with the department.

On the block funding, also I should point out that they are funded quarterly. They receive their money in quarterly payments, but it still comes in block form.

We have four communities that we are currently working with which are moving towards incorporation.

Mr. Lathlin: So 11 out of 38 councils have elected, and then out of that 38, 11 are funded by way of block funding.

Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, for those who are being funded through the block funding process, what flexibility do they have in terms of deciding where expenditures are to be made? Also, in their planning process, what flexibility do they have?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, within the amount of money assigned to them, the money is provided unconditionally so that they can set the priorities within their community, how they are going to spend that amount of money. We provide the regular audit and supervision and assistance roles in providing advice.

I am sure, as the member can appreciate, for many of these communities, it is developing the ability and the expertise, and it takes time. We have been working at it a number of years, but at least we have been, I think, making some pretty good progress over the last decade and a half.

* (1540)

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, what sort of expenditures then would these block-funded communities get into? In other words, what responsibilities do they have when they are in that block-funding mode?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, they would have pretty much the regular responsibilities of a municipality, which would be water and sewer, whether that would be a pump-out station or sewer line, maintaining and constructing those; sewage lagoon, if it is necessary, or a sewage plant; streets, street maintenance; disposal of garbage; street lighting; public works garage; fire service; recreation; and of course, their own administration. So it would be the regular array of responsibilities that any municipality would take on.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, what about the remaining, besides the 11? I believe

the minister said something like 56 Northern Affairs communities, 38 councils are elected, 11 being in block funding. What about the remainder? How do they operate?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, the others which are not in block funding and have elected councils operate to about the same degree, in about the same manner, except the monies are held in trust by the department. So they are not turned over for specific administration, but the bills are paid by the department. Depending on the degree of development of those communities, they by and large set their priorities with the department and we administer the money.

In those areas where we have very, very small populations, the department carries out the administration. I think we have some communities with two or three people, so one can appreciate that you are not going to have the same kind of municipal structure.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Deputy Chair, a while ago the minister alluded to training. I am quite familiar with the Northern Affairs communities. I just wanted to have the minister describe the training and development component of the funding that he provides to Northern Affairs communities.

He says that we have been working on these communities for a long time, and we have a long way to go. There is a lot of training that is required. When I look at the budget of Northern Affairs, all of \$19 million, and it is divided up, you know, so much percentage of that goes into community operations, regional services and grants and so on. How much money would be allocated for training then in view of this? The need for training that is required, obviously, there are 11 out of 56 communities that are block funded. The rest, I guess, are more or less being looked after by the Department of Northern Affairs.

Mr. Praznik: Yes, I do not want to leave the impression with the member that those who do not receive block funding are looked after. I guess that comment is open to such a difference of opinion as to what that means, because some of those communities are quite happy to have an elected

council to set their priorities and have those dollars placed in trust with the department and work out arrangements on how things are going to be spent.

We are talking about communities with often less than 100 people, 50 people in many cases. I do not want to leave the impression it is some paternalistic hand that is governing these departments. We have very good field staff who work regularly working through issues, and if you are only 50 or 60 people in a community, many of whom are related to one another, it is not the same dynamic in establishing an elected municipal council and moving into a municipal situation.

I can tell the member that in having discussions with the Northern Association of Community Councils, many of whose executive come from those types of communities, that has not been raised as a particular issue. They have had a good working relationship with the department. Again, it is the size of the communities that creates a different dynamic.

I can tell the member in answering his question more specifically that we budget about \$46,000 for training programs, plus the time and work of our field staff. In some of the training workshops or programs that we have run are the mayors and councillors institute program in how to conduct meetings and operate a council, the Community Clerk workshop for the clerks in those communities, budget review, waste and waste water school on how to deal with that particular issue.

We have sponsored a firefighters rodeo with the help of the fire commission and mutual aid for firefighters, public works workshops, recreation directors workshops and, in 1994-95, in this coming year, we are planning a system workshop with the NACC Board of Directors. Again, the budget review, again, the Mayor and Councillors Institute, again Public Works' Workshops, Clerk Committee Workshops, Constable Training is another program we have added this year, again the firefighters' rodeo, and we will be also supporting sending some of our fire chiefs to the Conference of Manitoba Association of Fire

Chiefs where there is a fair bit of discussion and training going on for those people.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Deputy Chair, the point I was getting at was, yes, I realize that a lot of these communities, the population is not there, some are 50, 100, but there are others that may number at least 1,000 people. Even those, there are not many of them.

The point I was trying to make with the minister was one would think that, because of this state of development that the Northern Affairs communities are in, 11 out of 56 communities being in block funding, the training component would be one of the bigger items.

I say that with the experience that we have on the treaty side. One of the priorities that we as treaty Indian people had to set was training, training, training, training. We know that that takes a lot of money. If the Department of Northern Affairs is going to assist in the attainment of local self-government, I would respectfully submit to the minister that there needs to be, I do not know about fast-tracking, but certainly a lot more resources could be allocated to training if in fact we are pursuing the goal of local self-government.

Mr. Praznik: Well, a number of points. I can recognize fully what the member from The Pas is saying. I disagree somewhat that it has to be an expensive process. I guess one of the things that I have come to learn in both the Department of Labour and the Department of Northern Affairs, and it is really a tribute to some of the people who work in those departments, is the ability to stretch a dollar and get things done for a much more limited amount of money.

We can all bring our anecdotes to the table and that is what that turns into. I certainly appreciate what the member is saying.

I guess one has to talk about the goals a little bit for a moment, because I do believe that there is a difference in the goal here for self-administration than what we are talking about with First Nations, where his experience has been.

The reason I say that is because when we are talking about self-government on First Nations, it

is a much broader area of responsibility and jurisdiction than what we are talking about in these communities. Here we are talking really about just the municipal side. It has also been pointed out to me by staff that over the last few years we have had a lower rate of turnover of our employees or people who are employed with these community governments. So the need to put people through courses has not been there.

I would say probably the slowest part of developing this municipal self-government in these communities has not been a lack of training. It has just been the people in the community developing a comfort level where they are, particularly in the smaller communities. In the larger ones they have been moving to block funding, and comfortable with that, and often asking the question sometimes, and it is a very realistic one, why would we want to take the next step to go to a full municipality because then we get into a host of taxing issues, and the like, which to some degree act as a bit of a break on the system?

* (1550)

So the experience I have had in talking with NACC and being briefed by the department, and being in some of those communities over the winter, was that the desire to move ahead to be full municipalities is not all that strong. In the communities where it is, and there are a couple in particular, four who are getting ready, even those four who are in that stream there is a reluctance in a couple of them to say, why do we want to do that, why do we want to move into this, because then we are going to be talking about the levying of local taxes and other things.

It is a much different situation than I think the experience in the First Nations, and that might be why there is a difference. I have been assured, and the sense I get from NACC is that there is a comfort level with what is being done in moving things forward. Quite frankly, I do not foresee the day when all of those communities will be municipalities. I think if we have three or four or five or 10 who inevitably become municipalities, I would think that would be probably the largest

number. Most of them will still continue to be Northern Affairs communities and governing with either local councils or under some trusteeship relationship or with block funding. If that is where those communities are comfortable and that is the way things work most efficiently, why would one want to change that if the people there are comfortable with that level.

I just point out to the member as well, I had the interesting situation this year of repealing one of the Orders-in-Council that created a council in a community because the population of that community was small, it was the 50-60 range. They had wanted a council, we had passed the Orders-in-Council, created a council, and then they found that it was just not really where they wanted to be, that they were having difficulty with the elections and the like, and so they asked us to remove that Order-in-Council and return to where we just appointed the person they chose locally to be the contact person.

So, again, that was what the community wanted, and if that is the comfort level and it works, that is where we should probably be, I would suggest.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Deputy Chair, those are all of the questions I had on the objective or the statement on the objective, unless there are any questions.

Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples): I would like to ask a question about Buffalo Point First Nation correspondence sent to the First Minister, and I believe a copy was sent to this minister, in regards to a proposal on taxation resource sharing.

I am wondering if I could know what the government's response was to this correspondence sent to them on April 28, 1994, from John Thunder, the band manager.

Mr. Praznik: To the member for the Maples, I do not think he was here when we had agreed and his party representative, the member for Osborne, had agreed that we would be dealing with the blocks under the Estimates, and we are currently on the Local Government Development section, which is the 56 Northern Affairs communities we administer. We will be getting on to the Native

Affairs area where that is most appropriate a little later on, and I will answer it then.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I thank the honourable member. The honourable member for Selkirk, and we are dealing with the Local Government Development right now under 19.2.

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I want to ask some questions about the Selkirk Regional Office. I noticed that it received close to \$90,000 less in funding between '93-94 and '94-95. I want to ask the minister, why was there such a large reduction in the funding to the Selkirk Regional Office?

Mr. Praznik: I am advised that the particular reason exactly is because we have eliminated one position in that office. What had happened here, for the interests of the member for Selkirk, was the person who had filled that position had been away on sick leave or disability leave for over two years, and, in the course of those two years, it was found that we really did not need to fill that particular position, that others had picked up the workload, et cetera, and so was part of this. I think the person has moved onto other disability programs, could not come back to work, has gone onto pension.

In this year's budget process, when one has a position that is not filled by a person, the person has moved on, and that the workload has been dispersed among others, and it was found after two years that you, quite frankly, do not need that position, that is an excellent position to remove in the budget process because you are not affecting an individual or a service delivery. That is why that, in fact, happened.

Mr. Dewar: That one individual was receiving \$90,000?

Mr. Praznik: No, but I am sure the member who spoke about Bill 22 days regularly and other cost-saving measures that this government has taken on could do the calculations to realize that other savings on the staff lines had been found that I would point out to him have kept other people working who otherwise would not be.

Mr. Dewar: What function did that single employee perform?

Mr. Praznik: That person was a co-ordinator who co-ordinated the work in various communities, and supported training and administrative on a one-on-one basis, but the job of that particular person, it was found that others in the department out of that office could have picked up the work responsibilities and amalgamate them into their own job. Quite frankly, it was a position that was not needed.

Mr. Dewar: What communities does this office serve in Selkirk?

Mr. Praznik: This office services the communities along the east side of Lake Winnipeg and several in the north Interlake, 22 communities in total.

Mr. Dewar: My final question to the minister is, how does this minister expect this office to perform its functions, which is to serve the individuals within these 22 communities when he cuts the budget by over 20 percent?

Mr. Praznik: First of all, I have to tell the honourable member that I have been in the Selkirk office, I have met with the staff, I had very good discussion with the staff, and they did not raise the issue that they were understaffed or could not handle their responsibilities. In fact, they were a very enthusiastic group of people. I meet regularly with the Northern Association of Community Councils that represent those communities that are serviced by the department. I have had no complaints about lack of service about the office.

The fact of the matter is, while the individual who occupied this position was away on sick leave for two years, which meant I could not fill the position, the work was done by others and to the satisfaction of our clients. Quite frankly, life has gone on, and neither the clients nor the people delivering the service are—the only person who seems to have a problem with it is the member for Selkirk.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Deputy Chair, I would like to ask on (c), The Pas Region. We went from 230 to 182. Was that another case of a person who had not been on the job for a year?

* (1600)

Mr. Praznik: First of all, I should tell the member for The Pas that there are seven communities serviced out of The Pas office. There was a shuffle of staff. The regional director for that particular area was transferred to the Selkirk office, moved into Selkirk, and the community co-ordinator in The Pas office was promoted to the regional manager of that office and, of course, creating a vacancy in her old position. Consequently, it was felt, as we worked through the budget process with our staff, that position was not really needed and could be handled by others. So that position, as a vacancy, was done away with in this budget.

Mr. Lathlin: So a lot of people, I should tell the people, I should advise those workers they are not to go on holidays; they are not to go on sick.

On the (a) part, Mr. Deputy Chair, perhaps I could ask the minister to just go through that list for us. Well, first of all, I wanted to know why we went from 74 to 90 under Other Expenditures, I believe that is under Other Expenditures. Then the Grants part, the Recreation Directors' Program, maybe he could expand a little bit on that to explain what the Grants are all about and the Recreation Directors' Program, how many people are employed and just give a general explanation as to the nature of the program.

Mr. Praznik: We will deal with these one at a time. With respect to the Other Expenditures, item 19.2 (a)(2), that is rent for our office in the Thompson provincial government building. As the member may be aware, during the budget process we have gone to a full cost recovery to Government Services on space we rent, which has had I think the push of making departments really evaluate the space that they need to carry on their operations.

So our administrators now take that into account when planning their workloads. We reorganized in that office. We actually took on less space, but cost of the space went up, and that is where the difference is there.

On (5), Grants, the \$258,900, that is our grant to the Northern Association of Community Councils, which is a co-ordinating body for all 56 communities that we work with, and who has

taken on a pretty significant role in co-ordinating and prioritizing the needs and wants of the 56 communities. It has given us a body to work with to develop a common policy and priorities with those communities.

The Recreation Directors' Program is the salaries for 13 employees of the Community Councils who provide recreation co-ordination in these various communities. It is a very important program, and if I can say this to the member, I am sure that he has been lobbied and certainly the member for Rupertsland has probably been lobbied with respect to the salary levels of those people. I know that they do their work for a very minimal amount of money. If there was one area in the salary side of this department I wish that I had some greater ability to accommodate, it would be certainly in that one. Regrettably I do not have that ability at this time, but I am certainly aware of that issue.

I say this for the member for Rupertsland, there is one individual in particular, I know the work that he does and the salary that he is paid, and the community and the province are getting a bargain. I am aware of the problem, and we are trying to struggle with some way to resolve it.

Mr. Lathlin: How does the minister allocate the grants to NACC?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Deputy Chair, within that allocation there is approximately \$20,000 for Whispering Pines, which is their publication, in support of their publication which they send to the residents of all these communities as an information circular, as a newsletter. As I am sure the member can appreciate, there is not really a vehicle of communication for most of these communities because they are in committee newspaper ranges, but nothing that ties them together.

Also included in that is the \$800 fee per community which is the membership fee to NACC. So in essence we pick that up for the communities. So 50-some communities who are members of—I do not think Warrens Landing is a member of that community, but those communities

that are, we pick up the \$800 fee, so that is how it is channeled through the communities to NACC.

I am kind of happy with that system because what it means ultimately is that if a community feels that NACC is not doing a job in co-ordinating that, they have some input in pulling some money out of NACC, and it keeps NACC, I think, more responsible to its membership as opposed to just receiving a straight grant from the province and not having some financial tie to its community.

So it seems to have worked well. We pay the money quarterly, it flows quarterly.

Mr. Lathlin: What I was interested in knowing was, is there a formula that the department uses in the allocation of the grant? How does the department determine, for example, how much money would go to NACC?

Mr. Praznik: No, there is not a particular formula. I guess it works on tradition, past practice and current budget requirements. One should just point out that NACC works as a co-ordinating unit. That money is not part of their capital budget or program delivery or cost, I should say, in the individual communities. It depends on what they are taking on and what we can spare in our budget and a lot of give and take.

* (1610)

Mr. Lathlin: That is all I have in that area.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 2. Local Government Development (a) Regional and Operational Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$231,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$90,600—pass; (3) Community Operations \$4,723,100—pass; (4) Regional Services \$692,300—pass; (5) Grants \$258,900—pass; (6) Recreation Directors' Program \$317,700—pass.

2.(b) Thompson Region (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$410,700—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$151,300—pass.

2.(c) The Pas (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$182,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$89,600—pass.

2.(d) Dauphin Region (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$360,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$107,300—pass.

2.(e) Selkirk Region (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$352,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$138,400—pass.

2.(f) Technical Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$321,900.

Mr. Lathlin: Two questions I have there. One is that we went from 392 to 321, a reduction of some \$70,000. The second question would be is, what sort of technical services does this part contain?

Mr. Praznik: The member for The Pas is not going to believe this, but it is true. Technical Services, first of all, is the drafting component where the water and sewer, road; it is where design work for projects in our northern communities is done. So these are the people who do all of the design on roads. Whatever has to be done, they do: engineering; I think they do our surveying, for example.

I should tell the honourable member that one of the initiatives I think the department has taken over the years, and one that we have been certainly putting some emphasis in, is the transferring of property and surveying lots, and those types of things in these communities.

So we do all of that in house in this particular branch, so that is what it is.

