



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

39-40 Elizabeth II

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



VOL. XLI No. 86B - 8 p.m., MONDAY, JUNE 15, 1992



MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, June 15, 1992

The House met at 8 p.m.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

CULTURE, HERITAGE AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau): Order, please. The minister to continue with her opening statements.

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): I think we just ended off discussing the new grants program that will be put in place to distribute grants to the heritage community, and started my remarks on our new Recreation Policy that was announced last fall that outlines this government's recognition of its importance, and our commitment to furthering the development of recreational opportunities for Manitoba in every community.

The fall announcement revealed the introduction of a new Recreation Opportunities Program to replace the Recreation District Grant Program. This new program expands access to northern municipalities and has been developed to better meet the needs of rural communities. I am very proud of the fact that it has been well-received since its inception.

Through these Estimates we will experience the first effect of budgetary changes to support our proactive development of recreation opportunities across this province. We will extend the Research Agreement we entered into with the University of Manitoba. Existing provisions permit extension beyond the original three-year period. A two-year continuation will allow us to pursue made-in-Manitoba research on recreation issues and trends.

I am also very pleased with the success of the Northern Recreation Director Pilot Project. This two-year initiative provided training to 26 recreation directors serving over 40 Indian bands in Northern Affairs communities. We undertook this initiative in co-operation with the Departments of Education and Northern Affairs. After graduation in August, many will soon be hired in their communities. As this was a pilot initiative, we are committed to study the effect

of the program and consider any necessary improvements. I expect the results of the study to demonstrate the value of continuing our co-operative efforts to improve community recreation opportunities in the North.

The Regional Services branch will continue to provide decentralized consulting services to communities in rural, remote and northern Manitoba from seven regional offices located in Brandon, Beausejour, Morden, Dauphin, Gimli, Thompson and The Pas. By providing access to departmental resources, regional staff support communities in meeting their goals for leisure development and improving the quality of life for their citizens.

We have also entered into a co-operative initiative with the Canadian Red Cross in developing a Water Safety Education Program for northern residents.

I also wish to note the steps taken in my department to protect our environment through responsible and cost-effective recycling initiatives. Within the Queen's Printer, 90 percent of paper stocks have been converted to alkaline processed. Approximately 75 percent of all in-house printing is double sided, and 100 percent of internally produced envelopes use recycled stock.

Versatech Industries handles the shredding of government documents under contract at Manitoba Archives. In 1991, they recycled 80 percent of the 696 tonnes handled. In the first quarter of 1992, that proportion has increased to 97 percent.

* (2005)

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I believe these Estimates to be a solid reflection of my department's commitment to serving the needs of Manitobans as directed by our mandate. It clearly illustrates responsible action in difficult economic times is possible while meeting these needs.

Manitobans place a great importance on many aspects of life in this province. Those of our arts, culture, multiculturalism, heritage, recreation and citizenship support are amongst the most prominent in these treasured aspects of Manitoba.

We believe, that with these proposed Estimates, Culture, Heritage and Citizenship will be able to

meet Manitobans' expectations in realistic ways. We further believe this budget will allow us to maintain and strengthen these valued aspects of our community and their relationship to the current and future well-being of our economy. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chairperson.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We thank the honourable minister for those opening remarks. Does the critic from the official party, the honourable member for Wolseley, have an opening statement?

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, since the minister has taken about 40 minutes of Estimates time to report, essentially regurgitate the annual report of her department, I will try and be brief in my opening statements.

I was disappointed by this annual report. It seems to me for a Department of Culture and Heritage, one would expect to see far more innovation, far more enthusiasm, far more new ideas, new programs and new ways of meeting the cultural challenges that Manitobans and other North Americans are facing as well.

I have spoken before in this department and suggested that things were certainly slowing down, grinding to a halt. It seems to me now as though they are pretty much in a deep freeze, that you see no bubble, no enthusiasm, no initiative in this department. It seems to me that the leadership of this department that the minister is offering is not a reflection on the staff in any way whatsoever, but the leadership that this minister is offering is essentially one of a bunker mentality. I would like to be proved wrong, so I look forward to the Estimates; in fact for the minister to show us that there is indeed creativity and energy that she is offering in eliciting from her staff in this area.

* (2010)

I would again say that I was disappointed by the minister's statements on culture. To my recollection, she only mentioned one particular cultural event that seemed to have highlighted her past year, and that was *Les Misérables*, an \$80-a-seat production brought from outside the province. This was highlighted for us as the event of the cultural life of Manitoba in the past year. I am sure the minister did not want to leave that impression, and I hope that she will perhaps offer some alternatives of what have been the highlights of her cultural year during the Estimates process.

As I have tried to say before in Estimates, I think that Manitobans, a million people of very diverse origins, are facing a number of significant issues in their cultural life. They are ones that they share with many other people around the world in some cases, but there are governments around the world which are trying to meet some of these issues head on, and it is those kind of innovative programs which I do not see coming from this department.

One of the ways in which most Manitobans receive their cultural experience is through television. We are increasingly watching more and more television. I do not see anything in the department's programs, or recognition of the cultural life of Manitobans, of the role that television is playing and the way in which this government is offering leadership for a Manitoba perspective, for Manitoba productions, for Manitoba experience, for new audiences for Manitoba television. It seems to me that ought to be one of the major areas, focuses of attention.

Most areas of Europe and North America are facing a homogenization of culture, particularly through the means of television, but also through films. I think the one area that I would commend the minister on, and that is in the addition of monies for film production and in the extension of the CIDO agreement, that there has been some attempt in the department at least to ensure that production facilities are available and are being used by Manitobans.

I am not sure that the department has done very much to expand the audiences. It is that marketing and audience expansion and accessibility of audiences to participate in Manitoba culture that I would also draw the minister's attention to.

We are in a period of the early years of a Free Trade Agreement which has brought into question many of the aspects of cultural production and cultural accessibility, not just in film and television, but also in books and newspapers and cultural periodicals. I do not see anything in the minister's statement which addresses that particular issue which Manitobans, I believe, feel very strongly about.

We are at a stage in the constitutional negotiations where some reports would have us believe that there is an agreement, however much in quotes you want to put that in, to devolve some parts of culture to the provinces. I have asked the

minister in the House about this. I would like to pursue this even further.

I do not think that the answers she gave in the House were very satisfactory in giving us an idea of what the Manitoba position is at the constitutional table on culture and what the significance of the federal cultural dollars is for Manitoba and what we stand to lose in those changes in federal positions on cultural agreements. As the minister knows, it is not just the broad-scale agreements that I am concerned about. I am concerned about the federal definition of culture.

* (2015)

When I asked in the House, the minister said that the federal government claimed that it would be retaining the national cultural institutions. The danger in that, as I am sure she is well aware, is that the federal government will, consistent with its practices over the past five or six years, begin to define national cultural institutions as only those which are in the capital region, that the national museum, the national galleries, the national granting agencies such as will be left in the next two years will be considered as national cultural institutions and they will retain those in Ottawa.

In the past, say in the last 10 years and certainly under the years of the Liberal government, the national cultural institutions were defined also as regional institutions. The presence of the National Film Board in Winnipeg, Halifax and elsewhere was defined as an element of national culture. What I am very much afraid of is that we stand to lose those regional branches of the national cultural institutions.

I do not think I have to underline for the minister or anybody who is involved in the cultural community in Manitoba the severe impact that would have on us, very dramatically, very drastically in the losses to the museums, to the archives, to the archives networks, to the galleries, to the conservation programs, to the performing arts, as well of course as to the facilities and the training and the standards that are offered to us by the National Film Board and the regional productions of the CBC. Those are very, very important elements of the cultural life of Manitobans.

I see very great dangers in the constitutional discussions that are going on now of losses for Manitobans. I do want to pursue that. I thought the minister's answers in Question Period were not very

helpful, and I think it is such an important issue that we should be pursuing it further.

We are seeing over the past five or six years across this country a concentration of wealth, a growing gap between rich and poor. I was not just idly picking out the \$80-a-seat ticket to *Les Misérables* that the minister mentioned, because it seemed to me that the rising price of theatre tickets and of tickets to the performing arts and, in some cases, the rising cost of ordinary public access to our basic institutions such as museums and art galleries are putting the cultural expression of many aspects of Manitoba life out of reach of ordinary Manitobans. In the past such access was limited by geography in some cases.

I believe what we have seen in the last five years and the fact that we are now looking at 60 percent of the wealth of this country being concentrated in the hands of about 15 or 20 percent of the people, that that has very severe implications for accessibility to culture because, at the same time that this concentration has been occurring, we are also seeing the increasing cost of admission to basic cultural institutions across the country.

I have raised this with the minister before. Her answers in the last set of Estimates I think have stayed with me throughout the year. When I raised the question of what do my constituents or anybody's constituents do who are on some form of social assistance or unemployment insurance—and as we know, that is in the region of more than 60,000 Manitobans—what do they do when they cannot afford the entrance to the Winnipeg Art Gallery or to a performance or to particular festivals or the entrances that are required in many cultural productions?

Her answer was that they could take a walk along the riverbanks, that was still free, and that apart from the obvious interpretations one would draw from that, I think the other issue is, of course, that the minister, seemed to me, to be very clearly confusing leisure and the arts. I would be looking for some recognition of the differences that she does see in those areas.

* (2020)

I am concerned about education and the relationship between the Department of Education and this ministry. There is, I believe, a joint committee between this ministry and the Department of Education, I do not think the minister

talked about in her presentation. I hope we will have the opportunity to pursue that because I think the thrust of every report that has been done on culture, whether it has been at the federal level on training in the arts, or whether it has been at the federal level on communication and culture, or the minister's own report, the DeFehr Report done in 1990, every one of them has expounded at length upon the necessity of expanding the role of cultural training and cultural education and arts education in the schools.

It seems to me that what we are hearing from at least the arts community, because I think many of those particular reports did not actually touch the broader community, but certainly the arts community itself is saying that we need to expand that kind of access. Given the absence in expansion of arts centres of access to cultural expression amongst the broad population, and I do not think that has been expanded in the minister's term since 1988, it seems to me that the schools are one of our avenues, one of our opportunities to ensure that a broader accessibility to arts or broader participation, not just consumption, but participation in the arts, is possible. That link between the Department of Education and the Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, I am interested in pursuing.

I am particularly also concerned about the DeFehr Report. The minister made a number of references to it picking out the areas where she has chosen to agree with it, the creation of an Arts Branch within the department and some application of capital improvements to one or two buildings, important buildings, and certainly expensive buildings in the city of Winnipeg, but it seemed to me that the DeFehr Report had a number of other important areas, one in particular which talked about the movement toward .7 percent funding for the arts.

The minister and I have had the opportunity to debate this particular goal in private members' hour in the last session. I was surprised by her responses in there and I wondered if she had had the opportunity to perhaps reconsider that. I was surprised that it was not a goal of this department. It was not one, I think, that either the DeFehr Report or the opposition would expect her to reach within a year, perhaps even two years. What I understood from that debate was the minister did not even have it as a goal. I would be interested in pursuing some other elements of the DeFehr Report, as well.

I could, I suppose, also ask the Crescentwood memorial question on lotteries, but maybe you could pursue that one, too.

I would like to also pursue some questions this time about the Arts Council and about some of the larger institutions and their reporting lines to the minister, the Winnipeg Art Gallery for example, and the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature.

In terms of heritage, I think we have seen a reduction in the department, a repetition of programs which have been there for some considerable time and essentially a reactive response on the part of the minister. I do not see many new initiatives coming out of that, particularly very few initiatives in the area of tourism. That is one of the areas I would like to pursue with the minister, what the links are to tourism, and what is being developed in those fields.

The Heritage Federation, I think is probably going to be an issue for a good portion of these Estimates, has been a great deal of disappointment in the heritage community with the way in which the minister handled the opportunity for reform of the heritage granting system. It seems I think to most people, whatever their position on the Heritage Federation, that this was handled in a very highhanded and unnecessarily autocratic manner, one which perhaps has lost the good will of many volunteers in the heritage movement. It will take the minister some time I think to win back that good will which was somewhat unnecessarily lost.

* (2025)

I will finish my remarks there, and now if the member for Inkster wants to make some.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We thank the honourable member for those remarks. Does the critic for the second opposition party, the honourable member for Inkster, have an opening statement?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, yes, I do have some opening remarks that I wanted to put onto the record. I am sure that some might find it enlightening, others might not.

It seems every time we go into the Estimates, there always seems to be an issue before us that I seem to concentrate a lot of time and effort on. Last year it seemed to be the Multicultural Secretariat's office, MIC and so forth, and I had spent a good number of the hours dealing with the multicultural grants.

Because of the bill that we currently have before us, once again no doubt we will be spending a great deal of time with the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council. In addition to that, we will be spending some time with respect to the Secretariat's office and the outreach office, if you will, and so forth to try to get a better idea in terms of what it is that the government is trying to accomplish by having these services offered.

Something that is somewhat new to myself, as the minister pointed out a number of months ago, this time we will be spending a good deal of time with the Manitoba Heritage Federation, because of some of the actions that the government has taken, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, made me think about what had happened to MIC a number of years ago, and we were very discouraged in the manner in which this came about.

I know I have had opportunities in the past, such as my grievance, to talk about some of the things that had concerned myself with respect to what actually took place and the manner in which the Heritage Federation was dealt with.

There are other issues in dealing with the public libraries, that I have raised previously, and looking toward some sort of a commitment from the minister as to whether role is in the preservation of especially community libraries not only in rural Manitoba, but also in the city of Winnipeg.

There seems to be emphasis or more emphasis needed in terms of the film classifications and other aspects of heritage preservation and cultural preservation too that need to be addressed.

There are also areas in which we feel the government could be moving more quickly on areas such as English as a Second Language, areas such as the Immigrant Credentials. We believe the government has been somewhat dragging their feet on some of these issues.

Where I do find that the government has been moving in the right direction, I will be sure to point it out, but, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I will definitely be pointing out the areas in which we feel that the government has been going backward. Unfortunately, far too often we have been seeing a number of areas where the government has actually been going backward as opposed to doing what is really and truly in the best interests of the community, or of the department that she is responsible for.

Having said those very few opening remarks, I would like to get into the questioning and in fact would suggest that we possibly even consider doing it in the same fashion that we did with the Civil Service or the Department of Labour, if the minister and the opposition critic do not mind, where we deal with the one line in particular, the Executive Support, Salaries, and then once we are done asking all of the questions, she can still have her support staff, that we could pass all of the lines. Failing that, we can go through line by line, whatever the minister feels most comfortable doing.

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

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

* (2030)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would like to introduce Tom Carson, Deputy Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, and Kerry O'Shaughnessy from financial services.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We will now move on to item 1.(b)(1) Executive Support: Salaries \$327,600.

Ms. Friesen: I suggested in my opening remarks that this department had become predominantly reactive, that it responded rather than initiating. I want to start on this line by asking the minister for perhaps some response to that.

What is the strategy for Manitoba culture, in particular, for the arts in Manitoba? In what ways does this department see that it is expanding the cultural participation of Manitobans—not consumption, but participation in the arts? How have audiences been expanded in the past year or even in the past three or four years? What new audiences are being reached? Is there a strategy? Have you got a goal where you are going to, and what are the stages on that road?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I listened intently to the opening remarks of the critic from the New Democratic Party. I must say that I must agree to disagree with much of the rhetoric that she did put on the record during her remarks, and some of the comments that she made on lacklustre performance of our department.

I think we have been very forward looking since we have taken over as government.

One of the first things we did undertake was an extensive review of the arts through the Art DeFehr Arts Policy Review committee, where there was extensive consultation within the community. In fact, the report came up with several recommendations. We indicated at the time that we would attempt to deal with some of them in a short period of time; others, of course, would take longer.

The one recommendation which we discussed last year around the Estimates table, and it looks like we will be discussing again, is the commitment of government to reach .7 percent total budget funding for the arts in our province. I have indicated many times that it has been a laudable goal that in difficult economic times is hard to attempt to achieve when government has to set priorities. We have made it extremely clear that one of our first priorities is not raising taxes, and we have not over five consecutive budgets. As a matter of fact, we have decreased personal income taxes over five budgets, and so that has been a commitment. It is one that we have undertaken and we have lived up to that commitment. We also have indicated that, of course, health, social services and education would be of higher priorities when we had to allocate increased budget dollars to departments.

I am pleased to say, and I know that last year was a tough year for culture and heritage, but in fact, we did see reductions. I am pleased to say that we have maintained, and in some instances, enhanced our financial commitment to the arts. We have restructured the cultural side of my department, the cultural resources, and developed an Arts Branch. We have looked at all of the programs and have just introduced four new programs that will deal proactively with culture throughout the province.

We have restructured so that in fact multicultural grants for the arts, if they are specifically arts related, are funded through the Arts Branch now and that they are not, if you might say, somewhat ghettoized through multicultural grants. In fact, there are arts at the community when we did consultation through the DeFehr Report made a recommendation that we should include all arts together. They should not be segregated or separated. That has been accomplished through this process.

We have looked at what the Arts Council has been doing in relationship to what the department has

been doing, and the Arts Council will now be looking after all the professional side of arts, and the Arts Branch will be looking at more the community and the development side of arts.

I would indicate that we have moved on the recommendations from the policy review. We still have some recommendations to undertake and we will continue to work along that path, but I believe that we have been proactive.

If you look at proactive, we had an NDP administration in place from '81 to '88, and there was no arts policy review undertaken and no change made. I think in our four years of government, we have undertaken a comprehensive review. We have some good recommendations, and we are acting on those recommendations.

Ms. Friesen: Can I put my question again? What is the strategy of the department to enhance the accessibility of the arts to a broader range of Manitobans? What the minister has just talked about is essentially the restructuring, administrative procedures for the distribution of grants.

Could she explain how that restructuring has made music or art or performing arts or visual arts—how has that made those aspects of cultural life in Manitoba more accessible to a broader range of Manitobans?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I indicated that we did restructuring. We do now have an Arts Branch. That Arts Branch is there in the new programming that has been developed, is there to support community initiative and when the community has a good idea and they think that they can attract audiences, in fact, we are there as a branch now, to support those initiatives.

I think that is a major move in the right direction. I think our agencies here in our province, are doing better than most across the country. We see major deficits, and we, I have to say, too, have had some problem with deficits. We have entered into several deficit reduction programs this year with some of our major institutions, but we know that they are doing as well, or better, than many across the country.

I indicated in my opening remarks, and I think it was one thing that the NDP critic did indicate was a positive move, and that was more support for our cultural industries. Our filmmakers here in Manitoba are among the most successful, I think, across the country. We are doing very well, and we are really proud and pleased.

Symphony, MTC and Prairie Theatre Exchange are among the many organizations in our province that have been artistically very successful and financially successful. The audience participation is good, and I cannot say that if you looked across the country at what is happening in other provinces that you would say Manitoba is faring any worse than anyone else. As a matter of fact, I would think we are probably doing better.

Ms. Friesen: I think there are also some significant losses in the past year. I think the difficulties of the Warehouse Theatre and a number of other institutions that we will come to later should also be seen in the minister's summing up of what is happening in terms of institutions.

The basic question I am getting at is: Yes, the minister has grants; yes, the minister has restructured those and has done it in conjunction with some of the recommendations made by the DeFehr Report; and yes, that is meeting some of the requirements of the institutions who ask for grants. What I am looking for from a Department of Culture in Manitoba is some strategic overall perspective that says, this is how we want Manitobans to be able to have access to their cultural institutions and cultural expression.

* (2040)

For example, in any of the issues that the minister instanced—the Manitoba Theatre Centre, the Winnipeg Symphony, the Winnipeg Ballet—do we have any indication, does the minister have any concern about the expansion of those audiences? Are they reaching for example people whom they did not reach before? Do we have more Manitobans who are becoming involved in play writing, in play workshopping, in becoming actors themselves at whatever level? How many more people and different kinds of people, not just the people who can afford the \$30 for the symphony or the ballet ticket, but how many new kinds of audiences and new parts of the population are being encouraged to have access to different forms of cultural expression?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, one of the things that has been undertaken as a joint effort by the federal government and all the provinces across the country was the Consumer Arts Profile, which looked at what kind of audiences are being attracted by different arts venues. I think it indicated that there are some difficulties, there are some

things that need to be looked at. It will be a valuable tool and resource to cultural organizations, cultural institutions and in fact a tool that government can work.

Within the Arts Branch, we can work with the community to try to highlight for them the types of audiences that are not being reached. I think one of the indications in that profile was in fact that some of the ethnic communities are not being reached by some of the artistic venues, so that is an area where we will hopefully work with our organizations over the next period of time to see whether that cannot be enhanced.

Ms. Friesen: I noticed in the minister's annual report, or perhaps it is in the Estimates itself, that the department sees its role as making available the information from that audience study to Manitobans.

I wonder what conclusions the minister has drawn from that report. Again, I come back to my first basic question. What is the strategy for expanding accessibility to the arts in Manitoba? What did the minister draw from that study, what kind of programs, new ideas, new programs, new incentives for particular groups who are applying to you to in fact move in the directions indicated by that study?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, as I indicated before, we have now received the Consumer Arts Profile. It has not been around for long. It has just been completed. We have evaluated and analyzed that.

One of the new programs under the Arts Branch is Grant Assistance for Arts Development. That grant program will support audience development and arts skills development programming by nonprofit community-based arts groups. These programs must take place in Manitoba and must be open and accessible to the general public, and that will be one of the criteria for grant assistance.

I think when you look at the study, it did show that the companies that we have are fairly well developed and have good skills. Our ticket prices are still \$2 to \$4 dollars lower than the rest of the country. That would be a goal, I would imagine, that we would like to have in place. That would be to ensure that our ticket prices do remain lower than other provinces.

Ms. Friesen: I did not specifically want to get into ticket prices at this stage, but I will use it as the second part of my question.

The first one would be, would the minister consider publishing that analysis that has been conducted so that all Manitoban arts organizations or educators or teachers who are interested in the arts will know what the audience is, what is being missed, who is not being reached, so that they will be able to develop some plans of their own if the minister is not going to have some overall strategy for the expansion. That is first of all.

Second of all, the minister raised the relative price of tickets. That is only one element in accessibility. For many people, as I suggested, \$2 or \$4 dollars out of \$30 is irrelevant. I mean, they are just not going to come anywhere near the ticket price for many of Manitoba's cultural organizations, particularly those which are well funded out of public money. It is an obvious critique that is made by many people that in fact the taxes, if the minister wants to think of them that way, of many Manitobans are in fact funding institutions and programs for relatively few people.

It seems to me that one of the comments that has been made about tickets is not just the price, but that we ought to be finding other ways of distributing tickets. Many tickets, for example, require credit cards. The only places you can buy tickets are sometimes downtown. A wider means of distributing, which might be done by some overall marketing proposals that might be instituted by the government or that they might encourage from other people, could be a possibility.

That is what I am looking for in some kind of overall strategy from this government, of expanding accessibility, looking at all of those elements which limit people's participation in the cultural life of the community, in many cases a cultural life which they have paid for.

Does the government have any strategies perhaps coming out of this audience survey that the federal government has done? Is it prepared to publish that analysis? Is it prepared to make some suggestions to arts organizations or to other community groups who might be able to collectively find ways to expand accessibility?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I think we all would love to see every performance that is ever undertaken in Manitoba seen by every Manitoban. That would be an ultimate undertaking.

The consumer profile has been out for two to three weeks. We are in the process of doing analysis

within the department. I think that information could be readily shared, and I guess any information that might be pertinent, we talked education and whether through the education system or teachers we should be making available certain parts. I would be very prepared to share the report with members of the opposition and, as we get closer to an analysis, I would undertake to try to share any information that might be pertinent to any arts venue with those who are in the process of looking at or developing innovative ways to reach audiences and have greater audience participation.

Ms. Friesen: I am interested in the department's analysis of that particular survey. I have not seen it. I wonder if in fact it is applicable to Manitoba circumstances, whether it takes account of the disparate nature of our population, the very many languages and different cultures, as well as the variation between north and south and the concentration of population in one city.

Those are some of the things that I would be looking for in an analysis of that particular survey, but I thank the minister for suggesting that she will share it, and I would look forward next time to in fact discussing a provincial strategy that might emerge from that.

The second area I wanted to touch on was the Constitution. We have already looked at some elements of that in Question Period. Perhaps I could raise with the minister again my concerns about the regional institutions of the national government and what position the minister is taking on this with her cabinet colleagues and what position Manitoba is taking to the constitutional table.

Mrs. Mitchelson: As I indicated, I cannot recall the month now, I believe it was in October or November of last year, I do not remember the exact date when we held the ministers of culture meeting, I raised that issue, brought that issue to the table as an issue of concern to Manitoba, and that was the devolution of culture to the provinces.

I indicated at the time that we were opposed to anything that would, I think the words I used were, cause a feeding frenzy, whereby every province was trying to get at the table first to try to get their share or more than their fair share of federal dollars. In fact, those that were able to negotiate an agreement—I think we have seen that on the immigration side of things with Quebec being the

only province to have an immigration agreement with the federal government, a bilateral agreement. There is a sense that they do get more than their fair share of dollars and immigrants to their province.

* (2050)

I raised that concern as being a real concern for Manitoba, that we were not in favour of devolution where it would impact us and have provinces fighting with each other for their share of federal dollars. At the time I raised the issue, the federal minister did assure us that devolution was not in the cards. We are now hearing in this round of constitutional talks in fact that there might be some culture, and it has not been defined to my knowledge, but that in fact the federal cultural institutions would remain intact.

In my mind, there is no agreement. I guess the deputies from across the country were to meet at the beginning of June to discuss this and other cultural issues. This was one that was high on the priority list but, in fact, that meeting has been postponed because there has not been any resolution around the constitutional table on what any final position might be. That has been postponed pending some further sense from our federal counterparts and through the negotiation of what might be there. We have no idea at this point.

Ms. Friesen: Was it March of this year that you met with the other ministers?

Mrs. Mitchelson: October of last year. Our annual meetings are in the fall. I believe it was October.

Ms. Friesen: Was the federal minister present?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes.

Ms. Friesen: In September, the federal proposals came out which suggested devolution of culture, so I am surprised they were not prepared to discuss it.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, the federal paper had come out and, in fact, that was the reason that we raised it, because we were opposed to it. In fact, the federal minister did assure us at that meeting that devolution was not on the table.

Ms. Friesen: Let me pursue a little more. You used the same phrase that came out of those meetings, the feeding frenzy. It puzzled me when you used it in Question Period, because, where is the assumption that there is anything to be frenzied about? There is no assumption that devolution is

going to mean that there will be federal funding for whatever is devolved.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I would say that Manitoba has a lot more to lose through devolution. That is because we have probably more quality arts per capita than any other province across the country. Therefore, we get more federal dollars per capita in Manitoba, maybe not more per group, but we do get more federal dollars per capita. In fact, we would stand to lose if there was devolution and there was funding not based on artistic merit, artistic quality. So I have concerns about devolution in that respect.

Ms. Friesen: Well, my concerns are that there will not be any money at all for anything outside of the Ottawa-Hull area. Your answers seem to assume that there would be and there would be some competition for it. So I am wondering, what is the basis for that assumption? Is it hope?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I guess we have no reason to believe—there seems to be a commitment of federal funding to the arts. I have no reason to believe there would be a reduction in funding.

The concern that I might have would be signing of agreements with the provinces, and we have no idea what those agreements might say, or what, and if you were first at the table, would each agreement be different, and if you were first there, would there be any special consideration? So our concern is that because we do have such quality arts and we do receive more than our share of federal dollars that we might, through bilateral agreements, stand to lose.

Ms. Friesen: Well, as those discussions, if there are to be discussions, continue, I think I would ask the minister to carry with her the concerns of the opposition.

