



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

42 Elizabeth II

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
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ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	NDP
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	Liberal
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	NDP
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<i>Vacant</i>	Rossmere	
<i>Vacant</i>	Rupert Island	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, May 31, 1993

The House met at 8 p.m.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(continued)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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

The committee will be resuming consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training.

When the committee last sat it had been considering item 2.(a)(1) on page 35.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, when we were last together, the critic from the NDP had asked me to give some information regarding some highlights and some direction which we are pursuing in this area of Program Development and Support Services.

I spoke before the break about a consultative process with program directors, and the ADM of this division is also having open discussions with staff members who would like to be involved. We look for that to be as many as possible and preferably all.

These discussions are focusing on services which we provide, things that we are doing well and things that we can improve upon. Immediately following these sessions the ADM is meeting with major educational organizations to get their input and their ideas on what type of leadership and services they would like to see the department provide. All of this input will help us move toward educational reform.

* (2005)

This division will also be very much involved in the Education Innovation Forum which we have been speaking of and which is planned for the fall. Some of the issues that are currently being examined and will be followed up upon for further discussion

through the forum are things like parental involvement, violence and aggression in schools, teacher training, interdepartmental co-ordination of services, program and student assessment, curriculum design and development process.

The division is also involved in the various initiatives across the department and will continue to build on the existing programs and the practices that have demonstrated positive results in the education system.

To summarize then, allow me to highlight the significant activities that each of the current branches are involved in.

First of all, in the curriculum area, developing curriculum guides and related support materials for Manitoba schools with a special emphasis at present on those areas identified in the High School Review involves working with about 40 committees of teachers.

Major curriculum revisions currently underway are mathematics in the K through Senior 2 area; science in the K through Senior 1; art, Senior 1; business education, Seniors 1 through 4; and English language arts, Senior 3 and Senior 4.

In addition, to develop, disseminate and interpret the indicators of student achievement to improve student evaluation practices and provide summative examinations for the final year of high school; also, workshops, courses, visitations are provided to improve teaching and learning relative to revised curricula.

The recently formed interorganizational curriculum advisory committee will provide advice on the principles, goals and broad directions to be followed in the development, implementation and assessment of the curricula K to 12. The committee also provides a forum for the discussion of organizational perspectives on issues of curriculum and assessment and also to integrate relevant applications of technology.

I also have further information on the area of native education, on initiatives of the Manitoba School for the Deaf, the Child Care and Development Branch, the Instructional Resources Branch,

our Distance Education and Technology Branch, the Student Support Branch.

I am prepared to go over these now or to begin to answer some questions.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Perhaps the minister would be willing to table that information. It would make it a lot easier for us to follow. I do not know whether she has copies of each of the highlights for each of the branches, but it would be helpful to go through those various branches.

However, in the meantime, we have the division administration, I guess is what the minister has talked about generally in the first dissertation on this.

I wanted to ask the minister about the reorganization she talked about in this section and talked about reorganization improvements and then went on to talk about curriculum improvement, database improvement, internal and external and a number of other areas.

* (2010)

First of all, the total staff reduction in this reorganization, as the minister calls it, which is really a reduction in the—it is a downsizing of the division, about 79 staff. Is that correct? How much of a reduction is there in the managerial section of staff?

I notice for the present year, I believe there are 16—13 management—I just wanted to know what the managerial complement was for the previous year.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I wonder if the member could clarify. Are you speaking about managerial SYs in the whole of the division or for this line only, this appropriation only?

Mr. Plohman: I am speaking about Program Development and Support Services, 16.2, in totality.

Mrs. Vodrey: In looking at the whole of the division, there has been a reduction of two co-ordinators.

Mr. Plohman: Am I to assume from that answer that under managerial, on page 14 of the Supplementary Estimates, Program Development and Support Services, co-ordinators constitute management and therefore there were 15 the previous year and now there is 13? Is that the total management co-ordinators?

Mrs. Vodrey: That is correct.

Mr. Plohman: Could the minister indicate in what area the co-ordinators were eliminated?

Mrs. Vodrey: One reduction of a co-ordinator for the High School Review and one reduction in Distance Education and Technology.

Mr. Plohman: Could the minister give us a breakdown of the other sections, the Professional/Technical people? We have listed here 160 SYs, Professional/Technical. How many were there in that section the previous year?

Mrs. Vodrey: I know the member is referring to a global chart in the Supplementary Estimates. We have the details of the staffing information done by subappropriation as it is listed in the Estimates booklet, so we would be able to talk about it line by line. If the member would like a more detailed kind of information specifically at this point, then we would have to compile it.

* (2015)

Mr. Plohman: I would like to get the compilation of all of these sections. I think it is rather, I guess, inconsistent that we would have information for the previous year in all cases, but on that table, we do not. So I think if the minister can get that information compiled as soon as possible, then I would like to have it. It would facilitate the discussion about the priorities and the nature of the reductions and cuts. As well, the administrative support is 87.5, 87 and a half staff, and it would be important to note how many were reduced there as well from the previous year, so if the minister can give us that.

I notice that the total reduction in this branch for staff is nearly \$3 million, and the total reduction for the division is about \$3 million and then total reduction for the division considering all appropriations, not just staff, is just about \$3 million too. So it would indicate to me that almost all of the reductions have come from staff cuts. There is very little from program cuts other than the staff themselves here. So it is important for us to get an idea of what kind of staff are reduced. So as soon as the minister can get that, I would appreciate it.

Mrs. Vodrey: We will get that for tomorrow afternoon and attempt to give the comparison for the member. Otherwise, as we go through the subappropriations this evening as well, I will be prepared to talk about them.

Mr. Plohman: Well, we are going to try to discuss most of the areas under Division Administration at least in a preliminary way because this Division Administration, I see, is responsible for

implementing the stated objectives of the seven branches. So having taken on that noble task in Administration in the (a) section, I guess they are responsible for what happens in the whole area. It is interesting, but makes the job very difficult, I would suppose, to be responsible for everyone else's detailed work, but it involves all of these; Curriculum, Native Education, Manitoba School for the Deaf and so on and so forth.

So I want to, first of all, discuss with the minister some of her priorities for Curriculum Services from the administration's point of view. The minister has raised some of the points. Could the minister indicate what the status is of the Skills for Independent Living program? Is that now fully implemented in the schools? Is it in a pilot status or where is it at?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, in Skills for Independent Living, the pilot for the course is complete. The implementation will begin for all schools in September '93. It is to be implemented as a full credit. However, it may be provided in two half-credit courses, so the total credit will be one but the actual provision of the course may be, according to the school and their timetable, by two half-credit courses. They may be implemented at any year within the Seniors 1 through 4.

Mr. Plohman: It is to be started or at least half the course has to be taught in Senior 2? Is that correct?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, no, the choice is at any time between S1 and S4.

* (2020)

Mr. Plohman: Do students who are already through any one of those years prior to September '93 have to also take one credit in the remaining two or one or three years? Is this only for new students starting in Senior 1 or Grade 9?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, this begins this September for students beginning Senior 2. Students who are past the Senior 2 year will be considered to have grandfathered in this particular course.

Mr. Plohman: Does this apply to all schools in the public education system and private school system or just the public school system?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it is students in all schools.

Mr. Plohman: Can the minister indicate the philosophy behind this course and the reason why it was given such high priority to be implemented within I guess a year or two years of the High School Review that was prepared by the previous minister, the Answering the Challenge?

I notice Strategy 79 was the Skills for Independent Living. I am going to be asking the minister about the status of all of these recommendations, these so-called strategies. It would be interesting to see what the philosophy was behind Skills for Independent Living and the urgency for bringing it in and the need that was deemed to be there, that had to be addressed by this course, that it was made compulsory.

Mrs. Vodrey: This particular course, the content and modules within this particular course have flowed from the original Challenges & Changes report which was begun under the previous government. It was also noted in Answering the Challenge, which has been the most recent document. There has been an identification through both of those reports of an importance to have a course which promotes critical skills needed by all students, for example, skills such as learning skills, career development, entrepreneurship, management of time and financial resources.

The pilot on this course was particularly extensive, and there has been a great deal of feedback from students and from teachers, and they have found the course content to be extremely relevant. In terms of the implementation, Answering the Challenge, the High School Review recommendations have been implemented in a staged process, and starting September '93 was the year in that process to implement the Senior 2 courses.

Mr. Plohman: Well, just as an aside, the minister might bring us up to date on whether the schedule has been kept. I note that the minister mentions September '93 as the time when Senior 2 courses were to be implemented. If that is relevant, then how closely has the schedule been adhered to for all recommendations in the time line that was given? Pardon me, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, really what I am asking is, is implementation behind schedule and on average by how much? I am not at this point asking for each recommendation, each strategy, as to how far it is behind.

* (2025)

Mrs. Vodrey: I understand that originally there were some difficulties in terms of meeting the time lines, but from the time that the former Minister of Education, now Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), made announcements to the field regarding the times, and the field has been updated on a quarterly basis regarding the dates of implementation, that I am informed that this has now all been on time.

Mr. Plohman: Just to clarify, on time to the original schedule or on time to the revised schedule?

Mrs. Vodrey: On time to the revised schedule.

Mr. Plohman: Getting back to the pilot of the Skills for Independent Living the minister said was extensive, what does that mean precisely?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, the pilot process included, first of all, a pilot in Year 1 or Senior 1, and that involved approximately a hundred schools. That was in fact one of the most extensive pilots that has been conducted. There was feedback from that pilot where some schools indicated that Year 1 was perhaps not the most appropriate year, and then there was a further pilot to pilot the program in Year 2, Senior 2, with 50 schools. Following that, in 1993, we have held consultations regarding the course, and those consultations have been just completed. The consultations were held with the pilot teachers, with school administrators, with the Chamber of Commerce, with labour, and all of the representatives from all sides have indicated a positive response to this course.

* (2030)

Mr. Plohman: Could the minister table a copy of the curriculum for this course?

Mrs. Vodrey: We do not have four copies of the curriculum today. We do have one copy of the curriculum. I would be pleased to table the rest tomorrow, at the next sitting.

Mr. Plohman: Good. Thank you. When was the committee established that drew up the curriculum?

Mrs. Vodrey: The committee was established in September of 1990.

Mr. Plohman: How many people were involved, and were they primarily teachers of Senior 1 or Senior 2 levels? Where were they from? Perhaps the minister has a list of the people that participated in that committee. I mean, if the list is all in the

curriculum, contained in the—that would be sufficient.

Mrs. Vodrey: The list is contained in the curriculum and it does list who the members were in terms of the steering committee. It lists them by their school division or their representative organization, such as the university, Brandon University, Assiniboine Community College, Manitoba Education and Training, Chamber of Commerce. There is further representation from the community colleges and various school divisions. So when that is tabled, that will be available.

Mr. Plohman: Another question on that, it seems that there was a lot of involvement from outside the direct educational circle. How many of the people on that committee were educators, what percentage of the total?

Mrs. Vodrey: Twenty of 21 were educators.

Mr. Plohman: I thought the minister mentioned that there was Chamber of Commerce on there and some other groups. Was that the only one that was an exception or was the Chamber of Commerce rep also an educator?

Mrs. Vodrey: I said 20 of 21 were educators. The 21st represented the Chamber of Commerce, but perhaps the member is confusing when I spoke about the most recent consultation process in which there was representation of educators and also the community.

Mr. Plohman: So following the initial work of the committee to draw up the curriculum, there was a process that involved consultation with the schools and also the community there. Is the minister saying there were many other groups involved in critiquing what was developed?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, yes, at the end of the pilot year, the course had been validated as an important area of studies, studied by a series of study groups. Within those study groups there was representation from the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, from labour, parents, as well as educators.

Mr. Plohman: Were there substantive changes made to the curriculum as a result of that process?

Mrs. Vodrey: None of the changes have been substantive. The changes have been in the area of refinements. They have occurred during the whole process of piloting the pilot which occurred at Senior 1, the pilot which occurred at Senior 2, and the

course has been monitored throughout the pilot process.

Mr. Plohman: In general terms, does the minister have a breakdown of the percentage of the course for each of the major areas that she talked about as being covered including critical thinking, decision making, fiscal and time management study skills, entrepreneurialship, career education, family studies, whatever the breakdown is? Can she give us an idea of how much time is spent on each of those?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, in the course, which is 110 hours, Unit 1, the introduction, is to take up to five hours; Unit 2, Enterprise and Innovation, to take up to 25 hours; Unit 3, Learning Skills, five to 10 hours; Self-management, 20 hours; Managing Your Resources, 10 hours; the World of Work, 30 hours; Independent Study, 15 hours.

Mr. Plohman: Which part of the curriculum deals with entrepreneurship—Enterprise and Innovation or a World of Work or what?

Mrs. Vodrey: It is Unit 2, Enterprise and Innovation.

Mr. Plohman: Is that the basic nature of that section of the course, all of that 25 hours?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, in that Unit 2, Enterprise and Innovation, areas covered are: what is enterprise and innovation; opportunities and ideas; the value of enterprise and innovation; the process of innovation; maintaining a balance; and also planning for success.

Mr. Plohman: Does the course deal with such information as establishing a company, a partnership or corporation?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the focus of this section of the course is on critical thinking. It is not specifically a business course which then develops specifically a business plan. In fact, it looks at areas such as how students can tap into their individual and their collective creativity and initiative in any aspect of life. In the area of enterprise, there are definitions which speak about enterprise as an undertaking which involves activity, courage, energy and also a daring project.

In addition, it looks at definitions of things such as innovation; entrepreneurship; involving a recognition of opportunities; the needs and the wants and the problems and the use of resources to implement innovative ideas for new thoughtfully planned ventures.

It also looks at the spirit of adventure and an opportunity to take one's own set of initiatives, not just to wait for life to happen; an empowering attitude; a set of behaviours and skills; a way to look at the world, dealing with problems; and perceives needs as opportunities for Improvement and also approaching a need or a problem as an opportunity to learn and grow, rather than in terms of what can be lost, what would be lost.

* (2040)

Then, an underlying part of the course is students and teachers to be encouraged to support each other, learn from each other; the issue of adaptability to change; learning about oneself; the setting of short- and long-term goals; the importance of making plans; the commitment required, both in time, energy; a hands-on learning techniques with student involvement and responsibility in planning, doing and evaluating. Those are all covered in that section.

There are, however, in Unit 6: World of Work, some areas which may also be of interest to the member in terms of the questions that he has asked. One area covered in the World of Work is job-seeking strategies and how students should understand the use of resumés and different ways of getting a job, recognizing the importance of knowing appropriate information about employers.

Also, a section on work relationships; keeping a job and protection against harassment; knowledge of the Human Rights Code; rights and obligations of employees and employers, so that students can understand the role and the responsibilities of the Employment Standards branch, understand the importance of this information for employers and employees to apply the basic principles of Employment Standards legislation to work situations, to understand the role and responsibilities of professional associations and labour unions.