With respect to the vacancy, we had a vacancy, and the member may not believe this, but, again, we had another individual who was on long-term disability, been away for some time and then moved onto pension and retired, giving us the vacancy; and, being good managers, we decided that that was a vacancy to take as opposed to laying off a live individual who was in the particular position. He did not go on holidays.

Mr. Lathlin: I believe the minister is doing this, so he can buy another Suburban for the Thompson office.

Mr. Praznik: I will have to investigate this particular comment by the member for The Pas. I will have to take it up with our ADM.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Item 2. Local Government Development (f) Technical Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$321,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$100,400.

Mr. Kowalski: Just on Communication, I notice in most of the Estimates that I have been sitting in, communications have usually dropped as a result of the use of the Vantage program from MTS. I notice there is no drop in Communication budget. Why would that be?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: He is talking about page 15.

Mr. Kowalski: I am talking about 10.2 last year and 10.2 this year in Communication in the detailed Estimates.

Mr. Praznik: I am advised here by my support staff that there was a drop from \$102,900 to \$100,400, which is representative of our saving in telecommunications. The total, I believe, of telephone for the department in communication costs is \$28,000, so that that did drop several thousands of dollars, based on a current expenditure of about \$28,000.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Shall the item pass? The item is accordingly passed.

Item 2.(g) Audit Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$150,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$30,300—pass.

2.(h) Inter-Regional Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$364,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$82,900—pass.

2.(j) Northern Affairs Fund (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$129,500.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would just like to get some information on what the Northern Affairs Fund is.

Mr. Praznik: That is the part of the department that does the auditing and bookkeeping for the communities that are not self-administered. So, where we provide the administration to communities, that is the fund we use to pay for the auditing, property tax collection and other things.

One comment that my staff make to me is that it particularly applies in areas that have cottages in our Northern Affairs communities where we collect the taxes, et cetera. So this is the fund we use to administer those particular costs where we do not have the services contracted or provided by the local Northern Affairs community council.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Shall the item pass? The item is accordingly passed.

Resolution 19.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$9,299,800 for Northern Affairs for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1995.

Resolution 19.3: Item 3. Northern Development and Co-ordination (a) Northern Development (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$334,300.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I believe this is where items like the Northern Flood Agreement treaty land entitlement come in.

I know the minister in his opening remarks referenced the work that is being done in the Northern Flood area, so in his reference to the Northern Flood, he stated that Split Lake, out of the five bands, I believe, has settled by way of the comprehensive agreement. He has also stated that for Nelson House, York Factory and Cross Lake, there is an MOU for each of those three bands and that Norway House is being proceeded upon by way of settling claim by claim.

Perhaps I could ask the minister to maybe give us a little bit of an elaboration on the remaining three bands that have signed MOUs, and also Norway House. But before he does that, I wonder if we could ask him also to describe to us what is a comprehensive agreement, and what is it that Norway House First Nation is looking for? What is the difference between the two types of agreements? That is two. Maybe I will stop there now. I will ask the minister to respond.

Mr. Praznik: First of all, I want to thank the member for The Pas for an opportunity to put this discussion into the context.

There were five bands, going back to a time when I was not of voting age and very young, that signed the Northern Flood Agreement: Cross Lake, Split Lake, Nelson House, Norway House and York Factory. The agreement provided for a global amount of money from Hydro that would be made available for settling claims for those communities.

Claims can obviously be on an individual basis—people have suffered specific damage, loss of

economic benefit, loss of property, those types of things—or they can be a comprehensive settlement where all of the claims in a particular community are lumped together. The community takes a settlement and directs those resources as it sees fit, whether it be payments to individuals, whether it be for community projects, what have you.

* (1620)

When we picked this whole process up under Minister Downey and wanting to move ahead, and I would hope that members of the committee share some of the concerns that we have, and I think the chiefs have in this process, is that it has gone on a long time. There seems almost to be an industry based in Winnipeg of negotiating Northern Flood. That may be inevitable ultimately because it is a complex process, but it does underline the frustration that I think everyone has had, because there is just so much involved with it.

The comprehensive process: We were able with Split Lake, I guess being the first, to sign a comprehensive agreement where we signed a Memorandum of Understanding to negotiate a comprehensive agreement. There certainly were still individual claims there until we reached a comprehensive agreement, but we did. That settled all the claims with Split Lake, and that comprehensive agreement with the community had decided how it would handle the dollars that flowed.

Three of the remaining five communities have now signed Memorandums of Understanding with the province to do exactly the same thing, and we are involved in those negotiations currently. I am told they are progressing speedily, reasonably well, as we deal with the detail of that comprehensive agreement.

It would be our intention, when the details are concluded and we have reached an agreement—and that is the stage we are at when we are negotiating detail, which is a very complex process—that each of those communities would receive as a community a payment, and they would then determine internally, or would have already determined internally, how they wish to distribute

that payment to deal with claims in their own community.

The one community that has not signed on to that process is Norway House. The member asks a very fair question when he says to us, what can be done there? I know the member for Osborne, representing the Liberal Party, raised that issue. I offer this by way of an observation, because we are not, quite frankly, sure where Norway House is coming from or what their position is.

We suspect that there is some internal debate going on within that community. There has been an election recently where there was a change in some councillors. I am sure that has initiated another debate as to where Norway House First Nation wants to be in this process. Until they are ready to decide where they want to be, we cannot make that process go any faster. If they do not want a comprehensive agreement, then, ultimately, their claims would be dealt with on an individual basis through the arbitrator.

The one point I do make that is very, very important to appreciate here is that there is one common agreed-upon total for settling all five agreements. So the last in, the last to get on the bandwagon is really picking up the last share of the pie that the other four have left to some degree.

So Norway House has to make some decisions about which way it wants to go. We hope that we conclude in the not too distant future, but you never know about these things, because they are complex negotiations. We hope that we can conclude comprehensive agreements with the other three communities, and within a not too distant period of time have this area wrapped up, because it is a long overdue for the people involved.

I say this to members from northern communities. There may be things about Norway House that we are not fully aware of that they may, as local members, and we would be more than pleased, and I would be more than pleased as minister, to arrange a meeting with the local members, with our staff, if there is information that they would like to exchange in order to accommodate the negotiating process.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would like to discuss Norway House a little bit further, but I want to deal with Cross Lake. Two weeks ago, I met with the chief, Chief Sydney Garrioch, here in this building, and he was telling me the story about an arbitrator's decision that had been made in favour of Cross Lake First Nation. I believe it had to do with the bridge. Then he proceeded to show me documents where, I believe, the government or Hydro or whoever it is was not really wanting to accept the arbitrator's decision. As a matter of fact, I believe there was an appeal launched on the arbitrator's decision, so I could not really understand why the government would appeal an arbitrator's decision, although I also realize that there are different types of arbitration. By and large, arbitration decisions are binding, especially after there had been agreement on the parties that are involved in the arbitration.

I wonder if I could ask the minister to shed a little bit of light on that issue. Is that in fact what happened? An arbitrator had made a decision on the bridge for Cross Lake, and the government turned around and appealed the arbitrator's decision?

Mr. Praznik: I am glad that the member for The Pas has raised this issue. I know it was the subject of a question in the Legislature to another minister, and it is a complicated area, as I know the member appreciates, and I am glad we have an opportunity to discuss it today.

As I am advised by staff, the issue was not whether or not a bridge was to be built. The issue arises out of the definition of an all-weather access road, and I believe, under the agreement, part of the terms is to provide an all-weather access to the community. Now, on the—is it the Pipestone River?—there is currently, as the member probably knows far better than I do, a ferry service. The question that went to the arbitrator was: Was having a road with a ferry service an all-weather road, or did one need to have a bridge to have an all-weather road? Was an ice bridge in the winter and a ferry in the summer still an all-weather road, or did you need a bridge? The arbitrator ruled that a ferry service with an ice bridge in the winter did

not make an all-weather road, and I guess it boils down to the definitional question.

Under the agreement, there is provision for appeal, and both Canada and Manitoba under this agreement have launched an appeal pursuant to the agreement. So it is not that one is turning down the agreement. We are using options that are available to us under the agreement in that definition. Obviously, it will be settled, and we will have to see where the thing falls out, but I am sure the member can appreciate that the specific question was not, did you have to build a bridge or not—and were not building a bridge—but it is definitional. Ultimately, if that definition carries through, then we will have to live with the result and the process of that agreement. That should work itself out. Both Canada and Manitoba have not done anything untoward or outside of the processes that have been agreed to under the Northern Flood Agreement, and all of us will wait to see how this thing plays.

* (1630)

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, so, as this issue is being chased up wherever this is being chased up on the system, after the arbitration hearing, would the next step be the court?

Mr. Praznik: Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, in terms of process, I am advised that currently the parties have taken this issue back into negotiation. So the appeal has been stayed. If it cannot be settled at the negotiation table, then the appeal, the final appeal, would be to another arbitrator under the agreement.

I would just point out that this is not so much an issue of continuous access because I am advised that the ferries even run at times with the ice bridge and that that continuous access, I guess other than days of extremely inclement weather, is provided. So we are not talking about a community that has total cutoff access. It is a definition of what constitutes continual access, and I can appreciate where the community is coming from on this, that a bridge is probably always better than a ferry, but at least it is not a question today of a community not having access. I just want to make that point.

Mr. Lathlin: I would like to go back to Norway House for a moment, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. I believe the minister made a statement, something to the effect that he cannot understand what Norway House wants or is looking for. I have met with Norway House a number of times, and I have listened to the elders in the community of Norway House and staff of the Norway House First Nation, the chief and council of Norway House First Nation. After listening to them through a series of meetings, I understand that what they are looking for is a settlement that would take into consideration the fact that you can never really compensate or pay for or replace the types of things that have been lost by the community of Norway House. In other words, a way of life has been lost through no fault of their own, and how do you replace a way of life? How do you compensate for a way of life?

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

If you talk to the farmer, I hear the same thing from farmers, fishermen in Newfoundland, how do you replace their way of life? It has been destroyed. If we destroyed southern Manitoba and those farmers are looking for something that will replace what was there before, how do you do that? I believe that is why Norway House First Nation is looking at this Northern Flood issue as maybe being a treaty, or they are saying that our way of life has been wiped away. So they deserve some compensation. They do not want to be paid off on a one-shot deal, and then 10, 15, 20 years down the road, still suffer from the effects of Hydro development, whether it is an economic disorder or social disorder, because this is what they are paying for now, at least the people I talked to.

There seems to be, once you have broken that cycle or that way of life, it is darn difficult to repair it. So what they are asking for, I believe, is a program that will see them finally, not necessarily heal completely the wound that has been inflicted on the community, but certainly go a long way to putting things back, maybe not even putting things back the way they were, but come close to restoring what was there before in terms of the community life, instead of having to go all the way

out 1,500 miles elsewhere to do fishing. I believe that is what they want.

For example, fishing used to be an industry that aboriginal people in the North could—for them, as a matter of fact, it was not even work. It was not until later that they began to view fishing as an activity that you did where you got paid for whatever amount of fish you got. For them, it was a way of life. You went to fish whenever you wanted to fish. Whenever the supply of fish was going down, you just got up and you went fishing, whether you used hooks or nets. In those days the net was used primarily, but when you come along and you take that away from them, then the effects of that taken away, whatever it is that they had—I am using fishing as an example—it takes a long time for people to feel good about themselves.

I believe this is the direction that the Norway House First Nation was wanting to go in the area of Northern Flood, and I agree with them wholeheartedly. When I look back to my community, I always ask my aunts and uncles—my parents are both dead—but I ask my uncles and aunts, because I do not remember ever going hungry when I was a child. I remember my dad used to fish and hunt and trap, and in the summer he would get seasonal work. We got along just fine. I do not remember going hungry. I do not remember being in need of anything really.

Then I remember the government coming along every spring. They used to give out—people probably remember this as well, Eric, certainly—they used to come in their horse and a wagon where they gave the Indian people lard, tea, flour, and that was the start of that taking away your way of life. This is what we did in Norway House. Soon after that, of course, welfare became so rampant. We began relying on welfare so much that it destroyed a lot of our people. I submit to you that even to this day we are still trying to get out of that mode that the government put on us.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

I say the same thing on the residential school issue, when the government came in and took children away. Imagine the minister, his family—you are living in your riding; you are

living in your community of Garson and your wife and your kids. All of a sudden this government came along and said, now we are taking your kids away, and you will see them in 10 months' time. Imagine how you would feel. Imagine the severance, the cutoff, the alienation, the severance of the circle. It will never be complete again.

Even if your kids came back after 16 years, think of how long it would take for you to rebuild. Your parenting skills, your children's social skills, like parenting skills, they would not be there, because the government took it away from them, and this is exactly the same thing we are talking about that Norway House is looking for.

* (1640)

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that is about the best way that I can explain, seeing as how the minister said that he cannot understand what Norway House is looking for. I believe that is what they are looking for.

Mr. Praznik: I say to the member for The Pas most sincerely, I have enjoyed his comments very much. I think, as we get into these discussions of issues, despite being of different parties, we can often find common cause, because the things of which he speaks for the people of Norway House, about disruption, about the whole welfare cycle, particularly his comments about people coming and providing a living to you and you lose the pride that comes with earning your own living is so relevant, so very, very relevant to our whole society today, not just those aboriginal communities.

I guess one of my pet issues, of course, as a politician is what we have done 30 years in our whole society in making many, many people, all people, to some degree, so dependent on government and government services to do things that they can do for themselves or did in their communities.

You have to ask yourself at the end of the day, what have we created when we try to be all things to all people from government and at the end of the day probably destroy the strength and the self-reliance that individuals, their families and their communities have?

The member spoke about the destruction to that particular community or the sense there of the destruction that occurred. As a bit of an amateur historian throughout all of human time I guess, in particular the last century or two, that great change to communities and destruction to way of life has been repeated over and over and over again from changes in the industrial revolution to wars and politics. Communities and peoples and indeed nations have had to endure those difficulties, and it is not easy. We have lots of experience in what it does. Some get through better—others not.

With respect to the detail at Norway House, I say to the member for The Pas, my question is not knowing not so much what the people in the community want, but the process that they want to follow to get there.

Under the Northern Flood Agreement, of which they are a signatory, they have two options. One is the comprehensive agreement, as the member well knows, and the other, of course, is on a claim-by-claim basis. So they can settle. They can seek redress for what they believe to be the wrongs done to them in either of those processes. It is their choice as to which one they pursue.

We had hoped as a government, the officials involved with this, that they, like the other four communities, would get into a comprehensive agreement for one reason, one reason alone, because the comprehensive agreement reduced the number of dollars ultimately that flow out of those settlements to the hands of lawyers and negotiators and consultants, which happens on a claim-by-claim, and I think the other communities have recognized and we have recognized, but if Norway House community, Norway House First Nation is not comfortable with that process and not interested in pursuing that process, they have the other alternative which they entered into, agreed to as part of the Northern Flood Agreement, to advance their claims on a claim-by-claim basis. They are free to do that.

I want to make very clear that we are not in any way wanting to stand in the way of their pursuing redress for the damage done to them by flooding for Hydro. We do not intend to do that and do not

want to, but it is their choice as a community as to which method of the two that they agreed to under the Northern Flood Agreement they wish to pursue. If they wish to pursue a comprehensive agreement, we are prepared to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with them on the same basis as we have with the other communities, who found that an acceptable approach. If they wish to pursue this on a claim by claim, if they are not happy with that comprehensive agreement process, they are free to do that, and, in both cases, ultimately resolve the issue under that Northern Flood Agreement.

One comment, though, I do have to make again with my bit of an historian's hat on is that, in the whole advance of humankind through history, I guess every change we have made technologically, industrially, what have you, has brought with it good things and bad things. Obviously, the disruption of life in that community and the changes that came with that were the bad things. It should also be noted that the bringing of electricity and road access were good things too that have to be put on the balance list and should not be forgotten, quite frankly. If we look at—the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) talked about southern Manitoba—my constituency, it is one that has six power dams in it. The whole Winnipeg River in my constituency, which is now a vast lake, is the result of the generation of electricity for the province.

We have suffered erosion, and we have suffered a number of things, but they have also provided some tremendous benefits, the power generation that led to the Pine Falls paper mill, the electricity generally for Manitobans and what that has done to quality of life, having access to electricity. Of course, it has made our area into a major recreational area. That may not be the case in Norway House entirely, but I think, whenever we are having these debates, we must always put onto the balance scales both sides of it, good and bad, to have a fuller comprehension of what has taken place.