First of all, what we have seen in the past several years on the part of the federal government is the taking away of federal grants to cultural institutions. The ones that I mentioned, such as the museums, the block funding to museums, would give anyone great cause for concern about the devolution of culture without some very specific commitments to the funding of institutions outside the capital region.

The second thing that I continue to underline is, how is the federal government defining national cultural institutions? If you look at the most recent advertisements that they have been using for Canada 125 and others, they in fact are defining

Canada's cultural institutions as only within the national capital region. Now that could be a quirk of that particular advertising campaign but, given the proposals to devolve culture, it gives me concerns. So those are the two main things that I am concerned about there.

The third thing I asked the minister in Question Period was for a study of the impact of federal cultural dollars upon Manitoba. The minister has already responded that we do get more per capita than some other provinces.

Can you indicate what other studies you have done to look at the impact of federal-provincial agreements, of the impact of tourism agreements on culture and heritage, the role of the National Parks Service, of the archives grants, the Canadian Council of Archives, all of those national institutions which bring federal cultural dollars into Manitoba?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we have never done individual studies on all of these. We have no reason to believe that there should be any reduction through devolution of cultural powers in those areas.

I do want to indicate that we have a concern as a provincial government at offloading in every area throughout government by the federal government. What traditionally happens is, when programs are offloaded, indeed there is an expectation that the province should pick up the federal portion of funding, and we just can not realistically do that throughout government. It is a major concern, and I think you have heard from many government departments and ministers in the House that we are actively pursuing the federal government and challenging them to maintain their commitments where they have responsibility. We believe they have a responsibility for culture, too.

Ms. Friesen: Well, that is what I want to hear from this minister. I have heard from other ministers that they are actively pursuing, after gaps of some months, the federal government, but I have not heard that from this minister. What the minister seems to suggest is that she is making assumptions about the continuing provision of funds through various programs for provincial institutions.

It seems to me that you would want to know what the total bill is, what do we stand to lose in these potential changes, and what kind of representations are being brought to bear by the provincial government or by the encouragement of other

groups and organizations in Manitoba. I know that some other provinces have in fact done dollar-by-dollar studies of what the losses will be in cultural institutions, and the bill is enormous.

* (2100)

As the minister suggests, in Manitoba, we have a higher proportion of money coming from the federal government per capita than is going to other provinces. It seems to me crucial that we should know now how much we are getting in all areas, and what our losses could be if the expectation is going to be, or even if the negotiation is going to be, based upon what the province can be expected to pick up.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, as I said, there is nothing written in stone. We do not have a Constitution and a constitutional agreement. It seems that we have been up, down and around all sides of many issues. I do not know if we are any closer today at the reaching of a consensus than we were when Meech Lake died. I do not have any sense at this point in time. We do not have any clear indication. That was one of the reasons that the deputies from across the country dealing with cultural issues did postpone their meeting until they had some more clarification on what in fact the proposals were going to be.

I have indicated that we believe we have quality arts here in Manitoba, that we receive more dollars per capita of federal funding than some other provinces do. It is attributed to the quality of Manitoba art, and we will do everything within our power to ensure that the dollars that flow to Manitoba will flow as a result of our ability to perform artistically.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, can I then look at another area of federal-provincial jurisdiction, and that is in training programs? I am thinking particularly of Canadian job strategy and am wondering what participation the minister has had in developing training programs in cultural industries or in areas of cultural interest in those programs.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we have had informal discussions with the I.C., but nothing has been developed as yet. There have been a few spotty situations where maybe the Manitoba Theatre Centre or the symphony have received some support through federal job training strategy, but there is nothing extremely concrete.

Ms. Friesen: What connections does the minister have with Workforce 2000? Are there any cultural training programs being developed through that, or are there any ideas for developing cultural training programs through that money?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, at this point in time, no, there has not been any discussion.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister perhaps expand upon that? Here we have a \$3-million program, one of the few job training programs in Manitoba that Manitoba has the opportunity to direct. We have, I think by the minister's and my agreement, an area of cultural industries which is very important in terms of its economic impact in the province.

I would assume that there is some interest in the department in expanding accessibility and training for the arts. It is one of the programs that is developed by the Manitoba Arts Council, so where again—and I am starting again from my original question, the departmental strategy for the arts in Manitoba.

Mrs. Mitchelson: To my understanding, we have not really had a skills shortage or a job shortage in our cultural industries. I would imagine that is a discussion we could undertake with those industries and see whether there might be a need.

Ms. Friesen: Again, I think it comes back to knowing the impact of culture and cultural activities on the Manitoba economy. It seems to me, one step might be to know how much federal money is coming in; another step might be to know what the economic impact of the development of cultural attractions, festivals, cultural industries on Manitoba are. I wonder what studies the department has carried out that would give us those kinds of numbers.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I guess we have not undertaken a lot of study into development when in fact, at this point in time in our economic situation, I do not know realistically whether there would be funds there for more development. There has not been a lot of study done, and that is something that needs maybe to be looked at for future. At this point in time, we have not done a lot of study.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, what research has the department done? We are looking here at a section that is providing executive leadership in policy direction. Do I really understand you that you have not done any

research into audience, other than what has been provided by the national study, and second of all, into the economic impact, and thirdly, into the training elements?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I guess it is usually Tourism that does major economic impact studies, but we do know from our analysis that our cultural industries do generate a lot of revenue for our province. We do know that some of the major venues that we bring into the province, like Les Miz, and I know that there was some criticism in the member's opening statement about Les Miz coming, but in fact there is an economic impact, a very substantial one, that is created when we are able to bring that kind of a theatre to our province, so we do know what certain things do to generate economic activity.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. Could I ask those honourable members wanting to put their comments on the record to do so from the table and not from their chairs next to the wall.

Ms. Friesen: My criticism was not of Les Miz as a production, my criticism was of its role in Manitoba's cultural life, that it was something which was brought from outside which used very few Manitoba actors.

* (2110)

Much of the money that was paid by Manitobans went outside the province, as the member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) I think was trying to put on the record. If it did expand audiences in Manitoba for particular kinds of historical musicals, it presumably expanded it at the rate of people who could afford to pay \$80 a seat.

If that is the minister's strategy, then that presumably was achieved by that, but that was not the impression I had of the long-term history of this department, nor indeed necessarily what the DeFehr Report was recommending.

I wanted to follow up on my questions on the economic impact of the arts in Manitoba. The minister said that she thought the Department of Tourism would have done those studies. Could I put that more specifically? Are there such studies? If there are, presumably the Minister of Culture would have access to them and know of their existence.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we do have studies which indicate that in the film area that in direct revenue 40 percent comes back immediately in the way of taxes. We are only just now beginning to use the computer-based tools to

project investment return, like the dinosaur exhibit at the museum. That is one that we are presently looking at through computerized equipment, so we are just starting into that area.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I think one of the common arguments for cultural industries is in fact that a good proportion—I do not know whether it is 40 percent immediately, or what is meant by immediately, and whether that in fact comes into Manitoba, or whether it goes to a particular local area, if you can actually track that, but the standard arguments that are given are usually that they are labour intensive and that 60 percent of their funds are in fact expended in wages which are spent here.

I think the other issue I was trying to get at, with the emphasis in my question about two questions earlier, on training in the use of Workforce 2000 monies, was that in fact trained people in the arts, just as trained and skilled people in any area, have the opportunity to attract industries here. People are going to come to where the skilled work force is. So it was not a question, as the minister interpreted it, of whether there is a shortage in these kinds of skills, it is whether in fact Manitoba is prepared to make the strategic economic decision of saying, yes, not only truck driving, not only whatever else Workforce 2000 money is spent on—I have forgotten the other industries at the moment—but certainly there is a good chunk of it that is going into the training of people in the transport industry.

If Manitoba made the strategic economic decision to say that cultural industries or certain types of cultural activities were to be focused here, then in fact you do go out for the money, you do train the people, and you create the pool of trained labour that brings people to the province.

That is certainly what has happened in the British Columbia film industry. It is not just the scenery, although that is part of it, and the climate, but it is also the training that they have done, particularly in their community colleges, in this area.

So again, can I put the question to the minister: What is the potential of the Workforce 2000 money of the proposed labour force development boards and the role that they are going to have in the training of people in Manitoba at the post-secondary level? Does the minister have any strategy, any economic arts plan for training that would fit into a broader economic plan for Manitoba?

Mrs. Mitchelson: As early as tomorrow, we are going to meet with the Credo group to look at the possibility or the feasibility of doing a series here in Manitoba and, in fact, if that seems like an option that could be pursued, following out of that would be the need for training opportunities if that should need to happen in order to make that series successful. So that is one way that we can be attempting to utilize or tap into resources.

Ms. Friesen: I want to move on then, I am still thinking in the context of policy strategies for this department, if the minister could suggest what the strategy for Manitoba arts, the Department of Culture in Manitoba, is for native arts in Manitoba. Is there a strategic plan?

Mrs. Mitchelson: If we are looking at a strategic plan as such, I guess all of our arts programs that have been developed for new programs will deal with all Manitobans. We will be working with all communities to ensure that the programs can be utilized to meet the needs of those communities. I guess I question, and maybe the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) could elaborate a little bit on exactly what she means, because I think that through our Arts Branch we attempt to deal with community arts right throughout the province. All of the programs that are being put into place will in fact deal with local initiative and local needs, and grant dollars will follow those initiatives.

Ms. Friesen: In a sense that is an answer: No, there is not a specific native art strategy in Manitoba. I am sure the minister is aware that the most recent federal report suggests that Canadians should develop native art strategies. Obviously on one level it is speaking to the federal government, but I am also asking, given the particular demographics of Manitoba, the numbers are as familiar to the minister as I am sure they are to everybody, that one in 25 young people in Manitoba is going to be aboriginal in this decade—is there a particular strategy? Many of them are poor. Many of them are migrants in the sense of moving back and forth between the city and the reserves. Is there a particular aboriginal strategy of this department for accessibility and participation in the arts? Does the minister consider that this is a priority in the way in which the federal report suggested it was?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I think that our focus through my department on the native community is focused very specifically on quality of life, and that would be heritage. We do have the

Oral Histories Program that was restructured and reallocated, because I think the intent of the program had been to support native community and native oral history, and it had tended to focus away from that, and we have brought that focus back again.

The Public Libraries Advisory Board, of course, has been looking at how we can enhance library delivery to remote communities and rural communities. That is another quality of life issue.

* (2120)

The other area that we have placed a major focus on, of course, is the Northern Recreation Director Pilot Project that has trained recreation directors to go back into their communities. When we talk recreation, I think that probably, at the local level, it includes much of the community arts.

Those are the areas where most of our energies have been focused. We do have a strategy and are developing areas through our Library's Report that we are expecting to be tabled fairly soon. It will look at what the needs are, and we will try to direct our energies in providing enhanced services. As I said, 26 recreation directors who will be hired to go back into their communities in northern and remote Manitoba will hopefully enhance the quality of life that some of those residents should come to expect.

Ms. Friesen: I think the recreation directors are certainly a beginning, but I was speaking from the particular basis of the arts and from a Federal Arts Report, *Art is not a Given*, which devoted one considerable section to the need for a native strategy looking not just in the recreational sense, as the minister is suggesting, but also in the broader sense of the need for professional training and for the creation of arts support organizations that may be on a regional basis perhaps to begin with.

What needs does the minister see that should be addressed, and what is the strategy for getting there?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, through our publishing program, we provide support to publish. We have many books, and I have seen examples through our publishing programs of the books that have been published about native—I suppose it is literature, children's story books and history of the north and our native community. A lot of books have been published in Manitoba that deal with our native community.

Prairie Theatre Exchange had a native theatre company that—of course, we subsidize Prairie

Theatre Exchange's rent in order for them to facilitate working with that theatre company. So there are some things happening.

Ms. Friesen: What I sense is happening then is funding in some instances through existing organizations, an emphasis upon recreation, and have I anything beyond that?

I mean, what does the minister see as the gaps in those programs?

Mrs. Mitchelson: There have not been any massive studies undertaken, not only not by this administration, but by another administration of the past, on what services might be available and what gaps there might be. We have not had any gaps specifically addressed or presented to us. I think that we look at things on a need basis, and in the areas that we have developed and on the recreation side of things, certainly we recognized a need.

We heard there was a need by meeting with northern and remote communities. That was a program that was put in place to attempt to address that need. As we established the Public Libraries Advisory Board, we knew that there was a need for looking at ways of trying to get books and libraries established or accessible to some of those communities. I believe that report will indicate that there is a need for new initiatives that we will have to look at addressing in the future. As I indicated, we refocused the Oral History Grants Program because it was focusing away from what we perceived was a need within the community to preserve the heritage.

Those are things that have happened over the last four years, and I guess we will continue to look at areas where there seems to be a need or needs to have some refocusing done of some of the things that we are doing presently.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I wanted to ask about one other element of the DeFehr Report which I had assumed would be in accord with the minister's and this government's philosophy, which was the setting aside of monies for the development of private sponsorship. I do not remember what number it was, but it was one of the basic recommendations. I can look it up if the minister wants. I wonder if that has happened, if you are planning for it to happen.

Yes, it is on funding, sorry—it is under funding. It is under the summary of recommendations that a portion—and it is No. 7—of the increased funding be

utilized to encourage private sector support and investment in the arts. I had assumed that would be one of the early ones that the government would act upon, and I am wondering what its fate has been.

Mrs. Mitchelson: This is under summary of recommendations that talks about funding. I guess the first funding recommendation was to increase funding to the arts to .7 percent of total expenditures and, as a result of an increase in funding, that some of that increase be utilized to encourage private sector support and investment in the arts.

I will have to say that since the DeFehr Report has come out, although we have found some areas that we have had the ability to increase funding, there has not been major leaps and bounds in funding support for the arts. It is a reality today. We found money for capital increase. We found money for cultural industries, but there has not been any major increase.

I suppose that in the context of better times and more money, if there should become more money available for the arts, that that might be one of the areas that we would look at. But to date, since the DeFehr Report has come out, there has not been, and I dare say, we probably will not see over the next year or so, anyway, any major additional commitments in many, many areas of government, probably including the arts.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I wanted to use that suggestion as a way of perhaps moving the discussion again to the research and strategic goals of this department, because one of the things that I would think that a policy and planning area of a Department of Culture would want to know is what the sort of five-year rolling support is from the private sector for parts of the arts in Manitoba.

The minister suggested that perhaps funding has been decreasing. Are there numbers on that? Is there some research in the Manitoba context?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I do not think I had indicated that funding was decreasing. Government funding?

Ms. Friesen: No, private funding. I thought that was what you said.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, you know, there have not been any studies that have been done as such, but we do know, we all know, that it is tougher to get private dollars today than it has been in the past, and that is because everyone is suffering economically, so times are tougher and

people are having to find very innovative ways of trying to raise revenue. I think that goes right across the board, and the arts are not excluded in any way from that.

* (2130)

When we go back to strategic planning and that kind of thing, I guess there are only so many things that we can expect a department or a branch of a department to undertake in any one year. You know, as a result of the DeFehr Report and the recommendations, we have established an Arts Branch, and we have reviewed many of the programs that were in place for many, many years in government without a change. We have developed, as a result of that, four new programs.

When you look at the requirements that go into sort of a major undertaking of overhauling a department and making some changes based on what the community believes are the directions we should be going, we can only expect a government department, or as I said a branch of a department, to undertake so many things. We have made some major changes over the last year which I think will be well received by the arts community, and we will proceed along the way and make other changes as time permits and as financial resources permit.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, what I am trying get at is the planning role of the department in the arts in Manitoba.

There are some things that the art gallery can do, there are some things that the museum can do, there are some things that the Popular Theatre Alliance can do, but in terms of looking at the economic impact of the arts in Manitoba, in terms of developing strategic plans for particular communities, of having some goals, in terms of having some research on what the level of corporate or private sponsorship is in Manitoba and how that has been changing over the last few years, it seems to me that this is one of the planning roles which, in the absence of a public policy institute in Manitoba, and we do not have a public policy institute in Manitoba in the way that some provinces do, that this role falls to government departments.

Again, if I can speak from the context of a government which is very much a free-enterprise, market-oriented government, there are some things which the market can do. There are some things which the market does well. It does not necessarily do it equitably, but it does distribute some things.

There are some things which the market does not do, and one of them is the kind of research that I have been talking about and the kind of strategic planning that I have been suggesting. So I am looking for some theoretical, some philosophical reflections from the minister on what she sees as the role of this particular section of the department.

Now I agree it cannot all be done in one year. In fact, the DeFehr Report did not suggest any of these proposals. It did have some proposals which would feed into a strategic or overall plan for certain parts of the arts or for certain research into the arts in Manitoba. So that is really what I am looking for.

What I am hearing from the minister, and maybe she can respond to this, that this particular section of the department does not conduct research and does not plan in the long term. It has conducted a review, and it has restructured one or two of its granting programs in the last year. Now am I being unfair to the department?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, when you look at funding for the arts, we fund and plan and do programming and analysis for the community arts. We have the Manitoba Arts Council, in fact, that deals with the major institutions and their funding.

Of course, we have continual dialogue with the Manitoba Arts Council, but we also do meet with most of the majors and many of the arts groups on a yearly basis and look at their plans. It is really the Arts Council that does deal with it, and we do not set plans in place. I mean each major institution or most cultural organizations do have a board of directors that looks at where they are going to go. Some of them are better prepared and do long-range planning and look at what they are going to attempt to accomplish over several years, but in fact we do not do that planning for them and we do not direct them in what they do.

The Arts Council, when it comes to funding those organizations, deals with their plans and with their proposed budgets, and tries to allocate dollars to them in order to help them achieve their goals within the budget allocation that they have to deal with, just as we deal with our clients who apply directly to our department for funding.

One of the reasons that we have restructured the Arts Branch and changed some of the programming was that the programming that was there and the grants that were in place were regressive. In fact,

they were more deficit structured then, and they were also project-by-project grants, so that in fact organizations could not do any long-range planning. All they could do was apply for maybe 10 or 15 different grants per year, and they had to wait and have an analysis done and receive their project grant based on ad hoc planning.

What we indicated to them, and one of the reasons we changed some of the programs, is in fact that we then would allow organizations to do some long-range planning to look at up front what they felt they would need for a year. At the end of the year, we would do an analysis, and if they had not met some of their objectives and their goals, then we would have to take a look at their funding for the next year. As long as they met expectations, we felt that it was better to provide one grant for a year rather than them spending staff time and energy applying and filling out grant applications and having our staff analyze 15 or 16 different small grant applications per year.

We felt that it would be more productive for them to do some long-range planning and receive a grant and be accountable for the money they received at the end of the year, or find that their grant might be in jeopardy the next year. Those are the kinds of things that we do, but we do not do long-range planning for every organization that we give funding to.

Ms. Friesen: I was not suggesting that the minister or the department dictate to organizations the kind of plans that they have. What I was suggesting was that only the department really has the capabilities to do the economic research and the basic audience research across Manitoba that can be used by many different types of organizations.

The second point the minister raised about long-term planning for individual organizations, if the new programs do fulfill that need, then I think everybody would be very pleased with that. There has certainly been a long-term pressure for longer-range funding within most cultural and educational associations.

I think the other side of that is that when all of the planning, or at least all of the programming is based upon existing groups, then there is a bias obviously in the way in which cultural funds and cultural accessibility is distributed to Manitobans. Because the groups which are obviously longer existing, better funded, come forward with the more elaborate

proposals are the ones which are going to get the bulk of the public monies. So the opportunities for innovation, et cetera, for newer groups, for wider accessibility, I think in some cases and in some areas have to be stimulated.

* (2140)

It is when you have the research that looks at audiences, which looks at where the gaps are, which looks at the needs which are not being met and are not being represented by any group, that the department has a role to play. It is that kind of strategic planning that I am looking for from the minister.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, if I can just indicate that we are still on our Cultural Resources branch. Yes, I guess we are still on the deputy's office. We have not gone through Financial and Administrative Services, Human Resource Services, or the Manitoba Film Classification Board before we get into all of our grants to cultural organizations and Arts Branch and that kind of thing, so I would like to know whether we could refocus a little bit and get on track.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I share the minister's concern to move on. We do not have as much time perhaps for Culture as in other years, but I did want to emphasize this line, the planning which applies to all of the other departmental activities, and it would be a shame to pass this line without talking about the deputy minister's salary.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Okay.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I raised this in Urban Affairs and actually I do not know if I made a reference to this particular department or not in there, but I am puzzled. I mean there is the obvious, I think, comment that should be made in every department is that managerial salaries have gone up. They have gone up considerably at a time when members of the MGEA have taken a pay freeze, and so I think that should not pass without notice.

Second of all, I am curious about the way in which salaries and levels are distributed in the Manitoba Civil Service, for example, the Department of Urban Affairs where the deputy minister supervises 14 people, and that is total. That is 14, compared to this department where the deputy minister is supervising, how many?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, around 350 or so staff.

Ms. Friesen: Or 1,800 in Family Services, and yet, as I understand it, the deputy ministers are all at the same level in salary.

Mrs. Mitchelson: No.

Ms. Friesen: Well, this is the same as Urban Affairs.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, there are three different levels of deputy ministers. I think the Department of Culture fits in the middle level, the second level, where it is not Family Services or Health or Education. I guess I do not know what level it is called, but the second level, and there is a fair amount of responsibility.

I must say that we have a wide variety of issues and areas that we as a department have to deal with and probably touch the lives of every Manitoban in different ways. We are very diverse, and there are a lot of issues, a lot of different branches that we have responsibility for.

Ms. Friesen: I raised it because it seems very different from the federal Civil Service. Maybe this is an issue of the Civil Service Commission more than this particular department, and that might be the more appropriate place to raise it. I know that in the federal Civil Service the size of the department and the number of people supervised come into much greater play than they seem to do in Manitoba. There seems to be a huge difference between a department of 14 people and a department of 350 people and yet the same salary for the deputy minister.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I do not have responsibility for a deputy minister in any other department. I do know that we are within the second level, and that is all I can say. It may be that the deputy in another department may have been in the position for a longer period of time and is at a higher classification, but I cannot explain that.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: A five-minute recess before we get into further questions? Does the committee agree? Agreed, so recess for five minutes.

The committee took recess at 9:46

After Recess

The committee resumed at 9:52

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. When the committee recessed, we were dealing with item 1.(b) Executive Support: (1) Salaries \$327,600.

Mr. Lamoureux: I have a number of questions that I want to ask at this particular line because this is the line in which we have seen policy decisions that have been made by this minister, as I would say, going in the wrong direction. This is one of a couple of areas that I want to point out here where we have seen the government moving backward in regard both to the Heritage Federation and also to the MIC.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I wanted to start off by going over what has actually occurred with the Heritage Federation and how the policy decision was made, and I would suggest to you, made in the most inappropriate fashion. One could go back to a while back where we have seen the Manitoba Heritage Federation bring forward or at least attempt to meet with the minister and the minister's staff in regard to what was going on with the Heritage Federation. On the day that the budget itself was being brought down—

Point of Order

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I think that, when we are dealing with my Estimates, I would like to go in somewhat of an orderly fashion, and we are dealing right now with Executive Support and we are dealing with the salaries and expenditures and the deputy minister's office. That is his office—

An Honourable Member: 14-1B?

Mrs. Mitchelson: 14-1B Executive Support.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: It is 1.(b) Executive Support.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we have already been into Culture and the Arts Branch, which is down in 14-2B and C.

I would prefer if we went in a bit more orderly fashion and when we get into Heritage and Recreation, I would rather go a little bit line by line than in fact just hopping all over the place.

I have presently at the table sitting with me my deputy minister. I do not have any other support staff. I think when we get into the areas of Historic Resources, Recreation and that kind of thing, I would like to have the staff available here at the table. So if we could pass the deputy minister's office and go into finance and administration and

then into each of the different areas, I would prefer to work in that fashion.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister might prefer to work in that fashion, but I would read to her in terms of the Activity Identification from the deputy minister where it says: provides advice to the minister and executive direction and guidance to the department in the development and management of its policies and programs.

To say that the question, or to at least imply that the question is out of order is to say that the minister acted alone and did not receive any advice from her deputy minister in respect to the policy decision that saw the Manitoba Heritage Federation lose its funding authority. I do not believe that is the case, and I do not think that the minister would want to leave it on the record that in fact her deputy minister had nothing to do with the decision made by the minister to withdraw that funding. I see she wants to respond to that.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. At this time, I would like to advise the honourable members that the minister did not have a point of order. It was a dispute over the facts, so that was not a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The honourable minister to reply to the honourable member for Inkster's statement.

* (2200)

Mrs. Mitchelson: I guess then, if I might just seek some clarification, are you indicating that once we pass this line, 1.(b) Executive Support, that we are going to pass the departmental Estimates period?

Mr. Lamoureux: At the beginning of my remarks, in fact that is what I had suggested that we might want to consider doing, but then it was decided that we would go line by line. I still leave that open. I do not mind to ask questions at this particular line, and if the minister wants additional staff to come forward when we deal with another line, then fine. Otherwise, we will just continue going line by line as the minister had originally indicated.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I have staff from Historic Resources here; I have staff from Multiculturalism; I have staff from Citizenship; I have staff from the Arts Branch; and I have staff from libraries, from the archives. I guess I would like to at least show a bit

of consideration for the staff that are here and might be here until the wee hours of the evening. In fact we are going to deal with one area—we have dealt with the Arts Branch to some degree from one of the opposition parties. We should either deal with the Arts and get that done so that in fact that staff can go home and show them a little bit of consideration rather than hopping from the Arts to Historic Resources to Multiculturalism to Citizenship and then back over them all again. So I would ask for some co-operation in that we would like to be able to go through this in an orderly fashion and allow people the opportunity to leave when we have passed their lines.

Mr. Lamoureux: Normally, I guess, I should be getting a bit sensitive. It seems the days that I ask questions in Question Period and then the government House leader decides to call that bill during Question Period in order to prevent me from asking questions.

Now, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I tried to ask a question regarding line by line, and I find that the minister then asked if in fact we would like to deal with all of them—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. To try and attempt to bring a little bit of decorum to the committee, I would like to inform members of the committee that the correct procedure for considering items in the Committee of Supply is line by line. In order to skip ahead or to revert back to lines already passed, unanimous consent of the committee is required.

Is there consent of the committee to forge ahead and not go line by line?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: No? Okay, we are going to go line by line. The honourable member for Inkster with his question.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I will then go on to my question. As I was pointing out, the government had made a policy decision with respect to the Heritage Federation, and that policy decision is something that we feel is not in the best interests of the province. What I am going to attempt at doing is to try to get better clarification as to why this government decided to do what they did and take away the granting authority from the Heritage Federation. So to start—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. Before the minister answers the question, the hour is now 10 p.m. What is the will of the committee?

An Honourable Member: Continue.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Carry on.

Mr. Lamoureux: I understand that the will was to sit till twelve o'clock this evening.

An Honourable Member: No. As long as it—

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. The honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), continue with his questioning.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we will have to revisit what time we are going to be going. I know our recommendation is that we adjourn at twelve o'clock.

Having said that, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I wanted to go on in respect to what has happened. During the Budget Debate, the president and, I believe, it was the general manager of the Heritage Federation were in the office of the minister—

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

Point of Order

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, we had indicated that we were going to go line by line. There are policy implications for every different line. If we are going to hop from policy in every different branch of the department before we go on to discussing any of the issues, I question whether that is the proper way to handle things.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, this is the second time that the minister has brought it up. I believe the ruling from the Deputy Chairperson prior to you was, the minister did not have a point of order. I would suggest to you that she still does not have a point of order, that the line of questioning is, in fact, in order. We are talking about a major policy change from this government. The deputy minister is responsible for advising the minister with respect to policy. I would ask that I be allowed to proceed to ask my questions on this particular line. Thank you.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): I believe the minister does have a point of order. I think it was previously agreed by the committee that we would proceed line by line on the Estimates. We will have to rely on the minister to indicate in which

department, in which line, the questions are appropriate, so that it may be indicated.