Mr. Plohman: When the minister mentions empowering, does it deal specifically with women in business in any special emphasis?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, in the World of Work, there is a section on nontraditional careers for men and for women. Also, in the World of Work again, the unit includes sections on goal setting, decision making, career exploration, the changing nature of work and sex-role stereotyping.

Then in the area of protection again harassment, the student should be able to understand what harassment is, how individuals are protected by the Human Rights Code and issues which would be among the basics for empowerment.

Mr. Plohman: Does it also cover in any way the aspects of co-operative and collective development of enterprises and efforts?

What we have seen here is an approach to an individual empowering attitude, more than anything, towards business to create confidence and some skills developed there. But does it also cover what can be attained in a collective way, in a co-operative way through development of say co-operatives? Is that aspect of business covered?

Mrs. Vodrey: The object of the course is to assist students to become self-reliant, whatever the environment that they are in. It is not specifically set up to assist students to come together in a co-operative venture to set up a business. But in looking at how people work together in the area of self-management, it does cover areas such as understanding human needs, self-concept, communication, conflict management, stress.

Mr. Plohman: I was just exploring, I guess, the philosophy behind the course whether it, especially the 25 percent that deals primarily with entrepreneurship, in fact, also deals with the co-operation and collective kind of approach to establishing enterprises.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, just a correction. Unit 2 does not deal just strictly with entrepreneurship. The title area of Unit 2 is Enterprise and Innovation, and it covers a series of areas including, as I have said, what is enterprise and innovation, opportunities and ideas and the value of enterprise and innovation.

One of the major objectives is to extend understanding of the concepts of enterprise and innovation. In terms of achieving those objectives, one of the first things is to know the meaning of the terms. So student activities focus on reviewing the definitions and implications of a series of those words such as enterprise innovation initiative. They also developed definitions for terms such as entrepreneurship, which is how in my description of the course I explained that entrepreneurship would fit into this particular unit. But the focus of the unit is not specifically entrepreneurship or becoming an entrepreneur as a specific goal.

Mr. Plohman: Does the course deal with the role of government in business?

Mrs. Vodrey: As I have explained, it does certainly look at some of the legislative framework which people working would perhaps need to know about, things like employee-employer relations, the Human Rights Code, but it also focuses on issues such as the work ethic and also issues such as citizenship.

Mr. Plohman: Yes. Does it focus primarily on private career development as opposed to development of careers or exploration of careers in the public sector?

Mrs. Vodrey: The course does not specifically look at exactly where a student might apply their particular interest. What it does do is it helps students look at their strengths and attempt to apply their strengths very widely and to look at not only traditional types of employment and careers but also nontraditional types. It also encourages students to look at the home as a place of employment and to view that and factor that in in terms of their decision making. It also looks at many professions and trades that have organizations and associations.

It assists students in reviewing the decision making and the problem-solving process. One of the objectives is for a student to look at what they might view as a particular career and through an interview process explore that career, also to propose a plan for organizing an in-school career symposium with a variety of speakers so that there could be a very personal way for students to begin to look at the types of careers that they might like to explore. The student should also have a good idea through this area of how to know what employer expectations are.

So there is a series of activities in which students would look at what is involved in terms of a full day's work for a full day's pay as is stated in the student activity.

* (2050)

Mr. Plohman: I thank the minister for that information. Obviously, the minister feels very committed to this course, feels that it is filling a very important role in high school education by the information that she has provided and the enthusiasm for the information contained in the curriculum that we are dealing with.

What does the minister feel this course is replacing, what kinds of courses? That is where we really get at the—there is only a certain amount of time available in high school and, as in any teacher's school day, in any student's school day, and something has to be given up when another course is made compulsory. What is being given up by and large in the school system?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, this course has been made a compulsory course. By making it a compulsory course, it does offer it a prominence within the curriculum because it has been, through the process that we have described, identified as a course which provides students with important skills that have been identified through a series of reports.

Students are expected to graduate from high school in Manitoba with a minimum of 28 credits, and with that 28 credits, our students in most cases are able to—it does not involve giving up a subject area. In fact, students do have the room to take this course. Again, in looking at the high school model, it is a course which is accommodated and able to be accommodated within the programs that are offered so far.

Mr. Plohman: Well, we are dealing with, I guess, something that has been made somewhat more flexible. Was not the original intent to have the full course offered at Senior 2? When was that changed?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, originally the course was set up as a half credit in Senior 1, a half credit in Senior 2. It was then a recommendation that it become a full credit to be offered in Senior 2. Through the process of the pilot and the feedback from schools, it was then decided that the course should be, at the end of Senior 4, seen as a full credit, but that it may be offered in the two half credit years, which would allow for a greater degree of flexibility.

Mr. Plohman: I think that may deal with some of the concerns that I have heard about the course in terms of Senior 2 or Grade 10 students having the time to have this course fit into their curriculum, into their year.

It is my understanding, for example, I guess, at Kildonan East Regional School, which had offered a Canadian studies course for vocational students at Grade 10, that they would no longer be able to do that. They had made that a compulsory course

basically, at least in that school, for vocational students.

This course will be compulsory over the three-year term, so it may be that they will still be able to offer the course as they had it. They were worried about that possibly not being the case. But it seems that the total hours devoted to this mean that some other options will be lost because the 28 credits were arrived at through physical education, through band or through drama, through another language, through computer, various options that were established. Now there are going to be few options available because of this course. Would the minister agree with that?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the timetable for individual students may be what in some ways dictates what is available for students to take, because students have this among many other courses which they would want to fit into their day and they may have a choice of several options in which they would like to take more than the required number of courses.

As I said, it was in direct response in an effort to provide this flexibility that we have made Skills for Independent Living with the flexibility that it may be offered either as a full course or in the two half-credit courses.

In some rural areas, there was a real sense of the school being very pleased with this because it did allow them to provide, and in fact they must provide, this particular series of skills. Again, I would remind the member that the 28 credits for high school graduation is a minimum number and that many students do graduate with more than the 28 credits.

Mr. Plohman: Is this the same curriculum for this course applied to all students in high school? In other words, students taking level 4 or 004, 001 courses, would they be required to take the same curriculum as 00 students?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, this course is a general core curriculum for all students. However, within the appendices, there is an extensive list of ways that teachers might adapt the course depending upon the level or the particular course that students may be taking. The member used, for example, students in the 04 program versus students in a 00 program. So we have provided for the adaptation of the general core curriculum for those students.

* (2100)

Mr. Plohman: One of the strategies in Answering the Challenge was Strategy 47 dealing with the International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement for credit in high schools. Is that fully implemented now, and will they also be taking this course in that program?

Mrs. Vodrey: The status of the AP and the IB programs, there was a recommendation that these be recognized for course credit towards a high school graduation. They are, in fact, recognized for course credit for high school graduation. They are above and beyond the Manitoba curriculum, but they are recognized.

I believe the member asked the status of skills, and that will be required for students taking those particular courses.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am going to pass to the Liberal critic for a time.

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): The member for Dauphin has asked some very good questions in the area of Skills for Independent Living, so I just have a few follow-up questions on that.

Can the minister tell us: Have there been recent presentations or concerns expressed to the staff in her department in regards to the apparent lack of flexibility that some schools or some teachers feel they have in regards to now implementing this course on a compulsory basis, or has that been resolved with the full credit versus half credit? I am not quite clear on that.

Mrs. Vodrey: That issue seems to now be resolved with the flexibility built into how the course could be offered.

Ms. Gray: Can the minister tell us, when exactly was that change made? I perhaps missed that. Was it just recently that change was made where there could be two half credits or one full?

Mrs. Vodrey: We did consider the representation that was given and the final decision was made within the last month.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister talked about some of the activities associated with Skills for Independent Living, and I happen to think that the addition of that course is an excellent idea.

Can she tell me what, in the pilot projects, type of evaluation was conducted, maybe explain a little bit about the evaluation of the pilot projects?

Mrs. Vodrey: The information was gained by first of all the pilot schools. They were divided up, shared, among five curriculum consultants.

(Mrs. Shirley Render, Acting Deputy Chairperson, in the Chair)

They were visited on site by those curriculum consultants so that there was a connection right within the school. There was then a series of regional meetings held. At the regional meetings the teachers involved were invited to provide again a very personal kind of feedback regarding their experience with the course. In addition, in a number of schools the students were surveyed and, also, in a number of schools the parents were surveyed.

Ms. Gray: With the surveys and this type of evaluation, what kind of changes were noted in the students? Was it knowledge change or behavior change or was there an opportunity to really evaluate that? I guess I am wondering and, as I say, I happen to think—it would appear that this course seems like a very good one and probably is long overdue in being in the schools.

I am just wondering what specifically the evaluation stated that led the department to be able to say, yes, this is a course that we should offer on a compulsory basis.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Acting Deputy Chair, one of the measurables was a more positive attitude towards school. That was reported by students. It was reported by teachers, and it was also reported by parents. It appeared that this course gave students a context for learning in which they could see an application for their learning beyond their actual time in each individual class as they looked ahead to their futures.

In addition, the section of the Skills for Independent Living which calls for independent study allowed students to be out in the community to do things such as job shadowing. Particularly in rural areas, that received quite a lot of support because parents had been concerned about students leaving the rural area. This was a way in which students could make a connection between what they were studying in school, what they might like to do when they finished school, and how they could see it within the area where they were living presently.

Ms. Gray: I thank the minister for that information. I know one of the issues that was raised with the department in regard to this course and the

compulsory nature of it was, and I ask this question not necessarily in support of the suggestion but for information, was there a way for parts of the curriculum, the activities within this course to be integrated into other course work thereby allowing more flexibility? Was that looked at at all, or what would the pros and cons of that approach be?

Mrs. Vodrey: This was an option or a suggestion which was brought to the department, brought to myself over a series of meetings. We did, as a department, look at it very closely. We looked at various modules which we wondered if we would find within the current curriculum, and we found in fact that it was easier said than done, that there was not really the match within the current curriculum to what was proposed in terms of Skills for Independent Living.

The other area where we found a difficulty was that not all students happen to take the options for which there might have been a module or a proposed module would have been covered, so it did not provide for all students in Manitoba the opportunity to receive the skills which were the proposed skills in this particular course.

*(2110)

Ms. Gray: Is there a long-term evaluation mechanism or is there, as with all curriculum, a service standard evaluation mechanism that tracks, perhaps, some of the measurable outcomes of the benefit of these students taking this course? Is that evaluation done even after the students have completed the course and maybe in three or four years from now when they are elsewhere?

Mrs. Vodrey: We have a consultant whose job it is to provide implementation support for this program for '93-94. That consultant again will be available to assist in all the areas of implementation. We then look at two years of feedback for this course before we develop a final guide for the curriculum, and then this particular course, as all other courses, then goes into the curriculum assessment cycle.

Ms. Gray: With this course, are there suggestions made to schools as to which teacher should be teaching the courses or is that totally left up to the school divisions?

Mrs. Vodrey: The issue of who will be teaching the course will be a local decision by that particular area. I am sure that they will be looking for teachers who have the best expertise in these areas.

Ms. Gray: Is this the first year then that this curricula is actually compulsory across all schools?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, starting September '93, it will be the first year that it will be compulsory.

Ms. Gray: The member for Dauphin and I, in our discussions, we were both prompted by the same question, and that is, what type of training or in-servicing will there be for teachers to be able to teach this curriculum?

Mrs. Vodrey: We have arranged for support to teachers by a series of 15 regional workshops, and 10 of those workshops have been completed. Five more will be completed by the end of the year. We will also provide follow-up and assistance. Those, by the way, are workshops for teachers who currently know that they will be teaching the Skills for Independent Living course next year.

We will also provide follow-up for teachers who may have been hired over the summer. We have also conducted workshops for school administrators so that school administrators can take a leadership role. They will have a full understanding of what is being offered in the course.

Then in addition to that, the teachers who have been part of the pilot program and also teachers who are on the steering committee who wrote the curriculum are available as resource teams to assist teachers through the implementation process.

Ms. Gray: When will these workshops occur in the areas where—the five I think you indicated—and how long are they in terms of days or hours?

Mrs. Vodrey: The workshops occur as one-day workshops. Ten of those one-day workshops have occurred. There are five left to occur, and they occur in regional locations around the province.

Ms. Gray: How will the teachers then attend these? Is this considered one of the professional development days for a particular teacher? How do these teachers get scheduled into workshops?

Mrs. Vodrey: As we discussed earlier, school divisions do get a categorical grant for professional development. With this funding, this allows them to provide release time for teachers.

So school divisions have that as an option. In addition, school divisions have seen, I am informed, Skills for Independent Living as a priority, and therefore have been making arrangements for their teachers to attend.

Ms. Gray: Can the minister then indicate, will all the teachers who are left who require this in-servicing be able to receive the in-servicing, and will the divisions be able to afford that within those grants that she spoke of? Will everyone be accommodated within that?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, school divisions still receive that categorical grant for professional development, and that has not changed.

Mr. Plohman: So the minister is saying that in the area of in-servicing she does not believe the loss of up to eight days in some school divisions is going to impact on the ability of school divisions to ensure that their teachers are properly qualified to teach this course.

It is an excellent example, I think, Madam Acting Deputy Chairperson, where in-service days, professional development days are necessary. As there are innovations and changes in curriculum, teachers have to keep up with those changes and ensure that they are ready to apply the latest techniques and so on, and are fully cognizant of the material that is being dealt with.

The use of professional development days, the 10 days that were available and that many used for professional development in the past, is now in question for this purpose. In some school divisions, it will be available; others, they will not. It will be a patchwork. I just want the minister to attempt to deal with that aspect of in-servicing in the context of this new course. How will those in-service days affect it?

Mrs. Vodrey: Obviously, the member does not understand how this works. First of all, this is not a divisional in-service, and therefore I think he is speaking about divisional in-service days. This would be an assistance for a teacher for a single course. It would be as if it were a pullout for that one teacher.

As I have said to the member when we discussed the funding formula, there is funding which has been made available through the funding formula. That has not changed. We talked about how that might have been used and how it might be used. We talked about the fact that it might be used for a teacher to go away. A school division might decide to send a teacher away to take a course and have someone in their place.

* (2120)

Through that particular funding, which is still available in the funding formula, that would be useful for school divisions to use in this particular area. Again, I underline that this would not be a requirement for a divisional in-service, which, I believe, he is thinking about.

Mr. Plohman: No, the teachers do not necessarily all take their in-service days on the same day. I do not believe with divisional in-services that many of them are used for that purpose.

Some, such as the SAG in-service, are a provincial one; however, there are many ways that school divisions apply their 10 days of in-service or professional development. So it does not mean that all of the teachers in the division would have to be on an in-service day at the same time.

So it was simply a question of the minister as to whether she feels that there will be any disadvantage for school divisions that have fewer of those days available after this year. Will there be a disadvantage in in-servicing for this kind of course or for other situations like it? This is only one example.