As a province that has benefited greatly from hydroelectricity and that has flooded vast amounts

of our northern areas to provide an inexpensive supply of electricity to light and heat our homes and fuel our industry and produce wealth for us, we have to recognize that we have caused damage to people in the areas where we have flooded. That is why this administration and others before it have recognized that and entered into agreements to compensate.

I know one of the comments that our Premier (Mr. Filmon) has made on many, many occasions is that one of the great tragedies of our hydro development has been the damage that we left uncompensated for decades in this province. I think one thing we do share around this table, even though there may be some disagreements on specifics, is the need to recognize and to properly compensate those communities for the damages that were done, that brought great benefit to Manitobans. That is our intention, and we are moving toward that with three communities, settled with one. Norway House, which is a signatory to that Northern Flood Agreement, will choose its option as to how it wishes to pursue compensation, either in a comprehensive way or claim by claim. That is their choice, and it is not for me to interfere in or make it for them.

* (1650)

Mr. Kowalski: I would like also add my comments to what the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) says. I have enjoyed his discourse. Most of the questions I had—as a matter of fact, all of the questions I had in regard to this Norway House flood agreement have come forward as a result of his questions to the minister.

When this minister talks about the balance sheet, one thing I have not heard mentioned is the part of that balance sheet which is the migration to the city of many people from those communities, because of so much of their culture being blown apart, so much of that community and that support network, the circle being broken, the cost not only to those people but to the social fabric of this city as a result of broken people coming to this community. As a police officer, I, over 20 years, have seen that migration from healthy communities to a city that was not always friendly to those people coming

from those communities that were broken up as a result of flooding in the North. I think that is an important thing to remember, that the damage was not only to those communities, but damage was caused to all of Manitoba. That is part of the balance sheet.

Mr. Praznik: I would just point out to the member for The Maples that I think that if one wants to get into these issues, one should appreciate in the larger context that people have flowed into Winnipeg from aboriginal and nonaboriginal communities across our province since probably the 1930s on a regular basis because of the attractions of urban life, or the promise that it brings, and changing economics and circumstances in a host of communities. I do not think the member is implying that only people from those five communities have come in to Winnipeg. One has to recognize that there are hosts of differences and hosts of issues. As a nation, urban migration from rural and remote areas has been a big trend in our country for a long period of time for a lot of reasons and a lot of causes, for good or bad.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would just like to commend my colleague the member for The Pas for the speech he gave on some of the realities of the affected bands of the Northern Flood Agreement. I was born in Norway House, so I am acutely aware of the situation and the changes that have occurred in my home community and also my home reserve where I am registered under the Cross Lake First Nation.

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

In our history, our modern history and, of course, the older part of our history, our treaty arrangement was made with the Crown in Right of England in 1875. Subsequent to that, of course, we have this modern-day treaty arrangement that is called the Northern Flood Agreement that was signed in 1977. But events leading up to 1977 were that the understanding of the elders and the leaders of that time, and the leaders of today as well, the socioeconomic conditions would always be addressed and would always be a part of the

Northern Flood Agreement that was made. We still have obviously some outstanding business with respect to the Northern Flood Agreement.

I would like to ask the minister, in order to give the Northern Flood Agreement full effect, I want to hear from the minister and his position with respect to the contention of the Northern Flood communities, particularly Cross Lake and Norway House, as a modern-day treaty. I would just like to get his position on that.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Acting Deputy Chair, I am not quite sure what the member is asking for my opinion on. If he could be a little more specific, I would appreciate it.

Mr. Robinson: I believe that we talked about a Memorandum of Understanding. If I heard correctly, we are talking about a proposed process to dealing with outstanding issues of the NFA. I think that you have heard the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) continually raising the issue of the contention of the chiefs of the Northern Flood bands regarding the Northern Flood Agreement as a modern-day treaty. I just wanted to get the minister's view on how he views that, what the chiefs have been saying. Does he in fact recognize the Northern Flood Agreement as a modern-day agreement—modern-day treaty, excuse me?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Acting Deputy Chair, first of all, the Northern Flood Agreement is an agreement between a number of parties: the Government of Canada, the government of Manitoba, Manitoba Hydro and the bands, the First Nations involved in that process. One can give that any label one chooses. The fact is, it is still an agreement between those parties that sets out certain rights and obligations under that agreement and processes, and that is currently what is in process.

Some want to call it a treaty. What is a treaty? A treaty is an agreement between two parties who agree to call that agreement a treaty. What does it mean? We have an agreement in the true legal sense between a number of parties with processes, rights and obligations. That is what we are dealing with.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): 3.(a) Northern Development (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$334,300.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Acting Deputy Chair, we are still under 19.3, right?

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): Right.

Mr. Lathlin: I had a question on treaty land entitlement. I know the minister, again in his opening remarks, alluded to the agreement that has been reached with the Island Lake Tribal Council. I believe there are four bands in the tribal council area. He says there are 22 other First Nations whose claims have been validated by the federal government, and I believe he said that there is some understanding reached between those 22 bands and the provincial government and the federal government, I guess, but more particularly with the provincial government in this case.

I would like to ask the minister, this agreement that his government has with the 22 TLE bands, what kind of an agreement is it, and how is this government involved with the 22 bands currently?

Mr. Praznik: Just to give the full picture here, we have 31 bands with treaty land entitlement claims, of which 26 have validated claims; 22 are signatories to a negotiating protocol; 19 of those communities have validated claims, I am advised. The four communities that have signed off on treaty land entitlement are not included, I believe, in that 22. So that makes the difference from the 26 who validated and the 22 that were signatories to protocol.

The protocol is, in essence, on how we will negotiate the treaty land entitlement issue between the treaty land chiefs, the Government of Canada and the Province of Manitoba. In theory, what we have agreed to are two bilateral sets of negotiations in keeping with the obligation. I, as minister, am very, very particular in following the correct lines of authority and responsibility.

I have to add that the national grand chief, Ovide Mercredi, took a very similar position. In fact, I took inspiration from him, or at least at a recent meeting, in outlining exactly where responsibility is.

As the member is very well aware, and I say this more for the edification of other members of the committee, the responsibility for treaty land entitlement is between the Crown right of Canada and the chiefs under the treaty. The province's responsibilities come in under the 1930 federal transfer act that transferred Crown lands to the province where we, in accepting those Crown lands, agreed to make uninhabited Crown lands available to satisfy those obligations.

So, in keeping with that process, we have two bilaterals.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Rose): Order, please. The hour being 5 p.m., time for private members' hour. Committee rise.

* (1420)

INDUSTRY, TRADE AND TOURISM

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

This section of the Committee of Supply will be dealing with the outstanding resolution for the Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism.

Resolution 10.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,296,800 for Industry, Trade and Tourism, Administration and Finance, \$3,296,800, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1995.

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

Madam Chairperson (Louise Dacquay): This section of the Committee of Supply will be continuing to deal with the Estimates for the Department of Highways. Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

We are on item 2.(e) Transport Compliance, page 92 of the Estimates manual.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Chairperson, I believe yesterday when we were dealing with the section on Transport Compliance, I had asked the minister questions relating to various violations and prosecutions that the department had undertaken by way of Transport Compliance legislation. The minister had just

started to talk a bit about some of the actions of his department and some of the statistics relating to the compliance section.

If the minister has a copy of a sheet relating to the statistics dealing with Transport Compliance and the various prosecutions, et cetera, to facilitate the Estimates moving along, maybe he could just provide a copy of the sheet and then it would make it easier for him, instead of reading it into the record.

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Madam Chairperson, I will table two copies of the information for the critics.

Mr. Reid: Madam Chairperson, I thank the minister for the information.

It is my understanding that the department may also have statistics, and I am not sure if it is on the information that is coming over, relating to the number of permits for the dangerous goods movements. Does the minister have information pertaining to the number of permits that would have been issued as well?

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chair, the permits that we issue in this department are for oversize, overweight, single trip, load of fuel permits or designated regulated commodity permits. We do not issue permits for hazardous goods. If there are such permits, they would be in Department of Environment, but not in our department.

Mr. Reid: I did not quite catch the minister's last portion of his comments. Could he repeat them for me, please?

Mr. Findlay: We do not issue permits for hazardous goods. If such permits are issued they would be by the Department of Environment, but not by the Department of Highways. We deal with oversize, overweight, those kinds of permits.

Mr. Reid: The information the minister sent over, does it also include permits for the items that he just mentioned a moment ago?

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chair, we will get copies right now of the permit information. Just for the member's knowledge: oversize permits last year, 6,700; overweight permits, 4,039; single trip permits, 3,400; load of fuel permits, 1,770; and

designated regulated commodity permits, 470. So there are a lot of permits, about 15,000 to 16,000 permits issued by the department in the course of a year, and we will give him the breakdown of those and the revenue statistics associated with those permits. The revenue in total last year was \$633,000 for those permits.

Madam Chairperson: I would just like to draw to the attention of all members that the Page, indeed, has gone to make copies for the members of that information. I apologize. We usually need three copies tabled, one for each critic and one for the table officer.

Mr. Reid: If the minister has that information on a sheet, if it is possible to have a copy of that as well. If it has gone out, I appreciate that as well. [interjection] Okay, I will see that in a few moments then.

It is my understanding that there are three TAC standards that are remaining to be put in place: carrier profiles, trip inspection reports and facility audits. Can the minister bring me up to date on what is happening with those three standards?

Mr. Findlay: Could I ask the member to bring that question up again when we get into the DDVL area because that is where the information is? Mr. Coyle has that information.

Mr. Reid: Madam Chair, I will bring it under DDVL. I just thought that it might have been under Transport Compliance, that it was applicable. That is why I raised it there.

Is my understanding correct that when we move to the National Safety Code that we were obliged to have a certain number of inspectors by way of Transport Compliance in monitoring? Can the minister tell me what the requirements were to meet the conditions of the agreement?

Mr. Findlay: Again, this is an area that we prefer to discuss under DDVL, but, for the member's information, there is no requirement for a specified number of inspectors. The standards are there, the specified standards, but not the specified number of inspectors in the National Safety Code, but we would prefer to discuss this under DDVL, if you would not mind.

*(1430)

Mr. Reid: Then maybe to clarify, can the minister tell me, would it also be advisable to discuss regulatory options for intraprovincial trucking and owner-operator load brokers—would that be the appropriate section to discuss those areas as well?

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chair, I would ask the member to raise that question when we are talking about the Motor Transport Board and staff are in on that particular area, subsection 7, the Motor Transport Board.

Mr. Reid: I need information relating to why the number of inspectors has been decreased, and I take it that it is the inspectors because it is the technical and professional people that have been decreased in the Transport Compliance. Is there not a requirement to have the current number of people? I know it says here, “. . . due to regionalization of compliance activities.” How is it that, because we have regionalized from 13 districts down to five regions, we need less inspectors to do the Transport Compliance monitoring?

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I have a number of concerns, and some of the comments are actually by way of notice that may require some information to be brought back. I have raised concerns about northern roads in the past, both in terms of maintenance but also in terms of construction. What I wanted to ask the minister is for a response to a number of items. One is, I notice the minister put out a press release this year indicating approximately \$3.5 million construction in northern Manitoba.

I would like to get some historical information in terms of that, and I think that is really important in terms of what information the department has over the past decade, 15 years. I think it is important to put in context that figure vis-à-vis other expenditures over time, and I think it is important for different areas of the province. So I would like to ask information perhaps going back to 1980. It should be readily available, and I am not expecting it necessarily at Estimates today if the minister could perhaps table that on Thursday if we are still on Highways or provide me with that information.

I do know, for example, I was looking at some of the capital construction expenditures in the 1980s, for example, 1985-86, there were approximately \$15 million spent in northern Manitoba. There were a number of targeted roads in those days. In the early 1980s we built the Gillam road, paved the Easterville road. There were a number of significant highway projects, including some major upgrading of Highway 391. So I am interested in that information, and my concern is to ensure that there is appropriate distribution of capital expenditures throughout the province.

Also, in terms of a number of specific matters of concern, virtually all of which I have corresponded with the minister, but I would like to ask on the record again.

Beginning with Highway 391, I just drove that highway again, and there is something about the timing of this set of Estimates, in driving on that road. It is in really atrocious shape, and I pass three Polaroid pictures of just how bad it is—

An Honourable Member: The ghost of Harold Taylor lives on.

Mr. Ashton: Yes, but they are not from a boxcar, Madam Chairperson, they were taken by a councillor in Nelson House, and they show, I think, quite significantly, the condition of the road and also the dust. There are significant problems with dust.

Last year I know there was a problem because of the delay in materials being obtained in Nelson House, but I also want to raise the concern about Highway 391 because the response I received from the previous minister and this minister is that the BOREAS project is the reason why they cannot do an upgrade. Now the band council has met with representatives of the BOREAS project, and, in fact, I believe, attended a meeting here in Winnipeg. They have received an indication that it would not necessarily be a problem in terms of their contact with the BOREAS project, and I raise this because the work is long overdue. The concern in the community with Highway 391 is that the dust in and of itself probably does more to disrupt the testing than the construction work.

There is a major situation with dust right now. You are probably getting two, three, four kilometres of immediate drift from the dust so that in itself may affect BOREAS. That is the Highway 391, I want to raise as a concern.

I know in terms of the Gillam road, it is a similar concern in terms of dust control. I would like an update in terms of that. I still refer to it as the Gillam road, rather than the PTH number. It is the highway that goes past Split Lake into Gillam.

I have also written to the minister in terms of a number of specific problem areas, one being the curve around Pisew Falls. I appreciate the response I received indicating that it is unsafe in the sense that it is rated for 100 kilometres an hour. The road is posted a 100. The normal margin of safety is that it should be at least 120.

I would point out that there have been a significant number of accidents on that particular curve. There were two fatalities a year and a half ago. I wanted to ask in terms of what the status is of that particular section. I have also written a number of—in terms of other projects involving the Wabowden area. There is concern in the committee for a need for an access lane. While the curve itself is rated for the speed limit, there are a significant number of heavy trucks that use that particular access. That has increased recently with a significant number of people in the community, who have been funded by CEDF to do trucking for Repap, so it is a major concern. In fact, I know our Highways critic was with me when we met with people in Wabowden. It is a significant concern.

The Cross Lake, Norway House road is also an ongoing concern. I know the member has raised that as well. I would appreciate some response in terms of where the department is proceeding in terms of that specific item. Also, in terms of communities that do not have roads, one of the concerns has been the condition of winter roads. I know the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) knows quite well the condition of the winter road going into York Landing. I must confess, I drove in, and, after nearly hitting the ceiling at the speed I was doing going in, the member for Transcona insisted on driving out.

Madam Deputy Chairperson, it did slow down somewhat. I guess I have been driving on the winter roads perhaps a little bit too long, and I do not let it bother me anymore. He can provide first-hand testimony in terms of—[interjection] That is right; we need air-flight bags and crash helmets.

Those are some specific northern concerns. I have said I have the overall concern about the amount of capital expenditures in northern Manitoba, but there are some specific projects, of which safety is a significant part, whether it be 391, where I have gotten the information for the department indicating there is upwards of three times the accident rate of the provincial average, whether it be the Pisew Falls section. Wabowden is perhaps not as major a concern in terms of safety, although people are concerned. There have actually been a significant number of accidents, particularly in the winter. Also, the Cross Lake-Norway House, I could say from first-hand experience, is in atrocious condition. I know the former Minister of Highways went into Cross Lake, across that road, and some people are wondering in the community if he was not replaced as Minister of Highways because he spoke up afterwards about the condition of the road.

* (1440)

In fact, I just want to conclude, in terms of the construction end, by indicating that certainly the people of Nelson House would like to invite the minister to come into Nelson House. They would like to actually invite him to drive up as soon as possible. Certainly right now he would see the road at not its particular best. I do hope the minister, by the way, on a serious note, will take up the offer, the invitation that was certainly extended to the previous minister because I think by seeing first hand, the minister will understand the concerns that the communities—and I realize the minister has responded on some of these items in terms of writing, but I really believe, especially 391 and the Cross Lake-Norway House, there has to be significant upgrading of those roads, and also the Pisew Falls. There has to be reconstruction of that curve because what we are dealing with, Madam

Chairperson, is not a question of comfort. It is a question of safety in many northern communities.

Mr. Findlay: Does the member expect an answer to all of that at this time, or does he want us to come back with an answer next sitting along with the statistics he has asked for?