Mr. Lamoureux: With all due respect, I would have to challenge the ruling of the Chair.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): Since the hour is after ten o'clock, there can be no challenge of the ruling of the Chair. I would indicate to—[interjection] The clarification is, you can challenge the Chair, but we will not do anything about it right now because it is past ten o'clock.

I would further point out that the Chair's ruling was simply what the committee had agreed to earlier on, that we would proceed line by line. The question, I believe, before the committee is whether or not the question is on the line under consideration. The Chair does not have the ability to make that decision, but if the minister will indicate when the question is being asked under which line that question would be appropriate, then we will make note of it and have that question considered when we come to that line. Is that agreeable?

* (2210)

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, it is not agreeable, because this is a government policy. This particular line, you know, and it says, right from the deputy minister: that provides advice to the minister and executive direction and guidance to the department in the development and management of its policies and programs.

Well, if the minister feels that this is not an appropriate time to ask these questions, what she is saying is that she did not receive any advice from the deputy minister, or is this not the opportunity to get onto the record what advice the minister did in fact receive from the deputy minister? This is the line that deals with it.

With respect, in terms of challenging the Chair, from what I understand now is that you are making reference to the point of order, and if it was the question in terms of the point of order that we were going line by line, I agree that we were going line by line. What I had challenged the ruling of the Chair was based on that I could not ask that question on that particular line, because I am sure, as the previous chairperson said, that the question was, in fact, in order.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Deputy Government House Leader): Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I would suggest that the appropriate places for any member of this committee when this committee is

proceeding line by line—to do otherwise requires the unanimous consent of this committee—is on the appropriate line for that department, or that part of the department, in this case I believe the Heritage Federation, to deal with that part of the line, or to raise the matter again in discussions of the minister's salary, but to raise it under the deputy minister's salary is most inappropriate.

The advice and discussions that take place between senior officials and the minister is a backdoor way for the member to get back at an issue that he may want to visit. I would suggest he has plenty of opportunity to do it under the appropriate places, the last being the minister's salary. So there is plenty of opportunity for the member to raise the question. It certainly expedites the discussion of the Estimates if we carry on line by line in each particular area. Given the size of the issues dealt with by this department, it is most appropriate. Trying to work in a question under the salary allotment for the deputy minister is to have another free-fall discussion that I do not think accommodates the work of this committee, and I would submit, as the deputy government House leader, that it be appropriate that these matters be discussed under the line for that branch or ultimately under the Minister's Salary.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I want to point out that the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) has suggested that he has the right to ask the deputy minister about advice that he gives to the minister.

Mr. Lamoureux: No.

Mr. Filmon: Read Hansard. That is exactly what you said, and that is not an appropriate question under any circumstances. In fact, that information is not even available under The Freedom of Information Act. You could not apply under The Freedom of Information Act to ask for advice that has been given by a staff member to the minister.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, maybe the Premier feels obligated to come in and jump and defend the minister. What I was suggesting—and I would look to the Premier to give some advice on this and see what he has to say with respect to it. I have suggested that the questions regarding the policy of this government with respect to the Heritage Federation in taking away the granting authority from the Heritage Federation which was a policy decision. We are currently on

line 14-1B of the Estimates, where the deputy minister provides advice to the minister and executive direction and guidance to the department in the development and management of policies and programs.

Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, to the Premier, I would suggest to you that this is in fact the line in which, the most appropriate line, to ask, because one would have assumed that in fact the minister would have sought some advice from the deputy minister. I am not expecting, nor would I expect, the deputy minister to answer the question direct unless the minister felt that she could not do it and asked for leave to allow the deputy minister to do it.

If that is the case, we would grant the leave but, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I would suggest to you that in fact this is the right and the best time to ask these particular questions because we are dealing with substantial policy changes of this government. If this is not the line, then I would suggest to you, where is the line, the most ideal line?

The government might suggest that it is the Heritage Federation line toward the end of the Estimates. Yes, I will ask some specific questions once we get to that line, but the general policy questions, the general policies in respect to what role the ministerial staff, the executive support staff had in her making this decision, this is the opportunity, this is the line in which we ask the questions.

Mr. Fillmon: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I just want to ensure that the member for Inkster understands that I have no need to enter into the debate to defend the minister against his endeavours. The minister is very capable of handling any initiative that he might put forward.

Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, on the other hand, I am here to try and ensure that the member for Inkster understands that it is absolutely and totally inappropriate for him to ask a question as to advice given by staff on policy issues. That is not permitted in this committee situation or even under a Freedom of Information application. He would be turned down by the courts, he would be turned down by the Ombudsman, and he would be turned down flat under any initiative.

The question that he is asking is a question of the policy of this government. The minister is responsible for the policy of this government not her staff. Policy is decided by ministers and cabinet.

He has the opportunity under the line of the Heritage Federation and then, after that if he is dissatisfied with that information, to ask under the Minister's Salary.

Those are the appropriate areas. He has two opportunities, and if he does anything else he is just showing, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, that he is not interested in anything factual with respect to these Estimates. He is only interested in making mischief at this committee, and if that is the case, then we are fine, we are able to handle his mischief, but we will ensure that the public knows that that is the higher calling of the Liberal Party in this Legislature.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): Order, please. I do not know how long you want to carry on this discussion. I believe the main purpose of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) is to seek answers to his questions. I was pleased to hear that he indicated that he would have the minister tell him which line was appropriate, which is what I suggested a while ago.

So if that is agreeable with the committee, we will carry on line by line. If the question is, in the opinion of the minister, not appropriate for that line she will indicate for which line it is appropriate, and that question will be asked at that time.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I suggested that there are good numbers of questions that I have with respect to the Heritage Federation, some specific questions that I will be saving until once we get on to that particular line. We are talking about the government policy.

I want to know, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, from the minister, what is the government policy and that is what I have been asking for. I think the Premier would have been best to have been around for the full evening where he would have heard questions from the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) and would have been appalled by the questions that she was asking. But the government is sensitive to who is asking the questions, and I find that unfortunate.

* * *

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): Order, please. Does the honourable member for Inkster wish to put a question on line 1.(b) Executive Support (1) Salaries?

Mr. Lamoureux: Yes, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I do. I want to start off by saying that once again—and I hope I do not get interrupted again—that the government made a policy decision. The policy decision was to take away the funding authority from the Manitoba Heritage Federation. I want to know why it is the government made that policy decision.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, the appropriate line for us to be discussing that issue, because it is a government policy decision affecting the Manitoba Heritage Federation, would be under 7.(m), and I will answer that question fully and completely when we get to that line.

Mr. Lamoureux: The minister can choose to answer whatever questions she likes, and I will suggest to you that if she finds that this is not an appropriate time to answer this question, I will continue to ask the questions. If she chooses not to answer the questions, that is fine, but at least the record will show very clearly that the government cannot support their decision to take away the multicultural grants.

I would ask, and will start off by going over, in fact, what did take place, and then we will end it off by a question. Once again, the minister can do whatever she likes, if she wants to answer it, or feels that she does not want to answer it and save the question, or take it as notice until we get to that particular line.

I am going to start off then from the beginning where we had the Manitoba budget presented. While that Manitoba budget was being presented, the deputy minister had met with the executive director, I believe, along with the president of the Manitoba Heritage Federation. At that time, they were given a letter that indicated to them that they were no longer going to be responsible for the funding allocation for heritage groups.

While they were doing that, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, we were inside the Chamber listening to the government budget being proposed. I have been led to believe, and the minister or no one else has given me anything else to believe contrary to that, that the Heritage Federation had absolutely no idea in terms of what the government's intentions were, that in fact they had on numerous occasions attempted to meet with the minister.

I would ask the minister if she met with any members of the Heritage Federation with respect to taking the funding authority away?

Mrs. Mitchelson: When we get to line 7.(m) of the Estimates, I will answer that question.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): Item 1.(b) Executive Support: (1) Salaries.

* (2220)

Mr. Lamoureux: I have an idea what the minister would have said, and I think it would have been something to the effect of "no." Now, I would suggest to you and I say to those individuals that the minister, if in fact that is the case, that the minister did—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): Order, please.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, it really and truly is a shame in terms of what the committee is turning into this evening because the minister is refusing to answer questions. Out of respect for the committee and the procedures inside this Chamber, I will accept that the minister does not have the courage to answer these questions. I find that it is complete absolute nonsense that she chooses to deal with this issue in such a poor way.

I am going to move on to another area, and I only hope that the minister will at least find this an area in which it is an appropriate time to ask some questions. This is with respect to what is happening with the multicultural community. This minister has made a number of commitments to the multicultural community over the last year. One of the commitments that she has made was just last week, as early as last week, and that was to bring forward a multicultural act.

The government had indicated in the throne speech that in fact they were going to be bringing in a multicultural act. I would ask the minister, when did the minister actually have the multicultural act complete?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I would have to ask advice from my staff who are not at the table with me right now on the exact date that the bill was drafted and translated. I cannot give you that exact date until I have some support staff.

That could be very easily discussed with my staff at the table under Multiculturalism which is 5.

Mr. Lamoureux: I would ask the minister, with respect to what has been included in the act itself, she has decided to include the Manitoba

Multicultural Grants Advisory Council, and I would ask her why she has done that.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Things do not seem to be sinking in in the mind of the member for Inkster terribly well, and it may be the late hour. Nonetheless, I suppose if he wants to be disrespectful to the staff who have been sitting here for a few hours and will continue to sit for a few hours while we discuss the Estimates, I will attempt to hop all over the place and answer questions. I do not know how many years the member for Inkster has been a member of this Legislature, but—[interjection] Not many more, that is right. Maybe some day he will learn the process.

I have indicated in the House—and if the member for Inkster had taken the time to read my opening remarks, I think he would recognize and realize that there was broad consultation done throughout the community. I met with all of the umbrella organizations that represent multiculturalism and I met with individuals. The consensus from those meetings was that in fact the structures that had been put in place by government should be included in the act and MGAC was one of those.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, it interested me in the sense that when the MIC Act was first introduced, I understand that the then opposition, the Conservative opposition, opposed the act and felt that in fact you should not put into legislation the granting authority, or at least the minister felt that granting authority should not be put into legislation for MIC.

I am wondering what benefit does she see by having MGAC in the legislation. What is the purpose of having it in the legislation?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I was not around, as was the member for Inkster, when the Manitoba Intercultural Council Act was first introduced and passed in the Legislature. Their mandate under legislation initially was not—they had no granting authority, and I think that was added at some point in time later down the road. It was not at the initial introduction and passage of the Manitoba Intercultural Council Act. There was no granting authority. It was subsequently amended to allow the Manitoba Intercultural Council to distribute grants.

The reason for putting the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council into the legislation is in fact that they are a vehicle that does distribute grants to the community.

Mr. Lamoureux: I am wondering what it is, why would something of that nature, given I am sure the minister's being fully aware that there would be opposition to having it put into legislation, why there was a need to have it in a multicultural act, when in fact she has the board currently, her board, and there really, I would suggest to you, is virtually no support whatsoever to have a Manitoba Grants Advisory Council in the legislation.

I have not run across anyone that has indicated to me, and I am interested in knowing where the minister came up with the idea that having MGAC in the multicultural act was an idea worth pursuing.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I think it is more a commitment to the multicultural community that in fact there will be grants distributed to them. I know we went through a little bit of a fiasco last year during the Estimates process, when the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) moved a motion to remove a grant funding to the multicultural community. I guess this is a way of showing a commitment to the multicultural community that in fact there will be a body that does distribute grants.

I guess, rather than us debating to any great extent the reason why or why not MGAC is in the legislation, I would like to see the legislation go to committee and listen to members of the community put forward their suggestions on what they believe should happen with multicultural grants.

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I do not want to interfere here in such a good exchange which has been happening for the last half an hour.

Can the minister tell me in just two or three words what this bill is going to do to somebody, a worker or somebody who has faced racism, somebody who is seeking a job for equal opportunity? What is this bill going to achieve? Can you tell me? It looks very good. I mean who will oppose a multicultural act?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, we have indicated that this is a piece of legislation which puts in place an advocate within government for multiculturalism and that is the minister responsible.

It talks about the policy statement, which we introduced two years ago. I think there was broad support within the community for that policy statement, and the commitment we made at that time was that we would put that policy into a legislative framework.

* (2230)

We have undertaken that commitment. It is an act that talks about uniting Manitobans and Manitoba society based on recognizing and supporting our similarities, not attempting to divide a community. It is a unity type piece of legislation which puts into place our multiculturalism policy. We have human rights legislation that deals with the racism issue. If in fact there are people who believe they are being discriminated against, they have a piece of legislation presently that they can use.

We, through government, will put into place policies and programs and projects, and support projects that will deal with antiracism initiatives, but in fact we have a piece of legislation already that does deal with racism.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I know the minister has attended many meetings and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) has attended many meetings, and they have shown a sort of good will. I am not denying that, but I am simply asking how an appointed committee can do a better job than the elected committee? Can you tell me in principle? I mean how will MIC not be able to do the job, the grants committee can do it? How can he justify that?

Mrs. Mitchelson: It was determined a couple of years ago, through the Lotteries needs assessment that was done and an external consultant, that there should be another structure that distributed grants to the community. We set up the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council.

I have not heard complaints that it has not been working well, and I have asked members of both opposition parties and members of the community, if they have specifics or incidents where people have been mistreated under the process in any way or have not received their grants, that I would investigate those kinds of situations.

We have an arm's-length body that is completely volunteer. They do not receive any remuneration for the time that they put in, and I think you might tend to agree that there are people on the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council who are very actively involved in their community, in organizations and put in many, many hours serving the community that they represent and the multicultural community at large.

So I believe it has worked well, but I certainly am open to suggestion if in fact there are instances

where there are communities or individuals that feel they have not been treated well, because I would like to know that kind of thing and make changes if it was necessary.

Mr. Cheema: I have a personal belief that anything that the government does right, then we should say, right. Now, you have the chance, the first government in this country, to bring in a multicultural act, in fact. Why do you do it half right? I mean, when you can improve, why not? I think you should have waited for the report that is investigating the role of MIC and then bring in a full act, an act which will give a good meaning. Why do something which two years from now may not be able to function at all?

How can you guarantee every day that you are the best minister possible? What is going to happen in two years time if somebody else will come in? He or she may not be able, as you are, if we suppose that is the way. Then how are we going to ensure that the people who are appointed by you—they are going to be turfed out. Somebody else is going to come in who is again appointed, and they are going to compete against the elected people.

This bill is virtually dividing ethnic communities—I am telling you very frankly—because any individual who is appointed by you is not going to speak against you. Any person who is elected by the ethnic organization, they are not going to speak against you. Why would they? They want to improve their livelihood. They want to improve what you intend to improve. But this act does not go far enough. It can be improved, and I think it is about time that you did it. I mean, why not take the chance? Why not do what is best for the people of Manitoba?

I am not saying that you have not done your best, but it could be even better than that, because the image which you have left for the last two years—and if you want to give a real meaning and get your name on for a long time to come, I think it is about time that you should put a real meaning to the multicultural act. I mean, tell me that anybody in downtown who has come two years ago is going to do anything good with this. No, it is not going to improve anything, because people who really need help are never seen in a meeting.

We are not talking about grassroots here; we are talking about the ethnic bosses, the ethnic personalities who can have access to your party, to

our party and to the NDP party, but if you want to do something good for the people who are not speaking, who are afraid to speak, then I think we need to do more than what has been done. That is my major concern, but I must say that you have the opportunity. Let us get it correct the first time. Why do it again in two years time?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I have been the Minister responsible for Multiculturalism now for four years, and I have talked to and met with a lot of people within the community. We have made some improvements. We have put in place some programs that have been of extreme benefit to the community, but you know, since I became minister, and even before that, we had a community that was crying out for a piece of legislation. In fact, I have met with and talked to members of the community and, through consultation, have come up with a consensus in this piece of legislation.

The one area that I sensed no consensus at all was in the area of the Manitoba Intercultural Council. A lot of people said to me at the time that in fact the Manitoba Intercultural Council had been in place for 10 years now. It was set up to serve a certain purpose, and that was to advise government on multicultural issues. It then had the granting function added to it a couple of years later, so it focused on that. Then with the granting function removed, maybe it was time to take a look and refocus, and see what, in fact, amendments should be made to the Manitoba Intercultural Council to strengthen that organization. So we have appointed a consultant who will be meeting with many members of the community and listening.

I know that some very valid points have been raised here tonight. The member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema) has indicated that things should be strengthened. This piece of legislation cannot take into account and legislate right throughout government. We have a multicultural minister who has a secretariat and some support people there to help and deal with the community. But we cannot put human rights legislation into this piece of legislation. I guess you can say that we can do certain things, and I can say that we cannot.

But I think that the key to all of this is that we listen to the people in the community who will come forward through the public hearing process, at committee stage, for this legislation. We can argue, and I know that I am going to get arguments on the other side of the issue from both opposition parties.

I understand that they feel it should be different, there should be other things. But I think it is incumbent upon all of us to listen to what the community has to say. You may believe that you have talked to a broad cross section of the community, and you may have. I believe that I have too, and I believe that I have a consensus in this piece of legislation. We will agree to disagree, all evening this evening, on this issue.

But I am open-minded enough to listen to those who will come forward during the public hearing process. If in fact, there are some suggestions that might change the legislation, I am open to listen. I will make that commitment here tonight. So I know you are going to ask some questions, and you may. Put your thoughts on the record. I am quite willing to listen to those suggestions, but I am not going to change my mind here tonight. I am going to listen to what the people have to say. If, in fact, they come forward with some suggestions, I will certainly be open-minded.

* (2240)

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, last month, when the minister made the policy announcement for the immigration credentials, and we said that that was very, very positive. There was a positive acceptance in the New Canadian community. I think that really raised the hopes that we would have a multicultural act which would really have some meaning.

I am just pleading with the minister that she has the chance to do a better job than what she is already doing. I am not saying she has not talked to many individuals. You know, we try. But if we can have a consensus where we can improve the act, we are not going to take anything away from you, or your government, or your own ideological philosophy. We are telling you that, simply, you have to make sure that there are 20 percent of individuals who could benefit from your act directly—from tomorrow, if you have an act tomorrow, which will have more meaning, more teeth and more real meaning in some of the issues there. The concerns have been raised.

But if we are going to say to some of those individuals to come forward and speak in front of the committee, it is impossible. It is next to impossible that people who really need help will be able to come and speak. It is very tough for them to come here and go through all that, understand the whole

prospect and then come and speak and give their suggestions, then you are going to change your mind. If you are not going to be acceptable to our suggestions, where we are not going to take anything away from you, how are you going to accept them from somebody else?

So, really, if somebody should review the whole process, in my view, this act will divide the ethnic communities more. It will put them into smaller shells. They will try to fight for the funding. They will try to fight for position on your council, and that will weaken the MIC. In the long run, this will serve some—I do not know whose political ideas are coming here, but it is very sad, because I always believed that this government and your government was more serious about the Multicultural Act than anybody else.

When I saw the act, I was disappointed, and I have expressed my views. I think it is best that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) is here, that he also have a look at the whole act, because he has set a tone during the Meech Lake Accord. He took the multicultural community with him to Ottawa, and that kind of symbolism that was given in 1988, it was 1990, now 1992, and we expect the same thing. I am simply asking him to look into this act and see if changes can be made now.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I guess some of the comments have been made that there are people that will not come out to committee and speak out, I guess those are some of the reasons why we have put in place some of the structures that we have. We have a Community Access Office where people who feel intimidated by walking into the Legislative Building—and we all know that there are those people who might feel intimidated by the building or by talking, so there is the Community Access Office.

We have established a Citizenship branch within the Department of Culture, and we have Immigrant Access Service that we are trying to strengthen and enhance. So there is going to be ongoing programming, and a piece of multicultural legislation does not mean the beginning of the end. We are going to have to continue on forever to look at the needs of the community.

Communities' needs do change. There are some communities that 10 years ago were extremely unsophisticated and today have become more sophisticated and are able to access government

programs and know how to access them a little bit better than they did, but then we have new waves of immigration. We have new communities coming with different needs, so we are going to have to be continually evolving and continually changing and continually trying to address those needs, and that is going to be through policy and programming and project grants within the community.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I have just a final comment. Giving multicultural grants to any specific community is not going to correct the problem, and you know it, because giving funds is not going to improve the livelihood of whole communities. It may give some ethnic individuals some high profile within government, but is that going to deliver what is meant to be?

That can only be delivered if you have a law which will have real meaning, give it some educational component to teach about racism in the schools, in the workplace. Many other things can be done.

Can the minister even give me the names of four or five individuals whom she thinks have benefited for the last four years from their policy, other than the political appointees? I mean, just four or five names of anybody that has benefited because of this multicultural policy?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I am not going to single out any one individual, and he may want me to put names on the record of people that, you know, have benefited or not benefited. I think that—

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I will rephrase my question. It may not have been the right language, but what I am simply asking is, can the minister tell me if any individual who has suffered racism, a problem at the workplace, in schools or in other places, in government communication or in getting services in the immigration department or Immigrant Access Service, is there any individual who has really benefited from all of these programs?

They can only achieve benefit if you have real meaning to this law. That is what I am saying. I am not accusing the government. I am simply telling them they can do a better job than what they are doing right now, and it can be improved if you have a good law.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I have always, always said that you cannot legislate the way people feel about each other. What it has to be is an educational process, and we have in fact

put in place an antiracism co-ordinator within the Citizenship branch of our government. That is a new initiative that has just been undertaken, and that person spent two years extensively working with the Manitoba Federation of Labour developing modules, and we have piloted one of those modules right within my department.

In fact, it was such a successful program that the Civil Service Commission is applauding that program and making it available throughout the Civil Service, and in fact they are, through the Civil Service Commission, developing an antiracism policy. So things are starting to happen. The Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) did release a multicultural education policy.

We know it is slow and it has to be progressive, and it is through education that we are going to achieve and make some differences. By saying in legislation that we will not tolerate racism, how do you enforce that in law if someone speaks out or says something nasty or negative about someone else? I think we have to do it by the programs that are implemented, not by legislation in fact, but by putting in place policies and programs that are going to make a difference, and they are education programs.

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I would like to pick up on this line of questioning and ask some policy-related questions, particularly with respect to multiculturalism.

In light of the last comment the minister made about not putting significant things into legislation and relying on education and government programs, I think that there are some areas where members of the community would differ. One of the areas has to do with affirmative action, and I am interested when I read through the Estimates booklet that her department has its own affirmative action committee and an affirmative action program. I am wondering if she can describe what the policy that goes along with that for her department is.

Mrs. Mitchelson: That is down under 1.(d) Human Resources, but in fact I will attempt to answer those questions, seeing we are hopping all over the place.

* (2250)

Point of Order

Mr. Lamoureux: I want clarification why it is the minister finds it most appropriate to hop all over the

place for the NDP critics but does not hop all over the place for the Liberal critic, according to using her own logic, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): The honourable member does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I guess the determination has been made by the Liberal Party that we should deal with multiculturalism at this point in time in the Estimates process, because that was the beginning of the questioning from—[interjection] Well, no, we moved on to multiculturalism which really—[interjection]

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): Order, please. The honourable minister has the floor.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Might I ask the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) whether in fact she feels this is appropriate under the line of questioning that we have been pursuing on multiculturalism, or would she be prepared to wait until the Human Resources part of the department to ask?

Ms. Cerilli: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, the questions I am going to be raising are going to be directly related to policy specifically with the act, and I am leading up to discussing the policy directions that the government is taking with respect to the act.

Mrs. Mitchelson: And are we dealing just with multiculturalism?

Ms. Cerilli: Yes, I will just be dealing with multiculturalism.

Mrs. Mitchelson: We do have an affirmative action committee that meets on a regular basis and deals with issues trying to enhance opportunities—we are talking for women and minorities and aboriginals also in this context. In our department, compared to government targets, for women, the government target is 50 percent, and we in our department are at 60 percent.

In the native area, and we have discussed this at great length last year in Estimates, we are below the average. The government target is 10 percent. We are at 2 percent in our department and working through the affirmative action committee to try to figure out how to deal with encouraging those in the aboriginal community to apply for jobs within our department. Visible minorities, the government target is 6 percent, and we are at 6 percent in our department.

Ms. CerlIII: Why does this department have its own affirmative action policy? Is there something different about this department? Is it doing things differently from other government departments?

Mrs. Mitchelson: We do not have our own policy. We have in fact our own committee that sits down, intradepartment, not government-wide but in our department, to look at ways and means of trying to attract and encourage and work with those women, native and visible minorities, whom we might be able to deal with and provide and support enhanced opportunity.

Ms. CerlIII: So are these programs and committees unique to this department? Is this approach to the policy of affirmative action unique to this department?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I am told that most departments do have an affirmative action committee.

Ms. CerlIII: Is it following along with the policy on multiculturalism that is outlined in the policy statement that the government released a year or so ago?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I would think, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, that it is, yes.

Ms. CerlIII: And the minister feels—does the minister have any responsibility for the affirmative action policy as administered in her department in other departments? Does she see any responsibility that she has as the Minister responsible for Multiculturalism and the Minister responsible for the Status of Women?

Mrs. Mitchelson: As an advocate for multiculturalism and for women within government, of course I am interested in what other departments are doing. I know some are doing extremely well, but the overall responsibility for affirmative action lies with the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik), and each department has a responsibility to attempt to achieve the targets and work within the framework of their department and government to accomplish those.

Ms. CerlIII: The real concern that I have is the government policy on multiculturalism as announced a while ago which is very clear and I will read the section: Government will ensure that the multicultural nature of our society is reflected in its hiring practice and appointments to boards, commissions and other provincial offices so that these institutions are representative of the community.

Now this is a policy that the government claims to endorse. There is a section in the new legislation, multicultural policy, yet that section is not included in the act, and I would like the minister to explain that. Why is that section not in the act?

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

Mrs. Mitchelson: I do not have both of those documents in front of me, so I would have to do that comparison before I could comment on it.

Ms. CerlIII: Is affirmative action not a policy of the government and this department?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, it is.

Ms. CerlIII: Are you saying that you want to wait until you deal with this issue?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I am saying that I do not understand the absolute discrepancy, and I would have to have the policy document and the act in front of me. I do not have my staff from Multiculturalism here with me to provide those documents that would normally be in the book, so we can either answer it now, if you want to wait, or provide me with copies. Then I will take some time to look at them and provide the answer.

Ms. CerlIII: Well, this is an issue that I have raised in the House. It is an issue that the community is raising and I think it is probably one of the most serious exclusions in the act that is facing us, and particularly when the government has congratulated itself and perhaps been congratulated outside of the House as well on its multicultural policies. So I find it surprising that the minister cannot answer the question without seeing the legislation or the policy.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I am not going to be drawn into this debate without the papers in front of me, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson. I am going to indicate that, in fact, we believe and we have worked very hard in our appointments to boards and commissions to ensure that we have a broad cross section representative of Manitoba. I will indicate that I think, if we look back at the record of the New Democratic government compared to our record today, you would find a major improvement, that we have more representation. The act does indicate and enshrine our policy and if I could just get a copy in front of me I will, before I even comment, have a look at the act and the policy.

Ms. CerlIII: Just let the record show that the minister cannot give an explanation for why the act

does not include an affirmative action clause, especially in light of the decrease in the percentage and real number of visible minorities in the Civil Service in Manitoba.

* (2300)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Well, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, let the record show that the member for Radisson is somewhat off the wall in her comments and her assumptions, but that is not unusual. We have experienced that many times over the last couple of Estimates processes and even her questioning.

I will reserve my right to respond to the question when I have the documents in front of me.

Ms. Cerilli: Well, let the record show that when the minister is not able to answer a question that she resorts to personal attacks.