Mrs. Vodrey: As I explained the categorical grant for professional development available across the province, we do allow for \$4 million for that categorical grant, which is approximately \$450 to \$500 per teacher per unit of instruction which would be available to allow for support—in this instance, perhaps this particular support for the implementation of this course.

Mr. Plohman: Madam Acting Deputy Chair, \$450 to \$500 per teacher would be about two days of in-service, or would the department just pay for the cost of the substitute as one of the portions of the cost involved in in-servicing a teacher?

Mrs. Vodrey: Divisions may use a number of mechanisms or apply this \$450, \$500 in a number of ways. They may wish to use that money in order to have a substitute come into the classroom, but again there are a number of ways in which that categorical grant may be applied.

Mr. Plohman: The minister, I know, is aware that if it is used to offset salary, it is only about two days of in-servicing per teacher. Although it sounds a lot of money at \$4 million, a significant amount, it does not go that far. So we are dealing with in the area of the Skills for Independent Living a course requiring 10 workshops of a one-day duration. Does this mean that one teacher would need only one of those

workshops or one day, or would they need all 10 of those to be qualified to teach this course?

Mrs. Vodrey: The teacher would require one workshop. What I said was that there have been 15 workshop schedules. A teacher would attend one of those workshops, not all 10 of those workshops.

I believe the member may not be accurate in suggesting number of days available with the \$450 to \$500 available per teacher. First of all, they may not be used for teachers. They may, in fact, be pooled by the division, and divisions may use that money in a number of ways. However, if we were looking at an application to a single teacher, I am informed that it perhaps would provide more like four days, because substitute costs are in the range of \$87 to \$110.

Mr. Plohman: Just to complete this particular line of questioning. We are dealing with in-servicing as it applies to this course. This minister did not answer the question regarding the disadvantage that divisions that have removed the in-service days would place their teachers in with regard to a course such as this. Does the minister feel that there is any disadvantage there in terms of their ability to be in-serviced for innovations, for developments such as this course?

Mrs. Vodrey: I did answer the question, and my answer is that we continue to provide, through the categorical grant, funding totally of about \$4 million available to school divisions, and they may use that in a number of ways. They may choose to use that for assistance to a teacher in terms of a new course, and there are a number of ways in which divisions may decide to apply that money.

I am just informed with some information that in 1990-91, in fact, the actual funds paid towards the professional development, the actual expenditures were approximately \$3.6 million, and today we provide \$4 million in terms of the categorical grant. So there certainly has not been any decrease; in fact, there has been an increase in the amount of money available to be used for the professional development through that categorical grant.

Mr. Plohman: Will the français programs have to take this course as well, and will the Francophone school division have to teach this course?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, both the français and the French Immersion programs will be taking Skills for Independent Living called Vie autonome.

Mr. Plohman: I missed part of that answer, Madam Acting Deputy Chairperson. Does that mean they will be offering the course?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, they will, as I described the French title.

Mr. Plohman: A couple of other questions about the course. We talked about various material that is covered in this course. When we are looking at exploration of potential careers, it seems like that is one of the most important areas that is missing in schools right now. A lot of young people just really do not know what the options are out there, what is available to them and what they have to do to get to a certain destination with regard to a particular career.

The other aspect of it, of course, besides their own ability as a student to explore certain careers, to pursue certain careers, is the financial ability and the resources required to obtain a standing in a particular profession.

I am wondering if this is covered in this course in any way, because if you are talking about careers, we have to talk about financial ability and resources available.

How extensively is that covered in the curriculum for Skills for Independent Living?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Acting Deputy Chairperson, in the unit, Unit 6, the World of Work, there is a segment called Costs of Post-Secondary Education. Following this particular segment, students should be able to know where and how to access information about the costs of post-secondary education, should know the costs involved for each year's studies, know how and where to access information on financial assistance for education and also to evaluate other ways to pay for education.

Mr. Plohman: So I would expect the minister has ensured the latest changes to eliminate bursaries are included in the curriculum information for students.

Mrs. Vodrey: We certainly would make sure that students had the most accurate facts.

* (2130)

Mr. Plohman: Madam Acting Deputy Chairperson, I would say the most up-to-date information that the minister is talking about here, including the latest cuts.

I mention the issue of career development and career information as being an extremely important one because we have a daughter in Grade 10, which you would call now Senior 2, and another one just graduated from high school last year. In both cases, this seems to be a major topic of discussion and one that occupies a lot of young people's time in trying to determine what is available for them.

This idea of job shadowing, or exploring in a practical way, careers, by going out and talking to people involved in different occupations and experiencing part of their day and seeing what kinds of things they encounter on a day-to-day basis, I think is very important. How much of this course is spent on that aspect? It would involve a lot of time, it would seem to me. It is a time-consuming approach to explore in a practical way various occupations. How much time is actually spent in this area?

Madam Acting Deputy Chairperson, to the minister, would this be a compulsory aspect of this course or could it all be done by way of films, videos, slides and in-classroom information, or would there be a requirement that some of it be done in consultation with the community?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Acting Deputy Chairperson, in the area of looking towards a career, within the Skills for Independent Living I did describe Unit 7, which is a unit of Independent Study. That unit occupies about 15 hours in the total 110 hours of the course. We do look for an interactive approach, not just films and videos. However, we also attempt to address students' career awareness, not only through Skills for Independent Living alone, but also we have the distribution of a computerized career information retrieval system, in-site, for every high school that does not presently have this technology.

We also have the distribution this year of Manitoba Prospects, which is a career information tabloid. That went to all high school students and other Manitobans who also wish to look at what the job forecasts might be in the future.

We also provide ongoing support for the career symposia. One occurs in Winnipeg and one also occurs in Brandon. We also have a career consultation committee. It has been established in the Curriculum Services Branch to examine the kinds of career information that students need to be exposed to and to determine the most effective way

to give that information to students across the province.

Mr. Plohman: Madam Acting Deputy Chairperson, I imagine most of this information was provided by way of guidance counsellors up to this point in time. Is that still going to be a major part of their work or is this totally taken over by this new course?

Mrs. Vodrey: Within the core Skills for Independent Living, there would be class discussion, and class discussion would be generated from information and awareness which is brought forward from the curriculum for Skills for Independent Living. It may be that a guidance counsellor may be invited in for a portion of that class discussion to maximize the available resources.

The in-depth kinds of career counselling that have been in the past provided by the guidance counsellor, we would expect, would still be provided by the guidance counsellor. That would be that one-to-one assistance for career information and career choices.

Mr. Plohman: Madam Acting Deputy Chairperson, I notice that in other areas of curriculum development, such as the issue of sustainable development—I believe the same in art, the art curriculum is being revised, and perhaps in the health curriculum—most of these are being integrated into other courses so that all courses would cover aspects of, for example, sustainable development as it applies in that course where there is related material.

Was there any effort or any thought given to many aspects of the independent living skills being taught in association with the curriculum of other courses, social studies, for example, science and others, as opposed to a separate course?

Mrs. Vodrey: As I did answer a little bit earlier this evening, we did receive some requests to look at that, to look at certain modules in which perhaps Skills for Independent Living sections might be accomplished in other courses. We did look at it very closely and very seriously, and what we found was that the fit was really not as good as had perhaps been first proposed or thought. So we found that we were not able to take portions of Skills for Independent Living and look at those being covered in certain courses which are presently ongoing.

We also found that certain students did not always take all of those options or all of those courses in which those proposed segments were

included, where we were asked to look at proposed segments for Independent Living and ongoing courses. So it would have meant that some students would not have had all of the same information as other students. Because it was really easier said than done, when it actually came down to looking at it, we did not find the fit, so we decided to proceed with the full, single-credit course.

Mr. Plohman: One other question with regard to this course, Madam Acting Deputy Chairperson, is an aspect of information on careers that I think would be valuable. I wonder if it has been looked at. I know the minister has said there was some information given on Manitoba job opportunities, latest information—I do not know what term she used, but it was just mentioned.

One of the ways that this is done, for example, that I am aware of, in Australia, actually by the federal government, is a booklet of information on every possible career that is available in the whole country, and it is distributed to every student at the end of Grade 10. At that time they can use this information to determine what direction they want to take in their high school education in preparation for this career. They have a complete outline of what the career involves, the kind of life that one leads by pursuing a certain career. They outline all of the qualifications required to get there, the kind of personality traits, maybe attributes that make one successful in that kind of career. It is really quite a good thing, I think, and one that I think Canada could benefit from.

* (2140)

I do not know whether the minister is aware of or her staff are of what is offered in Australia in that regard, but if it cannot be done at a national level because the government of the day is not inclined to do so, could we do something like that in the province of Manitoba, so that students have a complete outline of all possible careers and what is involved in getting to that point, pursuing that career?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Acting Deputy Chair, first of all, we do have a program called the Choices program, and this Choices program does provide a great deal of information regarding careers and what is required to reach that end point. It was originally begun by the Department of Education and Training, and I understand now that a number of

school divisions presently sponsor that particular program.

Secondly, we have another program used in the Senior 1 area called the career awareness lab which also helps students look ahead at the kinds of career choices they might like to make and what is required to get there. The Choices program and the CAL are both interactive kinds of programs, and I think that is what the member was speaking about in terms of the student having the opportunity on an interactive basis to look at what is required from the point that they are at now.

In addition, as I said earlier when I was looking at the kinds of information we provide, we do provide the distribution of a computerized career information retrieval program, and that lists in detail over 250 occupations.

Fourthly, as I said, we also distributed this year, in co-operation with the government of Canada, the Manitoba Prospects, which looked at the forecasts of occupations and what would be required in Manitoba and how a student might go about reaching that particular occupation.

Mr. Plohman: Certainly the updated lists are not sufficient. There has to be background information. When the minister talked about the computer lists of 250 occupations, is that the kind of information she is talking about, or is that only in that particular mode that just a list of the careers was listed?

Mrs. Vodrey: Certainly in the Choices program and the CAL program there is a great deal of detail that is included for students so that it is more than simply a list of occupational types.

Mr. Plohman: Is this provided in a compulsory way to all students at a certain grade level, or is it just made available to schools?

Mrs. Vodrey: While we have been discussing Skills for Independent Living for the past while, the information that is available through the Skills for Independent Living course is, in fact, compulsory because the course is compulsory; but the other resources, such as the CAL or the Choices program, are resources within schools and it is not compulsory that a young person use that particular resource.

Mr. Plohman: Does the minister think that it might be an advantage to requiring that every child have some kind of information on all possible careers, including what is involved in getting there and what

kind of educational road or stream they might take to get to that destination?

This is what I was talking about in the Australian model. It is distributed to every student in the country. I think that same thing would be beneficial, and I am asking the minister about her views on that.

Mrs. Vodrey: I would also remind the member that through our Ed Finance model we certainly have made it now possible for each school, Grades 5 to 12, to have a counsellor. As the member may know, under our new finance model, the funds are available and the person is to be hired into that position in order to provide that service to schools. That was included in the Ed Finance model because of the recognition of the importance of those particular skills.

In terms of the work of a counsellor and a counsellor assisting students in terms of making career decisions. I agree that is a very important role to be filled in the school, and I agree that students should have as much opportunity as possible to find out as much information as they can.

I am also understanding of the fact that students might need a number of different modes from which to do that. Some students may be most comfortable in the interpersonal way, one-to-one, actually speaking with the counsellor. Other students may be more comfortable using the interactive mode of self-exploration, and other students may be more comfortable looking at the lists and being able to do some thinking and then some discussions for themselves. Some students may need to have a variety of ways in which to make the career decisions, but what I think is important is that there are a number of ways in which students can get information regarding the making of career choices, because we know that all students are not the same.

Mr. Plohman: Certainly they are not in terms of how they might follow up and pursue the information. All of those ways can be pursued, but they need to find out the basic information as to what is available. Part of the information that would be provided would be ways to find out more on each career, but that it should be provided is what I am submitting at this time. I am asking the minister if she has thought about exploring the possibility of providing that kind of information on every career to every student at a certain age level in the school system.

Mrs. Vodrey: Again, I have said to the member that I do think this is important too, and because I think

it is important, we do have the career curriculum committee, and I did refer to that earlier this evening. Through that committee we are investigating ways to strengthen the kinds of information that we provide to students, and strengthen the ways in which we provide information. As I have said to the member this evening to this point, we do provide information in a number of ways, and we have to make sure that this is the way that the students need to receive the information. So, when I first described the work of the career curriculum committee, what I said about it was, it is looking at what is the kind of information that students need to receive and want to receive, and what is the best way to deliver that information to those students.

So we did speak about this, and, again, this is an area of importance, and where there are suggestions about how students could be receiving this information in the most effective way, I am certainly open to hearing what they may be.

* (2150)

Mr. Plohman: The minister just heard what one of those ways may be, and she may want to take that into consideration when considering the report from the committee, because it certainly seems to be effective and working in that jurisdiction.

I want to move into the Answering the Challenge booklet that was prepared by the—it seems to have a picture here of a funny-looking guy. Oh, it was the minister at that time, the member for Russell (Mr. Derkach). [interjection] He was pretty young. He had quite a bit more hair at that time, did he not?

Point of Order

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Madam Acting Deputy Chair, I think the member for Dauphin is, of course, referring to myself as the funny-looking guy in the—but I would like to tell you that at least this member does not mumble like the member for Dauphin.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mrs. Render): I am afraid the member does not have—I believe it is a dispute over facts.

* * *

Mr. Plohman: The minister, as usual, did not have anything too profound to add to the debate. I was actually giving the minister a compliment because I thought he looked a lot younger in that picture and,

certainly, had a little more hair than he does at the present time.

This was released in June 1990. There was a time line for implementation of each of the strategies. I want to ask the minister at this time whether she can give us the status report of the degree of implementation of the report by September 1993, as to how much of it has been implemented and what the dates are for those that are not implemented by the September of '93 period, and also any strategies that are not going to be implemented in the foreseeable future?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Acting Deputy Chair, in June of 1992, we released to the field the booklet Implementation of the High School Review, which was a status report at that time.

Now, for the school year 1992-93, the department has reviewed each one of the strategies. We have, in fact, a working document now that looks at exactly what the strategy is, what it relates to, any work to be completed and actions in order to reach that completion.

This document will be reviewed with the High School Review steering committee in June, and from that steering committee we will come out with the final document following that consultation.

We believe at this point that most of the strategies have been implemented, that the framework for change is established, and that the priorities for anything that remains outstanding will be established with the High School Review steering committee in June.

Mr. Plohman: Can the minister indicate whether the time lines for implementation for Seniors 2, 3, and 4 are being met? These are rolled back from the initial time line. When I look at the initial recommendations, the dates are quite different from what is proposed at the present time. Senior 2 was 1991, Senior 3, '92 and Senior 4, '93. Now we have Senior 2 at '93, Senior 3 at '94 and Senior 4 at '95, so each one has been moved back two complete years. Is that now a realistic timetable or has that been changed?