Mr. Ashton: I am quite happy if the minister took it as notice. I realize it was fairly lengthy, if he could provide that next time.

Madam Chairperson: Does the honourable Minister of Highways (Mr. Findlay) wish to respond to the previous question from the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid)?

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chairperson, the member asked about the elimination of one inspection position. That is one position out of 57.5 positions. So the department is very confident that the work that was done by 57.5 can be done by 56.5. So the loss of one inspector position is not going to in any way impact on the inspection capacity or capabilities of the department.

Mr. Reid: Where was this one person who used to do the inspections? Where is this job coming out of? What area of the province?

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chairperson, it is a vacant position at Headingley.

Mr. Reid: I can remember distinctly raising the issue with the former Minister of Highways and Transportation about the volume of traffic that was being seen through the Headingley and the Falcon Lake inspection stations. I do not understand, first off, why we had a vacancy that was there and why it would not have been filled immediately. Secondly, because that is such a busy point, including Highway 75 which is our terminus to the States, why are we cutting back on the number of inspections on what is one of the three busiest terminal inspection points in the province?

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chair, in terms of operating the Headingley inspection station, it is open 24 hours, but at certain points in time at night or on the weekend when it is deemed that there is low likelihood that there will be truck traffic through there it may be shut down for a period of time. So staff are rotating inspectors through that station,

and truckers have no idea as they travel down the road whether it is open at the particular hour that they are coming or it is not open, but it is technically open 24 hours a day, rotating staff, deemed to be a cost-effective way of maintaining inspection discipline at that particular point.

Mr. Reid: I sense that the minister shortchanges those that are employed in the trucking industry. From my dealings with them, they are very intelligent, competent, capable people who have a great means of communicating amongst themselves, not to say that there are problems in the majority, but for the few cases where there may be some problems, I am sure that the word would get back that at certain times there is an operations of the Headingley inspection station that are shut down for certain hours of the day—that word would get back fairly quickly to those that are going back and forth along those routes.

I know I have heard many of the stories from the people that are employed in the trucking industry on what inspectors are on and what inspection stations do what type of work, where you can expect certain actions to take place. So do not shortchange those that want to circumvent the law by reducing the number of inspectors and cutting back on the time. I think we are just creating opportunities here for people to get around the regulatory requirements that we have in place.

I do not know how you can say that there is—I mean, I have travelled back and forth on that highway most hours of the day and seen a fairly heavy amount of truck traffic going back and forth. Even into the very early hours of the morning to the late hours of the morning before sunrise, there is still truck traffic that is going back and forth there, and I do not know how we can shut down any of the inspection activities in the Transport Compliance monitoring.

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chair, I think the member might be doing the trucking industry a bit of a disservice. He is almost accusing them all of being guilty of trying to beat the system. I do not think they want to do that. [interjection] Yes, I realize he chose his words fairly carefully, but he still said you have to have people there to be sure the

trucking industry complies. I think the trucking industry is very responsible in understanding the restrictions. They are subject to an inspection at several locations between the point of where they load and the point of delivery.

If they pick up a load in Seattle and they are going to Toronto through Winnipeg, there is no way that somebody relays the information back so he knows that if he leaves Seattle he can overload and he is going to be okay at Winnipeg. What about the other stations along the way?

An Honourable Member: Timing.

Mr. Findlay: Well, the member says timing. The trucker or the trucking company takes a great risk if he is going to play that game, and in the long term not too many are going to succeed at that. The staff have just given me the information that current compliance rate averages 99 percent. So that just confirms what I said. The trucking industry is very responsible, and all we are there to do is not to harass, it is just to be sure that that 99 percent figure remains in place. So I do not for a moment think truckers set out to purposely, whether it is timing or whatever it is, beat the regulations because there are significant penalties. I have already given the member figures, the prosecution statistics last year, 3,552.

So we are obviously doing some work out there, and 99 percent compliance is a pretty good industry average for the truckers to have. I congratulate them for that. I have no reason to think that they are out to beat us, and I do not think we should be out there harassing them. I think there has to be some—we have to do our inspections. They are doing a good job of complying, and I think things are working fairly well.

* (1450)

Mr. Reid: Madam Chairperson, if the minister would have listened to my words carefully, he would have heard me say that the majority of the people employed in the trucking industry and the carriers were responsible people. It is the people who, by reasons known or unknown, circumvent the regulations that are in place. So it is not the

majority of the people that we are after, but those that have transgressions for the regulations.

Maybe the minister can give me an indication then, based on the Transport Compliance statistics that he has provided for last year, 3,512 prosecutions that we had in total, how many of those were for the various stationary inspection points that we have, including Highway 75, Falcon Lake and Headingley, and how many of them were from the remote inspections, the roving inspection points that we have? Does he have a breakdown sheet on those statistics as well?

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chairperson, we do not have those figures here. Staff are not confident that we will have that breakdown between stationary and roving. If we can come up with that we will bring it next time, but we cannot guarantee that the differentiation of the statistics on that basis actually exists.

Mr. Reid: The minister says we are eliminating one position due to regionalization, so I would hope we would have some basis or understanding to know what the workload is going to be for the people that are doing the Transport Compliance or monitoring. You have already said that we need less people at this location, so you must have the statistics for the amount of workload that is there and the number of prosecutions or tickets or whatever you issue to those who are in non-compliance for those specific regions. I would hope the minister and his department would have that information.

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chairperson, for the member's information, we have 11 permanent weigh stations in Manitoba. Headingley is 24 hours a day, and West Hawk is 24 hours a day. In addition, we have Thompson, The Pas, Birds Hill, Dauphin, Emerson, Log Cabin, which is on Highway 10, Pine Falls, Rosser and Swan River. In the course of doing the job, the staff have made some revolutionary innovative changes in terms of how they do their job. It is fair to say that the existing staff, whether it is 56.5 or 57.5, are probably doing more inspections to be sure we have greater compliance as to before.

I do not think it is fair to say you can measure the degree to which you are determining compliance by the number of staff. It is how you dispatch them and how they carry out their job. That is where you determine the efficiency of being sure that people out on the road are adequately complying with the rules and regulations of the road.

As I said earlier to the member, if we have a breakdown of statistics between the stationary inspections and the roving inspections, we will come back with that. But absolutely the department knows what their job is and how most effectively they can be sure that we are maximizing the ability to have compliance on the road, and, in 99 percent, I do not know how you can be critical of the department.

Mr. Reid: I am sure the minister well knows that I am not being critical of the department in this matter. I am only interested in the abilities of the department to meet the needs of the National Safety Code through the Transport Compliance component. If you cut back on the number of inspectors and you do not have statistics to confirm your decision or to support your decision, I do not know how you made the decision in the first place. That is why I am asking. You said you have 99 percent compliance, but you still have to have people to do the work.

Mr. Findlay: Obviously, we do.

Mr. Reid: Sure, and if I were an inspector, Madam Chairperson, and I inspected one vehicle and it was in total compliance, I have 100 percent compliance with the requirements. So it is all based on the number of inspections you do. So, if you cut back the number of inspectors, then, obviously, you are going to cut back on the number of inspections and your sample is going to be smaller. So this is why I am getting at the point. You have cut back on the number of inspectors, and I want to know how you can justify that if you do not have any statistics to support the number of prosecutions going through that certain point at Headingley, where you already said you have cut back the inspector. On what basis did you make that decision?

Mr. Findlay: I do not think the member is doing any justice to the department's ability to manage and be sure that we are doing an appropriate number of inspections to determine whether we have compliance. A 99 percent figure is pretty good, Madam Chairperson, and if the member is not satisfied with that, I would like him to put it on the record. But we will come back next time; we do not have the figure in front of us right now. We will come back with it, and total number of inspections. It is not the number of inspectors. It is the number of inspections that counts. If our number of inspections are consistent or up, I think we are doing our job.

Our job is not to go out and harass the people who are trying to make a living out there in the commercial world, but if you have figures that— [interjection] Well, I know the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohma) might like to harass them, but I do not—

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Findlay) is attempting to respond to a question posed by the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid), and I am positive that the colleagues in his party would also like to be able to hear the response.

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chair, I have basically completely my response.

Mr. Reid: I do not intend to belabour the point. If the minister and his department can come back with the information and give us a breakdown on the number of inspections per inspection point and the staffing breakdown for each of those individual points and the number of prosecutions for those individual inspection points as well, if they have the information, then I will go along with that and look forward to receiving the information— [interjection]—by breakdown by individual points.

* (1500)

Mr. Findlay: By 11 points.

Mr. Reid: If possible, yes.

One other question, Madam Chair, in the last Estimates I asked the minister about expanding the

driver's education seminars programs that the department puts on. Can the minister give me some information or a breakdown of the number of seminars that we would have put together, the number of drivers we would have instructed and any other information relating to the program, the type of instruction that we would have had?

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chair, I would ask the member again to bring that back when we are in DDVL when Mr. Coyle is here. That is where that information is.

Mr. Reid: Well, the only reason I raise it here, it is under the Activity Identification. That is why I am raising it under this component. It says: "Delivers educational seminars . . ." So I take it that is a component of the Transport Compliance, and that is why I raise it under this section.

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chair, what is referred to in this section, the member is right, there is identification here of some driver education activity. We have one senior staff person who works with the trucking industry, the Manitoba Trucking Association and the trucking companies to be sure that the educational activities are up to certain standards. But the driver education in the broad sense with citizens at large is in DDVL. This is working with the trucking companies and the trucking industry.

Mr. Reid: All right, I will ask that question under DDVL then to be more appropriate. I will take the minister's advice.

On the statistics related to prosecutions, there has been a 100 percent increase in the number of prosecutions relating to dangerous goods year over year. In '92-93, there were 66; in '93-94, there were 124. That is a significant increase in the number of prosecutions. Can the minister give me some kind of an indication on what type of goods we are seeing that are transported without the appropriate permits or clearances, and what actions we are taking to make sure that those who are doing the transport are knowledgeable of what the requirements are so that they can be in compliance?

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chair, we do not have exact specifics as to why that happened. All we can do is

speculate. We will come up with a more definitive answer after we look at the particular incidences that make up these figures.

The usual situation is they will not have the right weigh bill, will not have the right signings or placarding or that the manifest will not be correct. Now, whether it is any one or a combination of those we cannot say at this time, but I think the member has fully realized there is a lot of additional signage has been required by regulation in recent years. That might be some of the problem. It is lack of knowledge of what signage they should have for a particular commodity. I am only speculating. We will find out more for next time, but would have to assume that, you know, the increased requirement for signage and the increase here might be related.

Mr. Reid: I look forward to the information coming from the minister on that. It would seem that if we have a council of ministers or deputy ministers across the country who get together on regulatory matters to ensure that we have a uniform standard across the country, would we not also then notify all those who are involved in the transportation of goods in trucking to make them aware of what the regulatory requirements are so that they can be in compliance, because, I mean, this is a huge increase.

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chair, the dangerous goods regulations are basically put in place by the Department of Environment. We enforce them but they put them in place, and I can assure the member that both our department and Environment do let the industry know.

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

You know, natural human nature is that sometimes people are a little tardy in terms of recognizing what signs they must have, and some might have legitimate reasons, while they knew they should have had them for some reason they could not get them or whatever in terms of putting them on the truck before it was on the road. So there might be a lot of reasons behind it, but these are regulations of environment. We are the enforcement, and there has obviously been about

68 people picked up more one year over the next. Now you might say percentage-wise that is a big change, but it is only 68 additional and there might be some reasons behind why that is. In the next year it might fall. I hope it would fall. We will come back with a more definitive understanding as to what the particular prosecutions were so we have a better understanding as to why. But rest assured, information does go to the industry from both the departments involved.

Mr. Reid: The minister says 68 is not a big number there. Then what were the numbers for 1991-92? There were 66 for 1992-93. What number of increase did we see from the year previous to last year? Also, if you take a look at the number of prosecutions for oversize-overweight, that has climbed as well. What were the figures that we had for 1991-92, for that year, as well?

What I am trying to say here is, are we seeing a pattern establishing that shows there has been an increase in the number of prosecutions for those areas, and if that is the case, what is the department doing to ensure that those that are acting as carriers know what the requirements are so that they can be in compliance? I think the objective here is not to be punitive. The objective here is to make sure that everybody is operating within the requirements.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Acting Chairperson, we do not have the 1991-92 figures. We will get them for next time. The member was arguing before whether we are doing an efficient job of inspection. Maybe these figures reflect exactly that, you know, training of staff, a more efficient way to be sure they catch the people who need to be caught in the process. So it might just be a reflection of that as much as anything else.

Mr. Reid: Okay, I look forward then to the information. At the next Estimates process, I take it, or the next sitting on this, we will have the information. Okay, that is fine.

I have another question relating to vehicles. We have seen pressures upon various governments across the country dealing with the weights and dimensions and the increases that some of the industry members would like to see taking place. I believe we have moved to the 53-foot, I think,

combined vehicle lengths now. Have there been any further discussions to make any changes to any of the requirements that the industry is looking at, and what actions or what decisions has the department come to if there have been any requests come forward relating to changes in vehicles?

Also, while we are on that topic, am I correct in my understanding that there are certain jurisdictions within the United States that require placarding of the back portion of the semitrailers to indicate to the travelling public that is coming up behind and wishing to pass the length of the vehicle so that the public would know that they have to allow an extra margin of safety to have a safe pass around the vehicle?

* (1510)

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Acting Chair, the member talks about a maximum combined length of 53 feet. I presume he is just talking about a trailer. When you get a truck and trailer, or trailers, the maximum length is 75 feet.

In the United States, whether there are states that require placarding of trailers that are longer than a particular length, we are not sure. We do not have any evidence that that is actually the case. We certainly have heard about it. Whether in fact it happens, we are not sure.

Within Canada, we have moved to greater and greater harmony on the regulations province by province across the country, and certainly the trucking industry wants less interprovincial barriers on being able to move across the country.

It is fair to say we have some harmony on the interstate system in the United States. Once you get off the interstate system or the federal system and you get into the States, I have heard from truckers there are some significant regulations that cause them a lot of difficulty.

One could perceive a little bit of a trade barrier to keep us out, but you know it is fair say that under CUSTA and under NAFTA, I do not know of any industry player that does not want to move towards greater harmony and greater freedom of movement, less restrictions. So the Free Trade Agreement with the United States and NAFTA

hopefully continue to move us in that direction of greater harmony in truck lengths, weights and dimensions, so the trucking industry can move around with greater freedom and less requirements for obtaining permits here and permits there at increased cost and decreased efficiency.

Within Canada, we have moved a fair way. I am not saying we have moved all the way, but we have moved a fair way. I know our truckers in Canada want to see increased harmony with the United States.

Mr. Reid: I realize that the vehicles are a lot longer than the 53 that I was talking about because of the additional for the tractor, but I am also concerned here what the increased pressure on the department is going to mean by way of having changes to the bridges and your structures and your roadbed itself, so there are other costs that are associated with that. That is why I want to know what discussions are taking place between—and maybe it is more appropriate to raise this under Transportation Policy maybe or the Motor Transport Board with your advisory people. If that is the case the minister could let me know.

I also asked a question relating to placarding for vehicles with longer combined vehicle lengths that could potentially be a risk for the travelling public who may wish to pass these vehicles on the highway. Have we undertaken any studies of U.S. jurisdictions or other Canadian jurisdictions to find out whether or not this type is a requirement in other jurisdictions, and what their experience rating has been, if it is indeed in place? Because I have been told that some jurisdictions in the U.S. do now require the posting of vehicle lengths.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Acting Chair, as I commented in my answer, we are not aware of any state that requires that placarding. It may exist, but we are not aware of it. As I said, we have heard about it, but we are not aware that it actually exists.

I would not want to see that happening. Maybe the member might say, well, that is additional information that helps the travelling public that is passing. But you know, if you are passing something, whether it is 10 feet longer or shorter, if that is the margin of error that you are using in

terms of determining whether you can pass, boy, you are operating on a thin line of safety.

If you are going to pass a truck or any vehicle, you should have a significant margin of error so that 10 feet longer or shorter should make no difference whatsoever to the safety of your passing that vehicle.