The other policy issue I wanted to deal with is the reason for the policy change that this government seems to be undertaking with respect to multiculturalism, but also other areas, in moving away from elected representation from the community on boards, for example, the multicultural committee in the Department of Education advising the resource centre, the Intercultural Council which has seen an increase in the number of political appointments to the council, as well as the Manitoba Grants Advisory Council. I would like to ask the minister to explain why the government is moving in this policy direction.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I do want to explain, because the problem started with the Manitoba Intercultural Council when the New Democratic Party, when it was in government and Judy Wasylycia-Leis was the minister responsible, appointed a chairperson without consultation with the Manitoba Intercultural Council. It was someone who had never been a member of the Intercultural Council and who was taken off the streets, so to speak, by the minister responsible at the time and placed in the chairperson position.

Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, when I became minister, the major point of contention with the Manitoba Intercultural Council was that the minister did not take their recommendation on who should be the chairperson, but in fact took someone who was not part of the Manitoba Intercultural Council before that time and put them in that position.

That was the biggest problem, and it was an issue that was no end of aggravation to the Manitoba

Intercultural Council. I will tell you that this government has not interfered in any way. We have accepted the recommendations of the Manitoba Intercultural Council and appointed the chairpersons whom they have recommended to government.

Let the record show that it was the New Democratic government that interfered in the election process and the political process. I will tell you that under legislation, government can appoint one member for every two members who are elected by the community, and we have not exceeded that authority under legislation.

Ms. Cerilli: Well, there has been an increase, though, in the political appointments to the Intercultural Council. Now, is it government policy that all of those political appointments are recommended by the council?

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

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, no. Members are elected by the community, and for every two members who are elected by the community, government under legislation has the ability to appoint one person. We still have two elected members to one appointed member by government.

It is completely within the legislation, and I have no way of knowing why under an NDP administration they appointed more or less, or why in fact they appointed a chairperson who was not recommended by the Intercultural Council.

Ms. Cerilli: Not as many party memberships, Conservative Party memberships are on the council now. There is a definite policy shift, I assume it is a policy shift, by the government to move away from having community representatives elected by the community on government boards and committees.

I am wondering, are there plans that this is going to continue? As the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) raised the issue, this has now been transferred over to the heritage council. What are the reasons for eliminating individuals, for example, on the board in the Department of Education?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, without accepting any part of that question about the Department of Education, I do not understand where the critic is coming from. I indicated to the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) before that we would discuss the Heritage Federation later, and I

am not about to accede to questioning on the Heritage Federation from the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) at this point in time.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I wanted to continue on with regard to asking questions regarding the multicultural act.

At one point in time, back in June of 1992 in fact, we felt that there was a great deal of movement from the minister. We had introduced a bill that would have seen—I should not say June of 1992, it would have been November 6 of 1990, where we had seen a private member's bill sponsored from myself on behalf of the Liberal Party in which we wanted to give MIC its granting authority. We wanted to have the chairperson appointed from within and also the executive director hired from within.

The minister, in speaking on that legislation, agreed with us that the minister should not be appointing the chairperson, and we commended her on that, and in fact, did follow the recommendations that had been put forward from MIC for the chairperson. We were glad to see that. The minister has indicated on the record that she would also allow MIC to do their own hiring in terms of the executive director.

Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I wanted to read what the minister also said that causes a great deal of concern with respect to the multicultural act that she has just introduced. I want to quote from November 6, 1990, on Bill 9 when the minister spoke: "Mr. Speaker, we also have committed to a multicultural act for the province of Manitoba. Within the context of that act we will be addressing some of the issues that have been raised by the Liberal opposition about how the act that incorporates the Manitoba Intercultural Council will fit into the overall picture of a multicultural piece of legislation for the province of Manitoba."

The minister at that time back in 1990, in November, indicated to us that the MIC would be included in any multicultural act. My question to the minister is: What has changed? What has made her decide not to include MIC from when she made that commitment to the Liberal Party to do that?

Mrs. Mitchelson: The one thing that has changed since I made that commitment was the responses I got from the broad consultation that I did throughout the community where the community indicated that they wanted to see an act tabled, but when the question directly was asked, then what should the

amendments be to The Manitoba Intercultural Council Act, there were not any two people who had the same idea that I can recall. Everyone had a little different version of exactly what should be done. That was why we decided to go ahead with legislation as we had promised and bring in a Multiculturalism Act, and in fact deal with the amendments to the Manitoba Intercultural Council in time for the biennial assembly of next year.

So that is the process that we have put in place, and the one thing that has changed from two years ago is that I have consulted with the community, and it is what the community has indicated we are not ready for is amendments to the Manitoba Intercultural Council.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, the member had indicated back in 1990 that, in fact, she was talking about a multicultural act. When she introduces the multicultural act, she then announces that they are going to be doing a review of MIC. For a number of years, the minister was aware that she was going to be bringing in a multicultural act. Why would she wait until the day she brings in the act to take the initiative and have a study done on MIC? Why was that not done a year ago?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I guess I might have been under the mistaken impression that everyone within the community felt the same way as the Liberal Party did when they introduced their private member's bill in the House. I heard through the consultation on the act that, indeed, not everyone felt exactly the same way as the Liberal Party did.

* (2310)

I believe we have to provide the opportunity, and I would encourage members of the Liberal Party and the NDP party to, in fact, meet with the consultant and ensure that their views are known through the process. I think we probably already know what the views of at least the Liberal critic are, but indeed I would encourage all, and I have encouraged all members of the community to meet with the consultant and provide input into suggested amendments to the act.

Mr. Lamoureux: The minister, I would suggest, had put it off intentionally. Why she put it off, I am not too sure because I would go further into that same speech, and many individuals suggest that private members' hour is a complete waste of time. Well, I think this is an excellent case, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, where we see that in fact it was

well worth having a bill of this nature debated for the simple reason is we found out what the minister's intentions were.

Let me quote something else that she said that day: "In that context we will deal with some of the issues that were raised, but we are not about to, as a Government, take an ad hoc approach to amending legislation, rather than taking a look at the whole overall picture and doing all of the right things for all of the right reasons at the right time. That will be coming forward and we will be addressing any changes to deal with the Manitoba Intercultural Council in context when the Act is introduced."

This is what the minister said then, and again, we have seen a complete change. The minister talked about not wanting to do it in a piecemeal fashion. Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, she is doing what she criticized myself for, as the critic for the Liberal Party, saying that here I am wanting to do things in a piecemeal fashion, that in fact we should not have to vote or bring this to a vote to bring in those other two areas that we both agreed on with respect to MIC because she felt that it would be unnecessary.

In fact, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I have not read all of Hansard in terms of the Estimates and so forth, but I can recall that the general gist of the conversation was such that the minister felt that the MIC—or gave me the impression—would be in any future multicultural act.

Why, I am not too sure. Is it because she does not see a future for MIC? Is MIC's future called into question because of some of the actions that this minister has taken? If the minister felt that MIC had a role to play—she has known about the development of the multicultural act. She knows about the views and the concerns about MIC. She could have had those concerns expressed. She could have had Mr. Don Blair as a consultant to deal with the future of MIC, consulting with many individuals, and in particular MIC members and members of the opposition parties.

I know I would love very much to sit down with Mr. Blair to give a number of ideas that I personally hold in regard to MIC. But why is it that we saw the government bring in a review of MIC once we have seen the bill itself being introduced? It just does not make sense. It does not follow what the minister was telling me back in 1990. I would ask the minister to clarify that.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I would agree with the Liberal critic in one area, in that it has been a bit of a change from what I committed to two years ago, but, indeed, we have a community that has indicated, and through consultation has indicated, that they do not want to wait another year for a multiculturalism act, that they would like to see an act. We went through, and the consensus was that some of the things that are in the legislation are those things that a majority of those I consulted with agreed to.

But there was not a consensus on the changes to the Manitoba Intercultural Council Act. Rather than waiting another year for a multiculturalism act, there was a sense that we should go ahead with that act and make the changes to the Manitoba Intercultural Council at a later date.

But as I said earlier, we can agree to disagree on this issue all evening. I believe that it is incumbent upon us to get the legislation to committee and hear what the people of Manitoba have to say about the legislation and the act. I think all of us need to be there with an open mind.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, if I felt for a moment that the minister would be going to the committee with an open mind and would be receptive to amendments, I would at a moment's notice recommend to our caucus that in fact we give up debating the issue in second reading, so in fact it would go to committee so that we could hear that public representation and see some amendments to the legislation.

I pick up on what the minister is saying and maybe before I put this question, I want to ask something else because it will no doubt have an impact on the question that I would like to ask the minister. That is, she is having an independent individual go out and bring back recommendations from MIC. What are her intentions to do if we do see recommendations that MIC should be included in the multicultural act? Will we see that occur?

Mrs. Mitchelson: As we all know, many pieces of legislation are amended many, many times. I do not think that this will be the end of The Multiculturalism Act either, and I have indicated that to the community. It is a start and a step in the right direction. I do not think that there are too many people who can argue that what is in there is positive. It is a piece of legislation that does speak positively to multiculturalism and to the positive things that it contributes to our Manitoba society.

I would say to you that it will be changed many times, and if in fact a report comes back that indicates that the Manitoba Intercultural Council, with amendments, should be included in The Multiculturalism Act, that certainly will be something we could look at in next year's legislative package. I would be very amenable to that.

As I said, I am here to listen to Manitobans. I have consulted, and there are many more Manitobans out there who might come out and provide different points of view. We have no way of knowing that until we get to that public hearing process. Of course, you all know that we go back into the Legislature for third reading, and there is major time for debate on the legislation again.

Mr. Lamoureux: The reason why I wanted to ask that particular question first is because the consultant could come back and say that the funding authority should be given to the Manitoba Intercultural Council. He could realistically come back and recommend that.

Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, we have a piece of legislation that is putting in one aspect, that no doubt Mr. Blair will hear a number of individuals who, if he goes out there in an apolitical fashion as I believe he will, would like to see MGAC's funding authority be given back to the Manitoba Intercultural Council. I am wondering why it is that it would be necessary to have that particular aspect of the act, of the legislation, the MGAC, being put into legislation at this time. I do not see the benefit.

I look at one clause, in particular Clause 2, which I think is a fantastic clause and which I support and our caucus supports, but with respect to that one area dealing with MGAC, I just cannot for the life of me see why it is that it is absolutely necessary to have it in there. I would ask the minister if she would be at all receptive to any movement in that area at all, if it were to go to committee?

* (2320)

Mrs. Mitchelson: I do not think either of us would like to predetermine what members of the public will make presentation about during the public hearing process. I have indicated that I will listen to what the public has to say and make any decisions based on public input.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I guess if we took the minister at her word and felt that if it did come to light that MGAC should come out of the multicultural act, that in fact the minister would

act on it. It will be interesting to see when we do go to committee in terms of what does happen.

I know that during second reading, I will have much more time to be able to expand on that particular point as to why I feel that it should not be in the multicultural act, and I will do that instead of using up the Estimates time to deal with that. But I do want to address the issue in terms of why the minister would go ahead with the multicultural act.

She talks about a consensus, that there was a consensus there, for example, to include MGAC, that there was a consensus, I take it, for all other aspects of it, yet there was no consensus for MIC. I am wondering if the consensus that has been achieved on all of the things the minister has talked about is from the same group of individuals.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I met with, as I said, all of the umbrella organizations and different individuals. From the many meetings that I did have and the comments that were made at those meetings, yes, there was, as I said, general agreement that the things that are in the legislation are things that ought to be and that at this point in time, there was not a consensus that everyone felt the same way about the Manitoba Intercultural Council.

Some people expressed very strong opinions that there were certain functions and roles they felt the Manitoba Intercultural Council should play and should do, and as a result of that, you know what has happened. We have put in place a consultant that will look at the role, the structure and the mandate of the Manitoba Intercultural Council and come back to us with recommendations, so I do not want to predetermine what that process will evolve into as far as recommendations go for government.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I would suggest that we would not in fact have to predetermine this had the government had the report before she brought in the multicultural act. She knows as well as I do—she might not say it, but the minister had ample time to do it, and all we need to do is just take a look in terms of when the act was first announced back in the throne speech of 1991.

So there was plenty of time after the consensus, where it was agreed that there was not a consensus from her people and groups that she had talked to for MIC. She had from the time it was introduced to—well, when was it?—June 10, when the minister brought it in for second reading on Day 83 of a

session while negotiations are going on in terms of attempting to get out of session. That is in fact the other concern. The major concern that we have about the multicultural act is that it does not include MIC.

Again, instead of using up the Estimates time, I will stick to the debate in second reading in order to further expand upon why it is that we feel that is necessary. That will be it, and we will go on in terms of additional lines. We are quite willing to pass this particular line.

To conclude, I do want to, on this particular line, again stress some disappointment in terms of what the minister feels are appropriate and not appropriate questions to ask at this particular line and would suggest that the minister talk to a number of her colleagues as to what type of questions have been asked previously. In fact, without even looking at Hansard, we might have asked many of the questions in previous Estimates with this particular minister.

I find that it was definitely very unfortunate that she chose not to answer the first line of questioning that I was hoping to get on the record. Having said that, we will go on line by line until we can ask the specific questions that we need.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I just want to reiterate again that we may have a few more questions from the official opposition on multiculturalism. We have dealt with the multicultural act, but we still have another period of time somewhere down through the Estimates where there will be other multicultural issues, I would presume, that would come up. It is unfortunate that we have my staff from libraries and the Archives and that kind of thing not quite sure whether they are going to have to be here till the end of the evening. I just wanted to make those comments before we take just a five minute recess.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): The Committee will recess for five minutes.

* * *

The committee took recess at 11:28 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 11:32 p.m.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): Order, please. The committee will come to order. When the committee recessed, we were considering 1.(b) Executive Support: (1) Salaries

\$327,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures, \$77,900—pass.

1.(c) Financial and Administrative Services: (1) Salaries \$723,500—pass; (2) Other Expenditures, \$95,200—pass.

1.(d) Human Resource Services: (1) Salaries, \$193,900—

Mr. Lamoureux: This is where the government does its hiring, I understand, if the department does its hiring.

I would ask the minister how many applications have been received. There are two positions that are open, or that are going to be open at the Multicultural Secretariat's office. I would ask: How many applications have been received to date?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I am informed that there are 283 applications for the two positions.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I would ask the minister: We have the two positions that are opening; what is happening to the current two who are in there right now?

Mrs. Mitchelson: One of them will remain employed until the competition process has closed and the candidate has been chosen. The other one has already applied for a job and moved onto another position within government.

Mr. Lamoureux: Can the minister tell me which position, which department? Is it a promotion from within? Is it through the Civil Service?

Mrs. Mitchelson: That person applied for a position as the executive director of the Manitoba Advisory Council on the Status of Women and was the successful candidate. If I might just add to that, it was a career advancement.

Mr. Lamoureux: The one who is currently employed is going to be employed there at least until the competition has been filled. Has that employee made application for the position itself, too?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I have not seen the applications that have come in. It is a Civil Service board that will screen the applicants and determine who will receive the interviews.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, the last time we had an appointment that went through the Civil Service—and because the department has a hiring agreement as most departments, with the exception of the Department of Education, the minister is the one who determines who is going to be on the selection committee. Can

the minister tell me the individuals who will be on the selection committee?

Mrs. Mitchelson: It will be a board that is run by the Civil Service Commission, and I am not sure who the participants on that board will be as yet.

Mr. Lamoureux: In the selection for the outreach office, there was some concern as to one individual who was on the board, on the selection committee. I have had that particular concern raised from a couple of individuals, and Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I can understand to a certain degree as to why they would have that concern.

In fact, we had brought up that particular incident, and the minister would likely know full well in terms of what it is I am talking about with respect to the filling of that position. I would ask for an indication as to whether or not the make-up of that board and the person who was called into question as being on the selection committee is once again going to be on the selection committee for these other two positions?

Mrs. Mitchelson: It is a regular practice of a Civil Service board that the managers in the area would be a part of the selection board. In fact, we are all aware of the situation. Unless he is questioning the practices of the Civil Service Commission in this instance, that would be the general rule of thumb that would be followed.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, what I am most concerned about is addressing something that the minister often attempts to tell me to be very careful with, and that is in terms of the individuals who are ultimately selected. I know, in the previous selection for the outreach office, there was some criticism for the one individual who was appointed to this position.

I know the individual who was appointed myself and feel that the individual has outstanding qualifications, that the individual does merit a position of this nature. I am talking in terms of Lou Fernandez, who was an appointment, as an individual, we felt had excellent credentials. We were not calling into question his qualifications, nor once again, have we ever called into question qualifications of any of the appointments that the minister has made or, in this particular case, of Mr. Fernandez, the appointment that he received through the Civil Service.

Because of the concern that was expressed on the make-up of the selection committee, this

particular individual who went through the Civil Service had been somewhat blemished through the media, if you will, because it was felt that it was not just his credentials, that in fact it had more to do than the credentials. I think, in part, it was because the individual who was on the selection committee was a political appointment. Individuals went there, who also had very impressive credentials, but for obvious reasons, were not successful, which might be in most part the reason why they felt it necessary to come and criticize about it to myself.

* (2340)

I think there is some merit in terms of what it is they were saying. For the sake of the individuals who apply for these Civil Service spots, I would suggest, for this particular case, that it is in the best interests of those individuals who are going to succeed in getting these two positions that the manager or the individual who was on that particular selection committee not be on the selection committee for this, because if in fact it does occur, no matter who—and I will use the name of Ms. Kirkland—is appointed to the position and the individual, Mr. Langtry, is on the selection committee, no doubt it will leave a bad taste in the minds of many. Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, whether or not the individual is in fact the most qualified, people from the different communities—and I am sure the minister would acknowledge it, if not publicly, privately I am sure she will—will object to that particular hiring.

Now, having said all of what I have said, I would ask the minister if she would give some consideration to having the selection committee not include any political appointments.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, when the Civil Service Commission runs a board, in fact that board has X number of individuals, three or four individuals on it. One person alone does not make the determination on who will be hired. It has to be a consensus. Certainly, I would hope that the member for Inkster is not indicating that one person on the board had undue influence on an impartial Civil Service board.

We have people who are put in place as managers to manage their responsibilities, and one of the responsibilities of a manager is to ensure that there are competent and qualified people hired to do the jobs through the Civil Service process. It is a responsibility of that manager to manage, and it is

highly unusual to exclude a manager from a competitive process when that person is only one person making the decision.

Now each and every person who applies for the job has the opportunity to grieve through the Civil Service Commission if, in fact, they feel that the proper process was not followed, and that grievance is heard in a very impartial manner. So there is opportunity for anyone who feels that they were mistreated or were not given a fair opportunity.

I will not withdraw the responsibility of one of my managers to manage just because the opposition wants to play politics and use that person as a political football for their own personal reasons, their own political reasons. When people are employed with government to do a job, we expect them to do a job, and if part of their responsibility is to sit on a board where there are three or four members that have to develop a consensus on who the right candidate is, I will not do that.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, the minister herself is the one who made it political. I would suggest to you that the manager, as we have talked about in the past, is a position that should have been open for competition, that the government should not have made the appointment. To the minister across the way who says, well, it is debatable, this minister now wants to put that office into the multicultural act, which is a permanent Civil Service position that the minister is proposing.

This is not something that from individuals, as the minister alludes to, where you are going to see a number of grievances coming forward. I know of one individual who had made application that was a government worker. If that government worker made application for a grievance, in this particular case he expressed what would happen to him if he is unsuccessful.

So, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, the minister is not, in my opinion, protecting the individuals who are going to be filling those vacancies, because it does not matter who fills those vacancies, for some individuals, and one of those individuals could likely even be myself, it is going to leave a bad taste.

I disagree with what the minister is doing because if we were to criticize, or if the government, or if an individual were to criticize it, the minister's only response will be, well, is the member or is that person calling into question the credentials of the

person who received that position when she knows full well that is not in fact the case.

I only wish that the minister would reconsider, given the circumstances that are surrounding this particular situation. I have full confidence in the Civil Service; I only wish that the minister had full confidence in the Civil Service.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): Order, please. We seem to have a number of meetings going on at the same time and since I can only chair one at a time, perhaps other meetings would move out into the hall.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I am glad to hear the member for Inkster say he has every confidence in the Civil Service Commission and the process that is put into place. One of the things that happens with a Civil Service board and a competition is that managers from different branches of different departments are part of the selection process. As I have indicated, one person alone does not make a decision on who is hired. I would hope that he is not calling into question, I am not saying the credentials of the people who are applying, I am saying the credibility of the impartiality of the Civil Service Commission. I will not change that process.

We have managers who we expect to manage, and part of their mandate or their role as managers is to be part of a selection board, and I am not going to change that in any one instance. I will reiterate again, that there is not any one person on any board who makes the determination on who will be hired. As far as grievances are concerned, there are many grievances that are pursued from members from within the Civil Service, and absolutely nothing happens to them if they are unsuccessful in that grievance process. It is their right as members of the Civil Service and I would hope that, in fact, if anyone, and I would encourage anyone who feels that they have been treated unfairly to follow the grievance process that is in place.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I am not too sure in terms of the application or the bulletin that has been put out for the position, I assume that it does have the criteria on it, does it?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, it was. There is a waiting and a scoring process, and there cannot be points ascribed to anything that was not in the bulletin.

Mr. Lamoureux: When does the government intend on filling those two positions?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Well, as you can well imagine, with almost 300 applications it will take some time for the screening process to be undertaken. I am trying to think of when the competition closed. It was about three weeks ago, so I think that they should be getting to the screening process somewhere in the near future. I do not know; I would say it will be hopefully filled by the end of July, but I cannot guarantee that for certain.

* (2350)

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): Item 1.(d) Human Resource Services: (1) Salaries \$193,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures, \$17,400—pass.

1.(e) Manitoba Film Classification Board: (1) Salaries.

Ms. Friesen: Just a couple of quick questions. I have asked this before, and I notice the department is looking at theatres, bars and video stores. I have raised the issue of laundromats before and the showing of videos in laundromats, and I do notice that it is expanding. I am wondering what the procedures are for the department in this area.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I know that issue was raised in the last Estimates process, and as a result of the issue being raised, we did investigate that laundromat and indeed they were showing videos. Any laundromat that shows videos does have to be licensed. So they are required to have a licence, and in fact, if it is viewing in an area where there might be those under 18 years of age exposed to the video, they are not allowed to show restricted product. If in fact they were and that was reported, it would certainly be looked into.

Ms. Friesen: Could the minister tell me whether that has been expanding as a practice? I gave one example, actually not in my constituency but across the road. I thought that I had seen it elsewhere in the city. I wondered if the department was aware through its inspectorate of any expansion. How many licences, for example, are there for laundromats to show videos?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, we do not have that number. I would have to go back to the Film Classification Board, but in fact we will inquire of them and get the number back.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): Item 1.(e) Manitoba Film Classification Board: (1) Salaries \$94,900.

Ms. Friesen: I am moving out of laundromats right now into classifications, and I notice that last year the department was classifying rock videos and now it is not. Is that just simply a rewriting of the lines within the department or have you actually dropped rock videos?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I am informed that we are still classifying rock videos.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): Item 1.(e) Manitoba Film Classification Board: (1) Salaries \$94,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$144,100—pass.

Item 2. Culture, Heritage and Recreation Programs (a) Executive Administration: (1) Salaries \$228,000. Shall the item pass?

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I notice that one of the activities—oh, I will wait for the department staff.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I would just like to introduce staff that is here; Luanne Bura is the Assistant Deputy Minister for Culture, Heritage and Recreation programs; Sandra Hardy who is the Agency Relations Officer for our major cultural institutions; Kathleen McMillan who is the Director of the Arts Branch; and Donna Dule who is the director of Historic Resources.

Ms. Friesen: If we look at the historic pattern of this section of the department, I believe that we are looking since 1988 at a section of the department which is down \$2 million and 29 staff years. I wonder if the minister could perhaps review with us what the impact of those losses in monies and in personnel have meant for the people of Manitoba and for their access to cultural programs?

Mrs. Mitchelson: As I indicated in last year's Estimates process, our department was hard hit and I think we recognized that and acknowledged that last year. I believe that we have had an additional burden placed on staff, but in fact they have met the challenge that has been presented to them. In fact, we have done some major restructuring, still with limited resources, in the arts side of things with the Arts Branch now being established, and in Historic Resources we have been able to maintain the level of work that we were providing previous to the reductions.

Ms. Friesen: Last time we did discuss it in terms of the one-year drop. I am looking at the four years of this minister's incumbency and finding it very hard

to believe that a loss of \$2 million and 29 staff years can be dismissed in a phrase that staff have met the challenge. Surely the minister would have some ideas of the losses in programming and in monies to certain parts of the cultural community, particularly over the four-year period. Perhaps I can pose the question again. What has been the challenge to staff and how specifically have they met it?

Mrs. Mitchelson: We can go back and look at the last four years, and we do know that the last few budget years have been very tough budget years. I am pleased to say, if we are looking at the departmental Estimates for the year 1992-93, which is part of this exercise tonight, that indeed we have not had any decreases in staffing this budget year, and that we have maintained our budget with some increases in a few very strategic areas.

I will say, unless the member for Wolseley has some specific incidents where in fact she has heard there has been reduction in services from our department, I think that we have managed in fact to maintain and in some areas enhance our ability to deal with the community, as I said, with some restructuring and reorganizing. We have put in place some new programs that will ultimately have a very positive impact, I believe, on the community and the community is looking forward to these changes in programming.

* (0000)

As I indicated earlier, when you have cultural organizations that are receiving what you might call block funding, rather than having to apply project by project for grants, that means that there is less staff time spent on behalf of the volunteer organization and the staff that they have to employ to apply for grants. Likewise, within the department, there is less demand, I suppose, on departmental staff to analyze 16 different applications maybe from one organization and make recommendations. So, in fact, when we have gone to more global or block-type funding, there should be less demand on resources and analysis on a grant-by-grant basis. In that way the department should have the ability to focus more on other areas.

Ms. Friesen: Could it be argued that the absence of planning, the absence of research in the areas that we discussed right at the beginning of the Estimates, the research on the audience surveys in Manitoba, the absence of research on training and

the relationship to training programs across Canada and even those within Manitoba, the absence of research on the economic impact on tourism of culture and heritage, that all of that basic long-term policy analysis and policy development is really suffering because of the loss of these 29 staff years.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I tend to disagree that our culture and heritage in the province of Manitoba is suffering any greater than any other province. As I indicated before, I think that we have much in quality in our province that a lot of other provinces might wish to have. We have a fairly vibrant arts community, in spite of recessionary times, where we are able to keep most of our major institutions running in the black or we are able to deal with deficit reduction programs that will, in fact, enable them to continue to function the way they presently are. So I think that we have a community that is as vibrant as any other or more so than many other communities across the country.

I would hesitate to think that we should be removing funding from some of those organizations and putting that money into research and planning and trying to be forward looking in that respect when we would have to deny those organizations funding in order to be able to do that. I think that we have been able to meet the needs and the challenges, and we have a very intimate relationship with many of the organizations that we deal with.

We know, from year to year, where they are going to see their problems, and we try to deal with them in a proactive way before they get into too much difficulty. I think you have seen other provinces across the country that have had to go into major bailouts of their arts institutions as a result of underfunding or lack of funding for extended periods of time.

We try to keep on top of those issues, try to deal with our cultural institutions and organizations in a manner that does not get them into the great difficulty that other provinces have found themselves in. So I believe that we have a strong community. I believe that everyone is going through tough times, and it is not as easy to fund-raise from the private sector these days. There is not a lot of additional government money, but our cultural organizations and institutions do not have to play second place to any others across the country.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I believe the government House leaders had indicated that we would be having committee rise at twelve o'clock. So I would suggest we canvass the committee and the committee would rise.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): What is the wish of the committee?

Does the honourable member for Wolseley wish to complete her question?

Ms. Frlesen: Thank you, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, but we will complete it the next time we are sitting.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): Is it agreed that committee rise?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Rose): Committee rise.