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Acting Deputy Chairperson, I did explain that from the very first report, yes, there had been some changes. However, from the report which was released in June '92, the one to which I had been referring, all those time lines are now on target.

Mr. Plohman: Which time lines are on target, the ones that I just read out or the original ones or is it something new? This was February 11, '91 that a new time line was set out; that was not even a year after the report was released. So now we have over two years since that letter went out with the revised time line. Is that revised time line still being adhered to, or is there a new revision for that since then that I do not have, that I have not referenced?

Mrs. Vodrey: The revised time lines are all on target, and I believe those were the ones the member had been referring to in terms of the revisions that were made from the initial announcement. Those time lines, again, which are listed in the June '92 report are all on target, Senior 1 through Senior 4.

Mr. Plohman: The minister did not deal with the question about certain strategies that were not being implemented.

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Acting Deputy Chairperson, I can say that certainly every strategy that has been identified is in the process of being addressed. I can say to the member, too, that some of the strategies are not strategies which would be implemented within one specific year. Some of them are part of an ongoing process. The process of reform, in fact, takes more than simply being mandated for one single year.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

I would say to the member that for a number of these strategies implementation is a process, however, and the change will take time because some of the change which is required through the implementation of these strategies is an attitudinal change, for instance. When I look at the attitudinal change required for gender equality and to eliminate the sex-role stereotyping, that requires attitudinal change on the part of a great number of people—teachers, students and employers. So that one, for instance, is one which again would require a process in which it would be probably not realistic to expect everyone to have completed the change within a single year.

* (2200)

There are other strategies which will require the co-operation of other institutions. I look at some of the strategies which address the issue of teacher training. I can tell the member that in the area of teacher training, we have been consulting with the

institutions, with the universities, and we are in the process of addressing the recommendations which apply to teacher training. In those cases, they may not be able to be all implemented totally in one year because of the comprehensiveness of that particular program. However, I can tell you again that areas such as that are being addressed. Then, there are other strategies which may be addressed singly and within one year. We have been talking about those, and we have been talking about those as being on target.

So, as I said, there may be three ways in which to look at the process of implementation; one, the strategies which may be easily measured and applied in one year; secondly, those which involve another system in which we would be looking at for a process of change, and work with those systems has begun; and then, thirdly, there are a series of strategies which address a longer term process of, for example, attitudinal change, and that is also ongoing.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please. The hour being after ten o'clock, what would the will of the committee be?

Some Honourable Members: Carry on.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Carry on. Okay. We will carry on.

Mr. Plozman: The minister mentions some of the strategies that have not been implemented to the extent that others have, one being gender parity. The minister says that this is ongoing, and it takes its change by a number of different groups and people in society to accomplish.

So the question arises, what progress has been made? What initiatives have been taken to ensure that it is, in fact, being implemented? What can be measured?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, some of the concrete work that we have been doing in the area of gender equity and sex-role stereotyping has occurred. I can give him examples in two courses.

First of all, in the course Skills for Independent Living, we address, and I have already spoken of this this evening, the issue of sex-role stereotyping and also sexual harassment. I went over the areas of that course in which students would look at their rights under human rights and they would also have a chance to look at the sex-role stereotyping issue.

In the area of family and women's issues, which also relates to the issue of gender equality, we have in the health curriculum for the Grades 5 through 8 area a section on violence prevention in daily life and in relationships. This curriculum was developed in response to the Pedlar report and is also a very proactive curriculum.

The issue of gender equity, specifically, is not an issue restricted to high school, but it is an attitude or approach that needs to be developed throughout a student's school life starting in the very early years through Senior 4.

Mr. Plozman: Strategy 8 deals with many aspects besides curricula and textbooks. It talks about provision of appropriate role models, for example. What is the minister doing in that area with regard to this strategy?

Mrs. Vodrey: Strategy 8 deals with sex-role stereotyping, and the department is looking to facilitate the removal of sex-role stereotyping through the process of teacher education, through career counselling, through evaluation of curricula and through textbook content.

Through our Curriculum Services Branch, curriculum consultants are instructed to include enabling strategies in this area, looking at science for young women, inclusive language and women in art, et cetera. Textbook writers and reviewers are charged with the responsibility to screen for sex-role bias and to foster positive female role models and material for children.

Also, there are training sessions for reviewers, and they include a major section on sex-role stereotyping, and also the career symposium presenters have been more aware of the need to expand their material to be more gender inclusive.

* (2210)

Mr. Plozman: Mr. Deputy Chairman, Strategy 9 deals with the merits of cocurricular activities as described in here which would be under a different name and talked about as extracurricular activities.

What can the minister say about progress made in implementing Strategy 9 considering that these are being jeopardized as a result of certain decisions made by the minister with regard to cuts in salaries for teachers as a result of professional development days being removed.

How can she say that she is making any measurable progress, if not going backward in this

whole area of cocurricular activities which in the Answering the Challenge booklet is stressed as a very important part of the program of study?

Listed as cocurricular activities were field trips, debates, fairs, student exchanges, drama productions, festivals and sports events. These are essentially what we normally call extracurricular activities.

Mrs. Vodrey: The department certainly encourages the continued participation of students in a number of activities. I know some of the activities that have been listed in the discussion around Strategy 9 relate to things such as debates and fairs, including science fairs, exchanges and student leaderships.

We certainly do encourage the continued participation of students in those particular areas; in fact, we support the student leadership exchange. Again, through our phys ed program, we also look at skill development which encourages students' continued participation. We also look at fair play, and, in addition, in our phys ed program, we also have an adaptive sports program which allows all students to participate.

I think that this is an important area, so that it does not make some of those particular skill areas only for those who happen to really excel in those areas; instead, we really look at supporting all students taking part in these areas.

Mr. Plohman: Yes, can the minister maybe explain what she views as the difference between extracurricular and cocurricular?

Mrs. Vodrey: I might distinguish between those two by saying that in the cocurricular areas they tend to focus more on equal opportunities, opportunities available to all students, and we again talked about co-operation and fair play and so on, and the fact that there are adaptations to allow student participation.

We might look at extracurricular activities in some areas, particularly in the athletic area, as being somewhat more competitive as opposed to some of the cocurricular, which may be, in fact, more equal opportunity.

Mr. Plohman: Is that the only difference? Does the minister make the distinction on the basis that cocurricular activities would be taught more in an integrated fashion with the rest of subject material and co-ordinated with subject material, as opposed

to extracurricular which is in addition to after hours, or would she not agree with that kind of distinction?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, when I listen to the member's questions I am wondering about his interpretation of the terms "cocurricular" and "extracurricular." I have, in fact, spoken about what may be some distinguishing factors, but we may be now looking at an issue of philosophy. I would say that these are important parts of a student's school experience and they certainly would look at broadening students' perspectives.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am not sure that was a very clear answer. The minister said that she is looking at my interpretation, or whatever. Does that mean that she agrees that maybe that is the distinction, that cocurricular activities are conducted in conjunction with courses as part of the curriculum or complementary to the curriculum of particular courses, whereas extracurricular are not necessarily related directly to the curricula of any particular course?

Is that what the minister is saying, or is there no relationship and essentially is there no difference then?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the issue of cocurricular activities, again, has been defined in the Answering the Challenge, and the term has been used to convey a complement to the curricula. The extracurricular relationship may not be viewed as quite as close to the curricula, though it would still be a complement. Between the two, it is probably easier to look at how schools organize themselves to deliver the activity, whether or not it might be referred to as a cocurricular or an extracurricular activity.

Again, some schools decide to organize themselves in a way that they do not offer intermural sports but only intramural sports. In that way, they are looking at an organization which, again, is not quite as competitive perhaps as the intermural sports, the intramural sports recognizing the participation of more students. As schools recognize that all students have an academic participation, the organization of activities may also assist students in terms of their participation in other kinds of activities.

* (2220)

So I would say that one of the features may be, in fact, how schools organize themselves, and I would

remind the member, too, for instance, some school divisions also have electives in an intersession period. For instance, Argyle School had a two-week intersession in which they offered what they considered to be cocurricular activities.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I guess maybe the best way to clarify this is—we note that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) stated recently, publicly, that a teacher should be paid extra for certain extracurricular activities. [interjection] Scott Taylor's column in the Free Press detailed this last Friday. The minister can be referred to those statements.

I want to know whether the minister would classify cocurricular activities as those for which teachers should be paid extra or would it be just extracurricular activities or would it be just coaching basketball?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I did not see the article that the member is referring to, and so I do not have that same particular reference point that the member wants to talk about.

As I said earlier, we may view cocurricular and extracurricular based on how schools choose to organize the events. I have just spent some time discussing how schools choose to organize themselves with activities which may be complementary to the actual curriculum.

Mr. Plohman: So I take it the minister has not quite decided yet whether she agrees with the Premier (Mr. Filmon) on payment to teachers for extracurricular activities.

I have asked the minister whether she has decided whether she agrees with the Premier that teachers should be paid extra for providing additional services for extracurricular activities.

Mrs. Vodrey: Again, I think the member might want to listen again to the Premier's remarks. I have to say I did not hear them first-hand. I think he is referring to some remarks the Premier may have discussed on an open-line show. Again, he would probably want to put those remarks into the context from which they came.

Mr. Plohman: I can assure the minister that we will put them in the proper context during Question Period at some opportunity.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I want to ask the minister—she has said that everything is on stream, and that this implementation of the Answering the Challenge is going along quite nicely, in earlier questions.

[interjection] Well, the former minister says, you bet; he is the author of this, which is, in many cases, referred to as a disaster.

Strategy 2 talks about school divisions being "requested to submit, by January 1992, their plan of action, based on the identified criteria for the maintenance and enhancement of this environment in their schools." The environment is the one discussed in Strategy 1.

I would ask whether the school divisions have indeed submitted their plan of action by January '92 or even by January '93. If so, how many have?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, this document is now drafted. It was in fact in a draft form previously, and from that draft form, there was quite a lot of opportunity for school divisions and superintendents to make a comment on it. It is now in a form where it is ready for publication. The target for distribution is September '93.

In the process of development for an effective learning environment, as the member could imagine, it will require the participation of all staff. It will require participation of the community, so what we will be putting out in September of 1993 is a working document.

With this working document, the schools will in fact work as they also work through the continued implementation of the High School Review. When the High School Review has completed its implementation, then the school boards will in fact submit plans to the department on the effective learning environment.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Is it the will of the committee to just take five minutes for a stretch-the-leg break? Five minutes just to stretch the legs. Five minutes, stretch the legs, thank you.

The committee recessed at 10:20 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 10:40 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The committee will come to order.

Mr. Plohman: The minister had indicated earlier that there was a revision to the timetable for Answering the Challenge and that everything was on schedule to the revised timetable. June '92 was the date that that paper came out, the booklet revised? That is correct.

I want to know what the timetable given for Strategies 1 and 2 was in that booklet, because the minister just told us everything was on schedule to that, and now she tells us that the criteria were not even established for Strategy 1—or will not be established until September '93. That is when it is going to go out. It is just being published. That is a full two and three-quarter years after it was supposed to be ready, according to the timetable.

Then we are looking at the next step, which is when school boards will respond with their action plan to these criteria. That was supposed to be done January of '92, so we are a year and a half behind now. So I guess what I would want to know is whether the revised timetable of June 30, 1992 has been met for these two strategies.

Mrs. Vodrey: Strategy 1 has been accomplished. Strategy 1 was the development of the criteria. The development of the criteria has been accomplished through the consultation with the High School Review steering committees. Strategy 1 is accomplished.

Strategy 2 was not directly addressed in the document of 1992 in terms of a timetable. Because there was a recognition that this was a very complex area and, as I said, it was a document which was intended to make a difference, what we have done is now we have the criteria settled. As I said, Strategy 1 is accomplished, and we are now planning for the release of the document in September 1993 to the schools.

As I said earlier as well, this will be a working document. It is intended to be used in the schools through a process of study and review by a team of teachers. It is not intended for use by a single individual who will then implement it, but, as I said, it is intended for use as a working document by a group. So it is, in fact, on target in terms of what is intended to be accomplished.

Mr. Plohman: Well, the minister cannot explain the unexplainable here. The fact is that the Strategy 1 is two and a half years behind schedule, and Strategy 2 has not even started yet.

Point of Order

Mrs. Vodrey: Strategy 1 is accomplished. I made that clear in my last answer.

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

* * *

Mr. Plohman: Well, if the minister made it clear, whatever she made clear is that it is two and a half years late in being accomplished. It was supposed to be accomplished by January 1991. It is to be published June 1993, we hope, I guess, and distributed to the schools by September '93. Anyway you look at it, it is two and a half years late.

Mrs. Vodrey: No, that is not correct. Strategy 1 speaks to the development of the criteria. Development of the criteria has been accomplished. We are now looking at the distribution of the document to the schools in September '93, but the strategy was developed in consultation with the High School Review steering committee. That is Strategy 1. That has been accomplished.

Mr. Plohman: It is good to hear the minister is pleased to have Strategy 1 done. That is a good place to start. Strategy 1 is done, according to the minister, two and a half years late. My original question was, what was the date provided in the June '92 update for Strategy 1, the projected date of accomplishment? And then for Strategy 2, what was the date of accomplishment?

The minister earlier said with Strategy 2 that it was very complex and too difficult. Therefore, it was not identified in the June '92 document; it was not identified for a specific date. Yet the Answering the Challenge document put out by the minister's predecessor boldly said that this would be done by January of '92, this specific date. Why cannot the minister project a specific date just like her predecessor attempted to do, however wrong it was?

Mrs. Vodrey: In the document released in June '92, that document was intended to look at the revisions or the changes in terms of time. These two strategies were not identified in that document. I can say to the member that Strategy 1, or the document that is looking at the learning environment, was to be developed in consultation or in concert with other documents that were being developed at the same time.

I would specifically point to the document on multicultural education. That document, which was released last May, a year ago, May of '92, also speaks to the issue of the learning environment. That document also needs to be seen in terms of No. 1, the criteria, and how they were developed. Those criteria developed in relation to or in

reference to other documents which were also being worked on at that time and which also reflect issues relating to the learning environment.

Mr. Plohman: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister is referring to all kinds of complicating circumstances which prevented her and her department from implementing Strategy 1 according to the schedule that was adopted. There were no extenuating circumstances identified in the document that would prevent it being implemented by January '91 or, I would assume, they would not have put that date in there. The minister can maybe speak to why those complicating matters were not included in the initial strategy.

If we look at Strategy 2, now that we have got off the ground, that the minister has finally done Strategy 1, what was the reason for Strategy 2 not being included in her revised dateline that was published in June of '92?

Mr. Derkach: You know, I have been sitting here witnessing the questioning from the opposition. I would like to say that I have never seen a sorer sight in terms of questioning from the opposition than I have from the member for Dauphin. When you lower your level of questioning to such items as we have heard here from the member, I have not heard any substance yet, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. I am surely hoping that as we progress in the questioning of the Estimates in the Department of Education that we are going to get into some substance because this certainly is not it.