Mr. Reid: Well, I am not taking any consolation from the minister's words there. I mean I am sure we have all travelled on the highways enough and know what it is like to pass a semitrailer in a heavy traffic flow pattern, and I would think that any information that the public could have to assist them in moving about these vehicles safely would be of benefit. Even if we save one life out of this information—I know it is going to take a period of time probably for the public to become accustomed to or adjusted to what the information means in that there should be extra allowances, but it seems to me to be a reasonable safety precaution that we could take, and maybe even if we cannot do it here in this jurisdiction, at least raise it on the national level so that we could put that as part of our program requirements through the council of ministers. If the minister could raise it as an issue just to find out what other jurisdictions are—if they have similar concerns or interests in this matter.

So I will leave that with the minister, and if he has any information that he can come back to me with relating to the placarding—the vehicles now when they are travelling are required to post certain placards on the sides of their vehicles if they are transporting certain commodities, so I do not see that this would be an onerous requirement on the part of any of the carriers to provide that information on the rear of their vehicles.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Acting Chairperson, it has been discussed at TAC, but the member must realize the same tractor in the same combination of trailers is not always hooked together. People pick up loads and drop off loads, and you might have a longer trailer one time, shorter trailer the next time. One time the trailer may be your B trains front or back —[interjection]

Before we would enter into that, we would have to be clear on whether we were doing something that was positive for the industry and the travelling public. There has to be a very positive—there has to be a compliance that yes, this is the extra effort and cost we will accept because there are statistics to prove it. So rest assured, it remains on a discussion table, but at this time there is no intention to act on it.

* (1520)

Mr. Reid: I am disappointed that the minister said there is no intention to act on it. I would hope that it would be discussed. If it can be raised, I would be interested to know what the other TAC members are saying across the country relating to the issue. I know it is not critical to the industry itself, and it may not be critical to the travelling public except for those who are trapped in a situation that is potentially dangerous. I will just leave that with the minister. I will not belabour the point.

I have no other questions on this section.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Sveinson): Item 2.(e)(1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,876,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$484,200—pass.

Item 2.(f) Winter Roads \$2,575,000.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I had the good fortune this past winter as one of my first experiences in travelling the—taking in the extensive travelling on the winter road network. I had travelled short portions of it before, but never like I have had the opportunity this past winter.

My colleague the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) has indicated that we did travelling to the communities within his constituency and other communities as well, those along the bayline area and other communities up along Highway 391. We went to Nelson House, Split Lake, York Landing, Ilford, Pikwitonei, many of the communities that are serviced by roads that are, what I would consider to be, less than adequate.

My colleague the member for Thompson has also raised with the minister already, and I know the minister is going to come back with the

information related to 391 and the requirements there, but I can tell the minister that when I travelled on the Split Lake to York Landing segment of the winter highway program, the portion just outside of Split Lake where it goes across the lake and up into the first part of the forest area was not too bad in its condition, but when you get a bit further into the forest component, I have seen roller coaster rides that had less thrill than this portion of the winter highway. I have never seen a highway in more deplorable condition, and I do not know how it is that the people who are living in those communities can traverse back and forth in conducting their personal business or how, in fact, the truck traffic that is required to bring goods and services into these communities can move without damaging their vehicles. I also look at Manitoba Hydro and other Crown agencies that have to move into the community.

Is there any way that we can undertake to put in place or to upgrade the condition of the Split Lake-York Landing component of the winter highway network, to level out some of the hills and the valleys that are in there, to try and smooth out the road for the travelling public and also at the same time to address one particular area that was prone to flooding. Even in the dead of winter, there was a spring there.

Is there any way that we can undertake to put in some kind of a culvert or a structure system in place there to stop the flooding of the road which the people who do the maintenance on the road have to continually monitor to make sure that there is not an icecap buildup in the middle of that road?

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I can certainly respect what the member is saying in terms of rough road and up and down terrain. It is over muskeg and it is over lakes and there are a number of obstacles that Mother Nature creates. [interjection] Pardon? [interjection] The lakes are good, yes, but Mother Nature can do things there too.

We have had winter roads in this province for in excess of 20 years, maybe in excess of 25 years in some locations, and one of the ways to build the

roads where terrain is up and down is certainly to move snow to fill the valleys in. I am informed that last year was, if not the worst, certainly one of the worst years for not enough snow to be able to do that.

If we want to permanently take out the hills and valleys, now we are talking about moving dirt, and that is semiconstruction of a more level terrain for the development of a winter road each year. We are starting to talk probably some significant additional cost to do it and maybe even an environmental licence that may or may not be so easy to obtain. Staff certainly do not recommend putting a culvert in a winter road where you cannot stabilize that culvert with earth or other material.

There is no question that what the member raises is a legitimate concern, and I can suggest that as we monitor whether the winter roads can be improved in various ways, this will be considered, but the significant cost of moving dirt—very expensive. If we are going to put in a culvert or anything like that, you would want to do it on a permanent basis not just put it in a winter road with snow around it. In normal years, there is more snow than was the case last year to fill in some of the valleys and make it less up and down as the member experienced.

Mr. Reid: It is not only the potential damage to vehicles, there is also a safety factor for the public who are travelling. I understand what the minister is saying with respect to the culvert and the inability maybe to stabilize the road, but I would suspect that this would be a one-time cost to knock off the hills of that winter road to make it safer, to fill in the valleys portion.

At the same time that we do that, maybe there is a potential here, because it is my understanding and I am not sure if the minister is aware that the winter road that runs through the portion of the forest there now was only as a direct result of the instability of the ice surface on the lake as a result of Hydro's regulation of the water levels.

Now, if that is the case, maybe there is some potential here for the minister to have some discussions with the Minister of Northern Affairs/Native Affairs (Mr. Praznik) to look at the

establishment of either the sharing of the costs or to have those costs transferred to the other department that is ultimately, I would consider, responsible for the need to have that road running through the forest. If that can be undertaken, then maybe we can look at providing a decent level of road service for the people that are living in those communities so that the minister himself through his own departmental budget does not have to sustain the costs that are associated with that when that is only as a direct result of some other department's actions.

So I will leave that with the minister, and if he can undertake to talk with his colleague the Minister of Northern/Native Affairs or the Minister responsible for Hydro (Mr. Orchard) then maybe we can look at making some changes there for the people for the upcoming winter road season next winter.

* (1530)

I also want to talk a bit about the length of the winter road season, and I know I have had some private discussions with the minister on this, because when we were travelling in the North, the communities were concerned that the winter road season, conditions warranting, of course, with the weather, could in their estimations be extended with respect to travelling back and forth with light vehicles, cars, half-ton trucks, et cetera, where we would not have full allowances for the heavier truck traffic to move during those periods of time.

Is there any way that we can look at extending the start of the season and the end of the season to permit the light vehicle traffic to make it as convenient as possible for the people who are living there to move back and forth without having to worry about insurance or not insurance and be in compliance with the department's requirements?

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Acting Chairperson, the Winter Roads program which started, as I said earlier, 20-25 years ago was set up to supply roads for movement of commercial goods into communities during that period of time. The roads are open six to eight weeks, and they are open at a point in time when tests would indicate that the roads can safely carry loads of 80,000 pounds. They are closed

when it is deemed that they can no longer carry those kinds of loads. So they are open for commercial reasons, for moving of freight.

Over the course of time, as the member is more or less talking about, there are more and more people using it for social needs, movements of citizens back and forth between communities. [interjection] Yes, medical attention and a number of other uses for the roads have come into play.

I am sure everybody knows that citizens will drive when they feel in their own mind it is okay to drive. We are not there watching the roads, to regulate who is on them or when they are on them, but we feel that we are compelled to maintain the use of the road for the commercial purpose. In the same period of time, there are absolutely no restrictions on citizens going and using them.

Outside of the time when we feel it is safe for carrying 80,000 pounds, it is difficult for us to extend those seasons without technically putting ourselves at risk in terms of liability.

So that is the process that has been in place. People use them as they see fit, before and after that season, probably more after than before. There has been an evolution in the purpose for which they are used. I am sure they are serving people well in terms of getting from community to community, but there is some difficulty if we try to extend that season for other reasons.

Mr. Reid: I know the minister said the intent was for commercial purposes, but I would have hoped it would have also been for the purpose of allowing the residents of the communities access to the outside world, so to speak, and not limiting that, and that would have been part of the purpose for putting in winter roads.

All we are asking here is that if you had a staggered system, saying that commercial traffic would be for the fixed period that is normally announced by the department now, and then have a period that was slightly extended, because I think there are also some considerations here about not only insurance for the department, or legal liabilities for the department, I should say, but if someone is travelling on that road a day after the season closes and they get in an automobile

accident with another automobile, are they covered by insurance when they were travelling on the winter road at that time—so there are liabilities there too—when the road may be perfectly safe for them to do so?

So that is why I am asking to have—and why the communities have said to myself and to my colleague the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) when we were travelling there and when we have had meetings in this building, asking us to impress upon the minister and the department that for the purposes of general public movement in light vehicles they would like to see an extension of the season to allow them to do that.

They recognize that there is a certain amount of requirements or due diligence on their part to look at the conditions, and they would not want to do anything to jeopardize their own personal safety, but if there is some way we can do it, when the ice surface is still reasonably thick—I am not an engineer myself, but it seems to me to be a reasonable request, for a short extension. I know that there was one community group that was impressing upon the minister's department this year to have a couple of days leeway for the extension of the season for the truck traffic this year so they could get the remainder of their freight in.

So I am just asking the minister and his department to consider the potential for the people that utilize light vehicle traffic during the end and the beginning of the seasons when conditions may warrant safe travel.

Mr. Findlay: I thank the member for his comments. Clearly, if I lived in one of those communities, I would want exactly what he is asking for, and I understand. As a department, we will take his comments under advisement and see what we can do.

Mr. Reid: I thank the minister's department, too. I had made a request just recently for a winter road map, which the department has provided, and I appreciate that. It is an extensive map, and it is quite useful in educating me on where the winter roads actually go and the distances that are involved. So I thank the department for that.

We have had some discussions with the Southeast Resource Development corporation relating to the winter road network. I believe the previous minister and I had had some discussions on this last year in Estimates. This is a new corporation that was set up by the bands that are represented and the federal government to undertake dealings, I believe, for a winter road network and in dealings with the provincial government. Can the minister give me some further background on this relationship that exists there, because I do not fully understand how it is structured?

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Acting Chair, the Southeast Resource Development corporation starting in '92-93 received the federal money to pay the 50 percent of the costs of the roads. Prior to that, the 50 percent of cost that the federal government paid, that money came directly to the province. So SERDC has been handling the money in '92-93, '93-94 and '94-95, so it will be into the third year that they will be receiving the money directly from the federal government to fund the federal 50 percent of the cost of the winter road.

* (1540)

Mr. Reid: Can the minister tell me then—am I correct in my understanding that we have currently in place a long-term contract—and I say long term; I believe it is five years—with the department and the SERDC for the purposes of this winter road network? How far are we into that contract period at the current time?

Mr. Findlay: For the member's information, SERDC is a corporation that handles the money, and then Norwin is a group of obviously many of the same people who contract for the construction and maintenance of the winter roads. The Norwin's agreement is five years, as the member mentioned; four years have been completed.

Mr. Reid: Okay, if we have completed four years of this agreement and we are moving towards the last year of the agreement, have we started negotiations with Norwin for the purposes of contract renewal for this winter road network?

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Acting Chair, there is an umbrella agreement for five years, but that does not specify the cost of building winter roads.

Each year a negotiation occurs as to what the cost will be for building the winter roads for that particular winter road year. So it is done on an annual basis, and the five-year agreement is kind of a framework that the negotiations shall continue for each year to determine what will be paid for their performance of construction and maintenance of a certain winter road network, which, I think, covers 830 kilometres.

Mr. Reid: There has been some concern expressed on the part of Norwin that they are nearing the end of their contractual arrangements with the government for maintaining of the 800-plus kilometres of this winter road network.

There is some concern on their part because they do not have, or are not currently taking part in renewal of, contract discussions with the department. It does not give them the opportunity to go out and, if necessary, to make purchases of equipment, for one; to allow them to bid on the contracts as they come up; but, at the same time, to allow them to be prepared, too, should they be the successful party to receive the contract to continue the maintenance and the installation of that winter road network.

So I am asking the question why we have not commenced the contract discussions with them to further extend the contract period, if that is in the interests of both parties, at this point in time? Since we are nearing the end of the five-year agreement now, why have we not commenced those discussions?

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Acting Chair, I think the member realizes that we strike contracts with many, many construction companies for grading, gravelling, paving, building of winter roads, and our mission is to be able to maximum the mileage of roads we can build, whether it is dirt or pavement or winter roads, at a minimum cost to the taxpayer. That is our mission, to get the most done for the least cost to the taxpayer.

Clearly the department is prepared to enter into a negotiation process with Norwin about the future,

but recognizes that, although they want security for the future, we also want security of being sure we are getting the job done for the most appropriate cost to the taxpayer. So we cannot give away our negotiating position to satisfy them, and they should not give away theirs to satisfy us, so that is the normal negotiation process. How the contract is struck in the future will be a subject of discussion and negotiation in the coming months.

Mr. Reid: Well, then I think there is a long-standing relationship here between the two parties in contractual arrangements in the past. I would hope that the department, without tipping their hand if that is what the minister is worried about, sitting down at the table and just discussing the issues that are before both parties so that we have an understanding of where you want to go. If you can work out an arrangement that will assure some piece of mind between the two parties, I do not see where there would be a problem there. At least it would give the Norwin group the opportunity to know where they stand as well, which is a point they are at right now. They do not know where they stand. Even if the minister's department was to contact them and say, look we are interested in sitting down and discussing some issues with you, I would think that that would be a reasonable position to take, that they would welcome as well.

Mr. Findlay: Certainly, we are prepared to sit down and discuss the future. We have certain guideposts, of course. They have certain guideposts. If the member is saying, phone them up and enter into negotiations, we will do that. We will phone them up, but it does not mean that we give away the house here. We have to respect our capacity to negotiate, and they have to, too, so it is a two-way street and I am sure discussions will ensue.

Mr. Reid: Okay. I hope the department will undertake to do that before too much further time has elapsed on this, so the people will have an understanding of where they stand. The Norwin construction group would know where they would stand.

Can the minister tell me how many contracts we currently have within the province for winter roads? How many of the contracts this year are without tender and how many of the contracts were tendered? How many groups might have bid on the tendered contracts?

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Acting Chairperson, in total there are 15 contracts for winter roads. Six are done by public tender and nine are negotiated.

Mr. Reid: There has been a change over '93. We had 16 contracts last year.

Mr. Findlay: How many?

Mr. Reid: Sixteen, I believe it was, looking back in Hansard. We have had five contracts by tendering. So there has been a change in the number that were tendered this year over last.

* (1550)

Mr. Findlay: I may not have the exact reason here, but we believe the answer is, you have 16 the previous year; I have 15 here. Thicket Portage and Pikwitonei used to be two separate contracts. The year that I am giving you, they are one. So that it takes it from 16 down to 15.

Mr. Reid: There were Orders-in-Council that came out every year for the winter road system in negotiations with the federal government for a cost-sharing arrangement. In 1993, our arrangement was for \$1.168 million. In 1994, it was \$899,000.

Can the minister explain why there is a \$269,000 difference between the two contract years?

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Acting Chairperson, in the two years that the member mentions, the kilometres of road and the network are exactly the same. The only reason that we have it in front of us at this time is it reflects lower tendering in the second year as opposed to the first year with the figures that he gave. It is a fair significant drop, but I think one understands that the construction industry is also pretty hungry out there. Maybe this shows that with the process of tendering you can save some money.

If there is another reason, we will bring it back next day, but that is the only one that we have at this time.

Mr. Reid: Can the minister explain why in the '93 agreement with the federal government, we showed a section from Gillam to Shamattawa a distance of 196 kilometres and that is missing from the '94 agreement?

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Acting Chairperson, we will see if I got this straight. We are talking a 196-kilometre road here. In 1993 it was paid for on a 50-50 basis with federal money-provincial money, and the cost was \$250,000—\$125,000 each. This year the Shamattawa Band did not want to get involved in a cost-shared road. We went in without the federal money, built the road, the entire 196 kilometres for \$125,000, in other words, equal to our cost in '93.

We kept it open for 12 days to get the freight, government-related freight, into the community over the 12-day period, then turned the road over to the Shamattawa Band, and they maintained it for the rest of the winter. Whatever federal money they received, they used it to maintain the road for the time beyond the 12 days in which we used it.