* (2000)

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

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

We are on item 5. Transportation Policy and Research, page 96. Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

5. Transportation Policy and Research (a) Salaries \$526,200. Shall the item pass?

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): I have some more questions under the Transportation Policy and Research section. The minister had made a statement to the House a few weeks back talking about a national highway program. It would be a great idea, as some honourable members opposite indicate, if there were some dollars attached to it.

I would like to ask the Minister of Highways and Transportation if there has been any dollar commitment by the federal government toward this type of program, and what type of planning has gone into this from his department and from the federal department, hopefully, in conjunction with one another?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Well, Madam Chairperson, let me just give a little bit of background as to how the whole national highways policy aspect was

developed. It started four years ago when the council of ministers started developing the concept and scenario of a national highway program.

Studies were undertaken by what was then called RTAC and is now called TAC. My deputy was the chairman of that committee that started developing the background for it. What happened is the first stage was to develop, first of all, an agreement with all the ministers in the Northwest Territories in terms of a national highway system. That was the biggest challenge, I suppose, that we had, was to get everybody to agree because everybody felt very parochial and wanted to have their own highways designated more than everybody else.

Ultimately, criteria was set up to establish which route should qualify. One, of course, being the Trans-Canada Highway and the other one being a linkage to the States. The other one was the second major route within a province, and this was the criteria that was basically developed and in our case it involved Highway 75, it involved the Trans-Canada, it involved No. 16, the Yellowhead highway, and ultimately we did get agreement between all the ministers.

The next stage, of course, was then to take and do an assessment of the requirements of what should this system consist of—the engineering aspect of it, the twinning, you know, bringing it up to. The assessment was done by the RTAC committee at that time to establish the shortfalls in their present system, and so that was developed.

By and large, it has been a four-year process in terms of getting it to the point where the last stage was actually completed this spring, where the committee then came forward with suggested recommendations in terms of funding.

As the member is probably well aware, Canada is the only western developed country that does not have a national highway system, and when you consider the fact that, what happened over a period of time, each of the provinces was trying to, you know, make deals on their own with the feds in terms of cost-sharing, it is my sincere belief that the Maritimes and Quebec probably cut much better deals than we managed to do out west here.

As we developed this process, the final stage was the cost-sharing. We had one portion that was for the western provinces where we got \$40 million to be cost-shared between four provinces on the Yellowhead Route, which was a political decision

that was made then. The now-Minister of Finance federally, Mr. Mazankowski, was involved in that one.

Instead of continuing at this ad hoc type of system, we felt that we should develop something that was going to be acceptable and sort of uniform across the country, and so we finally got the recommendations that still have not been approved by the Council of Ministers as to how the cost-sharing should take place. But because of the recession and because of the federal government wanting to bring forward initiatives to stimulate the economy, all of a sudden this national highway concept got prioritized and it is in the federal government—I believe it is between the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance, federally, trying to decide how they can come up with the funding for this program.

We had made suggestions in terms of the cost-sharing arrangements. It would be very beneficial if that could be followed along the same lines, certainly for Manitoba, and our system is certainly not one of the biggest ones in there because our national highway system is through the bottom part of the province. Naturally you do not gain a lot more from that system.

The other concern that we had in terms of developing the cost-sharing concept was the fact that some of the provinces like Ontario and Alberta who, you know, use the user-pay concept felt that they would be subsidizing other provinces, the have-not provinces. So the criteria that was developed was that 80 percent of the money that was raised, equivalent to two cents a litre on fuel, using that as a criteria—we were not saying that there should be two cents a litre on fuel. We are saying equivalent to that, but they wanted some assurance that at least a good portion of the money that they raised within their province by whatever means would be spent there. So we developed a criteria where 80 percent would be retained by the province that raises the money, and 20 percent would be then taken and allocated through a board and commission or between the deputies and those provinces that needed it most based on certain criteria that we had.

So I had hoped that the federal government would accept that on that basis. They are still agonizing over it, and I have to indicate to the member that there is a lot of speculation out there, but I believe that there is still an opportunity that maybe before

the end of June an announcement will be made. If that is the case then, you know, I would be tremendously pleased, because I have to say that first of all my deputy has played a major, major role in this and I myself have been known to some degree as the strongest promoter of the national highway program.

Our argument with the federal government is that they collect over \$5 billion worth of taxes off the road system and put back, virtually, I think it is less than 15 percent or something like that into the system. You know, that is where the concept sort of developed. I have to indicate that in the States it is a little different. In fact, on November 27, 1991, Congress passed \$151 billion highway bill. The member is probably aware of that. They have a different attitude about that.

Generally aside from the economy that would be created by more road construction—the industry has been in a quandary and always been concerned about not having enough work and not enough money—I think that, in order to make us competitive on the world markets, you know, with all kinds of things whether it is the grain movement, et cetera, we have to start putting a higher priority on something of this nature.

I am giving a bit of a long answer, but I want to indicate to the member that I am still hopeful that the federal government somewhere along the line, before the end of this month, will be making an announcement on the national highway program.

Mr. Reid: Two questions on that part relating to the minister's comments. He mentioned 2 cents a litre as being the figure that should be taken into consideration by the federal government. Can the minister give me some indication, or does the staff have some information relating to what type of an investment dollar-wise that would mean for the Province of Manitoba based on the number of consumed litres in this province, and has any thought ever been given to changing the direction of the Yellowhead highway program so that we have like a mid-belt highway running across the central portion of the province? So, instead of having the Yellowhead come in and terminate in or near Portage la Prairie, we could have it going across the province of Manitoba so that we have a national highway around the mid-section of the province. Has any consideration been given to that proposal?

* (2010)

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, in terms of the proposal that we put forward, it was a 10-year financing program, and in the case of Manitoba it would make—I believe we would probably gain an additional \$35 million a year on our highway capital program of which \$25 million approximately, I am using round figures, would be picked up by the federal government. So it has a dramatic impact. We are looking at about \$250 million over a 10-year period of time in that program.

The member asks whether there has been thought given to extending the Yellowhead Route itself. I have to indicate that it does not end at Portage. It ends at Winnipeg. Winnipeg is mile zero.

There are various groups that have been lobbying from the eastern portion of the province along various routes, a group along No. 12, a group along No. 44; everybody wants to tie into this because of the promotion. It is a very active group. But we have the Yellowhead Route Association, which I happen to have the privilege of speaking to each year, who are basically now in charge of whether they want to extend it or not. I think that once the funding is good, if we ever get a national highway program, possibly they might be encouraged to expand the system in Manitoba further east, but at the present time they do not have any intentions of doing it.

I know that there are groups from Beausejour, from southeast Manitoba that have been lobbying for the extension of the Highway 16 system which is being promoted very actively as a tourist route. There are ongoing discussions about the potential of expanding, but it is not in the mix right now.

Mr. Reid: I thank the minister for those comments. The highways, of course, are very important because it creates all kinds of opportunities for us in the province. The minister mentioned one with tourism and I am sure the communities on the way would like to see that highway program extended to include opportunities for their communities. A highway system is also advantageous for the trucking operations that we have in our province here. I would like to switch my questions to more along the lines of trucking.

There is a deregulation study, I understand, that is underway currently. Can the minister give me some indication on when that is due to report and when we could expect a report back on that?

Mr. Driedger: I would like to indicate to the member that deregulation, like federal legislation, was a five-year program, and it would technically be terminated at the end of 1992, January 1, 1993.

Manitoba played an active part in having that five-year time limit in there as well as part of the legislation involved that a study would be taken in the final year to see exactly what the impact of deregulation had taken place. We had commissioned a study by the Transport Institute. They did not totally complete the thing, and we are in the process of completing that study to see exactly what impact it would have. Naturally, because we are an exporter of transportation services, it is more important to us than possibly other provinces who wanted to carte blanche deregulate.

We felt the impact on our trucking industry was such—and they have lobbied very extensively to try and have the grace period extended to another year. We are in the process of working with the Manitoba Trucking Association to see whether we can get consideration given while this study is taking place so that we know the full impact of what is happening with deregulation.

Mr. Reid: I take it by the minister's comments then we should not expect the completion of that study this calendar year?

Mr. Driedger: Yes, definitely, we expect that this study should be done within maybe a couple of months. We are getting a fair amount of pressure from the Manitoba Trucking Association to complete the study. Once we have the information as best we can, then we will forward that to the federal minister with the request that they extend the deregulation for another year or two.

Mr. Reid: Looking at the impact that deregulation has had on the trucking, I would be surprised if the trucking industry agreed to any kind of an extension of delay of that study at this time. I mean, they are very obviously hard hit by what has been taking place, and I am sure they would like to see the results of a study themselves.

Will the minister be tabling that study, or will we have the opportunity to see that study prior to the resumption of a new session of the Legislature.

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, I do not think I will have any difficulty bringing forward that information, certainly a summarization. I am prepared, once I have that report and know the

impact of it—I mean it is not a secret document; I do not regard it as a secret document because it is something that will impact the province—and I will certainly give every consideration that I can to take and make this public so that we can then have discussion on it.

Mr. Reid: I thank the minister for that. I will look forward to seeing the results of the study.

Another matter dealing with trucking was the CCMTA study that was ongoing dealing with owner-operator contract standards and motor vehicle transport brokers. Can the minister give me some kind of an indication at what state these discussions are at the current time? It is my understanding that draft model legislation regulations respecting those two items were circulated in January of this year, and in going through this I found there were some good proposals and some proposals that seem to be very watered down. Can the minister give me some indication at what point this is at right now, please?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, let me first of all indicate that the owner-operators have been demanding various actions from the federal government. Certainly, I would like to think our relationship with MTA has been such that when they were demonstrating in Ontario and B.C. we did not have these kinds of strikes and demonstrations taking place, basically because we have been trying to work very closely with them.

They had a variety of requests that they brought forward to the federal minister, but I want to indicate that Manitoba has played a major role in the development of the CCMTA recommendations to curb the abuse of owner-operators, including the introduction of contract standards and adoption of a model motor vehicle transport brokers act and regulations. So we have been working with that quite extensively to try to bring this forward, and we are looking at implementing some of the recommendations, but prior to doing so we will be consulting with the local owner-operators and carriers. Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia are adopting load broker regulations, and so we will be watching what happens there and be working with our MTA in terms of developing the same kind of scenario.

Mr. Reid: It is my understanding from the minister's staff, the chairperson of the Motor Transport Board was also the chairperson of this CCMTA, and there

was some—I know the owner-operators have been pushing for this type of a proposal to come forward in legislation. Looking at some of the actions that have been taken by carriers in their treatment of owner-operators, I must say I am appalled that this type of abuse could be ongoing for this period of time and have no actions taken.

I urge the minister and his department, his chairperson of the Motor Transport Board who is acting on behalf of his department, to push forward with these types of proposals. I know some of the carriers are reluctant to see these proposals, this legislation, come forward because they think it is in their interests to negotiate with the individual owner-operators. But looking at the way—the reluctance of these owner-operators, and I will provide for the minister's information a copy of a contract that was brought to my attention a few weeks back for a carrier in this city, and everything, and I say everything, is the responsibility of the employee of the company and they have to sign this document before they can even get into the employ of the company.

I will provide this for the minister's information and his staff, and I hope he will get back to me with a response on whether or not this is the type of abuse that we are going to allow in our province, in carriers dealing with owner-operators in the situations in this province.

* (2020)

I have more questions dealing with owner-operators, but that will come up under the Motor Transport Board. There was also an Order-in-Council that took place, and it was for one of the members of the minister's staff, Senior Officer II. This is Order-in-Council 931 and it was signed in October of last year for Mr. Wallace, and it seemed deemed expedient and advisable to revoke the appointment of Mr. Wallace. It is my understanding, and the minister can correct me if I am in error on this information, that this individual was off on sick leave at the time and was a member of the minister's Transportation Policy and Research group. At that time the minister or someone on his staff chose to terminate the employment of this individual while this individual was off on sick leave.

Can the minister give me some kind of an indication on why this type of action would take place, and if that is accurate, why we would treat our long-term employees in that fashion?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, let me first of all indicate that I had a good working relationship with Jim Wallace during the time that he was in charge of transportation. Mr. Wallace had been looking at the possibility of retirement. He had health problems, he was on leave of absence for a while, he was on sick leave and ultimately he was working together with the Civil Service Commission in terms of getting his situation resolved.

It was not a matter of myself or my department being at odds with Mr. Wallace in terms of how the separation took place, so I hope the member does not try and read something into there that is not there in this case, because maybe Mr. Wallace felt ultimately by the time the whole thing had been completed that maybe he had not been dealt with fairly.

Anyway, I just want to indicate that he was dealt with according to the Civil Service rules and certainly I, from my perspective at least, feel that we dealt with him as fairly as possible, and there certainly was no malice or any, how should I say, that I was at odds with Mr. Wallace, because I valued his advice and work very much, because he was a very qualified individual in terms of transportation issues, especially Churchill.

Mr. Reid: Well, it is my understanding that the individual was a long-term employee and that the individual is—a standard practice in most organizations, whether they be government or business or otherwise, when an individual leaves the service through retirement, there is an appropriate means of sending the individual off. They have a going-away or a farewell for the individual. This did not even take place for this individual in this case, and the way the individual was treated seemed to me to be very shoddy in that fashion. I was disappointed that would take place for an individual who had provided the advice and the consultation for the minister and his department. I hoped that same type of treatment would not occur for other employees.

Madam Chairperson: Item 5.(a) Salaries \$526,200.

Mr. Reid: Also, with the departure of Mr. Wallace, it was my understanding that his function was to do long-term analysis of Transportation Policy. Can the minister give me some indication on whether or not Mr. Wallace has been replaced with an

individual who now does long-term Transportation Policy and Research?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, Dennis Schaefer, who is sitting here on my immediate left, is the director of Transportation Policy and Research. I have to indicate that Mr. Schaefer worked very closely with Mr. Wallace over the years and has accumulated, I suppose, as much knowledge as Mr. Wallace had on the issues. I have to indicate that he is putting in a lot of time on this aspect of it, and I am very pleased with him.

Mr. Reid: One last question. Can the minister give me any indication on what type of long-term Transportation and Research planning we are undertaking at the current time in his department?

Mr. Driedger: I have about 15 issues here that they are working with. Continued involvement and transportation issues such as: the National Transportation Act and the Motor Vehicle Transport Act, participating in the federal review of inter-city bus service for the mobility disadvantaged, monitoring activities of the Royal Commission on national passenger transportation system for the 21st Century and responding to reports of the commission, review of the Western Grain Transportation Act, freight rate appeals, remote rail passenger service reviews, participating in open skies bilateral negotiations between Canada and the U.S., Winnipeg International Airport local authority evaluation, rail branch line reviews and hearings.

I have more, if the honourable member wants me to read them all I can do that, but basically my Transportation Policy and Research people deal with everything that is related to transportation. I could put it all on the record, but I am trying to give the member an example of what is basically involved.

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): One of the topics that the minister just read out had to do with the Winnipeg International Airport. I want to pick up on that firstly. What is the current state of the department's research and investigation into the legislation concerning airport protection? This issue has been raised many times by myself with this minister in connection with the Winnipeg Airport, in connection with the report of the committee the minister himself appointed some years ago, which reported going on two years ago now, and the recommendation of which—one of them—was to set

up a piece of legislation governing the immediate vicinity around the Winnipeg International Airport. The minister, I know, agrees with that conclusion, yet for some reason has been unable to come forward with legislation as recommended. Is that on his agenda any longer and if not, why not?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, first of all, I believe the member knows what my position has been, that I have always been very upfront in indicating that we should protect the airport that we have. I think we are very fortunate in Winnipeg that we have an airport right downtown. Concern has been between some of the residents of the city, who feel a 24-hour airport, when they are close to it, creates problems, the noise problems, et cetera. During the Pines debate, of course, the issue was raised many times.

I have to indicate that my colleague the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst) and myself are in agreement that we should have protection for the airport and Winnipeg plan 2000. Apparently, the decision was made that we would allow the city, which is responsible for the planning, to see whether they would address it and plan Winnipeg 2000; if they did not, that we would bring forward legislation, because we have more than just the City of Winnipeg involved. We have municipalities involved, as well, with planning statements. We are working together with them. So, at the present time, we are reviewing to see whether, under Winnipeg 2000, it is adequate in terms of addressing the protection of the airport or whether we would have to bring forward legislation in the next session to do that. That was basically the decision that we are at right now.

I just want to indicate groups and organizations with special interests in the Winnipeg International Airport continue to work toward protecting the airport from incompatible land uses and encroachment. We are working on the development of a provincial land use policy, as well as investigating the feasibility of implementing companion legislation within the Winnipeg plan 2000, so we think we are on top of it.

I want to assure the member that we will not let anything slip by us here; we will make sure that we have it protected.

Mr. Edwards: I appreciate that comment from the minister. I know that he has been a vigilant supporter of the airport. I would add to his

comments, that not only is the airport obviously an asset to the city of Winnipeg and has impacts on the surrounding municipalities, but I see it as a provincial asset to the extent that it is the largest and most significant airport in the province. Clearly, it dominates air travel to and from the province of Manitoba and has to, I think, be seen as a critical asset in our transportation infrastructure.

* (2030)

With respect to airport privatization and the proposal of the federal government or at least the floating of the idea by the federal government that they want to privatize major airports, including Winnipeg Airport. What is the position of this government on that, if any? Is the Research and Policy branch investigating the ramifications of a move such as that?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, from the time that the concept of a local airport authority was promoted by the federal government—first of all, other provinces like Calgary and Edmonton and B.C. are well on the way toward establishing a local airport authority. We participated, the province and the city together each paying \$25,000, for a base study which basically should give us some indication. That base case has recently been completed and presented to the members of the task force, and the next step of course is going to be to see whether they want to take and move forward on that. The cost of establishing a local airport authority could be substantial. We are looking at maybe a million and a half or something like that, at least a million and a half dollars. So I want to indicate that we are very cautious in terms of moving forward to getting involved as a province and I am sure the city must feel the same way.

You know, the concept of establishing a local airport authority is not a bad one because that would mean that we could probably develop initiatives out there that maybe the federal government is not doing. At the same time, we want to make sure that there is financial feasibility in terms of doing that so that we do not end up having something that has to be subsidized on an ongoing basis for a long period of time. So after the base case was made, Mr. Hopkins and a few other people are working on the next step. No decisions have been made. Certainly, I want to raise some caution as to what extent we would want to get involved as a government in terms of the financial aspects of it.

Mr. Edwards: Madam Chairperson, I think those sentiments are correct. What I think we do not want to have is this be under the guise of local authority and the benefits to the province in fact be a form of offloading by the federal government. I think that has clearly been their pattern. So I think the minister is right to be cautious about that.

He mentions a base study. He mentions a task force. Can he give us or undertake to provide me with the membership in the task force, and is he able to provide members with a copy of the base study?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, I want to indicate first of all that my department works very closely with the task force. I am prepared to try and forward the names of the people that are on the task force. I do not have that here right now, but I will forward it to the members.

Mr. Edwards: I am not sure the minister heard the second part of my question. I wonder if he is able to provide members with a copy of the base study which he indicates the task force already has, and maybe he can indicate how long they have had it for.

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, you know, we have just received the base case study on this thing, but we do not have the ownership of it. The ownership belongs to the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce. So I do not know whether I am at liberty to take and hand that out. I think that would probably be able to be assessed through the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, and I would suggest the member maybe ask whether he can get it. I cannot see why there would be any difficulty with it, but I do not know whether I am at liberty to take and hand that out.

Mr. Edwards: Madam Chairperson, well, I thought I heard the minister say that we had contributed \$25,000 to the completion of that report. It strikes me that if we paid for it, the members of this Chamber should have access to what our provincial taxpayers' dollars have paid for. If the minister is unsure of ownership, perhaps he will undertake to speak to the Winnipeg Chamber and stress that point and tell them that we would like, as members of Legislature—1, in particular, as the member of the Legislature in whose constituency the Winnipeg International Airport falls, have a particular interest in this area and would very much like to see the base study.

It would be invaluable to me in the ongoing debate over the future of the airport to have that information. I cannot imagine what they would be fearful of releasing it for.

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, I am just not sure of my ground on this thing, but I will undertake to talk with the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce. Barring any unforeseen thing, I have no difficulty in making the information public and will do so.

Mr. Reid: Can the minister give me an indication of the status of the UPS courier service that was supposed to come to this city? What point are we at with that now?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, in terms of the expansion for the activities with UPS, I think that question will probably be better directed at I, T and T. My only involvement was basically through the Motor Transport Board, giving them authority to certain rights.

I am told the expansion is temporarily on hold, but it is still being worked on and looked at. Probably I, T and T would be able to give you more details on that.

Mr. Edwards: Just one further question in this area. I received correspondence, and I know the Premier did, and I assume passed it on to the minister, about the moving trend internationally and indeed in other provinces in this country, most notably Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island and British Columbia, to transform abandoned rail lines into recreational purposes, bicycle trails and other things.

There are currently, the minister may be aware, 33 American states, the British Isles, and other jurisdictions around the world that have successfully turned the rail lines into other uses, including, in particular, recreational uses. There is an organization in Manitoba dedicated to doing that called the Manitoba Rails to Trails Conservancy.

I wonder if the minister has had a chance to meet with that group. This correspondence I have is actually dated last October. I wonder if the department is taking a position with respect to, if and when rail lines have to be abandoned, examining the potential for use in the ways suggested by this group?

Mr. Driedger: I have not met with this group as such, but I have met with other groups that have been promoting the use of abandoned lines for recreational—you know, snow tobogganing trails,

all-terrain vehicles, et cetera. I know that the minister of heritage, culture and recreation has been working along, has had representation made. At the present time, our policy is that, when we finally get access to the abandoned lines, we first circulate it to the various departments to see whether they have any use for it. For example, in my department, if a rail line runs along a highway, then we try and put our dibs in on the right-of-way so that we do not have to buy right-of-way.

In other areas, I know that there is more and more interest developing in terms of using it for recreational purposes. There is ongoing dialogue, maybe not directly with the group to do with myself, but certainly, I think, the minister of recreation is certainly involved in some of that dialogue. So, as we expect, it is probably going to be an expansion of the rail line abandonment taking place after the year 2000. I think that this is probably an area that I would certainly support everyone looking at it for other purposes.

* (2040)

Madam Chairperson: Item 5. Transportation Policy and Research (a) Salaries \$526,200—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$272,100—pass.

Resolution 79: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty, a sum not exceeding \$798,300, for Highways and Transportation, Transportation Policy and Research, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1993—pass.

Item 6. Driver and Vehicle Licensing (a) Management Services (1) Salaries \$2,694,900.

Mr. Reid: A couple of questions here, Madam Chairperson. It is my understanding that the licensing motor vehicle branch in Thompson was not in a position to hire any students this summer. It has been brought to my attention that an individual who had previously worked in that branch and had retired from that job has come back to that community and been hired on into a summer position in the community of Thompson.

Can the minister give me an indication why we would not hire youth who desperately need a job for the summer months to enable them to continue with education in some cases, or for support of themselves, why we would hire someone who has retired away from this job and has come back for the summer?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, let me first of all introduce Dan Coyle, who is the registrar for the province.

An Honourable Member: And a damn fine one at that.

Mr. Driedger: Oh, yes, he is. He has been there a long time and is doing a very fantastic job.

In terms of the details of a question of the nature that the member is asking, I would have to get the details, because, as I indicated earlier, Madam Chairperson, I have close to 2.5 thousand people working in my department. Details of this nature, I prefer to maybe take as notice and respond back at a later time. I do not know whether we have that kind of detailed information at the present time. [interjection] We do?

My very capable registrar has the information. He indicated that the lady who was working full-time at Thompson moved to B.C., came back this summer as a permanent resident of Thompson and has now been employed as part-time because she was a very capable clerk at the time she was there. She has now been hired as a part-time individual.

Mr. Reid: I thank the minister for that information. That is my understanding of the events as well.

My question here is, while the individual who was hired for this job was obviously capable and qualified, having been an employee of that department for some time previous to her retirement, nevertheless that does not answer the question why we would take that individual back for that part-time basis, a retired person who obviously has, I would think, some pension or some other means of support when the youth of our community are looking for employment and do not have that experience, need that type of job to get them through the summer months to enable them to have the income so that they can return to their schooling in the fall of the year, has not been afforded that opportunity. The question is, why not?

Mr. Driedger: First of all, the individual was not pensioned, and because she was very qualified, we did not have to take and retrain somebody at this stage of the game. She has just been hired as a part-time for the summer.

Mr. Reid: Is that a standard practice of the minister's department?

Mr. Driedger: I am told no.

Mr. Reid: What are the criteria of the youth in this exceptional circumstance?

Mr. Driedger: I am told that we only have four permanent staff in Thompson. Because this individual did not need training and because it was part-time for the summer, it was felt that this would be the most appropriate thing to do.

Mr. Edwards: The minister has had some experience in dealing with the concerns of citizens about the City of Winnipeg and various R.M.s having to deal with large amounts of unpaid parking tickets. This is an issue that I know he has been approached on many times.

I have a copy of correspondence which he wrote to a Mr. Ryan on May 15 of this year, and that correspondence is relatively lengthy and concludes that enabling legislation being passed by the government permitting municipalities to enact by-laws authorizing impoundment of vehicles where outstanding fines are owing would be a practical solution to resolving the unpaid parking dilemma for the City of Winnipeg as well as other municipalities.

I wonder if the minister can give me an update on what progress, if any, has been made towards bringing forward that type of enabling legislation?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, let me first of all indicate to the member and he is probably aware of the fact that the City of Winnipeg and the City of Brandon have been lobbying extensively in terms of trying to get the provincial government to pass legislation to tack on under the registration system.

This is a thing that we have reviewed quite a few times and based on the scenario in Ontario where they used it, it is a very, very cumbersome type of process to do that, and it gets to be a real nightmare. The system gets to be so bunged up with this type of system, and so we have discouraged that with the City of Winnipeg as well as the City of Brandon. However, as late as early this morning the Department of Urban Affairs, my colleague Mr. Ernst, the mayor of Winnipeg and their various committees met and further discussed this aspect of it.

I do not know whether the member had a chance to look at the news this evening at six o'clock where basically both the mayor and the Minister of Urban Affairs indicated the proposal of impounding cars is the thing we would probably be most receptive to. The City of Winnipeg seems to be receptive to it as well, so they will be going back and discussing it

further. If they feel so inclined, then they will let us know and then we would have to, for the next session, bring forward enabling legislation between my department and The Summary Convictions Act, which is under the AG's department, in terms of setting up the necessary legislation to allow them to impound cars.

In the case of Winnipeg, there is around \$4 million worth of outstanding parking tickets. In the City of Brandon it is \$86,000 was outstanding, and it is not fair. We realize that. It is just a matter of working out the system together with the city which will be acceptable to them as well as to our system.

* (2050)

Mr. Edwards: Madam Chairperson, I thank the minister for that update. That is very interesting, and no, I did not get a chance to see the news tonight, so I will have to catch up on the negotiations today. In any event, I hope and trust that something will come of these discussions to deal with this problem.

My second and last question in this area focuses on the drinking and driving initiatives, and this government's or this department's both suspension of driver's driving privileges for 90 days immediately following being charged with impaired driving and impoundment of vehicles for driving while disqualified.

I wonder if the minister could give me the current statistics for the 1991 year on the number of suspensions, the number of impoundments, the number of appeals, and the number of appeals that were successful. If he cannot give me that, perhaps he would undertake to supply that information, but he may have it with him tonight.

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, I will try to give a current status of what is happening. To date, the countermeasure program has been highly successful in our view. Several Canadian provinces have indicated intentions to enact similar legislation in their jurisdiction. In fact, Alberta recently introduced a vehicle impoundment program directly parallel to our Manitoba program.