* (2250)

Mrs. Vodrey: The document for 1992 was a document for use as teachers and administrators worked through the piloting and the implementation process, and they will identify areas that require further clarification and interpretation.

This document of '92 summarizes the adjustments of the last two years made to the high school model. In relation to Strategy 2, the High School Review steering committee had been reviewing it, they had been making progress, but they also believed that there needed to be further consultation with the field. Therefore, they did not include it in the document that was released June '92 but instead decided to look at how this would be dealt with in terms of long-range plans. It does deal with a very important area. As I stated, as the committee looked at this issue and they worked with it, they realized that there did need to be some

further work done on it. Now we are at a point where the document is ready to be published and will be distributed to schools for September '93.

Mr. Plohman: I thank the minister for that answer. We can certainly understand why the previous minister is so sensitive as we examine his dismal record here. It is to be expected that he would become very defensive about that.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I think we see two examples of the dismal record of the previous minister by the answers given by the present minister when she indicates that the deadlines or time lines for implementation of Strategies 1 and 2 were totally off, that they were totally impractical and unrealistic and they could not be met in any way, shape or form. These are the previous minister's deadlines. The record is clear, two and a half years late on Strategy 1, no time line for Strategy 2, already a year and a half behind and the clock is ticking.

So I can only assume from the minister's answers that she agrees that the previous minister had put in place a report with time lines for implementation that were totally unrealistic and the minister would agree with that.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, absolutely wrong. The member has just carried on with a set of conclusions that are just completely false and wrong.

I have spent a great deal of time this evening explaining to him the work of the High School Review steering committee and the work that has gone in to implementing the strategies for the High School Review and how, when working with the issues and working with the field, that then areas were discovered and discussed which would require additional consultation and additional work. That is a model in terms of flexibility and in terms of understanding that I think is a very helpful one which integrates the issues that are being uncovered to be solved. The member perhaps would like to have gone ahead and to have discovered issues, having already made decisions and then having had to go back.

So what I am saying is that guidelines were issued in terms of time and that in working with the issues, we looked at what was required and have now released a set of times. As I have said from the beginning of our discussion this evening, that we are on target in terms of the strategies and their

implementation. That has been the basis of our discussion for some time this evening.

I see that the member views time lines as very specifically deadlines instead of any sort of guidelines. I can tell him that the work that the previous minister did in terms of preparing this has set a basis for us to continue working in terms of looking at issues of quality and excellence. They are important. We want to make sure that what is put forward are also issues of substance. So I believe that does answer his question in terms of the times and to reassure him, as I have said, that we are on target now for the times we are looking at in the implementation of the strategies.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the previous minister, when he introduced this report to the public, said in his statement that the policy directions as outlined are the result of an extensive review process and reflect the input of various partners and so on.

What I am reading from this minister is that the previous minister did not do his homework before he put this report out. How else could the time lines be so far off?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, I would remind the member that consultations are ongoing and that they are a process.

The member, in his question, seems to think that once consulted, never to be consulted again. That certainly has not been the process that we have followed. So, as the previous minister has said, what had been brought forward was in fact based on a series of consultations and now we are at the implementation process, we continue to consult.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it is not me that put the deadlines on these implementation dates on this report. They were put on there by this government, by the previous minister, by this minister's predecessor, who put out a report with particular specific times for implementing each of these recommendations. They have not met them and they are far off.

Can the minister give us any idea when Strategy 2 will be implemented as envisaged initially when this report was put out by the previous minister?

He identified January 1992. What does this minister project at the present time, or has she learned from the previous minister's mistakes and will not give a time line any longer?

* (2300)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, well, as I have said this evening, the report and the guidelines will be released to schools in September of 1993, and following that, school divisions will begin to develop their plans in September.

The submissions will actually occur over a period of time, but school divisions will begin to develop their plan of action during the school year '93-94.

We will look at the pacing of their implementation, because we expect that it will be done in a very orderly and sequential way. It is very important that in the process of implementation, the orderliness and sequentialness be preserved.

As I have said to the member as well, we have relied very strongly on the advice of the High School Review steering committee and also the advice of the stakeholders. So the process has been one in which there has been this ongoing consultation with the field as we discussed. We are now looking for the plans to begin in their development stage in the school year '93-94.

Mr. Plohman: I understand the minister's dilemma in having to answer to a ridiculous time line that was placed in this report, inheriting it. So the minister is saying that they will start to implement this about two years late, and then it will go on for some time. Who knows, another two, three, four, five years? We do not know.

The minister just will not speculate, and I can understand that too because the last date that was given was so wrong that the minister may not want to be pinned down to a date.

Let us look at Strategy 4. This one the minister had more time. The previous minister gave her till 1995 for each school division in the province to have the services of a co-ordinator for guidance services. "The current Education Finance Review will make provision for this position." Can you imagine "the current Education Finance Review will make provision for this position"?

Here we are now about a year and a half away from this one being implemented, and so I would try to give the minister some running notice on this with a one and a half years to go. How is she doing on this one?

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

Mrs. Vodrey: The funding that is in place now is for guidance counsellors for schools in Grades 5 through Senior 4, and that is now part of the new ed funding formula.

In terms of the co-ordinators, specifically on the advice of the Ed Finance Advisory Committee, it was their recommendation that the funding first go to direct service as opposed to the administration. And, in terms of the actual date for implementation of the co-ordinator, well, we will look to the advice of the Ed Finance Committee when the funding recommendations are made.

Mr. Plohman: Yes, well, the date was identified, for better or for worse, as 1995, and that was five years down the road. It seems like an eternity, I know, when the minister put this out, that he would have five years to have to do that. Now we are only a year and a half away from having to implement that.

Is the minister now indicating that she is backing off from that strategy? I think it is important to put this all in context, because the minister did say earlier on that everything was going quite nicely with the implementation of the whole Answering the Challenge document, that strategies were being implemented and they were all on schedule.

So now we have to explore this in some detail. I would have to ask the minister then on that basis: Is 1995 realistic? Is she backing off of the date? Is she now saying that perhaps they might not even do it and go instead with direct services as opposed to a co-ordinator as well?

Mrs. Vodrey: Again, when we look at the kinds of changes and the time lines and guidelines which have been noted, again, they are there, they do provide a sense of focus, and they do provide a way to measure some progress but, as we have said, change is a process, it is not a single event. The member has wanted to tie it to a single event. This evening we have spoken about some areas which may be a single event and others which are in fact a longer period of time or a process of change which needs to occur.

If the member looks at the front of the document Answering the Challenge, which I know that he is referring to, on the second page, the second paragraph, it does say: "This document provides the blueprint for the future development of high school curriculum"

High school curriculum had not changed in many, many years, and this was a blueprint. So as we look

at the blueprint and not something specifically cast in stone, we realize that some of the strategies will be able to be implemented fully and others will be able to be implemented fully and others will be implemented in varying degrees.

In terms of this particular strategy, we will be relying on information and recommendations from the Ed Finance Advisory Committee as well to look at the process of implementation for this particular strategy.

* (2310)

Mr. Plohman: The minister really put her finger on it when she mentioned this is a blueprint. I do not know whether she has ever looked at a blueprint, had one drawn up. Certainly all of the capital facilities which she is in charge of, all of the schools and other facilities that are being built are built on the basis of blueprints that spell out in detail, every single detail that is going to be considered in building a particular building. If we are dealing with that here, I would like to know how the minister can talk about putting together a plan in varying degrees. It would be the same way as trying to build a building in varying degrees. What does that mean—have the thing changing along the way all the way? It is impossible.

These dates were put in here precisely because it is a blueprint as envisaged by the department and by the previous minister. This was the plan. The time lines were the time lines, the dates for implementation. So the minister perhaps thought she was referring to a paragraph that would allow her to soften the dates and they did not really mean what they said. In fact, by doing that, she provided evidence that strengthened the argument we are making that, in fact, they were not being met, and this whole thing was derailed and way off course.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, the member is wrong. Perhaps his knowledge is not as completely clear as he thinks it is. There are modifications made to blueprints. The member knows that, unless he is not as familiar with the term as he claims to be this evening.

I did refer him to the term blueprint so that he would see, yes, this was a plan. The plan or the working drawing which we have been looking at this evening is able to be improved upon, is able to be looked at by the field and also by the various committees which have been set up. I have pointed to the ed advisory committee as being one which is

looking at the funding, the ed funding advisory committee. I let him know that, based on their particular recommendations, they had recommended that funding be focused on direct service, and we accepted that recommendation.

Mr. Plohman: Is the minister indicating now by her statement that she is throwing out the blueprint and starting over again, that the blueprint was not what it was supposed to be, and because of the totally ridiculous deadlines that were put in that have not been met in terms of the minister's action on this so-called blueprint that she would be better off, at this point, to redraw a blueprint, a new working drawing for High School Review because this one is ridiculously out of date? Would the minister agree with that then?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, no, I would not agree with what the member is saying. We certainly have been using the High School Review in each of the strategies. As I said to the member, we have just finished a complete review of all the strategies. We have looked at the work accomplished. We have looked at work that needs to be done. I have explained that in June the High School Advisory Committee will be looking at these strategies and they will also be looking again at the priorities.

I have also said that some of the strategies which have been pointed to are also being developed within the development of other strategies within the department. We talked about the learning environment and we talked about other policies such as multicultural education and that particular strategy does reflect on the learning environment. So it was important to look at that in relation to the document on the learning environment.

In relation to this strategy, I have also explained to the member that it has been important to look at the work of the Ed Finance Advisory Committee, and that is exactly what we have done.

Mr. Plohman: The minister, in her earlier reply, said that services should be first and that was what was recommended and that has been a priority. We are not arguing that. We think that it is important to have professionals providing services for kids. These are all, of course, jeopardized by the funding cuts during this last announcement by the minister regarding funding.

But if we were to look at Strategy 5 and Strategy 4, we note that in fact there would be certain

requirements. If the minister is abandoning these strategies, then she can simply say she is and that services come first and that in today's fiscal situation, financial situation, it is no longer practical to make this recommendation.

We would respect her more if she would just say that rather than dancing around the time lines and raising all kinds of irrelevant arguments about interlinking and interlinking strategies.

What we want to know from the minister: Is she going to proceed with this, with the implementation of 4 and 5 at any time, or is it on the basis of the current financial situation impractical?

Mrs. Vodrey: I think the member has in fact perhaps finally answered his own question. Maybe he is now a little bit more clear on exactly what it is that he would like to be asking. Perhaps now, through the process of discussion, he has come to an insight about what is really happening, but I would say that he has in fact overlooked another important point that I have been speaking about this evening and that is that a number of these strategies are being developed in relation to other policies which are being developed by the Department of Education and Training and that it is important to look holistically at exactly the total development of policy areas.

He did say and referenced in his—as he posed his question about time lines being guidelines, which are, in fact, what they are. When we look at the document produced by the former minister, yes, there have been intervening events. There has been an election as an intervening event. There has been a new minister as an intervening event. School divisions have experienced changeovers as intervening events.

In addition to that, we do have some very real financial challenges, and we are attempting to deal with those through consultations, through the advice that is being provided by the minister's Education Finance Advisory Committee. I think that it is important that a progressive and a creative government, which, I believe, we have demonstrated here, demonstrate the ability to make these adaptations which we have been discussing this evening.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, if I read the minister's last answer correctly, she is saying that if I answered the question, then the minister is, in fact, abandoning some of the

strategies. She nods her head in the affirmative. Why does she not say that she is in fact—

Point of Order

Mrs. Vodrey: I do not know who the member was looking at for the head nodding. Certainly he would not have been referring to any indication that I gave him at all. I said that he answered his own question by coming to an insight himself.

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Reimer): The member did not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Plohan: Perhaps the minister was nodding off, but I did, in fact, see that she was indeed nodding and I assumed that she was saying, yes, that is correct, that she is, in fact, abandoning some of the strategies. She is now saying she is not abandoning them, and yet I understand that this insight she says I gained on this was that somehow, because of fiscal situation, some of the strategies cannot be implemented.

If that is, in fact, the case, why does the minister not just say that she is not implementing certain of these strategies? I ask the minister to come clean with the committee, with the Legislature, and say that, if it is not practical at this time, if that is what she is saying now, then let us have it clearly that she is not going to be pursuing as a priority that every school division should have a co-ordinator for guidance services because it is not service delivery directly. Therefore, it is no longer the kind of priority that was envisaged at the time that this report was made. It is not practical at this time. She will not be doing it.

* (2320)

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Deputy Chair, again, the issue is, first of all, the member attempting to read whatever signals that he thinks he is seeing; that is just ridiculous. I think that probably he should, in fact, be spending the time listening to the information and continuing to try and develop some insights into the answers given.

As I said, through a process of discussion, we have covered a great deal of information in this area this evening, and, as I said at the beginning, an adaptation is not an abandonment. The member seems to have not understood that.

What I have spoken about, as we have been discussing the strategies, is that there has been a

great deal of work. Work has been done by the steering committee. Work has been done by the Ed Finance Committee. So there has been a lot of input into the actual implementation of the strategies.

As I said, in looking at where we are now with all 90 strategies, we have reviewed all 90 strategies this year. We have looked at where we are with those strategies. We will be covering those with the steering committee and with the steering committee, they will be having a look at them. As I said earlier, they will also be looking at areas of priority as will the Ed Finance Advisory Committee be looking at areas of priority also. I did give the member an example of an identified priority in terms of the priority of direct service which was identified by the advisory committee.

So we look at the whole answer again, the whole answer says that adaptation is not an abandonment, that as we have continued to work with the stakeholders and the various advisory committees, the priorities have been identified or the adaptations have been identified.

Mr. Plohan: The minister is talking about all these advisory committees that she has that have to determine now whether in fact these are guidelines only or are they really a blueprint. So I guess all of this is being rethought.

Would the minister indicate which advisory committees are reviewing various aspects of Answering the Challenge?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, I would like to start by saying that the document Answering the Challenge, the strategies within it, cut across all branches and subject areas of the Department of Education. So since 1990, the strategies themselves have been a part of the work that has been done. They have been a part of every curriculum meeting, for instance, so that we can certainly look at that as one starting place in terms of where this information has been used and how the information and the recommendations have been integrated.

When we look at other committees which are operating, I could give him some examples. First of all, there is the High School Review steering committee and, obviously, they are dealing with the strategies. We also have an Advisory Committee on Native Education which is dealing with some of the strategies. We have the advisory committee on ed funding, and they are also dealing with some of the

strategies. We have an Advisory Committee for Gifted Education, and that is dealing with strategies. We have an interorganizational advisory committee. We also have an advisory committee on Distance Education and that task force which has recently given its report.

So we have looked at the work of this particular document, this blueprint, and we have made every effort to look at the strategies as they cut across branches, as they cut across curriculum and have their work integrated into the work of the committees which are very active within the Department of Education and Training.