The money we spent on the road provincially was the same in '93 as it was in '94, only we maintained it for only 12 days for our period of use, and it was a request or what the Shamattawa Band wanted. They really did not want us involved in building the road. We felt we had to have it to get our freight in there. We built it, then turned it over to them.

Mr. Reid: It seems strange to me that—does the band consider that they can receive the moneys from the federal government and then utilize those moneys and expend them as they see fit without having to direct them towards the winter road system? What type of precedent has this set for the provincial government's dealing with the federal government on other winter road systems or networks? If the Shamattawa Band does this, then does that not indicate or at least set a precedent that other bands may look at following the same course of action in the future?

Mr. Findlay: For the further information of the member, the origin of the discussions started that Shamattawa wanted to build the road and then use it as a toll road. They wanted to charge for

anybody's use of the road, and that is an even more dangerous precedent. We felt we would be money ahead to just build the road, haul in the freight—it is our responsibility—spend the \$125,000 and then turn it over to them, and it is their responsibility from there on. We have every reason to believe they received the money from the federal government. I have no idea on the accounting as to how much they used in terms of maintaining the road for the remainder of the winter season. Their first request was they wanted to build it themselves and charge toll. That is a very dangerous precedent.

The member says, well, this may set precedent for other roads. Well, it might, but there are two sides to negotiation and we cannot force them to do everything our way, but we clearly did not want it to be used as a toll road. Part of our agreement for this year was that they were not to charge toll after they took it over, after our 12-day period. It is just not something we want to see practised on these roads.

Mr. Reid: Then does the minister anticipate that for successive years down the road we will encounter similar circumstances? Have we entered into any discussions for the upcoming winter? Does the band anticipate putting the road in totally on their own part and then charging the toll for any of the services or vehicles that may be attempting to travel into and out of the community?

* (1600)

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Acting Chair, when the band came forward this year for the request saying, do not build the road, we want to build a road and charge a toll, it was very, very late. We had already tendered for the contractor to build the road. So, at that point, negotiations for this past winter were very late. Basically, an agreement came about where they allowed us to build the road on the reserve land which initially they said they would not, but they did in the end. The agreement was as I have already described. The nature of the negotiation and discussions for the next winter road season and the one after, I cannot predict what they will bring to the table. We will be prepared to

enter the negotiations but what the end result of it will be, it is impossible to predict at this time.

As I said earlier to the member, our mission will be to get the roads built, to get the goods in at least at cost to the taxpayer.

Mr. Reid: Okay, I will not belabour that. I just find it unusual, I guess, because it was new to me and I had not heard of it before, that that position would be taken. If the band chooses to go in that direction, I suppose that is their right to make that decision.

Can the minister tell me the results of some discussions by the Norwin group too? They have raised this issue with us about the feasibility of a road being constructed on the east side of Lake Winnipeg up towards Poplar River. At the same time, has the department undertaken any plans to make that an all-weather road versus just a winter road which is now seasonal? Have we done any cost analysis in the department? The minister can advise if this is not the appropriate portion of the department to discuss this under. Maybe I can bring it back under Capital if necessary.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Acting Chairperson, there is some discussion going on with Northern and Native Affairs, Abitibi, about extending what is now known as the Rice Lake road further north towards Bloodvein. There is discussion going on.

Staff tell me that several years ago some survey was done in the area. Whether it is relevant at this time remains to be seen. It is very expensive to build roads in there with the nature of the terrain. The member knows that the Rice Lake Road is there. What the outcome of discussion will be between Abitibi-Price, Northern and Native Affairs and Highways remains to be seen. As to whether there is a change in road direction or the nature of the road in the future, I cannot say at this time.

Mr. Reid: So then I take it there are no plans underway within the department to look at making portions of that into an all-weather road, even it is done in sections or components over a period of time to move the network further up the east side of Lake Winnipeg.

Mr. Findlay: Northern Affairs say there are no plans at this time. As the member knows, Abitibi-Price built the Rice Lake road, and what role they will play in the future is undetermined at this time.

Mr. Reid: I raise this issue with the minister because the communities along the way, I have had the opportunity to visit many of them in the last two years and again this winter when we were up there. They would like to have the opportunity to have some, as I am sure many of the communities would, and I know that resources are not always there, but even if we can move the project along in segments or components, at least it shows we are making an effort to move that along the way now.

Maybe there is some consideration being given by the department to wait until there is a transmission line that maybe comes down the east side of Lake Winnipeg that may facilitate some of the construction costs coming out of a different department. I am not sure if that would be the consideration that is underway here.

Mr. Findlay: Our information at this time is that any future transmission line that might be built there, and any associated road, would be further east than the location we are talking about right now.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Acting Chairperson, while my colleague is busy with a few other things for a moment, I wanted to ask a couple of questions of the minister. I understand there has been some flexibility allowed on some questions and discussion on the highways program. It does not fall directly under this section, but I wanted to ask the minister about a couple of roads in my constituency that are the subject of some concern and request to the minister.

Perhaps, he could give the committee a status report of the plans and work that might be undertaken on Highway 276 from the Waterhen to the community of Rock Ridge, what the plan is there. There was approval for paving from that community to the northern portion of the road onto the reserve last year. So I am wondering what the plan is for the southerly section, the south

Waterhen road request for upgrading. It is not a numbered highway, but it is one that the department is currently working on in some way in terms of acquisition, I understood, of property, and I wanted to know whether there was any construction plan for south Waterhen road.

* (1610)

As well, Mr. Acting Chairperson, there have been, over the years, serious concerns from the people in the Rorketon area about 364 westerly from Rorketon and also 481 from 276 to the junction of 364 and the extension of that highway across to 364 in a new location which was being planned originally, or a number of years ago.

I have a couple of others, but I do not want to get this too confusing by asking too many at one time. Perhaps I will just leave it right there and get some response from the minister, and then I have just another question on a couple of others.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Acting Chairperson, the member gave quite a series of questions, and we will see if we got all the sections right.

I think you commented on the fact from Rock Ridge to Skownan was done last year, and he has asked from Rock Ridge to Waterhen. That is the second question. It is not in the program for this year.

An Honourable Member: Not?

Mr. Findlay: Not. The section 364 west of Rorketon, survey and design is being completed, and environmental preclearance or prescreening will be requested. On that section of 481 westerly from—there was a consideration of a new location. There has been some opposition to it, and the decision is to stay on the old alignment, with some change just north of Dauphin Lake. There is a fairly sharp curve, fairly sharp intersection there, and it will be straightened, that curve will be straightened out. So there is a slight new alignment proposed as you go 364 moving north along the very northern tip of Dauphin Lake. In terms of new location throughout the entire area there, the decision is not to go to a new location.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I just follow up to that. Then the minister is saying that

364 westerly from Rorketon is ready to go. Is a land acquisition completed as well on that? Is it ready to go to construction phase, or is there some other delay that might impact on that reconstruction? It is a very low road and in very unsafe condition basically. I know the maintenance crews are trying to do their best on it, but it was built many years ago, and it is very low and very difficult to maintain.

The other one that the minister did not mention was the south Waterhen road.

* (1620)

Mr. Findlay: That section of 364 that the member is asking about, he says it is a low road and probably needs some upgrade—no question. The region is preparing an open house in Rorketon this spring. What will happen in terms of where it goes from there will be determined by input at the open house in Rorketon. With regard to the south Waterhen road—

(Madam Chairperson in the Chair)

An Honourable Member: Is the purpose of that for rerouting or what? What is the purpose?

Mr. Findlay: For public input. I guess the question of the existing route versus the rerouting may be still alive—opportunity for public input. The south Waterhen road that the member asked about is in land acquisition.

Mr. Plohman: I hope the minister will be able to get that land acquisition completed this year. I understand the design has been done, and the road there is also in a very poor condition, the south Waterhen road. It is not an awful lot of miles and certainly needs upgrading, as well, of course, as 364. I do not know that there would be any rerouting west of Rorketon. The first five miles or so it is just upgrading on location. I do not know why there would have to be an open house for that unless the minister is thinking about the section from 481 to 364 across the new route which is not really what I was asking in my second question. I was only asking about the first section west of Rorketon and whether in fact the upgrading would take place in this year and whether it was ready to go to contract or to construction stage. In other words, that acquisition had been completed on the

existing route and that was ready for upgrading. That was my question.

I just want to mention two other roads and end this. Madam Chairperson, 480 from Highway 5 to Makinak was previously asphalt surface treatment. It was regraded. It was deteriorating and breaking up and people are asking whether in fact it is going to be repaved with asphalt surface treatment.

The other one that a lot of people are concerned about is the narrowness and lack of shoulders of 274 just north of Gilbert Plains. It has no shoulders at all. It is paved but it is very dangerous. There have been numerous accidents on that section of the road. Farm equipment cannot get off the road onto a shoulder because there is no shoulder. It is a very dangerous situation. They need to have shoulders on that. It has been the subject of numerous resolutions over the years from the councils. I draw that to the minister's attention that there is some urgent need for those projects as well.

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chair, 274 for 20.8 kilometres is in for environmental assessment survey and design. That is dealing with the road that the member talks about as having inadequate shoulders or no shoulders.

On that section of 480 from Highway 5 to Makinak, it was graded several years ago. The intention at that time was to put base and AST on there. That would lead to restrictions in the spring. The municipality said, no, they would prefer that it was not paved so that it would be unrestricted in the spring. A calcium chloride treatment has been put on there. The future, the door is probably open to a base and bituminous pavement so that it would be unrestricted in the spring. That would be the hope of the department in the future.

Madam Chairperson: Item 2.(f) Winter Roads \$2,575,000, shall the item pass?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Chairperson, I too just have a couple of very brief questions.

Can the minister indicate in terms of, again, within the Perimeter of Winnipeg and highways, and the highway that I am looking in particular for is Highway 25 or Inkster Blvd., has the minister

commented on that thus far in the Estimates? What provincial responsibility is there on that particular highway? It is Highway 25 that turns into Inkster Blvd.

Mr. Findlay: You have a highway map there, if you look at the city of Winnipeg portion, it shows you where the boundary is for the city, the outside city boundary. Although it is called Route 25, it becomes Highway 221 right at Brookside Blvd. Did you find it there? It is city property up till Brookside Blvd., and that is called Route 25. From Brookside Blvd. on 221 that is provincial road.

If you look at the Perimeter relative to the city boundary at all corners, the city is well inside the Perimeter. There is a fair section there of provincial road that is inside the Perimeter. I just happen to have driven that last Friday night. I thought it was a pretty good road. I know it handles a lot of truck traffic coming into the trucking terminals there off the Perimeter.

Your question was, what are we doing in the future on it? We are at 6.6 kilometres and survey and design is being done with the potential of a dual roadway or double laning there.

Mr. Lamoureux: I know in the past on that particular roadway and also Sturgeon Road, there was some concern in terms of the need to get some work done there, and I know that the Department of Highways has in fact done some work. I guess what I was looking for is more so the long term.

I have been listening to the member for Transcona over the last couple of days talking about all the different highways. I think that you can virtually get every member inside the Chamber coming forward and saying here is what is happening on this road, what is happening on this roadway.

* (1630)

I am wondering if the minister can, I guess in a short time span, give some sort of an idea for the average person who is living in, let us say, rural Manitoba and wants to see improvement to a particular roadway, what is the actual process? Because there is a demand and I guess ideally it would be wonderful if every roadway was a double highway fully paved, and that would be one

extreme to the other extreme where there are winter roads in which, as the members for Transcona (Mr. Reid) and Thompson (Mr. Ashton) alluded to, that are in fairly rough condition.

I am just trying to get a better idea in terms of what the actual process, how is that all prioritized? Ultimately, it ends up at the minister's office, but I take it that there has to be vehicles for input basically through the different municipalities. Is it through individuals who are calling in, especially in some of the more sparsely populated areas?

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chair, I do not know if there is a real critical path here, but I will give the member some of the ways in which a particular citizen could raise the profile of a road that he wanted to have done.

I think I would preface the comments by saying that probably in terms of the requests that have come forward in the various directions I will mention in a minute, we are going to spend on capital a little over a hundred million dollars this year. It is probably fair to say that we went through the entire list. There is \$600 million in requests somewhere in one of these stages that I am going to mention in a minute.

In terms of raising the profile, I would say certainly within the Department of Highways and Transportation the department pays attention to what roads or what state have certain parameters for measuring the necessity to upgrade a road and will advance it through the department. Probably the most advantageous way for somebody to raise the profile of a road is through their R.M., through town or R.M. resolutions that come forward directly to the minister or through UMM annual convention. Whenever the Minister of Highways goes to that convention, there is quite a long series of meetings with different R.M.s that want to advance a particular road.

In the past, R.M.s have got together along a section of a particular road, say PR 250. There has been a PR 250 committee. There are different regions of the province—if a number of R.M.s, say 20 or 40 or 50 miles of road need upgrading, they will get together, form a committee and lobby on a continuous basis. The department works with them

to determine how do we approach this on a step-by-step process knowing you cannot do it all at once.

The other route, of course, is to communicate through your MLA who can then communicate to the Minister of Highways. There is a variety of routes and the very ambitious people will use all of those routes to raise the profile of their road to try to have it considered in the next program.

The process of steps that a particular road, like some of the ones raised here today, will go through, is you will start first with survey and design. In some cases it may be just a preliminary survey and design. Then you have to get an environmental licence. On the major routes, you will do a detailed design after the environmental licence is obtained. Obviously, there might be some changes to what that preliminary design might have been.

Then you will go through land acquisition which sometimes can be a very difficult process. Land acquisition is done by Government Services. It is not the easiest process in the world.

Then there are utility moves for hydro, telephone. If you are going to be widening the road or doing any digging or grading, you are going to have to move the utilities. Then you go to a tendering process. If it is a major job you do the tendering for the earth moving first, then in subsequent years, subsequent budgets, you do the paving of the surface.

It is quite a long, arduous process to raise the profile of a road knowing there are a lot of roads that everybody would like to have done at any given time. You cannot just say in 1993, well, we should rebuild this road in '94 and just get a bunch of equipment together and walk in and start doing it. It is quite a long significant process between survey, design and the land acquisition process, before you can ever get around to tendering, to start to move dirt or redo the surface.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, the minister made reference to the fact there is approximately \$600 million of road work that could be done. I take it that is just a ballpark figure of which approximately \$100 million is used in

this particular year. Is the \$600 million or that estimate, is that something that is fairly constant, like we can participate, for example, we invest \$100 million this year, that we could anticipate through deterioration of different roadways, that it will be another \$600 million the following year?

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chairperson, I think it is fair to say there will always be a need to spend in the vicinity of \$100 million-plus just to maintain the roads in their current state because they are always in a state of deterioration.

The \$600 million might be called a wish list. Some of those on that wish list might never be able to justify what the citizens might want, which is obviously a paved road in every instance. Because the traffic count is not sufficient, that is why we have an awful lot of gravel roads.

I think out of the 18,000 kilometres of road in the province, there are about 13,000 gravelled or something like that—12,000 to 13,000, rough ballpark figures.

The national organization called TRIP, and I just cannot think of what the acronym is, they did an analysis across the country of what each province should be spending to maintain the roads in the current state. They identified in Manitoba we should be spending about \$136 million a year, so we are not quite up to their expectation. I can tell the member also that the previous minister was very aggressive and the previous deputy was very aggressive in terms of trying to have a national highway policy, so we could have some federal government funding, the reconstruction of our highways. If we could get that, then we might be able to move from the 109 we are at, up to the 136 and be able to do more each year and supply more jobs and improve the state of our roads.

* (1640)

We have seen the current federal Minister of Transport say on June 3 in Thunder Bay that there is a national highway policy. The only trouble is they have not figured out how to fund it. That is the issue all right, figure out how you are going to fund it. The provinces have done their funding. The federal government has not done their funding over the years. We are right now in the second year

of a three-year agreement we signed with the previous federal government to put \$35 million of federal money into what is called the SHIP program. We put in \$35 million, too. Out of our \$109 million in our budget this year, \$15 million of it is the SHIP program money.

There is a little bit of federal money. It has come on little agreements, bit by bit, but we do not have a consistent national government commitment to upgrading our highways across the country.

The highway network is not just a provincial network, it is a national network. It is used for movement of people across the country, particularly for commerce, the movement of trucks and freight and traffic across the country. I think where we are making major efforts in terms of putting dollars in provincially, we just wait till we can get the federal government to understand they have a responsibility here and come up with some funds to help us. I can tell you, every province is on track to do that.