Since November 1, 1989, 9,417 administrative licence suspensions have been imposed and 4,662 vehicles driven by suspended drivers have been impounded, based on December 31, 1991 statistics. Based on that, the total fatal traffic accidents are down by 16.8 percent; alcohol-related fatal traffic accidents is no change, but total fatal traffic accident

victims is down by 21.9 percent; alcohol-related fatal traffic victims is down by 2.5 percent.

Mr. Edwards: Two questions. Does the minister have the comparative figures for nationally in Canada for the statistics he has just quoted in terms of reduction of fatalities and reduction of impaired driving generally? Secondly, can he indicate, as regards the second part of my question which was, how many appeals have there been of the impoundments and the suspensions, and how many of those appeals have been successful?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, I want to indicate that in 1989 there were 11 licence suspension reviews; there were 11 appeals in 1989, 27 in 1990, 19 in 1991, and four so far in 1992. Suspensions upheld out of those were: in this year, half were upheld, and successful reviews—there were none. On the impoundment, I do not have that information. That is in the Attorney General's department.

Mr. Edwards: Just for clarification. I had appeals on the suspension, 1989, 11; 1990 and 1991, those two years, 27—

Mr. Driedger: And 19 in 1991.

Mr. Edwards: Okay, 19 in 1991, 27 in 1990, and so far in 1992 four, and I have the rate of success, I believe, for the 1992 year, which is that two out of the four were successful. How many of the appeals in '89, '90 and '91 were successful?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, in 1989, there were seven upheld; in 1990 there were six; in 1991 there were seven; and two to date in 1992.

Yes, Madam Chairperson, I gave the wrong information. Out of the 11 in 1989 there was only one that was a successful review. In 1990 there were only five that were successful. In 1991 there were two that were successful, and in 1992 there are none that are successful. I had it mixed up with the written and oral applications. So the last figures I gave are the ones that were successful in their review.

Mr. Edwards: My final question and it is a repeated question: Does the minister have comparative statistics with respect to the decline and the fatalities—decline in impaired driving, arrests—on a national perspective so that we can compare Manitoba's decline with the national decline and thereby get a clearer picture of the success of our program?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, I do not have that information here, but I am prepared to undertake to bring that information forward for both critics.

Mr. Reid: Just a couple of questions under this section and then I am prepared to pass it through. It was mentioned about the serious problem that the City of Winnipeg has in trying to collect their outstanding parking fines, and I note in the minister's letter that he had sent to Mr. Ryan that we are looking at legislation that would permit municipalities to impound vehicles to enable them to collect, I believe, the \$4 million in outstanding parking fines as was shown in a City of Winnipeg motion that was put before City Council. Of course, there is a lot of money that is involved in this, and I think that may be a move in the right direction to give the municipalities the opportunity to collect.

The one other area that we see changes in the Estimates is the transport safety regulation. There seems to be a substantial amount of increase in fund expenditures under the Salaries.

Can the minister give me an indication on the increase in the number of positions and where these positions are, and what their functions are going to be?

Mr. Driedger: The changes in the figures are all related strictly to the National Safety Code.

Mr. Reid: Will these be inspectors then who will be doing the actual inspections of the vehicles that will be on the highways?

Mr. Driedger: There are six SYs who are going to be involved in the final stages of implementing the National Safety Code and these six SYs will be dealing with carrier profiles, maintenance records and monitoring how the shops do their maintenance, et cetera. So those are the final stages of implementation that we are bringing in under the National Safety Code, and there are six SYs with that.

Mr. Reid: I am not sure if the minister has this information available here today, and if he does not if he could provide it at another opportunity in the near future, that would be all right. It is dealing with audits of the Motor Carrier records.

Can the minister give me an indication of how many audits were done in the last year, how many nonconformances were found and what actions were taken, if any, to deal with these nonconformances?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, I would have to undertake to bring that information forward from the Motor Transport Board. I do not have that information here at the present time, but I am prepared to bring that forward.

Madam Chairperson: Item 6.(a) Management Services: (1) Salaries \$2,694,900—pass; (a)(2) Other Expenditures \$2,816,900—pass.

(b) Licensing: (1) Salaries \$1,706,200.

Mr. Edwards: The cost of Class 4 licence, I was advised by a constituent of mine, went up to \$50 for the driver's fees and another \$35 for the motor vehicle branch fees, for a total of \$85. Can the minister verify those figures and indicate why the increase has had to come into place?

* (2100)

Mr. Driedger: I would like to indicate to the member that driver licensing fees as of April 1, 1992, for drivers' licences are \$13; photo card replacements are going to be \$6. Road tests for Class 1 are \$40; for Class 2 and 3, \$35; for Class 4, \$25; for Class 5 and 6, \$20; others are \$20. Written tests for all those cost \$10 all the way through from 1 to 6; and searches, driver searches cost \$4; vehicle searches, \$4; driver abstracts cost you \$4; accident reports cost you \$5. That is the fees that you pay, plus you have that insurance component that we have in Manitoba, uniquely here, that is part of the process under MPIC that we add on to that. I am not sure whether I am addressing the question the way the member wanted me to, Madam Chairperson.

Mr. Edwards: Well, maybe the minister can clear things up by giving, if he has them, the insurance fee for Class 4 licences. Did I understand him correctly to say that the fee figure he gave, which was \$13, I believe, is a Class 4 licence fee as well?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, no. I will try and clarify that. All licences cost \$13, but then, depending on which class of licence that you apply for, you then pay for a road test. In the case of Class 4, you pay the \$13 plus the \$25 road test, and then there is the insurance.

Mr. Edwards: Does the minister have the insurance cost figures in the normal course?

Mr. Driedger: \$35 with no deductions for merits.

Mr. Edwards: Have those fees recently gone up?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, there was an increase in the road test last year, and then we

raised, this was in '91—there was an increase in the road fees and the testing fees and the driver's went up \$4 because of the photo licence two years ago.

Mr. Edwards: What about the insurance fees. Did those go up as well?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, there is no change in the insurance fees; they are still at \$35.

Mr. Edwards: Madam Chairperson, there has been a complaint which has come through our office, and it is an interesting one about the motor vehicle branch here. We have a constituent upset that the motor vehicle branch is only open weekdays, which is an inconvenience to most working members of the public, and the indication here is that the Saskatchewan government provides more extensive operating hours to the public. So I wonder if the minister can comment on whether or not his department has looked at opening beyond normal working hours to accommodate the working public at least on the evenings, if not Saturdays.

Mr. Driedger: I want to indicate that we have been looking at this very carefully, and I want to indicate that on a pilot basis we will be opening up the St. James office starting September 12, and we will be open all day Saturday. As a pilot project if it proves that people like that kind of service, then we would be prepared to start expanding on that.

Mr. Edwards: For obvious reasons, I am very pleased that the pilot project is in the St. James office. I hope that it will be successful because I think it is important to accommodate, in particular families, and there are many in my area where both or all adults in the home work. It is difficult to get to the essential services, like the motor vehicle branch, to deal with someone's licence.

On this issue, I want to raise one other issue that was raised with me by a constituent. That is regarding the handicap pass system which was brought into place, and the requirement to complete a medical form and pay \$10 for the pass. What has happened with the handicap pass program generally? Can the minister give us a brief update?

Secondly, what happens when somebody cannot afford the \$10 for the pass? Many handicapped people literally have \$10 for an entire month disposable income, if that. Has that been a problem? If so, are social services or other organizations picking up the cost or does the motor vehicle branch waive it in certain circumstances?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, let me first of all indicate that this has not been a problem to date, but it is my understanding in working with the people involved that should there be a people the social services are prepared to take and work and give that consideration for the \$10 if it creates a hardship for somebody.

So I must indicate that, to date at least, I am very pleased with the program, the way it is working. The member has, I think, mentioned this before. I take particular note at shopping places now; it seems to be working well. The people have their permits hanging from their mirrors in the car. I think it is just great.

Mr. Edwards: One final comment, Madam Chairperson, that is simply to recognize the efforts of the former member for Seven Oaks, Mr. Minenko, who spearheaded this initiative in this Legislative Assembly and put legislation before this Assembly in the form of a private bill which ultimately provided the framework for the piece of legislation in place. It is good legislation whose time had come. I am very pleased to hear that it has been successful. Thank you.

Madam Chairperson: Item 6.(b) Licensing: (1) Salaries \$1,706,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$1,954,500—pass.

6.(c) Safety: (1) Salaries.

Mr. Edwards: Madam Chairperson, I was quite disturbed during national road safety week, May 17 through 23 of this year, and I am sure the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) will be particularly interested in this statistic. National road safety week proved that Manitoba had the lowest rate of compliance with respect to seat belts in the nation. We have 79 percent driver seat belt use in this province, and the Minister of Health should take note of that because those who do not use seat belts are often the people who populate our hospitals and they cost the taxpayer additional funds. The national—
[interjection]

Now, here is an interesting comment from the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). The Minister of Health says that there is absolutely no evidence of the seat belt compliance. Now, that is our forethinking wide-eyed Minister of Health shouting from his feet, having nothing in front of him to verify it, taking issue with the sponsors, the national road safety week co-ordinating committee. But, no, our Minister of Health knows better. They say

Canada's rate of compliance is 85 percent. There is not a province except Prince Edward Island that ranks with Canada in the 70s. Prince Edward Island is 75 percent, Manitoba is 79. All other provinces are significantly higher. I draw to this minister's attention Saskatchewan with 92 percent compliance, Quebec 92 percent compliance, B.C. 87 percent. What is the minister doing about the low and tragic rate of noncompliance in this province on seat belts?

Mr. Driedger: Yes, Madam Chairperson, I realize the statistics show that Manitoba is on the low side with compliance with seat belt legislation, but we are part of the national program which basically—at the council of ministers the decision has been made that we will try and achieve 95 percent by the year 1995. So all efforts are being made to try and enhance the usage of seat belts, and we are gradually creeping up and hopefully we will meet our target.

* (2110)

Mr. Edwards: Madam Chairperson, specifically can the minister indicate what programs we have going in Manitoba to reach that goal? I mean, it is a laudable goal, but is it realistic? Does the minister have a plan to get us there?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, basically it is through MPIC who has enforcement promotions going, and also the law enforcement agencies that are, you know, having drives every once in a while. I think that it is gradually beginning to take its effect and show positive results in the gradual climbing of the usage of seat belts in Manitoba.

Madam Chairperson: Item 6.(c) Safety: (1) Salaries \$4,771,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$752,000—pass.

6.(d) Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Cost-Sharing Agreement \$3,628,600—pass.

6.(e) Transport, Safety and Regulation: (1) Salaries \$747,400.

Mr. Edwards: Madam Chairperson, one brief question. I wrote the minister correspondence back in April of this year, and it had to do with the ham radio call sign plates. The Canadian Radio Relay League had written me on this issue, and quite a lengthy letter, talking about the research that had been done by that organization. I had not received a response from the minister. Mr. Pat Pettipas was the actual author of the letter. Does the minister have a response at this time or would he be

prepared to forward to me a copy of his response to Mr. Pettipas about the ham radio call sign plates?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, I want to indicate, yes, I remember the correspondence that the member has written. We are looking at it, and I will be responding in writing to him. We are reviewing it, comparing what is happening in other provinces, and I do not have a big hangup about doing it. I think it is just a matter of getting our act together on this thing.

Madam Chairperson: Item 6.(e)(1) Salaries \$747,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$358,200—pass.

Resolution 80: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$19,429,900 for Highways and Transportation, Driver and Vehicle Licensing, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1993—pass.

Item 7. Boards and Committees (a) Motor Transport Board.

Mr. Reid: There were some serious concerns that came to my attention, dealing with the authorities that are granted to particular carriers and the abuse of authorities by companies operating in and through this province, and by those that have no authorities and yet are not called to account for their actions in this province.

I speak specifically of a show cause hearing that took place at the Motor Transport Board offices, some two weeks ago I believe it was. At that time, there appeared, for the minister's information, and this was relating to a question that I had asked him the day before those show cause hearings took place. It had come to my attention that there was some plea bargaining, and I will call that plea bargaining, that had taken place by officials that were representing the province at those show cause hearings before the Motor Transport Board.

The position that had been taken by those officials was that a minimum cost, not a fine but a cost of \$250, was going to be in order for carriers that had been utilizing companies that did not have authorities to operate. The plea bargain had taken place and was not acceptable, even though this may have been the first offence that these companies had committed. They were only going to be given a \$250 cost as a result of this. This particular negotiation had taken place behind closed doors, prior to the show cause hearing taking place, when individuals were involved and had produced

evidence. I do not mean a one-time piece of evidence, I mean there were several occurrences, and yet the department was only willing to go forward with this after much reluctance.

I know this took place, because I sat in on one of those meetings with the individuals that brought forward the evidence. I have copies of the evidence here today with me of companies that were operating contrary to the laws of this province. For officials of the department to go forward with the position that they were only going to ask for \$250 in costs, not any fines, no conditions set down on the licensing for these companies, was beyond my comprehension.

Can the minister give me some explanation on why the officials in his department would take such a position for abuse of operating authorities in this province?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, let me first of all indicate that the chairperson of the Motor Transport Board, Don Norquay, I have the highest regard for the individual. I think he is very qualified and a very fair individual. I want to indicate when the member raised the questions, we at that time raised it with the Motor Transport Board and they were in the process of already dealing with some of the irregularities that had taken place, and that a hearing, as a member mentioned, was taking place shortly. I have asked for a full report as to what has happened. I do not have the full details of that at the present time. I will get the details and report back to the member indicating exactly what has happened. Some of the accusations that he is making are pretty strong accusations. I will want to have full details of exactly what has happened.

Mr. Reid: I do not make these accusations lightly. I was there, I witnessed it, I know what happened. I witnessed all of the actions in the room, the old buddy-buddy system that seems to be in place. It did not make me happy to see that. It seems to be that some of the officials in the department are getting very cozy with some of the carriers that are operating through this province, and I do not think that is proper action for anybody to take that is supposed to be a regulatory agency.

So I draw that to the minister's attention, and I hope he does investigate that, because it is a very serious thing for us to have in this province, when those who are operating in our province under legitimate businesses cannot feel comfortable with

the fact and knowledge that we have an agency in this province under the minister's department, or part of the minister's department that is supposed to oversee the regulations and the laws that are in place in this province, without these departments becoming cozy with the carriers. It leaves the wrong impression in the minds of many that are operating out there in legitimate business interests.

One of the things that caused me concern about this was the fact that the company itself that was operating without authorities, when they went to those show cause hearings, walked out of that room without any charges being brought against them. No fines were levied. Can the minister indicate to me whether or not this is a standard practice, and if it is, what recourse does the province have to ensure that this company does not go forward again and commit the same type of act? Is there recourse through the courts, through the RCMP or is there some other avenue that I am not aware of?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, the only thing that I will indicate to the member is that I will take and get a full report on the full status of what has happened. I am prepared to share that when I get that full report, and if there is any further concern, I am prepared to work together to see that we alleviate that kind of thing from happening in the future.

Mr. Reid: I thank the minister for that, and I want to indicate, and I should have said this before I ask this last question, that the chairperson of the Motor Transport Board did a very commendable job at that show cause hearing. He was prepared to stand up to those individuals that were making the plea bargain case on behalf of the province in conjunction with the carriers, and I will give the chairperson of that board full credit. He was prepared to question the position that was brought forward at that time, and I think he did a commendable job. I want to put that on the record for the efforts of that individual and the members of the committee with him.

There are some other concerns that have been brought to my attention dealing with trucking and owner-operators, and it has to do with the Motor Transport Board's role. There was a particular company, Canyon Distributors, that had been operating in and through the province of Manitoba. Can the minister indicate if this particular company, which I believe is headquartered in Alberta, is only granted corridor authority?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, I am aware of Canyon Trucking, but I do not have the details of that question here with me in terms of how they operate, what kind of operating authority they have. I will have to take that question as notice.

* (2120)

Mr. Reid: I would appreciate if the minister would get back with the information on that, because it is important to those who are involved in this because this particular company took away job opportunities from legitimate business concerns in this province, and I am talking owner-operators in this province. There were five individual companies that are now unable to work because of this one company that is not headquartered in this province.

The carriers, of course, have a role to play, but the owner-operators form a good portion of the carriers' business function in this province. In dealing with the Canyon distributors, the owner-operators, of course, lost a great deal of money in their dealing with this case.

Can the minister indicate, or will he be able to provide at some other opportunity in the near future, what role the province played in the bankruptcy of that particular company? Were there monies that were outstanding in that case and if so, what is being done to collect any monies that are outstanding to the province?

Mr. Driedger: It is impossible for me to have all the details available here today in terms of what has happened with the various boards, special cases. Some I have, but not the—I am prepared to get all the detailed information regarding this particular case and will forward it to both critics.

Mr. Reid: I appreciate that. I know there were some letters that were written to the minister in the past, and I have read some of the answers that the minister sent back to the people who had written to him. Some of them were very ambiguous, and I did not think that it was the way we should be treating, from my own opinion, the way we should be treating legitimate business concerns in this province.

Because there are so many concerns dealing with how owner-operators are treated across Canada, including the ones in this province, and I know that there is a task force studying these owner-operator concerns right now and they are preparing legislation, hopefully, that will come before this Legislature, probably, I would think, in the next session. Some of the concerns that were raised are

dealing with refunds of monies that are due and payable and outstanding to the individual owner-operators, whether it be for licensing fees or registration of vehicles.

Because some of these vehicles are registered in the owner-operator's name, and they pay the fees that are deducted from their salaries and wages, one of the concerns that was brought forward was the fact that these monies, when these plates are turned back in to the companies, are not reimbursed to the individual owner-operators. Does the minister have any information on that?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, let me indicate to the member that the owner-operators in the trucking industry have a whole variety of concerns that they brought forward. I want to indicate that at the CCMTA meeting which was held last week in Yellowknife, all these issues with the owner-operators were discussed. I had my staff representatives there, as well the chairman of the Motor Transport Board. All these issues have been discussed, and they will be brought forward for us at the ministers' conference in September to see whether we can resolve what hosted them. Various positions are being developed right now in conjunction with other provinces, and hopefully we can take and address some of their major concerns.

Mr. Reid: If the minister would provide a status report or progress report on those meetings, I would like to see that information because these concerns are being raised over and over again from the owner-operators that are contacting me in this province.

They are quite concerned about what is going to happen to them, not only from their dealings with the individual carriers,—and there are a lot of good carriers in this province—but it is the unscrupulous ones who are ruining it for everyone and the owner-operators are running into some difficult times.

It is also the load-brokers' situation for which we do not have any legislation to protect the owner-operators. We can have loads that are secured from a company that wants to ship through the load broker, that load broker can send it to another one, and so on, and so on. We would get to the point where the actual carrier, the owner-operator who is doing the carrying of the goods, may be only receiving 60 or 70 percent of the price that was agreed to. It is the load brokers in

these cases who are skimming off profits for only doing the paper work and the administration portion of this.

Mr. Driedger: I will indicate to the member that as staff brings forward the various recommendations that were discussed at the CCMTA meeting in Yellowknife, once I have a position that we basically are going to be bringing forward to them, a council of ministers' meeting that I am prepared to sit down and discuss this with the member.

Mr. Reid: The minister has staff here obviously dealing with the Taxicab Board as well, and since we are in that section, I will ask my questions now on the Taxicab Board.

Can the minister give me an indication—it is my understanding that the ruling that was made has been appealed or it is going back to court, dealing with the extra 60 taxicabs that his government wants to put on the road which is going to water down the job opportunities and business opportunities for the existing operators, many of them who have invested their life savings into the operations of this business.

Can the minister give me an indication on the status of the taxicab industry?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, an appeal has been launched. The issue is coming up. It is before the courts right now, and I think the case will be heard in July sometime. I do not think that I am at liberty to make any comments on it at this stage of the game.

Mr. Edwards: One of the activities identified, of course, is that the Highway Traffic Board conducts public hearings. Can the minister indicate the number of hearings that were held this year, and whether or not the number of hearings is increasing or decreasing?

Mr. Driedger: The total applications before the Highway Traffic Board amounted to 357 applications under The Highways Protection Act. Under The Highway Traffic Act we had 117 submissions for the year 1991. That is using the calendar year.

Mr. Edwards: I am not sure the minister was finished his response. I wonder if he can just give me the year-over-year statistics as to whether or not the number of hearings is going up or down?

Mr. Driedger: I do not have year over year. I only have the 1991 figures here where we had a total of 474 applications, we had 106 on-site investigations

by the Highway Traffic Board, and they held 47 hearings. I will have to go back to last year's figures to give him year over year.

Mr. Edwards: I appreciate the minister looking into that if he would. It would just be interesting to me to know if the number of hearings is on the increase or the decline.

With respect to the weight limits on provincial and municipal roads, will the weight limits change with respect to the cross-border traffic coming up from the United States? Are there any weight restrictions on Highway 75 now, and will that change when the twinning is complete?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, the maximum loading that we allow is what we call the RTAC loading. We have an extensive system that we have expanded over the last three, four years which virtually tripled what we call the RTAC loading, which is the maximum loading that is accepted throughout the country.

Highway 75 is at RTAC loading now and there will be no change even after we have got it twinned and we have the new inspection office out there.

* (2130)

Mr. Edwards: One of the other interesting—at least interesting to me—activities of this branch is the establishment of locations for off-road vehicle operation. Is sporting activity of off-road vehicles on the increase in Manitoba? Is this department actively working with organizations to ensure safety and access to sufficient sites for this type of sporting activity?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, I am told by the registrar that our applications in terms of off-road vehicles is about to be stagnant. There are no big variations in there. Within my department, as minister responsible, I have the authority to approve municipal by-laws which municipalities can pass in terms of regulating off-road vehicles within their communities, and I have been doing that on an on-going basis.

When communities come forward, whether it is to deal with snow toboggans or the rubber vehicles that they have, off-road vehicles, if the communities and councils decide to pass regulations, by-laws, then it is my responsibility to take and review them, and either approve or disapprove. All cases I approve.

Mr. Edwards: Finally in this area, the establishment of safe speed limits throughout the

province. Is the minister's department—is this department regularly reviewing those speed limits? How does that work? Does the department wait for people in certain areas to complain or raise a concern about a speed limit being too high or too low, or is there a proactive review of highways on a regular basis looking at appropriate speed limits? Are the police involved? What is the process?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, the Highway Traffic Board does not go out there necessarily of their own volition to go and check. They have enough work right now with activities that are brought forward by individuals, communities, law enforcement agencies. The moment somebody brings in a request for either increasing or decreasing the speed limit, that is when they respond to it, but they do not actively go out and check to see whether they are too high or too low. It is based on public need or response to the Highway Traffic Board.

Mr. Edwards: When a new highway is being built or upgraded, such that the speed limits can increase, is the board involved in assessing what the speed limit should be or is that done in another branch of the department?

Mr. Driedger: When I first took over as Minister of Highways and Transportation, we had staggered speed limits between PTHs and PRs, et cetera. One of the things we have done, we have a consistent speed limit on PTHs, which is 100; and on what we call the PR, provincial roads, it is 90. Now there is ongoing pressure coming down all the time in terms of having all paved roads maybe brought up to the 100-kilometre speed limit. We have not moved or had any further discussion on it, but the pressure is coming down to do that. At the present time, we have a very consistent—PTHs are 100, and PRs are at 90 kilometres an hour.

Madam Chairperson: Item 7.(a) Motor Transport Board: (1) Salaries \$624,300—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$136,900—pass.

7.(b) Highway Traffic Board: (1) Salaries \$196,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$58,300—pass.

7.(c) Licence Suspension Appeal Board: (1) Salaries \$199,600.

Mr. Edwards: Madam Chairperson, one of the objectives of this board is to provide the appeal procedure, obviously, for applicants whose drivers licences have been suspended but also to provide

a medical review of appeals based on medical grounds. Can the minister give the number of appeals that were heard on both the heads in the past year and also, if possible, give an indication as to whether the number is increasing or decreasing year over year?

Mr. Driedger: I will give the Licence Suspension Appeal Board applications first, and then I will give the medical review committee ones: 1988 2,734; 2,248 in '89; 2,000 in 1990; and 1991, 1,722. We anticipate approximately 1,700 for '92.

Under the medical review committee, we had 178 applications in 1988; 162 in 1989; 161 in 1990; and 196 in 1991. We anticipate about the same as last year for 1992.

Mr. Edwards: I note the minister is still looking at some statistics. He may want to add to his answer when he answers this question. The board in the department revokes licences or suspends licences, in addition to criminal code sanctions for impaired driving, amongst other charges, also including dangerous driving and such and so forth.

One of the things that happens when someone is convicted of impaired driving is that they have to go through an Alcoholism Foundation of Manitoba assessment. I wonder if the minister can indicate whether or not there is any move to expand the number of qualified experts or organizations to assess to the satisfaction of the department someone's reliance on alcohol as opposed to the AFM. It appears to me the AFM has a virtual monopoly on this, and there is a fee of course of \$250. I believe it is a revenue earner for the AFM. I wonder if there is a move to expand the experts or organizations that people can turn to, to satisfy the department that they are not dependent upon alcohol.

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, we have an established professional criteria that is being applied, and if any individual group or organization comes forward and meets those criteria we are prepared to have an open mind to look at having them provide the kind of service that AFM is providing at the present time, as long as they meet the criteria that we have set up.

Mr. Edwards: Madam Chairperson, I realize that. It is my understanding though that there are very, very few people who meet the criteria. Can the minister indicate how many people there are presently who are accepted by the department as

meeting the criteria outside of the Alcoholism Foundation of Manitoba?

Mr. Driedger: Right at the present time there are three that meet the criteria. One is AFM, one is a private position who specialized in this field, and the other is the St. Norbert Foundation. Those are the three.

Mr. Edwards: Madam Chairperson, with respect to the fee, I believe it is \$250 which is payable to the AFM. I realize that is not under the direct jurisdiction of the minister but it does play specifically into a requirement of getting one's licence back. Can the minister indicate whether or not his department has any role in setting that fee and whether or not it bears any relation to the actual cost of the assessment, given that in the majority of cases the assessment consists of one interview; \$250, which I believe is the fee, seems a little high.

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, the AFM sets the fee, but it is set on the basis of full recovery. Now, in some cases it might just be one interview, but in other cases it maybe would be several. There is much involved. Basically, the fee is worked out on a cost-recovery basis.

* (2140)

Mr. Edwards: That has always seemed strange to me because what that does is essentially punish the person who is not alcohol dependent and make him or her pay for the person who is and who requires further treatment. Can the minister comment on that philosophy of the AFM and whether or not he thinks it is appropriate that the person who is not a habitual drinker, who does not have an alcoholism problem, who goes to one interview, should essentially be subsidizing the longer-term treatment of the habitual drinker who also drives?

Mr. Driedger: Again, Madam Chairperson, the people that we are dealing with are the ones that have been involved in alcohol, and I do not think that it would be fair to take and have the general taxpayer be involved in paying for this. Now, if you want to start differentiating between the guy that drinks a little and the guy that drinks a lot, basically they are all alcohol-related problems from our aspect of it, and as a result they pay on a cost-recovery basis.

Mr. Edwards: For clarification, there is no suggestion in my question, nor would I make one, that it should not be a cost-recovery program. I agree with that. My point was, and the minister addressed it laterally, that there is no discrepancy

in terms of the penalty paid between him or her who is a habitual drinker and has a habitual problem or is a repeat offender, and he who simply drives while impaired, true, but does not have the same level of alcohol dependency or alcohol problem. The result of that is that the law essentially, because the law requires you to take the AFM course, treats you the same way, regardless of the extent of the damage you have caused, regardless of the specifics of the incidents, whereas the law courts do not treat people identically. They look at the facts of each case when it come to sentencing.