Mr. Plohma: The minister is talking about not just one advisory committee, she is talking a whole number of different committees that she has classified as advisory committees. Maybe it never occurred to the minister that what she could have used was an action committee to get something done with regard to the classroom and what is happening with students.

The minister has indicated that she has advisory committees doing this and that and she has a blueprint. Seriously, it seems to me that we need to have support for our teachers in the classrooms, and this is what is missing in the minister's plans. There are all kinds of theory and philosophy and discussions and processes and various interlinking strategies as the minister says, but we do not see any action. The minister has indicated to this House that she still considers this a practical blueprint even though the time lines are way out of whack.

My contention is and our contention is that because the time lines are so far out on this report, and indeed it is no longer practical to talk about this as being implemented, what we are talking about is an adapted version that would be so far changed that, and because of the changing financial and fiscal realities that the minister has talked about in terms of her budgeting and the cutbacks to the public schools, it is no longer practical to even talk about the report as being something she is implementing.

Why does the minister continue to talk about implementing the Answering the Challenge report, now three years old, in which the time lines are three to five years behind schedule?

Mrs. Vodrey: First of all, the educators across Manitoba, who give a great deal of time to these committees and from which there has been a great

deal of action, might be quite disappointed in the remarks made by the member for Dauphin. Those people, who do give of their time and do provide a great deal of hard work and have provided a great deal of assistance across Manitoba, I think, do not need the member for Dauphin suggesting that they have been doing nothing.

I would also say that it is the time we have spent in continuous consultation with the field and with these committees that is keeping this document current. The member seems to be expressing concerns that somehow this document is not current, yet all of our discussion this evening has pointed to the fact that the document is in fact current, that there is a reflection in the strategies which reflects the changes that have occurred.

That is why I have said to the member that the work that we have done for this year in looking at all of the strategies and which we are referring to the advisory committee is the updated work. So it is important to recognize that the document is current.

I would also say that all of the advisory committees which I have spoken about first of all certainly are action committees. I only need to point to the committee on Ed funding to show the member and point to the brand new funding model which was instituted a year ago and to the changes which have occurred this year.

* (2330)

The Distance Education task force has certainly been an action committee. These committees do refer all of their work to the steering committee on the High School Review so that there is a process and a coming together based on the work of these committees.

I could, if the member likes, provide some information of just what action has been delivered to the Parkland area, the area that he represents, from only one part of our department, being the curriculum area.

There is certainly more information which I have available which could describe the information from many different parts of the department but, just within the Parkland area, there have been workshops presented on a series of areas including cognitive coaching and an early years reading workshop, implementing the Senior 2 Language Arts Program, developing curriculum congruent examinations, workshops for the Parkland superintendents and PD chairpersons on

sustainable development. There has been administrative support.

Parkland region is represented by a number of people on departmental committees. Bill Schaffer, superintendent of Swan Valley School Division is represented on the High School Review steering committee, one of those committees that the member is wondering about the effort and the work.

So I would ask him to perhaps look to his own division and to look at the work being done by a superintendent within his own division, who also, by the way, sits on the health education steering committee. A representative from the Pelly Trail School Division sits on the English language arts steering committee.

So there has been a great deal of action which has occurred by these committees. These committees have been very active and they have provided important action to education in Manitoba.

Mr. Plohman: Well, the minister is incorrectly off on a tangent about the work of educators on the advisory committees. I have not maligned their work. They are doing their job as outlined and directed by this deputy minister and this minister. They are the people that are on the front lines trying to do the work.

I suggest that the minister is not providing the action. I only have to look as far as Strategies 1, 2, 4 and 5 that we have identified as not being anywhere near close to being implemented as outlined in the paper, in the document.

I am going to go and pursue a few other of these recommendations, these strategies, to look at the minister's action plan.

Let us not try and confuse the issue as somehow maligning the educators. That is ridiculous. It is absolutely ridiculous. If I am confused, as the minister says, the only reason I would be confused is because the minister has not given any straight answers here tonight. She would certainly provide misleading—[interjection]

The Acting Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Reimer): I would ask the member to withdraw that remark.

Mr. Plohman: Certainly, well, in terms of her deliberately misleading, I did not say that, Mr. Acting Deputy Chairperson, but I would say that, as I said earlier when this discussion took place with the previous chairperson, to the people looking on at this process, they can only be misled by what is

happening, and that is the way I see it tonight in terms of what is being provided here.

Now let us look at Strategy 12. "The department will establish a liaison group representing faculties of education, community colleges, school divisions and professional organizations to co-ordinate professional development activities."

Can the minister give us a status report on that recommendation?

Mrs. Vodrey: Let us just go back to some of the comments of the member, in terms of the action, to say that there are 90 strategies and I am informed as of our latest review which will be going to the advisory committee that they are about 80 percent complete. That is quite a simple mathematical way of looking at this so that the member, I believe, can understand the amount of action which has in fact taken place.

In reference to Strategy 12 in particular, I can tell you that strategy has been accomplished by the setting up of the interorganizational curriculum advisory committee. I have spoken about that this evening, and it is a relatively new committee.

(Mr. Deputy Chairperson in the Chair)

Its purpose is to provide advice on principles, goals and broad directions to be followed in the development, the implementation and the assessment of curricular K to 12. The committee also provides a forum for discussion of organizational perspectives on issues of curriculum and assessment. The committee consists of 11 members, three representatives from The Manitoba Teachers' Society, one of whom should be a school principal; two representatives from the Manitoba Association of School Trustees; two representatives from the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents; a representative from the Manitoba Home & School & Parent-Teacher Federation; a representative from a university faculty of education, and that representative represents post-secondary education, not just university education alone; two representatives from the Curriculum Services Branch. The committee may invite other representation from groups or organizations on an ad hoc or an as-needed basis.

Mr. Plohman: Yes, well, what I found interesting was the minister had previously said that 80 percent of the recommendations were implemented, and so it was kind of interesting to go through the

recommendations to in fact see if that is true. It sounds to me like it may be all in the mind of the beholder as to whether these have been implemented and to what degree. I will do my own mathematics later on as to whether 80 percent have been implemented, but we have seen a number that have not been implemented and certainly many that are behind schedule. There are a lot more that we know that are not implemented.

The minister says Strategy 12 is effectively implemented. Can she indicate whether effectively Strategy 13 has been implemented dealing with revising and updating "... teacher preparation programs to ensure the acquisition of subject-specific content and the process skills outlined previously"? Has the minister determined whether 13 has been implemented?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Strategy 13 begins: "The Department urges the faculties of education . . ." Therefore, it certainly says from the first part of the sentence that it is a matter of working with, as opposed to specifically directing, the faculties.

I am happy to tell the member some of the work that is well underway in terms of Strategy 13. First of all, the issue of teacher training has been identified within our whole process of educational reform as an important area.

* (2340)

I can tell the member that the University of Manitoba in particular is reviewing its whole process of teacher training and teacher education. The University of Manitoba also will be having a new Dean of Education in September, and we understand that, with this new dean, the whole area and review of the teacher training is a high priority.

In addition, there is a committee which is operating at the University of Manitoba called an articulation committee, and the purpose of this committee is to look at the transition of students from high school to university. We do have the Director of Curriculum Services of the Department of Education and Training sitting on that particular committee.

Mr. Plohman: Yes, I gather from that, that the minister feels she is moving along on Strategy 13.

Strategy 19 deals with the department in co-operation with school divisions establishing "a coordinated system of teacher recruitment . . ."

What is the situation there? Has that co-ordinated system been established?

Mrs. Vodrey: If the member reads the whole strategy, he will see that it says, "... when demand exceeds supply . . ." At the moment, demand does not exceed supply.

Mr. Plohman: So the minister is saying that it is an irrelevant strategy. Why is it there?

Mrs. Vodrey: Again, when those circumstances present themselves, then, of course, it would be a strategy in which we would be wanting to look at, but that is simply not the case now.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister has, under multiculturalism, said that she is going to, under Strategy 20, structure high school social studies programs to ensure that students develop as a first priority their identity as Canadians in a global society. I would suggest that policies pursued by this government and the Conservative government nationally have done quite the opposite.

What has this minister done specifically to counter the influence of national and provincial Conservative governments which have, in fact, attempted to Americanize Canada as opposed to identifying and developing our distinctiveness and our feelings of being Canadian first, especially as it applies to students with regard to the curriculum?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, this is a strategy again which is seen to be completed, and through our Curriculum Services Branch, the social studies, Grades 3, 5, 6, Senior 1 and Senior 2 levels do look to this strategy with a special focus at Senior 1.

Mr. Plohman: Well, that is a pretty general statement in terms of what has actually been done since this document came out to, in fact, accomplish as a first priority—very strong words—their identity as Canadians in a global society, that students would in fact establish as their first priority, and that the department would indeed establish this as a first priority. The general answer that she gave certainly does not do that.

I would ask her to consider that and, as well, Strategy 21 with an outline of some of the actions that have been taken by this minister to ensure that all aspects of Strategy 21 have been implemented, especially dealing with multiculturalism throughout the curriculum, establishment of departmental and divisional multicultural educational policies and provision of ongoing consultation with ethnocultural

communities. How is this being done? What precisely is being done?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, when we look at Strategy 21, we see that Strategy 21 looks at the development of a strong sense of personal identity through the awareness of a person's own culture and the culture of others. In order to accomplish this we have released our strategy on multicultural education, and that was last May, May of 1992. In addition, we have also done a number of multicultural and antiracist workshops. There have been workshops that have been given from March, 1992, and the most recent one was May 27, 1993, just last week. The Manitoba Library Association conference focus was on multicultural library services and resources. Those workshops have been given through the Instructional Resources Branch.

We have also had workshops given through the Curriculum Services Branch beginning in April 1992, the most recent one having been completed May 17, 1993, Building a Vision of a Community School Multicultural Whole Schools model.

There is another workshop to be given July 5 through 23, 1993, a summer institute, Innovative Approaches to Antiracist Multicultural Education International and Local Perspectives.

Mr. Plohman: The minister has mentioned a number of workshops and talked about the multiculturalism curriculum. What has she done with regard to the fourth point under Strategy 21 dealing with the ongoing consultation with ethnocultural communities? What is the extent of her consultations there?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Deputy Chair, well, there have been a couple of ways in which we have looked to accomplish that particular point in the strategy.

As the member probably knows, we do have a multicultural education consultant. It is that person's specific role to bridge or to liaise with the specific cultural groups within Manitoba, and we know he does that.

Then, through our Student Support Branch, we also are looking to strengthen the programming for visible minorities.

Mr. Plohman: Has the minister completed her answer?

Mrs. Vodrey: Yes, thank you.

Mr. Plohman: Under Vocational Education, Strategy 29 and Strategy 30, can the minister indicate what progress has been made on these?

Mrs. Vodrey: I think one of the strongest ways that we have looked at meeting that particular strategy is in the unit credit funding for courses through the Ed Finance model. In the past, the member would know that—maybe he would not know—students had to be in that particular program. Now through the Ed funding model, students may take a single credit. In fact that is encouraged, so students do have the opportunity to experience the vocational programs, especially as they are making up their career choices. This allows for courses to be taken in Grade 9 or in Senior 1.

* (2350)

In terms of the Industrial Arts courses at Senior 1, it introduces students to a broad course area and a number of approaches. It allows for students to experience this at an introductory level and perhaps then to take other courses which then would meet their interests, so it has freed up the vocational programming from a single course or a single program and is allowing students now to have a much greater exposure.

Mr. Plohman: The minister may be surprised to hear that I support this recommendation. It is certainly one that I think makes wiser use of facilities and also ensures or works towards integrating the vocational courses with the remainder of the programming in the high schools. I think it is an important development and one that I hope is actually catching on or taking place out there as opposed to something that is more hypothetical. Does the funding model change actually reflect the fundamental change in programming or is it too premature to say at this point?

Mrs. Vodrey: As the member may know, we are into the first year of implementation for Senior 1, so we are in fact then into completing the first year of this program. We will be looking to see how it has been able to encourage students into this model and into this particular opportunity. We certainly look for it to have the effect that we expect it to have.

This unit credit funding has been really widely praised across Manitoba school divisions. It has been seen as a very innovative approach to vocational education. The co-ordinator of the Science and Technology unit of the curriculum services, together with the consultants for Home

Economics, Industrial Arts and Vocational Industrial has conducted implementation workshops with the Seniors 1 to 4 school principals and divisions superintendents and secretary-treasurers in all regions of the province during the first two weeks of September 1992.

The Curriculum Services has also produced two manuals providing information needed for the very efficient use of the unit credit funding in this area. The first is called Technology Education Guidelines '93 and the other is Unit Credit Titles under Program Headings '93.

A copy is being sent to the principals of all the Seniors 1 to 4 schools, the chairpersons of all school boards and the division or district superintendents and also the secretary-treasurers.

Mr. Plohman: I thank the minister for that answer. Can she indicate the status of the second-last commendation in vocational education dealing with ensuring the shared use of facilities among high schools, colleges and the community? This was to be done by September of '92. Is that time line still relevant here or has it been changed, and what progress has been made on that?

Mrs. Vodrey: Well, I can say in relation to that strategy first of all articulation proposals for the linkages between vocational programs, apprenticeship, colleges and the private sector are now being reviewed. We also have a vocational education steering committee with representatives and they are looking at the most effective use of the facilities.

Then perhaps one of the most important changes in looking at that strategy is the fact that the apprenticeship, which formerly was housed in the Department of Labour, has now been moved into the Department of Education and Training.

As we work with that new part of our department, we will be able to look at the needs and the co-ordination, and we believe attempt to deal with these issues in now a much more comprehensive way.

Mr. Plohman: Does the minister see credit being given to the apprenticeship programs and towards work done at the community colleges that would not have to be repeated in the work done in the vocational programs? It would not have to be repeated in the community colleges later on. Does she see that kind of co-ordination developing and credits given towards apprenticeships and courses at the community colleges in vocational education?

Mrs. Vodrey: Well, the answer is yes and, in addition to that, we are looking at that also through the adult education policy. I spoke about that earlier in the Estimates process. When we are looking at the whole process of adult education and articulation, that is one area within the adult education that we would be looking at specifically.

Mr. Plohman: Well, what I am really asking, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, is whether this is actually happening and, if so, when will it happen? Is there a plan for this to be implemented, where there will actually be credits given for high school vocational courses at the community colleges? Is that part of the plan and is there credit being given for vocational studies in high schools towards apprenticeships?

* (0000)

Mrs. Vodrey: This is a very important question, and it is a question which we are looking at now with apprenticeship being integrated into the Department of Education and Training, but it is an issue which needs to be explored through our trades advisory committees and also through the Apprenticeship Board. So it is an issue which I can say we are certainly looking at exploring, but it is one which will involve discussion in a number of areas.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: The hour being twelve o'clock, what is the will of the committee?

An Honourable Member: Committee rise.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Committee rise. A demain.