It was interesting, the federal minister said, yes we have a program but it is unfunded. So it is not very successful that way.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, I do not necessarily know the details in terms of the federal minister and what particular programs he might have in place, but the minister makes reference to the fact, there is \$136 million, just one organization says, that we would need on an annual basis to prevent any deterioration of our roads. Out of the \$100 million that would be allocated this particular year, what percentage of that would go towards new road construction, because I take it the \$136 million is just the maintenance and operations of the current roadways that we have. How much of that \$100 million would be going towards completely new roads, whether it is gravel, asphalt? Again, it is approximate. I am not looking for hard numbers.

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chair, I would just correct the figure I gave the member earlier about 18,000 kilometres of road. It is 6,000 that is gravel and 13,000 paved. I had the pavement and gravel reversed.

I think, just for the member's understanding, in terms of highways we should talk in terms of three categories: absolute new roads that are built, and the four-lane on the 75 and the northeast Perimeter are probably that category. Then there is reconstruction on existing roads, which takes up at least three-quarters of our capital expenditures on rebuilding existing roads and 25 percent or less on total new roads. In addition to the \$109 million for capital, we spend about \$50 million on just maintenance on existing roads. That is not reconstruction, just maintenance. So we have new roads that are built; existing roads that are rebuilt in some form or other, whether it is grading or just resurfacing or grading and resurfacing; and then the third category is an additional \$50 million is spent each year on just annual maintenance, winter and summer.

So when you are thinking of maintaining the roads, when I say \$136 million, we are talking capital rebuilding or building a new road, but on top of that there is a \$50 million annual maintenance expenditure.

Mr. Lamoureux: The primary reason why I bring that up is, again, with the Department of Highways—and I do understand the system in many cases and how the system works in terms of the squeaky wheel generally gets a good quantity of the grease. That is the reason why, you know, I would like to think that the department itself when it gets that request of approximately \$600 million, also acknowledges that there has to be some onsite, and maybe the minister can give me some sort of indication on whether or not the department does, in fact, send individuals onsite prior to any sort of an approval so that we know out of the \$600 million of requests which ones should be placed on a higher priority.

I know when I used to live in the community of Weston, we had residents who would comment in terms of why this street was built or resurfaced when the other street is in much worse condition. Madam Chairperson, it was likely because one was just a bit more vocal than the other. There are a certain amount of political decisions that are made and that is accepted, but I think that where we can, we should be minimizing that and allowing for

those priorities to be well established and based on criteria in terms of what is in the best interests of not only the communities that are asking and lobbying in a very heavy way, but also that silent group that quite possibly could use it. Maybe they just do not have the same sort of contacts as another particular group might have. I guess that is the primary reason why it is that I had asked this series of questions.

Madam Chairperson: Item 2.(f) Wmter Roads \$2,575,000—pass.

2.(g) Other Jurisdictions (1) Gross Expenditures \$2,640,000—pass; (2) Less: Recoverable from Other Appropriations (\$1,000,000)—pass.

Resolution 15.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$73,444,700 for Highways and Transportation, Operations and Maintenance, \$73,444,700, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1995. Shall the resolution pass? The resolution is accordingly passed. Oh, I am sorry. I got a little ahead of myself. I thought it moved to—I apologize. I thought because it ended a page that was the end of No. 2, but it is not.

We move to 2.(h) Eastern Region Office.

Mr. Reid: Madam Chairperson, I only have a few questions under the regional offices here, so I will try and squeeze it in as quickly as possible.

Last year, the Minister of Highways, I had asked him some questions pertaining to a group that had been looking at access to some of the Whiteshell area properties that were only accessible by rail currently, and the minister at that time indicated—these are Nora Lake and Florence Lake. Now it was my understanding that there was a much larger group of people who had been involved and were dealing with some properties that even extended into northwestern Ontario, but the minister said it was only the Nora Lake and the Florence Lake people and he said that the group is currently looking at getting an environmental licence or moving towards getting an environmental licence or commissioned hearings for a road allowance.

Can the minister tell me, has there been any further progress on that matter? Has the group

moved forward with that, and have they come back to the department looking to have the road constructed into the Nora Lake and Florence Lake areas either up from Rennie or from some other point?

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chair, the road to Florence Lake and Nora Lake that certain cottagers would want, an alignment has been determined involving department staff. They have proceeded to the Department of Environment about an environmental licence and our knowledge is that at this point in time they have received terms of reference for the environmental licence. Whether they have proceeded towards achieving that environmental licence, we do not know at this time.

Now, while I have the floor, Madam Chair, I would like to table the Department of Highways and Transportation Highway Construction Programs, 1994-95. I have three copies here. These are the spring program plus all projects underway.

* (1650)

Mr. Reid: I thank the minister for the construction project list. We are looking forward to seeing that. It is interesting to hear too that the Florence and Nora lakes group have moved to the point where they can, I believe, apply for environmental hearings—

An Honourable Member: The terms of reference for the environmental licence.

Mr. Reid: Okay, so they know where they have to go from this point in time then. All right.

Last year the previous minister said that he was going to give a final anticipated outcome of the regionalization process, an analysis of what was taking place. Is there an analysis of how this process has worked and are we anticipating any further reductions other than what has been shown in the Supplementary Estimates here, as we go through South Central, Eastern, South Western Region, et cetera? Are we anticipating any further job reductions as a result of that regionalization process?

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chairperson, at this time, we do not have what the member really asked for and that is an analysis of regionalization, but one will be developed over the next few months as we report back to Treasury Board in what we might otherwise call an audit process of the success, the growing, maturing of the regionalization process.

In terms of what else might be considered in the broader picture of further regionalization, on September 1 there will be some bridge crew relocation as part of regionalization, and the MES group, Mechanical Equipment Services group, will probably in the future be responsible to the regions as opposed to central, in other words, to Winnipeg. So there will be decentralization of the decision processes and responsibility processes in the mechanical engineering services.

So the vast majority of regionalization is done, and it is a growing and maturing process. The department is constantly looking at ways in which it can be more efficient in the process and have as many decisions as possible done out in the regions as opposed to in Winnipeg.

Mr. Reid: I am not sure if the minister has figures here. It is my calculation that there was a reduction of some 40 SYs through the regionalization process. The minister can correct me if I am wrong. I think it was 16 in transfers to the region and 24 actual job losses. That is why I am asking if there are going to be any further reductions on top of what has already taken place and what is shown here.

Mr. Findlay: Madam Chairperson, there were 26.5 SYs eliminated through the process of regionalization and that process is now completed.

Mr. Reid: One last question on the eastern portion. The transportation costs have changed; they have escalated. Is there a reason why that has taken place or is it a requirement, further to travel as far as the requirements for the regional office is required? Is that why there has been, I think it is a \$5,000 increase?

Mr. Findlay: Previously, they were budgeting on the basis of 13 districts. Now it is on five regions. Previously it was what the cost of transportation would be in the regions, but (b) was kind of a

projection. Now they have had some experience, found the numbers more accurate, and, yes, more transportation, more cost of travelling within five regions as opposed to 13 districts.

Madam Chairperson: Item 2.(h) Eastern Region Office (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,954,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$519,100—pass.

2.(j) South Central Region Office (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,858,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$562,500—pass.

2.(k) South Western Region Office (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,760,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$454,200—pass.

2.(m) West Central Region Office (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,285,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$335,400—pass.

2.(n) Northern Region Office (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$1,138,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$324,100—pass.

Resolution 15.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$73,444,700 for Highways and Transportation, Operations and Maintenance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1995.

The hour being 5 p.m. and time for private members' hour, committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

* (1700)

IN SESSION

Committee Report

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairperson of Committees: The Committee of Supply has adopted certain resolutions, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinsson), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 5 p.m., time for Private Members' Business.

SECOND READINGS—PRIVATE BILLS**Bill 300—An Act to amend an Act to continue
Brandon University Foundation**

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Brandon West (Mr. McCrae), that Bill 300, An Act to amend an Act to continue Brandon University Foundation; Loi modifiant la Loi prorogeant la Fondation de l'Université de Brandon, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, I have great pleasure to rise on this particular piece of legislation, because what it is intended to do is to make the Brandon University Foundation even more effective than it has been in the past. At the present time the Foundation has 21 members, and what this bill essentially does is permit the membership to be increased to not more than 42. The basic reason for this is to allow the foundation to recruit additional people across the country to help in fundraising for the university.

The foundation was established 14 years ago to promote and advance the higher education of Brandon University and to improve the quality of its facilities and activities. To date the foundation has funded university projects totalling over \$5 million, and these include almost \$2 million for the new library addition and \$1 million in student scholarships. Currently the foundation has almost \$7 million in endowed memberships. All members of the foundation play and have played an integral role in developing fundraising strategy as well as acting as a liaison between the university and the broader community. Currently, there are 21 members who serve a three-year term, and if anyone is interested, I have a detailed list of the present membership if any member is interested in knowing who is in the foundation at the present time.

The foundation does appeal to national organizations and to individuals beyond the borders of Manitoba. The expansion of the membership that this bill will permit will enable the foundation, the enlarged foundation, to recruit

other people who can play an effective role in raising money for the university.

There are some prominent television personalities, I understand, one at least who is a graduate of Brandon University who is prepared to come on board, who lives in Ontario, but he is quite prepared to come on board to help raise money for Brandon University. There are other people as well, Mr. Speaker, who live beyond the borders of Manitoba who are prepared to come into this foundation and become a member of the foundation to help the university by way of even more effective fundraising efforts.

As I said, the foundation has done an excellent job to date, and as I indicated earlier is almost \$7 million now in endowed scholarships. So this is a very worthwhile organization and one deserving of our support, and this particular amendment, although it is not a substantive amendment, in a sense—it just increases the membership—nevertheless is going to enable this foundation to be more effective.

I think as members of the Legislature who have to pass Estimates of money supporting our universities, we should be very much supportive of any organization such as the foundation which is involved in fundraising and helping this particular university to grow and to develop.

With those few words, Mr. Speaker, I commend this legislation to the House and trust it will get swift and unanimous passage. Thank you.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join with my colleagues and the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) in supporting the bill that is before us today.

Even though it might sometimes seem there are a number of things about which the honourable member for Brandon East and I do not agree, you will usually find us both standing strong for the efforts of the Brandon University, the services it provides and the Brandon University Foundation and all of those people involved in a voluntary way in trying to secure a bright future for Brandon University.

I will be extremely brief because my interest is in the speedy passage of this bill to ensure that the Brandon University Foundation can be expanded and widen its net, as it were, in terms of all of its efforts to raise funds to, as I say, ensure a bright future for the students of Brandon University and for the larger community that Brandon University serves.

It is not well known perhaps in all regions, but certainly is well known around Brandon, that Brandon University serves a very large geographic area and enhances the quality of life for many, many years of hundreds and hundreds of students every year.

So it is with those brief comments that I lend my support to the bill and wish the university and the foundation well in the years to come.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I would move, seconded by the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 302—The Manitoba Historical Society Incorporation Act

Mrs. Shirley Render (St. Vital): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), that Bill 302, The Manitoba Historical Society Incorporation Act; Loi constituant la Société historique du Manitoba, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Render: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to act as a sponsor to this bill. As I stated earlier, the Manitoba Historical Society's original incorporating act was repealed in 1990. The society is now asking that this act be passed to re-establish its corporate status and to ensure that its decision making since the original act was repealed is valid and enforceable.

The Manitoba Historical Society has played and continues to play a very important role in preserving this province's heritage, and passage of

this bill will ensure its corporate status and thus allow the society to continue its vital role.

Now, for those members who are not familiar with the society, I would like to spend a little bit of time just outlining its history. On June 25, 1879, 115 years ago almost to the day, the Manitoba Legislature incorporated the Manitoba Historical Society or The Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, as it was then known. This was the outcome of a meeting on a very cold evening in January of the same year when 15 prominent citizens of Winnipeg met to hear Alderman Alexander McArthur's proposal to form a society for the purposes of literary and scientific research.

* (1710)

Much has changed since those early days. Not only has the population of Winnipeg grown from the 20,000 of that period, but the city itself has changed markedly. The society has also changed. In 1879 it was envisioned as an organization devoted not just to the study of the province's history but also one that would examine its birds, wildlife and climatic conditions. It was also to function as a library, an archives and a museum. The dreams of those early founding members were realized, Mr. Speaker. It was the society which laid the foundation for the present Winnipeg Public Library, the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature, and the Provincial Archives of Manitoba. Today the society's focus is less on the world of science and natural history and more on education, information gathering and preservation.

In countless ways the society informs Manitobans and others about the historical significant reminders of our past. For instance, on a quarterly basis it publishes a journal called Manitoba History which, as the title suggests, is devoted to Manitoba's past. This journal contains major scholarly articles, book and site reviews, historical tours, interviews, photo essays and heritage notes.

The society also has annual awards for history, local histories, books, historic projects, and theses and essays. The Margaret McWilliams medal competition is one such award. Another very interesting award is the Centennial Farms Award

which is presented to descendants of pioneers who have retained continuous ownership of the land for 100 years.

Mr. Speaker, the society aggressively goes after young people, and by that I mean it works very hard to inform young Manitobans about our heritage. This is an extremely important part of the society's work, because if our young people do not know and treasure our past and learn how to preserve and promote our past, then our history will be lost as the older generations pass on.

The society has instituted the Young Historians Award for Grades 5 and 6, Grade 9 and Grade 11, and that award is given for a project which could be on that individual's family, community or western Canada.

Essentially what the society is doing is encouraging young people to discover their past. The society has done a marvelous job in making our young people more aware of our past through such awards as the Young Historians Award and other activities such as Dalnavert house.

Almost each issue of the society's newsletter, which is known as Keywords, shows that more and more schools and thus young people from around the province have become members.

The society also promotes regional history through assisting 30 Manitoba-affiliated societies by such things as providing organizational guidance, giving procedural advice and conducting information workshops.

The society has also worked hard to foster the preservation of property relevant to the appreciation of the history of Manitoba.

I think perhaps one of the most well-known activities of the society is its work in conjunction with Dalnavert. Dalnavert was built for Hugh John Macdonald, the only son of Canada's first Prime Minister. It was the family home until 1929 when, following his death, it was sold and became a rooming house for the next 40 years. In 1969, the house was slated for demolition. The Manitoba Historical Society, recognizing the importance of this house to our cultural heritage, stepped in and

began the painstaking restoration which cost over half a million dollars.

The society also organizes many field trips so that members and others can see, first-hand, historic parts of our city and province. In the newsletter I received just two weeks ago, I saw that the society's autumn field trip is to the Interlake and Hecla areas to study patterns of settlement and resort development.

Mr. Speaker, I do not have time to go into any more detail about the society, but I think I have said enough to show that this is no sleepy society but an active, enthusiastic and vibrant historical society which takes its mandate of preserving and promoting our past very seriously.

I very strongly recommend to all honourable members that they support this bill so that the Manitoba Historical Society can continue its very important role. Thank you very much.

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to join with the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render) and the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) in supporting this particular bill, The Manitoba Historical Society Property Act. This bill of course will ensure that the Manitoba Historical Society has a legislative mandate to carry out the good work that it has been carrying out since 1879.

Mr. Speaker, the member for St. Vital has certainly talked about much of the good work that the Manitoba Historical Society has carried out over a number of years. She has mentioned the Museum of Man and Nature and the Provincial Archives, and specifically the changes, how the Manitoba Historical Society has also changed with the times and is now focusing a lot of its efforts on education and field trips, information gathering.

I note as well the monthly newsletter that members of this House receive, Keywords, which I certainly try to take the time to read, which does talk about the many activities of the Historical Society. I also noted, as well, that one of the projects and one of the individuals who works with Dalnavert, Mr. Tom Worth, was honoured with a Prix Manitoba award this year. Certainly I think that speaks well not only to the many volunteers

who work with the Historical Society but, in fact, about the good works that this particular association does carry out.