Why does the AFM not reflect that and assess the person based on how much treatment they really need, thereby not building in an additional penalty for the person who is not a habitual drinker and building in an additional benefit for the person who is a habitual drinker, who may get \$1,000 worth of treatment and only pay \$250 for it? It is a benefit essentially to the hard-core drinker. What the government and the Alcoholism Foundation of Manitoba are supporting is direct subsidization to those who drink heaviest and most habitually.

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, I am taking as note the member's comments and will have further discussion on it. I am not in a position where I am going to make a commitment that I will make those changes. We will take and review that.

Mr. Edwards: Madam Chairperson, I am not sure if the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) wants to ask some questions at this point, but can the minister indicate whether or not the Expected Result, "the delivery of a licence suspension review approach to ensure safe vehicle operation on the provincial highway system," is, in fact, being successful in the sense that traffic accidents are being reduced in this province? Does the minister have evidence of a reduction of motor vehicle accidents in the province?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, I am not sure of the question that the member is asking.

Mr. Edwards: I have no problem repeating it. One of the expected results of this branch, of course, is that through suspensions it effects a deterrent on those who would drive imprudently, and I wonder if there is any evidence in Manitoba that generally people are driving safer. I suspect the opposite, given MPIC's recent indication that they are going to have to raise their rates some 10 percent for all

the people who are in accidents. Is the accident rate in Manitoba going up or going down?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, I do not have that information here. I will try to get that information through my colleague who is responsible for MPIC. I just want to indicate under the Licence Suspension Appeal Board that there has been a reduction from 2,734 applications to 1,700, which we anticipate for 1992. So in that regard, at least, people are more conscientious and it is improving in that situation. Most of these are related to drinking and driving, so there has been a dramatic decrease there. The other figures I will have to try and get.

Madam Chairperson: Item 7.(c) Licence Suspension Appeal Board: (1) Salaries \$199,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$68,400—pass.

7.(d) Taxicab Board: (1) Salaries.

Mr. Edwards: Madam Chairperson, there is quite a controversial move into the upscale taxicabs, as the minister is no doubt aware. Is there going to be a monitoring system in place to determine the use of those taxicabs and the wisdom of the decision? Are the board and the minister going to maintain surveillance of whether or not it has been a good move with the expected results?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, as I indicated to the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid), this is before the courts right now. An appeal has been made by the taxicab industry to the decision. I do not know whether I am in a position where I can make too many comments on it at this time. Certainly, after the judgment comes down, I am prepared to have further discussion on that.

Mr. Edwards: That is a fair comment. Is there any indication when the luxurious taxicabs would come into place in terms of length of time after a court decision has been rendered? Is it anticipated that would happen relatively shortly?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, depending on the decision that is finally going to come down from the courts, I would anticipate the activity to start taking place immediately. But again, it is subject to the decision that comes down.

Mr. Edwards: One of the other activities of the Taxicab Board is to provide training for taxicab drivers. I wonder if the minister can give some details as to what the extent of the training is for a taxicab driver prior to getting a taxicab licence.

Mr. Driedger: We have taxicab driver training courses that are available right now. A day course is three days each; an evening course consists of six evenings each. So there is a course that is available for people who come on stream.

Mr. Edwards: Does the minister have any information as to the curriculum of that course? Is he prepared to perhaps supply a copy to members? Can he give an indication as to exactly the nature of what is taught? That is not a lengthy course, three days. I wonder if the minister can indicate what the curriculum is.

Mr. Driedger: Madam Chairperson, I am prepared to provide the information as to what the course consists of.

Mr. Edwards: One of the other things done by the board is to establish vehicle standards and inspect taxicabs for vehicle condition and meter accuracy. There are oftentimes complaints heard from taxicab users in Winnipeg as to the condition of the taxis, and I suspect that has been a large part of the impetus towards the luxury cabs.

What is the rate of inspection of a taxicab being operated on a regular basis? Are they inspected monthly, yearly? How often are they inspected for condition, which, on top of safety is important in terms of our tourist industry to have well-kept cabs?

Mr. Driedger: Under the taxicab inspections we have semi-annual vehicle and meter inspections. We have inspections while on patrol and inspections carried out at the office.

* (2150)

Madam Chairperson: Item 7.(d) Taxicab Board: (1) Salaries \$194,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$58,400—pass.

Resolution 81: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,534,600 for Highways and Transportation, Boards and Committees, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1993—pass.

Item 8. Expenditures Related to Capital (a) Construction and Upgrading of Provincial Trunk Highways.

Mr. Reid: Just a couple of quick questions on this. Can the minister give me a very brief update on what is happening with the eastern leg of the Perimeter Highway? It seems to have stagnated. There does not seem to be any progress taking place there. The residents of my community are concerned

about that because they would like to have that finished link put in place.

Can the minister give me an indication on whether or not an all-weather road is being considered for the east side of Lake Winnipeg as I had a letter of request from a resident of the province?

Mr. Driedger: If the member wants to listen, in my opening remarks and in my discussions with the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) we talked about the northeast Perimeter, and it is all in the record.

If he wants to look back at Hansard, I gave exactly the details of what we are doing with the northeast Perimeter. As far as the road on the east side of the lake is concerned, there have been various kinds of discussions. It is going to be a long, long process.

At the present time, Hydro is looking at bringing Bipole III possibly along there. The environmental impact of that, whether we get anything going with the road there, is far, far down the road, as far as I can see.

Madam Chairperson: Item 8.(a) Construction and Upgrading of Provincial Trunk Highways, Provincial Roads and Related Projects \$103,000,000—pass.

8.(b) Aid to Cities, Towns and Villages \$1,300,000—pass.

8.(c) Work in Local Government Districts and Unorganized Territory \$3,960,000—pass.

8.(d) Rural Municipal Bridge Assistance Program \$400,000—pass.

8.(e) Acquisition/Construction of Physical Assets: (1) Other Projects \$4,384,200—(pass).

Resolution 82: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$113,044,200 for Highways and Transportation, expenditures related to Capital, for the fiscal year ending the 31st of March, 1993.

At this time, I would request that the minister's staff please leave the Chamber.

Order, please. At this time we will give consideration to item 1.(a) Minister's Salary \$20,600.

Mr. Edwards: Madam Chairperson, one of the comments that I made at the outset was that, whatever policy disputes that I have and that our party has had with this minister, a dispute we have not had is that he has been forthright with his critics and that he has been open to—[interjection] Well, the

member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) says, he has a big enough head now. I think actually within the cabinet he has one of the smallest in terms of his own view of himself. In any event, I think that the minister has done his best to be forthright with his critics and that is appreciated.

We do want to rush, of course, to enable the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Downey) to get on tonight, and we recognize that time is running short. I had many, many questions on the Taxicab Board, but I will have to ask those at a later date because there is a need to press on here.

In any event, Madam Chairperson, we are pleased to support this minister's salary, and while he knows from the Estimates discussions which have gone on there are serious disputes and discrepancies between the parties, we certainly do not intend, at least for our party, to attack his personal commitment to his department and to the people of this province and this area.

Mr. Reid: Madam Chairperson, I will be very brief. I look forward to the information that the minister has indicated that he is going to provide that will lend some support to his position, the position of his government as they have been trying to deal with the transportation issues of the province. Of course, transportation still continues to be very, very important to us in terms of job creation and revenue opportunities for us in this province.

We hope that he will look to doing everything within his powers to protect those job opportunities for us in this province because they have historically been very important and they will continue to be. I hope that we will not see continual erosion of the transportation jobs as we have seen over the last year or two, which we have drawn to the attention of this House on many occasions, because even my own community is impacted by some of those reductions.

With that, I am prepared to pass this section.

Madam Chairperson: Item 1.(a) Minister's Salary \$20,600—pass.

Resolution 75: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$4,934,000 for Highways and Transportation, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1993—pass.

This concludes the Estimates for the Department of Highways and Transportation.

ENERGY AND MINES

Madam Chairperson (Louise Dacquay): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will be dealing with the Estimates for the Department of Energy and Mines, page 49 in the Estimates manual. Does the honourable minister have an opening statement?

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Energy and Mines): You bet. Madam Chairperson—[interjection] Well, I could make a deal. I do not have to speak. If we could pass this in half an hour or so, I could proceed to table my comments. But I will speed along in the interest of time, although we may have quite a bit of time this evening to work on this.

Madam Chairperson, I, as well, will distribute copies of my speaking notes to members afterwards so that they have it for their records. Let me say how pleased I am to present the expenditure Estimates for the Department of Energy and Mines, as well acknowledge the former Minister of Energy and Mines for his hard work, his effort and his dedication in the direction of the Department of Energy and Mines and in his retirement from cabinet.

I still look upon him as an individual who has a straightforward approach, has put the department in a very efficient operative mode, and I think well respected within the Mines and Energy departments throughout Canada in the leadership that he showed in his capacity as Energy and Mines minister as he carried out his responsibilities within this government.

Energy and Mines are a very important part of the economic development and, of course, a very important part of the future development of this government's plans. We are committed to continued economic growth and an enhanced standard of living now and for our future generations. We are committed to providing excellence of service for the participants of the energy and mineral sectors and are committed to doing this in a manner consistent with the principles of sustainable development.

Madam Chairperson, I want to compliment the Department of Energy and Mines in their hard work and dedication. They have gone through some reorganizational activities, but I am sure are presenting their programs and their work activities

with enthusiasm. I want to compliment the staff on their hard work and effort and their dedication.

The long-term priorities for the department are to ensure that Manitoba's vital mineral industry is sustained, strengthened and diversified; to encourage mineral and petroleum exploration, development and production; to promote Manitoba's mineral and petroleum potential to developers and investors; to ensure a stable supply of affordable energy for all regions of the province; and to create a competitive investment climate.

* (2200)

The department has three operating units: the Energy and Mineral Divisions and the Marketing branch guided by the Administrative Services Division. We have the Administrative Services Division, marketing division, they basically carry out the major work activities of the department.

We have as well, the Energy Division; under the Energy Division comes the energy conservation branch to provide Manitobans with information on the latest in energy-efficient technology; promote energy awareness as well as the efficient and more diversified use of energy; and co-ordinate the province's efforts in the areas of research, development and demonstration of energy efficiency in addition to alternative-energy technologies offering economic development opportunities for Manitoba.

Madam Chairperson, we have many activities, and I will table the notes so that all members have the information which I do not have to read and that will be available to them and will speed the process and can get right on to questioning from the opposition.

But I do say that the mineral sector and the energy sector in Manitoba is one of the major generators of economic wealth in this country. We have to promote it so that it creates the revenues to provide the support for the social services programming, for the health services programming, for the educational programming in this province. That is why it is so essential that we encourage to foster the economic investment by the private sector, to encourage new developments to take place in the whole area of minerals and energy.

I would request that these Estimates pass very quickly, so we can get on with making those revenues for the people of Manitoba.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Yes, Madam Chairperson. First of all, I would like to offer my thanks to the former Minister of Energy and Mines who I feel I had an excellent working relationship with. Many times he went out of his way to be of assistance. I am also looking forward to working with the new minister.

I have some concerns and some questions on the whole energy planning and the conservation which we covered in Manitoba Hydro. Also I would like to ask the minister later on if they have pursued the possibility of alternative fuels. We hear people talking about emission of gas, and other fuels that could be powering our vehicles, and in relation to the depleting of the ozone and various alternative fuel sources for Manitobans to protect our environment.

The other area that I would like to cover later on is the whole aspect of the Conawapa co-ordinating unit. I would like to get a better understanding of it and to find out who all is involved in it and what purpose it will have if, for whatever reason, Conawapa is either delayed or shelved for a while. What will happen to that unit? I hope it does not happen, but if it does happen I would like to know what will happen with all the work that has been taking place.

I appreciate the minister stating how important mineral resources are for all Manitobans. I find that very interesting because we have in the near future the opportunity of aboriginal self-government, and I know that one of the key areas of resources will be the mineral area and our hydro consumption and the water rental rates in northern Manitoba, where the aboriginal people in the community will be looking at probably cost-shared revenues or some long term revenue sharing for a base for economic development of aboriginal communities. I was glad to hear the minister state how important mineral resources were.

So, with that, I will just leave that as my opening remark. I look forward to getting into questioning the minister on various areas.

Madam Chairperson: We will now hear from the critic for the Liberal Party, the honourable member for St. James.

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Madam Chairperson, I want to start my comments in the same vein as my colleagues, and express the appreciation which my former critic, Mr. Carr, the former MLA for Crescentwood, and indeed our caucus, had for the former minister. He was known for many qualities. The one that we, of course, remember most is that he was impeccably straightforward and honest with his true feelings and how he felt. The former minister should be congratulated for that. It is a rare quality in these times. I think the lack of it often leads many in society to be cynical about politicians. The former minister was one who bred confidence in the fact that he was telling it like it was or at least like he thought it was. He was not attempting to skirt the issues.

With respect to this minister's work and the challenges which lie ahead for this department, we have had the opportunity in discussing with Manitoba Hydro, at two separate meetings in reviewing their annual reports, much of the debate about the Conawapa project, and we have been through that at those committee hearings. We have also had, through having in front our committee at the Legislature, the Manitoba Mineral Resources Ltd. We have had a chance to explore with them some other aspects of the mining industry.

Madam Chairperson, we are starting from that advantage, the opposition critic for the NDP and I, and I think that should streamline these Estimates process somewhat. However, this department has a specific and distinct role to play beyond those two organizations, and I want to canvass that in some detail with the minister on certain parts of his department.

I do want to speak some more about Conawapa when we get to it. I do want to have him comment on the new Mines Act, how it has worked, what is happening with respect to reviewing it, whether or not amendments are anticipated. It was a mammoth task coming up with that piece of legislation; it was a complicated piece of legislation; the result of many, many years of work. I will be looking to the minister to comment on how it is working, whether or not it is too early to judge, and what is being done to review whether or not it has been successful.

There are other aspects that I will touch on as we go through the department, but I look forward to asking those in detail as we go forth.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Madam Chairperson: I would remind the members of the committee that we will defer 1.(a) Minister's Salary until all other items have been passed. At this time, I would invite the minister's staff to enter the Chamber.

Mr. Downey: Madam Chairperson, let me introduce the members of staff. We have Garry Barnes, who is executive director of the Administrative Services Division; we have Clare Mosler, who is the assistant deputy minister, Energy Division; we have Lyle Skinner, business development officer, Marketing branch; and Craig Halwachs, who is the manager of Financial Services.

* (2210)

Madam Chairperson: Item 1.(b) Executive Office: (1) Salaries, \$238,800.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Madam Chairperson, I have the consent of my colleague the critic to ask a number of questions so that he can continue. I will warn the minister that I am going to be moving around somewhat, but the questions will be fairly general, and I am sure the minister will have the answers at his fingertips.

The minister began by expressing, I guess, his interest in seeing a thriving mining community in the province. Of course, the history of mining since this minister, this government took over responsibility for that particular sector has not been a particularly bright one. We have seen a number of communities face disaster, and I am obviously not blaming the minister for all of the dilemma that has faced those communities, but I certainly have some concern over the way the government has addressed those problems.

I guess I would like to begin by asking the minister to clarify how he is going to approach the current circumstances with respect to the community of Snow Lake. The community, I guess, is in the process through the adjustment committees, both labour adjustment committee and community adjustment committee, of attempting to identify a plan of action over the next couple of years, and they are relying on the government to respond to some of the needs of both individuals and the community.

One of the issues which has been raised has been the question of using the Mining Reserve Fund as a means of supporting individuals who will have to relocate from Snow Lake to other communities, in

particular, Flin Flon. I am wondering whether the minister can tell us whether there is any work afoot in the department to help individuals in the community of Snow Lake address that particular problem.

Mr. Downey: Madam Chairperson, I will try and be brief and make the message across. The answers really have not changed a lot since we went through a lot of this in the MMR committee that was before this House. Increased exploration, I believe, the member is well aware of some of the numbers that were put forward, major exploration activity in those communities, or in the community of Snow Lake. As far as the mineral reserve, the Mining Reserve Fund, I will anticipate, in fact not only will I anticipate, I can assure the member that the same treatment will be allowed the people of Snow Lake for relocation as was applied in the Lynn Lake situation.

Mr. Storie: That is not particularly reassuring. I can tell the minister that, if he speaks to any of the former residents of Lynn Lake, he will know that the support level was deemed to be woefully inadequate. We are talking about a community and individuals who are losing everything.

The minister expressed his support for the mining industry, and expressed how important it was to our economy. Since this government took office, the Province of Manitoba has collected almost \$400 million in mining taxes, almost \$400 million, and from that money has set aside in the Mining Reserve Fund some \$12 million to \$15 million. To ask that that be used, in part at least, to support in a much more generous way the disruption of the people in Snow Lake's lives does not seem to be asking much.

We all understand in northern Manitoba that the minister and this government are prepared to use the resources of the North and take our taxes, both income taxes, corporate taxes and mining taxes, and spend them on building highways in southern Manitoba. What we want to know is, are you prepared to spend some of that money in northern Manitoba protecting our livelihoods and our investments? The minister does not appear willing to make that kind of commitment.

He should know that in Lynn Lake the Mining Reserve Fund was hardly touched at all, that there was only some moving expenses offered, not relocation expenses to the people in Lynn Lake. The people now who have lost their total life savings

and their homes in Lynn Lake do not look on this minister's action or the government's action with any favour. They look on it with disdain. They feel that the government has treated them arrogantly and rightly so.

What they are asking for now in the case of Snow Lake is fair treatment. For the minister to say somehow that they will get what Lynn Lake has got tells me at least, and maybe the people in Snow Lake, that the government has not learned a great deal from the experiences in Lynn Lake.

Mr. Downey: Madam Chairperson, first of all, let us make it perfectly clear that the government of Manitoba did not start taking taxes from the mining communities in 1988. The mining taxes have been paid to the former NDP government, frittered away in MTX affairs and Saudi Arabia, building bridges north of the city of Winnipeg over the Red River. Let us look at the management record of this government versus the management of the last government.

I have a lot of concern for those people in those mining communities, Madam Chairperson, so much concern that we have implemented some new policies and new programs to increase the exploration activities around those communities. We are concentrating in the Snow Lake area, not only us with the Manitoba Mineral Resources, but HBM&S as well increased their exploration activities, I believe, something like 60-some percent in that area. We are fully cognizant of the need to find new reserves.

Well, the member for Flin Flon says, no, that is not the important thing. Move the people out. His first priority is move the people out. [interjection] Well, he said they are moving. Well, as far as the government are concerned, we are prepared to offer the same kind of package that was put on the table for those people of Lynn Lake, but our first desire is to develop new sources, to find new sources of mineral for extraction in those communities so they can stay and maintain their homes and their livelihoods.

I have talked to quite a few people in that community, and they say we do not want to move. The first thing they tell me is we do not want to move. Well, the member for Flin Flon says his first priority is to help them move. My first priority is to help them stay and carry out a meaningful life in those mining communities, because I know what it is like to have

a home. We all do. Your roots go deep. You become very attached.

So we believe that there are sources of minerals for future extraction, and we have to get on with the job of finding them. That is the first priority. Now those people who decide that they do not want to stay and want to move, what I have said is there will be the same package, and the member can criticize it—I do not know what he put in place when he was in government or had in place for relocation—

An Honourable Member: Just closed down communities.

Mr. Downey: Just closed down communities. Well, he did not find any new resources. Yes, he found a new resource at Puffy Lake, but he would not even build a road into it; spent \$600,000 in a trailer park in Sherridon that nobody ever lived in and strapped the people of Manitoba with the cost of it. There were very few trailers ever moved into it. To see what? To see the mine close down. That does not make me very happy.

I like to see mining communities with their reserves, with the community doing what it does best and that is to mine and to live a prosperous life. The member can carry on with this if he likes. I have answered him to the best of my ability as it relates to how we are prepared to deal with it. My colleague, the former member, the member for Emerson indicated as well that we had faith in the Snow Lake community. We have committed several hundreds of thousands of dollars to build a new airport in their community, to work with them. We have not given up on the town of Snow Lake, or the mining prospects for the future of that community, Madam Chairperson.

* (2220)

Mr. Storie: I am going to say right out, the former Minister of Rural Development said from his seat that the government had committed some money from the Mining Reserve Fund for the building of the airport in Snow Lake. I have congratulated the member for Rhineland in the past—member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), I am sorry—although I hope he will acknowledge the airport was half done. There was some \$250,000 already invested, but certainly the government did make that commitment.

The minister wants to pretend that somehow the previous government was not making any investment. In March 1988 the government

committed millions of dollars to the development of Callinan Mine in Flin Flon at a time when investment—[interjection] As soon as you had a chance—of course the minister says how much did they invest? Well, soon as they had a chance they sold it, and now they are not prepared to invest that money. Two years ago I was telling the minister this was going to happen and was asking him to double his exploration investment so that we did not have to face precisely the kind of circumstances we now face.

The minister wants to pretend that somehow there is not a crisis in Snow Lake. HBM&S has said there will be no further miners employed in Snow Lake after the end of 1993 or early 1994. They have told the community that even if they found an ore body today, there would be no employment for some period of time after that. People have to plan. Is the minister suggesting that the people who currently live in Snow Lake put their lives on hold for the next two or three or four or five years, or is he suggesting, no, they should just walk away from their life's investment?

People make an investment in those communities. We want them to make an investment in those communities. I am asking the minister to make sure that people who do that, who make that commitment, do not always pay the ultimate penalty. There has to be a way of protecting at least part of that investment.

We protect the investments of farmers across the province. We invest millions of dollars. We have stabilization programs for sugar beets, for every kind of crop and animal in the farming community. We contribute hundreds of millions of dollars. When the minister was asked to contribute a very small sum of money that he has sitting in the bank that was collected from mining taxes, all he could say was, well, that is the best we can do.

It is not good enough. It is not fair and it is not good enough. The question you have to ask is: When is the minister going to accept his responsibility as minister to the people who live in those communities and be fair? When is that going to happen?

Mr. Downey: Madam Chairperson, I can further indicate that the total geological survey programming focused on that region over the next five years will amount to some \$15 million, and we do have confidence in the community.

If the member wants to make light of the problems that those people are facing by trying to somehow personally embarrass me by the way I am answering the questions, let him have his fun. But I tell you very genuinely, I am serious about helping those people in that community, serious about finding new reserves and new resources. I have also indicated what we are prepared to do as far as relocation is concerned.

Mr. Storle: Madam Chairperson, a \$15-million commitment over five years means that MMR is going to spend roughly, on average, what it spent for the last seven years. If the minister is telling me that is some new resources, then the minister maybe can explain where it is coming from, because it certainly would be a welcome addition.

Mr. Downey: This is an additional amount to what MMR are spending. Plus it is an additional amount to what HBM&S are spending in that particular area, which have increased 60-some percent their expenditures and exploration. So the total concentration in that area is substantial.

If the member was so committed, as he lets on he is tonight, and so helpful to move those people out of the community, if he would have put emphasis some five or six years prior to this period of time, we may not have been in the situation we are in today. I say may. I cannot genuinely say that we would not be, but you have to spend money.

That is one thing I have learned in this business, very surely. If you are going to have mines, you have to find the source you are going to mine, and that is where the main investment and the encouragement to invest has to be. That is what we have tried to do, Madam Chairperson. That is what we will continue to try to do.

Mr. Storle: That is exactly what I was telling the minister two years ago. If I had known prior to that that HBM&S was going to run out of ore by 1993, I would have certainly been encouraging him in 1988. It was never raised as a serious problem. HBM&S has always run on a relatively short proven-reserve cycle.

But I have to tell the minister that three years ago now, in 1989, I was telling him to double the exploration budget. It is a little late, after the company could not possibly get a mine up and running, to sustain the community at this point. I am sure the people who may be future residents of

Snow Lake will thank the minister, but it is a little bit too late, to say the least.

Madam Chairperson, I have a couple of other questions relating to mining. Recently, in fact last week, I had office hours in Lynn Lake, and the minister may know that it was extremely windy in northern Manitoba. The tailings pond in Lynn Lake at the mine was blowing, creating a stream of dust and pollution that was probably blowing 50 miles from the community. Those tailing ponds, I think at one time at least, had the remnants of gold tailings which may contain things like arsenic. I wonder if the minister can indicate who is responsible for the tailings pond at the LynnGold mine?

Mr. Downey: Madam Chairperson, I am sure that this is not the first time that the wind has blown in that community. It has probably blown for the last many number of years, even when the member for Flin Flon was representing as a minister that area.

Mr. Storle: No, we never let it blow like that.

Mr. Downey: Well, he is now saying that he never let it blow like that. To be fair, this is not a new phenomenon, I am sure.

Mr. Storle: It may be.

Mr. Downey: It may be.

Mr. Storle: It is not being worked now.

Mr. Downey: Oh, okay. So he is conceding that it may be that it happened before as well as just last week when he was up there.

I guess, Madam Chairperson, he asked the question, who is responsible for it? I imagine that the individuals who are the operators of the mine are responsible for the control of that type of activity, or that residue or that by-product of it. I will take under advisement what the situation is and have a report brought back to me, so I can report to the member as to the situation which he has raised. I am under the impression that under the mines authority that we would be able to try to have it dealt with, but I would check as to who is—my impression would be it would be the operator of the mine that would be responsible for those tailings.

Mr. Storle: I appreciate the minister's willingness to take a look at that. Although I have not been told by members of the community, I would have thought that pollution of this scope would have been reported at some point. It may be because of the inactivity since 1989 that the tailings pond has dried out and that has created the additional dust

problem. However, I guess the question is to the minister.

Would this mine fall under the new Mines Act and the regulations dealing with mine rehabilitation?

Mr. Downey: Yes.

Mr. Storle: So the minister is saying that if in fact it falls under the new Mines Act and if LynnGold is responsible, then the cost of rehabilitation of that tailings pond, if it turns out that it is a serious environmental problem, would fall to LynnGold and not the province.

Mr. Downey: It is my understanding, Madam Chair.

Mr. Storle: I have no more questions.

Madam Chairperson: Item 1.(b) Executive Office: (1) Salaries \$238,800.

Mr. Hickes: I would just like to ask the minister on the second line in Supplemental Estimates that where under Profession/Technical staff there is one position that has been deleted and under Administrative Support there is another one. At the bottom it says: "Reduction of 2.00 SY is a result of sharing Minister with another department."

I would like to ask the minister: Have these individuals been moved to other departments?

Mr. Downey: Yes, Madam Chairperson, they were two vacant positions and it is because I as a minister have two portfolios brought together that they were not required.

Mr. Hickes: What happened to these two SYs? Are they just cut from the government services?

Mr. Downey: Deleted.

* (2230)

Madam Chairperson: Item 1.(b) Executive Office: (1) Salaries, \$238,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$77,200—pass.

1.(c) Administrative Services: (1) Salaries \$630,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$229,500—pass.

1.(d) Marketing: (1) Salaries \$793,700—

Mr. Hickes: I would just like to ask, in the whole area of marketing, is there any ongoing marketing with other countries; or what is the marketing strategy that is happening today?

Mr. Downey: I will try and be brief, Madam Chairperson.

The whole area of promoting Manitoba's mineral production or capabilities of development of processing and sales is a very major part of what the department's role is: To work with the mining industry, to work with the potential investors, to present Manitoba in the international or national marketplace as the right place to invest.

Whether we are talking about the future mining opportunities for potash, whether we are talking about the future potential for the nickels, for the coppers, for the zincs, it is a general thrust of this department, Madam Chairperson—not just a regulatory body working to control the different people in the mining business or the petroleum industry, but to encourage globally the opportunities that Manitoba has to produce the product; to produce jobs that are part of the mining, and the processing of it; transportation; and just a general putting the best case forward to those people who are interested in not only mining and developing in Manitoba, but buying our finished product that comes from the industry.

Mr. Edwards: Madam Chairperson, one of the objectives in this branch is to provide information promoting the efficient use and conservation of energy and to disseminate and promote information on the province's mineral and petroleum resources and opportunities for their development.