ENVIRONMENT

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Ben Sveinson): Order, please. Would the minister like to bring his staff into the Assembly. Would the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply has been dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Environment.

We are on 2.(a) Environmental Operations (1) Salaries \$3,598,300.

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): We were dealing with issues around enforcement, regulations and enforcing licenses, and I am concerned about the staff in this area, the number of staff. How many staff in the department have responsibility for enforcement?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): There are 70-some officers directly involved, some 130 people including all the public

health inspectors. Just to clarify, the 70 would be regional staff and would be environmental officers.

Ms. CerlIII: Then the regional staff also have the responsibility of doing licensing as well?

Mr. Cummings: When you add in all of the licensing capabilities of the department, that is when you get the total of 130.

Ms. CerlIII: I guess the point that I am trying to make is that the staff in the regions are splitting their time between enforcement and doing licensing work. Is that split in the regions as well, outside of the city?

Mr. Cummings: Regional staff are doing limited licensing at this point, although I believe you are probably quoting me from previous Estimates process when we said that we would be getting more licensing capability into the regions.

Ms. CerlIII: I was not quoting you from previous Estimates, but how many staff people have been increased in this enforcement area? What is the number of staff that have increased? I think there was some talk that there were going to be increased numbers in enforcement.

Mr. Cummings: Five additional staff under Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation.

Ms. CerlIII: Five additional as of over last year?

Mr. Cummings: Yes.

Mr. CerlIII: How is it decided how they are going to be spread out in doing enforcements? I look from the annual report at the variety of things that are inspected and 70 people or so spread out over all of these areas would require some planning. How are the decisions made of where to put people for doing inspections?

Mr. Cummings: The most important aspect would be where the work is. Obviously we have a significant number around Winnipeg and the rest are spread out as best we can balance it across the regions.

Ms. CerlIII: So the focus is just regionally. I was thinking in terms of the various activities that have to be monitored and inspected. How is it decided in the planning where people are going to be focusing their effort. Even further to that, is there much inspection done where there is a schedule followed or is most of it just responding to complaints and to crisis?

Mr. Cummings: The answer to the last part of the question is both, and again it goes back to where we

allocate staff, where the work is and where we have set our priorities, areas of importance.

Ms. CerlIII: That is what I am getting at, is how we are setting the priorities for enforcement, how you are doing that and how you are setting up any kind of schedule for inspection that is followed, and what the schedule is, what are the priorities.

Mr. Cummings: The priorities are set by the divisional management team in each division, and I would think that this reflects a fair bit of continuity with the discussion we had the first day, because we are putting ongoing emphasis into dangerous goods.

Ms. CerlIII: How many people are working in inspection of dangerous goods now?

Mr. Cummings: All of the personnel that has enforcement capability looks after the full spectrum of areas, so I do not think it would be reasonable to say there are 16 or 35 that are concentrating in one specific area, although, over the past two or three years, the personnel that we have been adding has been primarily to deal with the additional workload under Dangerous Goods.

Ms. CerlIII: Well, the minister had said that there are five new people that have been dealing with dangerous goods. So are those five people also dealing with inspections in other areas, or how does it work?

I am trying to get a better sense of how the schedule is set for inspections. If those are inspections in Dangerous Goods, if people are spending some of their time doing dangerous goods inspections and some of their time doing the variety of other areas with respect to—

Mr. Cummings: Most of them are employed, as I said a moment ago, but I am told that the last employees, the newer ones that are coming on stream, are specifically going to be working in the area of dangerous goods in the licensing aspect.

Ms. CerlIII: So what is the schedule of inspections like for Dangerous Goods? How is it arranged, or maybe another way to ask the question would be, what is a week like for these inspectors? How is their time spent?

Mr. Cummings: I suppose it is a little difficult to set out what a workday would be for one of these officers. Maybe I could put it in perspective by talking about the fact that we have identified on the first cut some 4,000 operations that we believe are likely to

be handled and need to be permitted under dangerous goods handling and transportation. That should give you some indication of the scope of the work that is ahead of these officers now that the initial mail contact has been made. Then I suppose if they have not already been visited, they will be followed up and they will begin to license and permit the operations as is appropriate.

Again, right from the start it has always been my understanding that the officers are expected to be multidisciplinary in the work that they carry out. They would not deliberately walk by one responsibility on the way to another one supposing or believing that someone else or another employee would come and take care of that. They are expected to be multidisciplinary.

Public health inspectors are doing more and more work that you would not necessarily consider in the first definition of a public health inspector—licensing lagoon discharges, being an example.

Ms. CerlIII: I look at, under the section, the annual report for Dangerous Goods and Handling, the petroleum storage tanks. It says that there are 8,554 of them established and, in the last year, I assume it is within that year only that 1,135 were inspected.

So what do the regulations say for the rate of inspection, and how long will it be before all those 8,500 are inspected?

* (2010)

Mr. Cummlngs: Regulations in that area do not reference any particular schedule of inspection, but spot inspection and routine inspections, any combination of them will accomplish the goals that we are expected to produce.

Ms. CerlIII: Can the minister repeat the second half of his answer? I was having problems hearing it.

Mr. Cummlngs: I said spot inspections combined with a series of routine inspections would accomplish the goals that we need to under this area.

What I did not mention was operators are also expected to report any noncompliance on any spills. The very fact that we have 8,000 sites that need to be registered, as an example.

Ms. CerlIII: So how long will it be before all of the, for example, tanks are inspected?

Mr. Cummlngs: It is an ongoing responsibility, and I suppose regulation change influences that as well.

Agricultural storage of fuel, for example, if it is below a certain volume, is not regulated. Those types of things will change. So if one were to say that all inspections will be complete and up to date and all operations will be licensed, I think one would be not able to back it up.

The fact is that we will be continually adding to the list and expanding the responsibilities in this area simply because of the ever changing conditions that exist out there. Even my own operation, or others of similar size, the storage may well change from year to year, let alone over a decade of time.

I have had it written up for me what a typical day's activity might be for an inspector. First of all, he would have his regular areas of routine, scheduled inspections that would be expected to be carried out and were scheduled for that particular time, response to complaints, response to emergencies, and a general reporting on the above and in other matters that come to their attention.

Ms. CerlIII: Just in the section of activities listed under Dangerous Goods Handling, how many of those are we relying, on a regular basis, on the reports from the operators rather than having them inspected on a regular basis?

Mr. Cummlngs: I think the best way to respond to this is that the first line of defence is that all new installations are inspected. All removals are at the other end of the spectrum. No tank removals can be completed without an inspection. In between, we have an ongoing requirement of all operators to report inventory, and any variations in inventory that might occur in the short term between their regular reports are expected to report immediately.

That is followed up with routine inspections which may be of varying duration in between but can be driven by whether or not there seems to be fluctuations on the inventory sheets that have not been reported. Generally speaking, those are followed up on and should be reported if in fact there is a leak, and by the operator within a very short period of time.

Ms. CerlIII: Would I be correct in assuming that with some of the things, particularly like gasoline tanks, that there would be a computerized system where operators would have to account for the amount of gasoline that is in their tank and that could be compared with sales to see if there is leakage? Is there a system like that in place?

Mr. Cummings: The department keeps a computerized record once the information is provided to the department, but each operator is required to keep a record of balance between the inventory and the tank which would be measured as a result of a daily dip measurement compared to sales. That very quickly establishes a day-over-day record.

Any variance from that requires reporting, bearing in mind that the impacts of weather on the expansion and contraction of gasoline particularly is enormous and that that has to be accounted for in the measurements and adjusted as they calculate whether or not the dip test reflects a proper inventory in the tank as compared to sales.

That is where the question arises in terms of the system. The system, I believe, is quite tight, but you have to allow for expansion and contraction. There is a small margin of error and that is the reason why the reporting procedure requires that there be a definite trend indicated to have a report because there would be a very significant number of false reports if you only went on one day's variance, if it was at the very low levels which we presently require a report, the very low variance at which we require a report.

Ms. Cerilli: Well, it occurred to me that with the kind of computer modelling that could be done there could be some accountability, based on research, to account for the weather impact and we could have a fairly tight system within the department. I do not think it would cost that much money, so all of that information would be kept in the department and we could easily see where leaks were and where the responses need to be made.

Mr. Cummings: Well, that is exactly my point, and I have to say I do not believe the member appreciates the amount of fluctuation that occurs in these vessels as a result of temperature changes. To be out .7 of 1 percent, I believe, is the cutoff that we reference; .7 of 1 percent is not a very large margin of error, but that is the maximum amount of margin of error that is allowed before it is considered to be a potential for a leak. It can be one half of one percent very easily for a period of time, and that has to be demonstrated on three or more readings which would indicate that there might be a pattern starting to develop.

That is when the operator is required to report, as I understand the system, and there are very

significant fines for any operator who would ignore the signals that I indicated in terms of any variance between volume and sales which could indicate potential leakage.

To show you how easy it is for a system either way to be difficult to project, you can have, as I said, a very large number of erroneous reports believed to be showing leakages, or you can have, over long periods of time, leaks that amount to very small amounts, but those are normally not as a result of leakage within the tank. They may be as a result of other leakages in the handling system.

Ms. Cerilli: So what happened with the Domo on Henderson Highway? Where did the system break down? I think the minister said in the House one day that that was actually a new tank. Is that correct? I did not follow this. It was more the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), who has this facility in his constituency, that was dealing with this issue. So, as I understood it, I think that one of the comments was: If not, well, what happened? There was also some discussion that that facility had been inspected recently. So how did the system break down, or what happened to cause the problem on Henderson Highway?

* (2020)

Mr. Cummings: Actually there were three new tanks located there. The problem resulted from improper installation of the tank and a leaking connector in the pumping lines. As I recall, the only time it would have leaked was under certain conditions when the pumps were running, and it was the location of the tanks that led to the difficulty. Actually the volume of fuel that escaped into the sewer line was exceptionally small, but it does not take much gasoline vapour to have explosive potential. The volumes were extremely small, but unfortunately, what did leak was able to get into the sewer system and vaporize.

Ms. Cerilli: Getting back to some of the other questions I was asking earlier about inspectors then, how many does an inspector do a day?

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I have not asked the department to give me an opinion on this, but my view of the work of the inspectors is such that I do not think that this is a particularly relevant question in terms of how these people lay out their workday.

They may well run into problems one day that would take a lot more time than what they would at other periods during the operation. I am looking at a list of inspections of total that were carried out, and I see, for example, there were almost 4,000 inspections of food service establishments.

I look down, subdivision land splits, scheduled development plans, there were 916 inspections in that respect. There were over 2,000 litter inspections, over 1,500 dwellings and buildings were inspected for various reasons associated with the environment. Private water supplies, there were over 1,000 inspections, over 1,500 private sewage inspections. I am looking at manufacturing plants, 200; petroleum storage, over 2,000; pesticide storage, over 200; PCB storage, almost 40; hydrous ammonia, 40; hazardous waste, 153; dangerous goods, almost 600; and contaminated sites, almost 300.

Those were the kinds of numbers, without adding on all of the smaller ones, all of which are in the double digits at least, as a result of the work that they have done. We see a large number of complaints over litter, 1,400 complaints regarding litter; 1,000 complaints over dwellings and buildings.

I guess the reason that I point to those numbers and point to the fact that it is hard to lay out what might be an inspector's routine day, as opposed to the three or four priorities that I laid out, is, as I said, these people are expected to be multidisciplinary and respond appropriately when they get calls. I would be the first one to complain if the department was not responding to some of the calls that come in because they said, well, I cannot go today, I have got to go and inspect a couple of private sewage tanks before I can get over to the complaint about the fact that you think there is an odour coming from the neighborhood operation, whatever it might be.

I suggest that the only way to adequately answer that is whether or not, in the overview of the operations of the department, we are satisfied that they are doing enough inspections and responding sufficiently to complaints and emergencies to be able to protect the health and well-being of Manitobans and the environment.

Ms. CerlIII: Well, I think that the minister can appreciate that what I am trying to do is put together a comprehensive picture, some kind of picture about where we stand with our enforcement. I mean there are a lot of activities to monitor. There are 70 staff,

130 staff including the people for public health. It seems like, with all the activities in public health, we are going to be in a situation where people are going to be stretched. I think that we have to be clear about giving some kind of accurate picture about what is happening in this area.

Another question would be, when I look at the number, there have been 102 complaints about environmental accidents and there were 222 inspections for accidents. Why are those not listed in the annual report of where those were and what the outcome was?

Mr. Cummings: I suppose, firstly, it has not been the normal routine of what is reported in the annual report. A report to an emergency can be all the way from something as dramatic as the train wreck at Oakville and St. Lazare, the gas rupture in St. James, to something more mundane such as a fish truck that has inadvertently stopped and is leaking blood and guts on the side of the road.

I am not sure how useful it would be in those responses, but I think that it is well documented that the Department of Environment and its 24-hour response line has and continues to work rather efficiently in terms of response. The people who are in that area take a fair bit of pride in their ability to be on site and provide expert advice in very short order. There is no particular reason why it is not included other than I suppose after awhile it becomes a question of just how much information you put into the report.

Ms. CerlIII: I think that is the kind of information that people are interested in and the kind of accountability, too, that we want to be looking for. I look at something else and one of the issues that has been raised with me is storage of pesticides, even just home pesticides with food in small grocery outlets. Is that something that is looked at by The Public Health Act inspectors?

(Madam Chairperson in the Chair)

* (2030)

Mr. Cummings: Yes. I can add to the previous answer that we also do have a separate accident report which is compiled by the department. We can arrange for her to receive a copy.

Ms. CerlIII: I will get onto sort of some of the more issue-oriented questions that I have around some of the kinds of violations that we are concerned about. One in particular is with the oil that was spilt from

ACL. I am wondering if there is an accident report and when that accident was reported and if I could know the date of the accident report.

Mr. Cummings: That probably occurred in the early '80s and any activities on that site, as I recall, are fully regulated under the federal authorities. We would be following up as a result of information we received from them. In fact, I am told that the accident pre-dated any existing reporting requirements which we now have in place to require all operators to report any spills of this nature.

Ms. CerlIII: What is the status of that spill, the oil in the river there? What kind of work order is being issued? Is that something that the province is handling or is that something being dealt with at the federal level as well?

Mr. Cummings: I presume the member is still asking about the incident in the early '80s. There is no traceable contaminant, so there really is not anything to follow up on at this point. There are no identified traceable materials that we have been able to identify as a result of that.

There is still monitoring going on. There was monitoring at that time to try and determine what, if anything, had occurred. There has been no ability to follow up on a cleanup project, is what I am referring to, because we have not been able to identify what to clean up.

Ms. CerlIII: I thought the minister two answers ago just said that there was some kind of a spill in the early '80s. Is he disputing that there is radioactive oil covering a part of the bottom of the Winnipeg River and that it has been linked to AECL?

Mr. Cummings: That is the reason there is monitoring going on. We are not disputing anybody that there might be something there. Any information I have at this point says that we have not been able to find it.