I think when we look back over history, it is very important that as a society and as a culture we know where we have come from in order to know where we are now, at the present, and where we should be going in the future. So certainly any organizations that deal with our heritage and our history are very, very integral to Manitoba as a province, and we certainly congratulate the Manitoba Historical Society for their good works in the past. We also hope with the passage of this particular bill that in fact this organization will continue to provide good work in the future. So certainly our caucus, Mr. Speaker, is quite prepared to have this bill go to the committee stage. Thank you.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render) for inviting me to second this bill. I have had a long association with the Historical Society and for a number of years was the editor of their journal and have served on their board and lectured in a number of their lecture series, as well. From that perspective, I think it is regrettable and it is unfortunate, and I think the society probably recognizes this as well, but the continuity, the legislative continuity of this society has been broken, as it was. I think it was an unfortunate accident and an oversight, and it is important that the Legislature, I think, does have all-party support to reinstate the society, in effect, in its legal form.

There are a number of interesting changes in the bill as it stands before us, from presenting the idea of a different kind of society, I think, than existed in 1879. One of the areas that I was struck by was the transition from the responsibilities designated in 1879 as speaking to all of North America and to both human and natural history. In the bill that stands before us now, the society is in effect regularizing, perhaps, the kind of mandate which it has taken upon itself since the 1940s, and that is to be primarily responsible for Canada and Manitoba and to be a society which is not so much a collector, an arranger, a custodian of objects and books as it was in the 1879 bill, but to becoming

one of promotion and public education about Manitoba and Canadian history.

I think this is something which certainly has been the mandate of the society since the 1940s, and it is interesting to see it now translated into legislative form. That transition, I think, is an interesting one because in 1879 when the society was formed, it was formed, as the 1879 act shows, by the leading men at the time, including the honourable John Norquay, a Premier of this province and a Metis Premier of this province. These were men who saw themselves as part of the great frontier of the British Empire. They saw Manitoba as the next great frontier of Britain, and they saw it as a British province.

They used the Manitoba Historical Society as one of many instruments to create a cultural standard, as they saw it, for Manitoba at the time. Much of the society's activities, whether it was in archaeology or whether it was in history or in the writings of R. G. Macbeth [phonetic] or George Bryce, was to in fact create by their activities a Britishness for Manitoba, to define it as that kind of community. Historical societies, of course, across the country were engaged, whether it was British Columbia or Nova Scotia or Ontario at that time in the 1880s of creating that kind of identity for the province of this new empire.

* (1720)

Much has changed since then, and I think that is reflected in this bill as well. The idea of a Canadian identity is something which in the interwar period the society played a great role in trying to create, transforming Manitoba into a different kind of community.

Similarly, I think if you look at the work of one of the provincial deputy ministers, a man called Ivan Schultz [phonetic], who worked with W. L. Morton and later on with James Jackson in the Manitoba Historical Society to try and create a different kind of identity in Manitoba. Ivan Schultz [phonetic], in particular, was responsible for the creation of a series of books dealing with what we would now call multicultural, which at that time was called ethnic identities in Manitoba. It was a very new venture for the Historical Society and

was an attempt to create a different sense of Manitoba.

I think again when you look at the 1970s and the 1990s and the role of the society in various celebrations and jubilees and commemorative events, that the society has in fact tried to keep pace with the times and tried to create different and more appropriate versions of Manitoba's identity.

One of the most recent instances of this was two very successful dinners which the society held in conjunction with the Chinese Cultural and Historical Society, something which would not have been envisioned by those leading men of empire in the 1870s but which has been in fact one of the most well attended and enthusiastically received activities of the society and indicates not just a changing society but a changing Manitoba as well.

The transition then to popular education to a multicultural Manitoba, all of those are reflected in this bill and in the goals of the society. As the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render) put very well, it has been a society which has acted as a catalyst which has been very active in bringing together rural historical societies, very, very active in promoting work amongst young people, and I think is one which has over the years had its ups and downs. In the 1920s it was not a very active society. It revived again in the 1940s by Professor Morton, and I think revived again in the 1960s by centennial activities.

It has at each phase of its development found new volunteers, been able to draw in different parts of the Manitoba community, has formed at different times liaisons with the Société historique de St-Boniface and has tried to bring all Manitobans to a recognition of their place in Canada and of the kind of society which could be created here.

So I welcome the support of all members in this bill and with that look forward to its passage to committee.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I was wanting to put a few words on the record on this particular bill. I know that the government members have been somewhat disappointed in my

previous adjournment of other bills and possibly another adjournment that is yet to come. It is not to say that one does not necessarily support a bill by adjourning it today or by adjourning it Thursday, as long as the business is in fact being addressed in an orderly fashion.

Mr. Speaker, I know our critic had the opportunity—or at least I had the opportunity to inform our critic that we would in fact be speaking on this particular bill today. I know when I indicated to her, I had mentioned that it would be the Manitoba historical bill, and I think there was an assumption that I was referring to the government's bill, The Manitoba Historical Society Property Act, which she had made reference to.

I know in discussions that I have had—and positive discussions I must say—in terms of the worth of the Manitoba Historical Society and the many contributions that they provide to all Manitobans through their work and understand that this particular bill basically gives it the legal status, something which no one I believe inside this Chamber would deny, because we see first hand throughout the province the fine work that is done through this particular organization.

With a bit of miscommunication on my part, I would like to indicate to the Chamber that the Liberal caucus fully supports Bill 302 and would in fact like to see it go to committee whenever government decides to call it to committee.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading of Bill 302, The Manitoba Historical Society Incorporation Act; Loi constituant la Société historique du Manitoba. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? Agreed? [agreed]

Bill 301—The Misericordia General Hospital Incorporation Amendment Act

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), that Bill 301, The Misericordia General Hospital Incorporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation le "Misericordia General Hospital,"

be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Laurendeau: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today and introduce second reading on Bill 301, The Misericordia General Hospital Incorporation Amendment Act.

Mr. Speaker, the Misericordia General Hospital traces its beginnings to the summer of 1898 when Les Soeurs de la Misericorde journeyed from Montreal to open a mission in Winnipeg dedicated to caring for single mothers. This dedication marked the beginning of the hospital and continues to be felt today in its mission, purpose, motivation and spirit of the hospital personnel. It has served the needs of Manitobans for 96 years. Like the Grey Nuns before them, the Misericordia Sisters are the pioneers of our health care system.

Mr. Speaker, this is a legacy for the Misericordia Sisters. The hospital corporation constantly strives to meet the changing needs of the community by endorsing moral and progressive attitudes to care of the sick, injured, suffering and frightened people and by being ever mindful of the motto of the Misericordia Sisters: "compassion of the heart for those in need."

Mr. Speaker, in 1969, the Misericordia Sisters transferred the Misericordia General Hospital, without consideration, all assets known as the Misericordia General Hospital. Since then, the Misericordia General Hospital has been owned and operated by a corporation whose members are members of the congregation of the Sisters of Misericordia.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is being requested at this time to provide more flexibility in the appointment of members of the corporation, and this change would provide by appointing individuals as members of the corporation who are not necessarily Misericordia Sisters. Such appointments would be made by the Superior General of the Misericordia Sisters or pursuant to the by-law of the corporation.

This change will allow for a broader base of expertise at the corporate level and will also

respond to the general decline in the number of religious persons in the Roman Catholic and Christian communities, Mr. Speaker. This bill also allows for the executive committee to act on behalf of the board of directors, and the current wording in the act only allows for the executive committee to act between meetings of the board of directors.

The amendment provides for the executive committee to have a broader scope of activity, which is required from time to time when specific matters are referred by the board of directors for handling. That is, the board may wish to have a particular matter concluded without calling for a full meeting of the board of directors.

Mr. Speaker, the Misericordia General Hospital continues to provide health care needs for the residents in the community. In fact, the Misericordia offers a Centre of Excellence in Ophthalmology which will enable an additional 600 Manitobans to receive cataract operations this year. All in all, this bill makes the act more efficient and modern, and I would like to ask for the full support of the House. I do appreciate the honourable member for Wolseley seconding the motion.

* (1730)

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the honourable member for St. Norbert for the invitation last week to second this bill.

The Misericordia is the largest employer in my constituency, and it is a very important institution and has been for 96 years. The purpose of this bill, as the member has suggested, is to make a number of administrative changes and corporate changes at the Misericordia. The first of these is to allow the Superior General in Montreal, in fact, to appoint people to the corporation, not to the board of directors but to the corporation, the holding company of the hospital, to appoint people who are not necessarily members of the congregation.

It is, in part, as I understand from speaking to Sister Plamondon, not just the fact that as we know throughout the country that fewer people are entering vocations and that there are indeed fewer sisters, but it is also I think on the part of the sisters

a desire for greater lay participation and something which they are finding in their institutions across the country and in the United States as well. So they have encouraged lay participation in this latter part of the 20th Century and look upon this move as one element of that similar to other changes in others of their institutions.

The Misericordia Hospital, as the member for St. Norbert noted, was founded 96 years ago in 1898 when the Sisters of the Misericorde came to Winnipeg. They came to Winnipeg at a time when that British and English nature of Manitoba that those members we were speaking of earlier today, the members of the Manitoba Historical Society, perhaps, had not made their mark as strongly as they were to later.

I always think when I drive past the Misericordia of the connection to Quebec. It is not just the visible architecture of the centre block of the Misericordia or of the design of the chapel inside, one of the oldest chapels in fact in the city, it is the idea of that link with Quebec and the importance of Quebec institutions, whether it was the Grey Nuns or the Misericordia, or of other institutions in St. Boniface, in the Interlake and throughout the southern part of Manitoba that Bishop Taché tried to establish through the latter part of the 19th Century.

It was a very different vision of Manitoba that Bishop Taché had and that sense of a Manitoba which would represent the broader Canada, English and French, and which he tried to establish through the creation of settlement patterns across southern Manitoba and Saskatchewan. That is, of course, to me what the Misericordia also represents, and at this time in Canadian history I think it is a very important visual and political symbol for us to remember. That vision of Bishop Taché, in fact, was perhaps never realized except for a very short period in Manitoba's history, but certainly the Misericordia and the institutions of the Grey Nuns and other institutions from Quebec and families from Quebec, indeed, have survived and prospered in Manitoba.

The Sisters of the Misericordia themselves are one of the more recent orders to have been founded

in Canada, later than the Grey Nuns, and they took on the task which was not a popular task at the time in Quebec, and that was the care of the poor and of the single mothers. That care of single mothers, unwed mothers as they were called in the 19th Century and, in fact, until the 1960s, something which has been the special mission of the society represented by the Villa Rosa on Wolseley Avenue, which, again, is also an important part of our community.

That care of single mothers is something which is a very important part of the sisters' role in New York city as well as the several institutions which they have in Montreal. They were as an order perhaps amongst the poorest of sisters. They did not have the opportunities that some periods of Grey Nuns' history had in acquiring wealth and acquiring the support and patronage of many wealthy people in Quebec and elsewhere. The Sisters of the Misericordia have been very practical sisters. Some of the early sisters in Montreal were certainly women of great ability and ready to turn their hand to carpentry or to manual work as well as to the nursing care and pastoral care of single mothers.

The community itself has created in Winnipeg the Misericordia Hospital, a very diverse community hospital, which has certainly in the last decade, I think, had many anxieties and concerns about its future. It is finding now, I think, in its vision statement, a very strong direction for the future as a community hospital, one which retains a very strong Catholic philosophy and set of values and which is very clearly enunciated in their policy.

In recent years they have also begun to specialize in a number of areas, in ophthalmology, in Easy Street which is a rehabilitation program. Today I was able to be present at the unveiling of a new program and that is what was called the Caravan which is an attempt to bring health prevention, health care and health education to a broader section of the community.

They also have a very successful out-patient clinic called the Breast Care Clinic which has been extremely successful, and now I understand in fact

has a waiting list. So it is a hospital which has been reaching out to its community, in fact it is many communities, in a variety of ways.

The appointment of lay members or of a broader representation of the community on its corporation, I think, will certainly enhance that and enable it to fulfill those goals and to be recognized as it wishes to be as a centre of excellence in outreach programs and services.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 206—The Coat of Arms, Emblems and the Manitoba Tartan Amendment Act

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Urban Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh), that Bill 206, The Coat of Arms, Emblems and the Manitoba Tartan Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les armoiries, les emblèmes et le tartan du Manitoba), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. McAlpine: Mr. Speaker, I only wish to speak very briefly on this bill. I am pleased to rise today to give second reading to The Manitoba Coat of Arms, Emblems and the Manitoba Tartan Amendment Act.

It is in a symbolic salute to the Scottish heritage in our province that I put forward this bill which will officially include April 6 as Tartan Day in The Manitoba Coat of Arms, Emblems and Tartan Act.

Manitoba is a province which has benefited greatly from the immigration of Scottish people to its territory. These Scottish settlers were the first Europeans to make their homes on the Prairie and their influence is significant.

Since the earliest days of Lord Selkirk's modest colony, the Scottish settlers and their descendants have contributed significantly to the advancements of our communities. This province was settled en masse in 1811 when the gently altruistic fifth Earl

of Selkirk, Lord Thomas Douglas, 1771-1820, brought the first group of crofters who had been driven off the land in the Highland clearances.

These newcomers braved starvation since they did not get a decent crop for many years after their arrival. They endured our brutal winters, and I think the winters of long ago seemed to be much more harsh than we have today. Along with that they faced the floods of this land and the crackle of gunfire to put their roots into a colony at the junction of the Red and the Assiniboine rivers.

This land of ours was not a pot of gold for these settlers, but rather it was a hard and laborious struggle to build a life and a home. The first settlers from Sutherlandshire, the Orkneys and elsewhere in Auld Scotia put the names of the places they left on their new home. It was Lord Selkirk himself who on his first visit to the colony in 1817 was asked what he would name the settlement, and he replied, I quote: We shall call it Kildonan, unquote, honouring the parish from which many left in Sutherlandshire.

* (1740)

Indeed, West and East Kildonan, separated by the Red River, continue to expand as places in which to live and to work. To drive through the Kildonans you cannot mistake the streets' names. Helmsdale, Burrin, Golspie, Rothesay, Dunrobin, Kilbride, Seaforth are just a few which demonstrate the Scottish heritage in Winnipeg. Go out into the countryside and see the names of the towns and villages—Argyle, Lome, Fraserwood, Selkirk—and you will realize the flavour of Scotland permeates our province.

The evidence of a strong Scottish heritage is very prominent in Manitoba, and this culture continues to bloom. It has blossomed with the many pipe bands, the Manitoba Highland Dancers' Association, the Scottish Country Dance Society, the Highland Gathering at Selkirk, the St. Andrews Society and so on.

There is a notable presence of Scottish heritage in this Legislature with many honourable members having Scottish heritage. To name just a few, we have Mrs. McIntosh, Mr. Mackintosh, Mr. Rose, and Mr. Sveinson. Although Icelandic, his

grandfather was a Gibson and his great-grandfather was the first settler to bring Fife wheat to this land from the old country. Fife wheat, I think, is derived from the city of Fife in old Scotland. Among other members, Mr. Speaker, we have Mr. McCrae and Ms. McCormick, Mr. Cummings and Mr. Dewar (Selkirk). I am proud to stand in this Chamber today, a place of honour, representing the McAlpine clan.

Manitoba has had an official tartan since 1962, when our current tartan received royal assent. The Manitoba tartan has been approved by the Lord Lion, guardian of Scottish heraldry, and is registered as the official tartan of the province. Each colour in the Manitoba tartan, as all tartans do, has its own significance. Dark red squares symbolize the natural resources of our province; azure blue lines for Lord Selkirk, founder of the Red River settlement. Dark green lines stand for the men and women of many races who have enriched the life of the province, and the golden lines represent the grain and other agricultural products from Manitoba.

Our Premier, witnessed by the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, has proclaimed April 6 as Tartan Day for the past three years. I want this new tradition to be continued, and I believe that our tartan should be honoured in an annual day of celebration marking all the symbols which it represents and also the Scottish heritage which spawned it. Manitoba is well steeped in

Scottish heritage from the Selkirk settlers who established a colony here in Manitoba to the many Manitobans who continue to explore and promote their heritage. Many different generations of people built our province and made it successful, but there is no denying the contribution of people of Scottish heritage to Manitoba. This province's commitment to cultural diversity has allowed for the flourishing of many cultures and many Manitobans continue to celebrate their heritage.

In Nova Scotia and many provinces, April 6 has already been designated as Tartan Day or is presently being considered. In this spirit, I hope that all members of the House will support this bill so that Manitobans can have a day which celebrates our tartan, its meanings and its Scottish heritage from which it is drawn. Through this day, we can recognize the significance of the tartan of Manitoba and embrace the history behind that tradition. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock? [agreed]

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).