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

What is the extent of the marketing strategy? Are there various brochures produced? I mean, what is the department doing? Does this include attending conferences, does this include going around the world looking for investment on a proactive basis? What does this department actually do to attract investment in the mining industry of Manitoba?

Mr. Downey: Just to further elaborate on the last answer. There is some recent information that has been put out on staking claim in Manitoba, and mining in Manitoba with some of the new incentive packages that are available.

On the energy conservation side, we have an energy conservation centre where we have all the brochures and all the information necessary to maximize the energy efficient uses—at Eaton Place.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Sveinson): Pass?

1.(d)–

Mr. Edwards: I am going to ask this question here or somewhere else, so maybe the minister can tell me if he wants to answer somewhere else.

It is one I referenced earlier on. One of the activity identifications here is to monitor current mineral industry trends. What has been the record of our new act? Is this act seen as in keeping with trends in other jurisdictions? Is the philosophy we have followed consistent with what has happened, and is the minister satisfied that it is working as he indicated it would at the time it passed?

Mr. Downey: Let me just quickly go back to recall the member's comments initially when he opened his comments about the hard work and effort and the years that went into developing the act. It has been very recently introduced, as he knows, and it is really in the growth stages and, of course, too early to say whether it is meeting the objectives. All indications are that it is in line with protecting the public interest, encouraging the mining sector and in line with the national philosophy and the development of mining in this country.

It is too early to bring forward an amendment, for example. I do not envisage that, but I can say that we think it is meeting the objectives, but there always has to be fine tuning done, but pleased with it to this date.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Acting Chairperson, just one further question on that point. I recall from sitting in on some of the hearings that there were many in the industry who came forward at the time and had concerns. Many of those were met with amendments, but others were not. Is there a formalized process for review at certain points, review of this legislation with industry representatives? I notice that one of the activities here is the ongoing discussion with industry representatives. Is there any kind of a formalized process with respect to The Mines Act to sort of say, at five years or three years we will have a review internally and with industry representatives to review the effect of the act?

Mr. Downey: No formalized process, just ongoing dialogue with the industry.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Svelnson): Item 1.(d)(1) Salaries \$793,700—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$210,700—pass.

Item 2. Energy (a) Energy Administration: (1) Salaries \$170,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$14,800.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Acting Chairperson, just very quickly on this—in terms of the demand-side management of energy in the province, I wonder if the minister can indicate what the department is doing in that respect dealing not only with Manitoba Hydro but other energy suppliers in Manitoba. What is the demand-side initiative being undertaken by this department?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I guess the whole area of the major work that is being done—and I do not want to get into Hydro debate at this particular Estimates process—but let me indicate that as far as the energy conservation branch is concerned, just to go over the objectives and that is: "To promote the conservation and efficient use of energy and to encourage the greater use of economic alternative energy sources." Public education: The department maintains a comprehensive and up-to-date information data base on all energy-related uses; produces numerous publications, both general and technical, which are prepared for public consumption. The department operates an Energy Information Centre which I referred to earlier. The department provides a technical advisory service to the public with technical staff available. The department works with Fort Whyte Centre for Environmental Education and provides a grant to them. A major energy exhibit is currently being developed with both technical and financial assistance, some \$20,000 of a grant from the department.

The department is providing an advisory service and some funding assistance to the Red River Community College to help develop a state-of-the-art reference library on energy efficiency technologies; development and presentation of various public workshops and technical information seminars in the whole area of energy conservation. So there are a lot of efforts being put forward in that area.

* (2240)

Mr. Hickes: I would like to ask the minister: What is the state of the hydrogen under the energy planning of the government?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I may take some time and go through the whole hydrogen energy process. I guess, first of all—no, I am just going to take a very short period of time.

The whole question of hydrogen is one that we have to take a longer-term vision as far as the

potential is concerned. He is aware of some of the recent activities as it related to a Japanese group who were here meeting with the I, T and T department. I guess it augurs well for the possibilities in Manitoba. I noted the Leader of the opposition party in a statement to one of the radio stations indicated that we should go full bore ahead with the hydro generating station to produce electricity for hydrogen production regardless of the environmental damage—[interjection] Oh, I think it came from a Leader of the Opposition. But the bottom line is that I think there is some good potential in that area, and I, of course, as Energy minister am prepared to do whatever we can to produce energy-efficient types, sustainable development principles applied. I think it has a potential, but it will be in the longer term, not in the immediate future as it has been discussed with me.

Mr. Hickes: I think that, if the minister followed the Leader's statement, the Leader of the Opposition's statement, what the Leader was saying was that, if you develop a market for hydrogen, and if it will decrease the consumption of fossil fuels and also the emissions in the air, and if we are saving our environment by using hydrogen, then it will offset the Earth for use by our children compared to the damages that a hydro dam would cause—well, you could not even compare it to polluting our air today.

What I would like to ask, just to follow up a little further, is the minister mentioned ongoing negotiations with Japan. Is there any ongoing negotiations with Japan? Is there any set date for Japan to come to Canada to study this further?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I am not aware of any ongoing negotiations. I think there are ongoing discussions, but I am not aware of any ongoing negotiations. The member may want to ask the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson) when his Estimates come before this committee as to what further activities are taking place there, but not negotiations, I believe discussions at this point.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Sveinson): Item 2. Energy (b) Energy Planning: (1) Salaries \$357,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$94,400—

Mr. Hickes: I would like to touch on the energy conservation part of the process. We heard talk of energy conservation and demand-side management with Manitoba Hydro, but I have heard very little energy conservation pertaining to fossil

fuels and nonrenewable resources. Is there any activity in this area taking place today?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, the answer to the question is yes. I do not believe there are large expenditures taking place within the department, but I know there is certainly encouragement, particularly in certain areas where it may be more economical to run school buses on natural gas versus the traditional types of gas. There is encouragement in that particular area. I know there is a major program in that particular area.

As far as improving the insulation, as far as education on improving insulation in buildings, again another major initiative. I would like to—and I say this very genuinely—see a lot greater extension of natural gas throughout some of our major communities throughout rural Manitoba that today are not hooked in to the natural gas systems. I believe that we could use the lower-cost natural gases where in fact they are using either possibly hydro, in certain cases today, to fire certain industries or certain heating purposes and/or other types of activities that you could convert diesel fuel use to natural gas or in certain areas, and I say that genuinely, with the North Central Hydro agreement that has been struck. One of the reasons behind that again, the purpose of not only bringing in a better hydro service to those communities, but to convert from using diesel-generated electricity to water-generated hydro power was not only a good economic move, but also environmentally sound.

So I think we are applying those principles wherever we can. I am looking forward to some major initiatives—and I say that genuinely—in this whole area of trying to keep the costs down and, of course, maximizing the proper energy fuel in the proper situation.

As far as I am concerned as the minister, and I know the department feels the same way, efficiency is extremely important and also it is important to use the proper energy to do the proper job with.

Mr. Hickes: I would just like to touch on two areas of staffing where last year under Professional/Technical there were eight staff, and this year there are only four, which has been cut in half. This is in the Energy Conservation area, and in Administrative Support there were two, now there is only one. With the minister's statement of being very conscious and very concerned about energy

conservation, yet the staff is being cut in half, I would like to ask the minister why?

Mr. Downey: The reason for the reduction was the elimination of funding for the Energy Bus Audit Program.

Mr. Hickes: Could the minister tell me what this program was all about, the Energy Bus Audit?

Mr. Downey: It would take a considerable amount of time, but I will try and be brief [interjection] Summarize it? Okay.

The Energy Bus Audit Program was terminated effective March 31, 1992. In 1985, the federal funding was discontinued and Manitoba was one of the few provinces that continued to fund and run the program. It provided free energy audits to commercial, industrial and institutional facilities. I guess one would think if the efficiency were there that without being encouraged to do it that the efficiency factor and the cost of heating or firing one's industry would be a reason to do it.

That is really the main reason, is to encourage industries to use more efficient motors and more efficient heating systems, and of course Manitoba Hydro has picked up on the Power Smart program which is to some degree fulfilling some of the areas of responsibility that were under the Energy Bus Audit Program.

Mr. Hickes: With the reduction in staffing to about half, if you look under Expenditures for Transportation, you still have relatively the same amount of money for half the staff. I would like to ask the minister, is there additional travel for those four staff now?

Mr. Downey: I hope Treasury Board are not listening, when you picked that up, Mr. Acting Chairperson. I hope we still have the same resources. We want to carry on some work activity, but it is in a little different area.

* (2250)

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Sveinsson): Item 2.(b) Energy Planning: (2) Other Expenditures \$94,400—pass.

2.(c) Energy Conservation: (1) Salaries \$288,800—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$216,800—pass.

2.(d) Petroleum: (1) Salaries \$788,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$139,900—pass.

2.(e) Conawapa Project Co-ordination: (1) Salaries, \$146,200.

Mr. Edwards: I want to talk briefly about the Conawapa Project Co-ordination and the recent correspondence from the chairperson of the joint review panel, Mr. Eagleton, the correspondence of March of this year which indicates that the review panel's work will be significantly delayed as a result of the decision and the agreement by Manitoba Hydro to include consideration of the effects of the project on the Hudson Bay basin.

I want to ask the minister what the Conawapa Project Co-ordination Unit believes will be the result of the assessment of the broader environmental issues on the timeliness of the construction start, when they anticipate that it may start, or what range of times they think it might start; but secondly, on the economics of the deal, given that delay in the deal and in construction may, quite obviously, have an economic impact, an impact that was acknowledged by Mr. Brennan and Mr. McCallum recently at the committee.

What does the Conawapa Project Co-ordination Unit of this minister's department believe the effect will be of the increased scope of the review and the resultant delay in getting through the environmental review process?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, the member for St. James is taking a different interpretation than the one that I am getting from what Hydro has indicated as it relates to the scoping for the Conawapa Bipole III. It is not my intention, in any way, to get into the debate as to the environmental work. It is my job here tonight to express what I believe the Conawapa project co-ordinator is doing without commenting as it relates to the process.

But I think that the member would well want to be a little more accurate in his interpretation as to what Hydro is saying as it relates to the scoping for the environmental review of Conawapa and Bipole III. My understanding is that the request by Manitoba Hydro, which is the proponent, is to get a licence to build the Conawapa generating station and to get a licence to build Bipole III. That is the objective of Manitoba Hydro.

Yes, I think that there is a role that can be carried out as far as looking at some of the impacts. We have certainly spent a lot of money on some of the past impacts that were not looked after by previous administrations. In fact, signing of the Split Lake Cree agreement, which the member is well aware of, is a major commitment of this government, to

continue to implement the Northern Flood Agreement. Losses or the damages done by northern Hydro development again shows a major commitment not only just to look at and review and study, but to pay for damages incurred by Hydro activity.

So I am of a little different opinion than the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) as it relates to what Hydro is saying as it relates to the request for licensing for Conawapa and Bipole III. I believe, and the member is well aware of this—and this is not the Conawapa project co-ordinator speaking—but I think there is certainly information available, that any delay would not be helpful to the project. At this point I cannot see where it is of any major difficulty, but again we have said we want the proper environmental work done on the Conawapa project and Bipole III. It is not my role to interfere in that but to make sure it is done properly and thoroughly, and so those are the comments that I have at this time, Mr. Acting Chairperson.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Acting Chairperson, the minister, I guess, mistook my comments about the increased scope of the hearings causing delay as coming from Manitoba Hydro. That is not what I suggested. The indication of delay came from Mr. Eagleton who is the chairperson of the joint panel, and it was enclosed in a March 12, 1992 letter which the minister has, because the letter was addressed to him, to the government, if I recall correctly.

Now, Mr. Acting Chairperson, my question is—one of the objectives of this unit is to assess anticipated planning or organizational needs—I want to ask the minister what the current assessment is of the anticipated date of the construction of Conawapa that his department is placing on it, such that they can plan the organizational needs. They must have a new target date for construction. What is it?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I am not informed of any major delay from the Conawapa Co-ordinating Committee. Their work, as I understand what their mandate was when it was set out, is to co-ordinate activities within the communities that are going to be affected; develop educational programs to make sure that we are maximizing the economic benefits of the building of such a major structure; industrial offsets to make sure that the government and Manitoba Hydro are working together. So at this point I do not have a report that I am aware of from the Conawapa Co-ordinating Committee that would show any

different time frame than what has already been made public through Manitoba Hydro. So I have no additional information from the Conawapa Co-ordinating Committee at this point.

Mr. Edwards: Well, certainly the minister does not deny that Mr. Eagleton indicated that there would be a delay, in his March 12 letter, and I assume that he is not taking issue with that. But is he saying that his department, his branch, is essentially ignoring that or taking the position that the construction schedule of Manitoba Hydro which initially called for construction to begin in early 1993 can still be met?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I would say that as far as the department is concerned and the Conawapa co-ordinating unit is concerned all of these things are taken into consideration in the work that they are doing. I would hope that we can have a smooth process as far as the environmental hearings are concerned, and that there will not be a major delay even though we are aware of what Mr. Eagleton has said.

I think that in the interests of the sale that is proposed to Ontario, the job creation that the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hicke) keeps pressing us for and his party keeps pressing us for—some 22,000 person years of work; the economic benefits of over \$600 million to the people of Manitoba—that all people, and I say all people, want to get behind this project, Mr. Acting Chairperson, get behind this project for the economic betterment of this province.

Quit being a naysayer, quit being negative. It is time to get on with what is right for the people of Manitoba and use Manitoba Hydro as an economic generator, as it was done under D. L. Campbell, as it was done under Duff Roblin, as it was done under Sterling Lyon and Ed Schreyer and Howard Pawley. The thing that has to be done is to do the proper environmental hearing, to do the proper work prior to the development of it, and for people to get on with it, and not to use certain things for delay tactics. The work has to be done properly, but we have to get on with it.

So as far as the Conawapa Co-ordinating Committee are concerned, it is to make sure that all the benefits that can flow from this project are maximized in Manitoba, that we have industries that benefit from them, that we have education programs that are provided under such a major thrust. As far as the issue of delay is concerned, I believe it is too

early to determine to what extent that will be, but again that is part of what I would expect to have reported in due course.

* (2300)

Mr. Hickes: I have a couple of questions on that. I do not know how to follow up on that very fiery speech I just heard. Like I have been saying from Day One—and I am not backtracking or veering in any way as some members have stated—we have always said from Day One, follow the rules, do it properly, and do it for the benefit of all Manitobans. I have said that from Day One.

On that note, I have one concern where, if, when Conawapa goes, and I hope that the co-ordinating unit has addressed this issue, is the whole issue of aboriginal participation on site. Where at one time you used to have northern Regional Employment Services that were on site to help the workers adjust and to make sure that people had adequate clothing and adequate tools in order to continue working on site, under Family Services, dismantling all the whole area of Regional Employment Services, has the co-ordinating unit or the minister, has anyone addressed this issue to you?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, it is the intention of the co-ordinating committee to work very closely with the communities to have a direct liaison, not only with the co-ordinating committee in the communities, but to have the top management of Manitoba Hydro, as well as my office, directly involved in working with the communities to make sure that we are not seeing difficulties that are not being looked after, that we can have them looked after when they are brought to our attention.

I see a lot of community involvement in the whole planning process. That is the intention of myself as minister for both Northern Affairs and Hydro. I will take the information the member has provided and have it looked at as to making sure that that is being considered at the same time.

Mr. Hickes: Mr. Acting Chairperson, under staffing for the Conawapa Project Co-ordination unit, there are three staff working. I would like to ask the minister if any of those staff are aboriginal people?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, the answer is no. But I do have an individual who I have just recently brought on under contract to my office who is aboriginal, who is working with the Conawapa Co-ordinating Committee and with the communities.

I plan to have more aboriginal involvement as time goes on.

Mr. Hickes: Who is that individual?

Mr. Downey: Well, Mr. Acting Chairperson, I am pretty proud of the individual. I guess it would be appropriate to put his name on the record. It is Brian Henderson, who the member may or may not know. But he is a very qualified individual and is getting on very well with the work that has been assigned to him.

Mr. Hickes: I just have one more question. Under Other Expenditures where it says Other Operating costs, you have \$10,000 last year and this year it has gone up to \$18,000. Could the minister explain what that \$8,000 increase is?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, he is asking me embarrassing questions. I just get this extra money through Treasury Board and now I have to explain it to him. I have to now, probably, go back to Treasury Board and tell them what I am going to do with it.

The reason for the increase is—

Mr. Hickes: I did not get the answer for the increase of \$8,000.

Mr. Downey: . . . demonstrated need.

Mr. Hickes: Could the minister explain what that need is?

Mr. Downey: Extra work activity.

Mr. Hickes: Could the minister explain what the extra work that had to take place involved?

Mr. Downey: As I had indicated, a lot more work activity, associated travel costs, an acceleration of activity within that area.

Mr. Hickes: In that area, would that cover additional work and additional transportation costs? Would that not come under the transportation that is under Other Expenditures?

Mr. Downey: No, it would not.

Mr. Hickes: You have almost a doubling of one area of expenditures. Maybe the minister would like to explain further what additional responsibility or extra cost—was that cost directly related to the three staff people?

Mr. Downey: General operating costs, computer related, travel, extraordinary cost, publications, employee education assistance, relocation and transfer costs, convention costs and just general overall increase in activity in this area.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Sveinsson): Item 2.(e) Conawapa Project Co-ordination: (1) Salaries \$146,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$195,200—pass.

Resolution 35: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,412,100 for Energy and Mines, Energy, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1993—pass.

Item 3. Mineral Resources (a) Mines: (1) Salaries \$1,675,200—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$399,800—pass.

3.(b) Geological Services: (1) Salaries \$1,551,400—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$238,400—pass.

3.(c) Canada-Manitoba Mineral Development Agreement: (1) Salaries \$473,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$326,100—pass.

Resolution 36: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$4,664,800 for Energy and Mines, Mineral Resources, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1993—pass.

Item 4. Mineral Industry Support Programs (a) Manitoba Exploration Incentive Program: (1) Salaries \$28,100.

Mr. Edwards: I assume we are on the Mineral Exploration Incentive Program line. This, of course, was announced in March of this year; \$12.5 million was committed. I see here that just in excess of \$3 million has actually been given out or has actually been spent; \$3 million has been given out in grants. Does the minister have a list of grants making up that \$3 million?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, the \$12.5 million was committed over three years, and this is available for commitment this year. We are now in the stages of approval of some of the first applications, and I believe there are two or three—oh, I have a list of them here. To date, five programs, one oil related and four mineral have been approved by the government. Total exploration expenditures for the five programs are approximately \$2.7 million, with a total initial grant allocation of \$485,000. Companies are currently completing their financial arrangements, and there are two additional programs that are currently under consideration by government.

* (2310)

Mr. Edwards: Does the minister have a list of the criteria for qualification for this program that he would be prepared to supply us with?

Mr. Downey: Yes, Mr. Acting Chairperson, I am prepared to provide the member with the whole list of criteria, the whole program. If not at this particular time, I can make it available to the member.

Mr. Edwards: I notice that this is only available to junior companies with a capital base of less than \$100 million. Is it not the case that many of the companies in this area are diversified and in fact they have parent corporations oftentimes because of the mining industry's roller coaster nature? Oftentimes, large companies split off subdivisions fairly early on, and each mine tends to be incorporated under a separate corporate entity.

Is there a process in place to guard against essentially larger corporations through lesser, smaller subdivisions qualifying under this junior exploration company qualification?

Mr. Downey: I have a copy of the criteria for the member which I will provide to the member. As far as the larger companies positioning themselves or organizing themselves so that they can take advantage of this program, I am not absolutely clear as to how the regulations apply. But it is the intent of the program not to fully disregard this.

I am sure that he being a lawyer, and businesses being businesses, there are certain activities carried out that a major company, if putting an investment in a smaller company, could well take advantage of it, but I guess what we are really trying to accomplish is increased mineral exploration in the province.

It is with the best intention of the government to make sure that the funds are not used by major companies. That is really the bottom line. We believe major companies should be able to do it on their own. It is the junior companies that need the support of such a program.

So although some major companies may well position themselves to take some opportunity under this program, it is the intent to have the major portion of it applied to junior companies.

Mr. Edwards: I am not convinced of the logic of that myself, but in terms of distinguishing between bigger companies and little companies, I think generally, in terms of incentives like this it is probably preferable to distinguish between higher-risk ventures and lower-risk ventures. That is, lower-risk ventures can usually attract the capital

required. It is the higher-risk ventures, the exploration and development, that often need incentives in place to encourage companies to take a higher risk.

In any event, I am content to see how this program works. I simply drew that to the attention of the minister because he is absolutely correct. A lot of lawyers spend a lot of time trying to figure out ways to qualify for these programs, and that is something to watch for because, particularly in this industry, it is an industry that tends to have corporation upon corporation upon corporation.

There tends to be a hierarchy in most of these organizations simply because liability dictates that you incorporate almost each and every mine because it may go under, and you do not want the company to suffer beyond the mine itself. In any event, I am content to leave this to next year to review the success of the program in greater detail.

Mr. Downey: I may add, further to that, what we have is a corporate chain and web test that applies. I guess the bottom line is, we are trying to maximize the exploration activity with a minimum amount of provincial cost.

Mr. Hickes: I just have a couple of questions in this area. I would like to ask the minister if there is any new activity around Sherridon and Lynn Lake.

Mr. Downey: Mr. Acting Chairperson, one wants not to get every community excited when a question like that comes forward. There are people always waiting for activities to come and replace the activity that was lost. So, without creating a lot of excitement, I will answer it on the cautious side to say that there is some slight interest in the Lynn Lake area.

As well, let me report that I was at Lynn Lake about two or three weeks ago, and there is also another interesting activity taking place. That is the launching of some atmospheric balloon, an atmospheric balloon program, from about three countries, Japan being one of them, the United States being another; I am not sure which the other one is. Again, there is some renewed activity and hope for economic activity in their community in the summer.

As I understand it, there is some renewed interest in the LynnGold area.

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Sveinsson): Item 4. Mineral Industry Support Programs (a) Manitoba Exploration Incentive Program: (1) Salaries

\$28,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$79,000—pass; (3) Grants \$3,000,000—pass.

4.(b) Acid Rain Abatement Program - Flin Flon \$2,930,000.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Acting Chairperson, is the HBM&S Agreement the only agreement that is administered under any acid rain abatement program in the province? Is there any other area of the province that the minister has concern about acid rain?

Mr. Downey: Well, this is the only one that the government is participating in. If there were acid rain in another area, one would be concerned about it, but this is the only one that we are participating in.

Mr. Edwards: Is the minister, is the department aware of other companies, other mines, that are producing the fumes to the extent that acid rain is a problem?

Mr. Downey: Not that I have been notified of, Mr. Acting Chairperson.

Mr. Edwards: Does this branch take any kind of a proactive position or work with the Department of the Environment in monitoring other smelters for acid rain implication?

Mr. Downey: Yes, for sure the Department of Energy and Mines works very closely with the Department of Environment.

(Madam Chairperson in the Chair)

I guess as far as acid rain is concerned, I am not so sure that, you know—all mining activity I am sure has the possibility of acid rain, for example, Inco probably; but again those are all closely monitored by the Department of Environment and if actions are needed actions are taken. So testing is going on, on an ongoing basis.

Madam Chairperson: 4.(b) Acid Rain Abatement Program \$2,930,000—pass.

4.(c) Manitoba Potash Project \$179,600.

Mr. Edwards: One question here. Having grown up part of my life in Saskatchewan where potash is a huge industry, as the minister knows, I certainly understand the economic importance of potash. The expected result here is the development of a multimillion dollar potash mining, processing operation. What is the progress report on that?

* (2320)

Mr. Downey: Well, I can tell you, Madam Chairperson, that it is, from the length of time that I have been involved in the Legislature, slow. I will just give him a little bit of history as I was a member of the Legislature from 1977 to '81. In the Lyon government there was a very aggressive move to develop the potash reserves in the western side of the province. In fact IMC had proceeded to identify a shaft area, to proceed to do some major planning for the development of a potash mine. Of course, with the loss of government in 1981 the rest is history. The potash is still in the ground. There is no mine. There is no economic development from that mine. So that is the unfortunate history of, again, those years of New Democrats governing this province.

An Honourable Member: The price is down.

Mr. Downey: Well, the member says the price is down. Well, the mine would have been there if they had proceeded to carry through with the plan that was put in place to develop some \$800 million in mine development and some hundreds of jobs. Being that as it may, the current state of the potash program is to continue to have the Manitoba Potash Corporation—which is in partnership with a French company which currently are waiting for market improvements. The member is right, the market of potash is down, but it is my plan and our plan as a government to move as reasonably fast as possible under current situations to see the development take place.

I am desirous as the Minister of Energy and Mines in the Province of Manitoba to see a potash mine be established in Manitoba. It is our desire to do so, but one has to do it based on the economics of doing it. So you will not probably see one develop in the next few days, but I can tell you that we will be working aggressively to look at all options to enhance the opportunities for that development.

Mr. Hickes: I cannot just leave that on the record where it is all totally the NDP's fault that we do not have a potash mine going in Manitoba. I would just like to remind the minister that his party has been in government since 1988, and if there had been the will of the government, that would be ample time to develop a mine and to put it into production and create some much needed jobs in Manitoba where we see the unemployment rate over 50,000 right now. If the mine was developed within that five years, we might have less than 50,000 people out of work today.

Madam Chairperson: Item 4.(c) Manitoba Potash Project \$179,600—pass.

Resolution 37: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$6,216,700 for Energy and Mines, Mineral Industry Support Programs, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1993.

At this time I would request that the minister's staff leave the Chamber so we can give consideration to item 1.(a) Minister's Salary.

Item 1.(a) Minister's Salary \$10,300.

Mr. Downey: Madam Chairperson, it is not my intention to delay the Estimates of the Department of Energy and Mines, but I do want to acknowledge, and I say this genuinely, the work and effort of the Department of Energy and Mines and the work of the former minister.

I do want to acknowledge the concern that this government has for those people living in our northern mining communities that have seen difficulties, whether it is in Lynn Lake or whether it is the current difficulties in Snow Lake, that we are genuinely concerned. That is why this government proceeded to introduce some of the most progressive mining incentive programs that this province has seen, Madam Chairperson.

I can tell you that without that there would be no hope. We were informed about several months ago that there was still a belief in the mining sector that some of the old Ed Schreyer policies still applied in the province of Manitoba. That, I believe, has been put to rest. The general industry out there now know that the Filmon government in Manitoba is not only open for business, we are going out after business.

So, for those people who I have a lot of concern for, who are living in our northern communities, looking for the ray of hope that will come to provide a new source of mineral for production and processing in their communities, we are working desperately hard to try to find them.

As for the energy sector, I believe strongly that we need the co-operation of members opposite to bring in natural gas to some of our rural communities that do not have natural gas supplies. We believe it is the right thing to do. Energy efficiency is extremely important to, again, use the proper energy in the proper industries, Madam Chairperson. So I want to say, I am very much energized with the prospects

that we have in the whole mineral and energy sector in the province of Manitoba.

I look forward, over the next months and weeks, to having the support of members opposite in some new initiatives that I hope we were able to further introduce within the energy and the mineral sector. I want to thank members for their active participation in the Estimates process here this evening and the departmental staff who played such an important role.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Madam Chairperson: Item 1.(a) Minister's Salary \$10,300—pass.

Resolution 34: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,190,400 for Energy and Mines, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March 1993—pass.

Mr. Downey: Madam Chairperson, I wonder if I could have leave from the committee to have the Department of I, T and T start their Estimates process this evening?

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. I regret that the committee is not in a position to grant leave. It is a rule of the House that no new Department of Supply shall commence after 10 p.m.

This concludes the Estimates for the Department of Energy and Mines. Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hour being after 10 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Tuesday).

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Monday, June 15, 1992

CONTENTS

Committee of Supply

Culture, Heritage and Citizenship	4664
Highways and Transportation	4700
Energy and Mines	4719