Ms. CerlIII: You are not disputing that there might be something there, but you have not been able to find it? Because I have heard that there is visibly a streak that can be seen from the air at the bottom of the river and it is affecting likely the fish habitat. The reports are saying that it is not likely affecting the drinking water that is drawn from the river, particularly by the reserve there, but that it could be affecting the fish.

Mr. Cummings: Madam Chairperson, as I recall, since I came into office I believe I have seen or heard

reports of some sampling being done on the fish but no effects have been detected.

As to the other accusations that the member is making, I do not think I can respond because I have given her all the information basically that I have.

Ms. CerlIII: I know the minister has received a number of letters from various members of the community, I think also from some concerned scientists at the university. Can he clarify that their department does or does not recognize that there is an oil slick in the Winnipeg River close to AECL?

Mr. Cummings: I can only assume that the correspondence that the member is referring to has come from Mr. Dave Taylor and the Concerned Citizens group, and we have endeavoured to follow up on every aspect and a number of complaints that Mr. Taylor and his group have filed. If we find anything, we will certainly be willing to share that information, but so far, as I have indicated, the concerns that have been raised and the issues that have been raised have not led to conclusions any more than what I have indicated, that we have been unable to document the contamination. To argue whether there was or was not a spill is not my point. My point is that in monitoring and following up we have not been able to demonstrate anything that might support the claims.

I would remind the member that while this has nothing to do with the protection of the environment, it would appear that this occurred some time during the previous administration's mandate, and we are working at a bit of a disadvantage trying to follow up 10 years later.

Ms. CerlIII: Well, if the oil is there, then it does not matter when it happened. Certainly if there were weaker regulations at that point—the question now is: What type of inspection has been done? What has been done either by this department or federally? I do not think that people would make this up. What kind of inspections have been done?

Mr. Cummings: Between the province and the federal government, there has been water, fish and sediment sampling in the area.

Ms. CerlIII: Have all those files or results been made public to the group? I know that they have gone through some kind of, I think, a Freedom of Information search.

* (2040)

Mr. Cummings: We certainly do not have any reason not to share any information we have. I am not sure that we have received any requests on this particular item, or if we have it is not in recent memory.

Ms. CerlIII: With respect to the Oakville derailment, can the minister tell the committee where the train was going and where the material on the train was from?

Mr. Cummings: No, I could not answer that question specifically. I suppose that would be easy enough to find and document, but it is not something that I have had occasion to ask, frankly.

Ms. CerlIII: Why I ask the question, because one of the concerns was why that train was going through that particular community. I think it is reasonable for people in the community to want to know where that kind of material that is coming through their community is coming from. But besides that, what was the determined cause of the accident?

Mr. Cummings: First of all, that town is located on the main line and whether it is a main railway line or whether it is No. 1 or 16 Highway, there are only a limited number of east-west routes across this country, and I think that one could safely assume that there is a pretty wide assortment of dangerous goods being transported both by rail and by road. The exact cause of that accident, I do not think there has been a final report from the transport people to indicate what it was. There were lots of rumours. Presumably, one of the rumours that was getting the most credibility was a broken boxing or hot box or bearing, but I could not verify that.

Ms. CerlIII: When can we expect the report on that accident?

Mr. Cummings: The information regarding where the train would have been coming from and where it was going, that is certainly available and I would think that is part of the complete report and that Environment and EMO would have compiled that information. But in terms of when we will have a report, it is not our jurisdiction at this point, so to be able to predict accurately when there will be a report from the transport inquiry, I am not sure I could.

There is a good possibility that there will be a national workshop held here this year presumably as a result of the experiences we have had here in Manitoba and the expertise that some of our people have developed, albeit it might have been happier if

they had not practiced it in this jurisdiction, but we have been very fortunate in the quality of response from our personnel and other departments. Nationally that is now being recognized in terms of having a workshop to make sure that information is shared on how to best respond under these circumstances.

Ms. CerlIII: It is unfortunate there did seem to be a bit of a trend there for a while with train derailments. I am wondering if the minister, even though I know that his department is not involved at all in inspecting trains carrying dangerous goods, but if there has been some communication with the inspection agencies and the federal agencies about any changes that have been made in the way that inspections are done and the kinds of frequency and the location. As I understand it, these kinds of trains used to have some maintenance and inspection work done in Manitoba, and that is no longer the case.

So has there been any follow-up from the department to inquire about the kinds of changes to inspecting trains containing dangerous goods?

Mr. Cummings: This answer could be very long or very short.

It has not been just a recent phenomenon that we have had a number of train problems in this part of the Prairies. I will not speculate in any detail about what some of the causes might be, but for a while MacGregor, Manitoba, was known as the train wreck capital of Canada and had a sign up at the outskirts of the town in order to so indicate.

Going back to the days in '79-80 when there was a chloride spill, rather a large chloride spill at MacGregor and two or three other derailments within a few miles of that town, and within over a period of two to three years, I think they had five derailments.

The St. Lazare incident that occurred, I believe the report is now in and it will likely show that there was mechanical damage done to the tracks and caused that train to derail. So what you are looking at is an inspection of the track. If the damage occurred perhaps within the very short period of time before the train came down the track, that is darn near impossible to guard against.

I recall in the St. Lazare incident that one of the things we checked and were assured of very early in the response period was that that train was properly structured. In other words, the mix of

chemicals split up between various carloads was properly assembled on the cars so that they did not have chemical reactions that were violent or more caustic than what might occur just from the materials themselves. In fact, in both of the major derailments that we are talking about, acids and bases were following each other on the track and leaked, as it turned out, both of them neutralizing each other. It was still a very nasty occurrence, dangerous, but, nevertheless, as far as we know, the rules were being followed.

This opens up a whole can of worms in terms of inspections, rail truck safety, and so on. It gets into an area that, given the liberty, I would like to expound on for about a half an hour. I am sure the member would not want to hear.

Ms. Cerilli: My concern is that there have been changes. We know what the situation is with the railways across the country, the cutbacks that they are suffering, and that there are some changes in the way that inspections are done. I just hope that the minister would, given the experience in Manitoba, with the staff, take an interest in expressing concern and following up to make sure that there are not dangerous practices being developed or less safe practices. It is interesting that there is going to be this conference here now.

With respect to this derailment in Oakville, can the minister tell us a little about the nature of the response, the time when they got the call, and when they were able to respond, in what way, and who were the staff that actually were on the scene and following up?

Mr. Cummings: I will try and fairly quickly summarize our response. I presume that the local authorities would have been the first ones to put in the report, but I am told that probably Arvyn Gray was the one officer who was the closest to being on site first and this department maintained a couple of officers at the start and then down to one officer on duty 24 hours a day for the balance of the response time, which was some three weeks.

Bearing in mind that the total response by the Province is co-ordinated by Emergency Measures in conjunction with the local R.M., which had an emergency plan, the evacuation of the community would be managed by that arm of the response. The Department of Environment would be there responding more on the technical aspect, on the

potential for environmental damage and the safe handling of the materials that were spilt.

* (2050)

As I recall, the reports that I have received from some of our people early on in the accident were that there were some rather violent chemical reactions going on sort of in the centre of the pile-up of equipment. It was very difficult to determine in the early three or so days or four days, also given the very bad weather conditions that were occurring at that time, to determine exactly what was going on, although, given the make-up of the cars, one could assume what the chemical reaction was.

The environment people who were on hand, the emergency response people, indicated that they could not even get close to making an assessment of what was occurring because of the chemical reaction that was going on and the steam that was coming out of the wreck as a result of that.

So it made for a pretty dramatic scene, not necessarily one that was dangerous to the environment, although there has been some cleanup there since the snow has left. I see there has been some cleanup work that has gone on there to make sure that there is no contamination.

The violent reaction, if you will, of the chemicals led us to set up an air monitoring program or capability at the site and we had equipment flown out from eastern Canada in order to be able to adequately monitor what was going on, particularly in the air, because we were not sure precisely what might be getting emitted into the air and where it would end up. That was one of the first things that led to the need to make sure that the town was evacuated.

I would add one thing in terms of a general sense about the response. At St. Lazare, there was no question about whether or not the valley had to be evacuated for the safety of the people and the residents.

There were some continuing questions by residents and others about the need for as complete and as lengthy an evacuation as occurred at Oakville. The bottom line is that if any of us were going to have any comfort in terms of having satisfied ourselves that there was no possibility of anyone suffering physical damage, possibly death, from any actions around this site, that it had to be properly secured and all of the proper security in the

area for security of property flowed from the fact that the site was evacuated.

It is a decision that I support, it was the right decision because it would only take one situation that would occur where one person was exposed in an unprotected manner to some chemical contaminants in the air that could lead to unknown difficulties and concerns being raised. Even if they were never proven, certainly leaving that particular person with a lifetime of wondering whether or not they might have received some damage that would continue to plague their health for the rest of their life.

So it was a strong response but, I believe, necessary under the circumstances, and one which we would repeat if required to in order to protect the safety of the people in the area.

The cleanup, however, did take longer because of the weather. The hoses were frozen. Once you started moving the equipment everybody had to be properly protected. They had to work in waist-deep snow until they got it cleared away, coming in on snowmobiles to get in close to the site in the initial stages.

All of those things made it very difficult, coupled with 40-degree-below weather. All in all it was a successful cleanup, but one that under less difficult weather conditions, and perhaps even less careful operation, would not have taken as long. But it was carefully done and, I believe, properly done in the end.

Ms. Cerilli: The need for evacuation, I would agree that it was a good precaution, especially when I heard about the kinds of chemicals that were involved. That is the reason I asked, initially, where the trains were coming from and specifically which industry, because as I understand it, the chemicals on the train were explosives that are used either in mining to blow up rock, or explosive in weapons manufacturing.

So I think a lot of people would be interested in finding out where these trains that are coming through communities in Manitoba are going to and coming from. I do not know if the minister wants to make any comment on that.

Mr. Cummings: Only to say that while the chemicals were dangerous because of their caustic nature, to my knowledge I do not think there were explosives on there. There were, obviously, some pretty wild stories at the start, when you have steam

rising 300 feet into the air, people begin to wonder what is under there. That was heat that was being generated as a result of chemical reaction that was going on that was causing that, as I understand it.

So, no, we did not have those types of chemicals on there as I understand it. But there was certainly reason to be concerned about the materials. It will be part of the report or we can get the information sooner. It is no secret about where they may have come from.

Ms. Cerilli: Madam Chair, another area that I want to ask some questions on has to do with the enforcement of the new legislation and regulations around stubble burning. I want some kind of explanation of how the minister sees that the new system will work, and how those regulations will be enforced.

Mr. Cummings: The introduction of the stubble burning regulations, first of all, let me speak to the timing. They were introduced this spring. Actually, I think we startled staff a little bit when the Departments of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Environment said we want those regulations by April.

The fact is that we had an awful lot of straw left over from last fall, and the last thing that we wanted was a repeat of last fall's smoke problem in the spring. We knew that there was potential and, in fact, there was a fair bit of stubble burning that went on this spring.

Regulations are intended to allow for some burning, but under conditions that will not impact on the human population or any other living population to the same extent that nighttime burning has a tendency to. In other words, daytime burning will encourage the smoke to rise, and the burn will be hotter. There will be more clean combustion if there can be such a thing for stubble burning. We implemented them effective this spring, but the spring regulations were not quite the same as the level of regulations that will be in place for the fall.

* (2100)

The fall regulations are such that the province will be broken into regions. The announcement will go out on the air waves, and will be listed on an 800 line, and will be available, I would think, likely through our Ag reps offices, as to which municipalities burning will be permitted. That is the difference between fall burning and other times of the year. During the fall, burning will only be

permitted in certain areas under the conditions that we consider acceptable. It will be banned otherwise.

That will, of course, mean that there will be a lot more control around the city of Winnipeg. We fully expect that there will not need to be as much of an enforcement in the rest of the province. An announcement might well read like this: Burning would be permitted in the southwest quadrant in the city of Winnipeg, not permitted in the north, not permitted in the east quadrant, and there would be a list of the municipalities where it would be permitted in the Winnipeg region. The balance of the province, burning would be permitted. That could be the form that an announcement could take.

It could also take another format that would say, where it came to the part referencing the balance of the province, that if conditions warranted other areas could be named as not being permitted for burning. Couched within that, however, is the fact that burning should not be undertaken unless it has been properly fire-guarded, and unless the weather conditions are appropriate for combustion and management of the fire so that it can be started after eleven o'clock in the morning and be out within two hours of sunset.

That is another important compromise, the two hours after sunset. That does allow for fire to burn for a small period of time during what we would think of as the evening period, I guess, but it does mean that the fire must be put out and we, during the discussions, believed that that was a reasonable compromise.

All of these regulations can be changed based on six-hours notice and that is authority that we assume under The Environment Act, that we can add to or change these regulations on that short a notice. In other words, if we start to get a build-up of smoke in the fall, we could on six hours notice indicate that all fires must be out by sunset or whatever other conditions we wish to impose.

It is a little scary in the sense that there is a great deal of authority that will rest with the Minister of Environment and the environment officers, but, as I have said many times and I would like to put it on the record again, there has been good co-operation all the way around as a result of what was a very unsettling and upsetting situation last fall.

The agricultural community has recognized its responsibilities and we hope that the compromise between what the agricultural community wants to

do and what the city believes is responsible will be workable.

Ms. Corliss: Well, with the way that the legislation is written, the minister has said that it still allows us to ask for the kind of chaos that resulted last year where we had a decision that we tried to enforce without people feeling like they even had adequate time to know what the information was and they could then use that as a way of saying that they did not know about the change.

I wonder if that is not the kind of situation that we are asking for with the way that the regulations and the authority with the minister is made and that what we could end up having is just another ongoing emergency situation where people can continue to say that they did not know what it was for that day.

Mr. Cummings: That scenario has been contemplated and we believe that the deterrents that are in the legislation will allow us to enforce regulations and fines, particularly if the fines are large enough, that we will have a very strong deterrent.

Last year was a declaration under Emergency Measures. It was a dramatic change from anything that has occurred before. I suppose I see this just the same as a lot of other regulations that the people, the operations that are being regulated, by and large, most people are pretty co-operative and pretty much want to be law-abiding citizens.

There will be some exceptions. I understand that and they will have to be dealt with as necessary, but as a member of the agricultural community myself, I would certainly expect that we will get the co-operation that we are looking forward to.

Certainly, it will not be a pleasant fall for me or whoever sits in this chair if we do not get good co-operation because any law, whether it is speeding or whether it is smoking in a prohibited area, any of these laws that regulate human activity, if they do not have the co-operation of the community at large, they become very difficult to enforce.

Peer pressure goes a long way in answering this. You only need to go out in the Red River Valley this spring and you will find farmers that are still struggling with their straw from last fall in order to try and get germination on their fields this year because they are trying to avoid burning.

Now, I almost would have suggested to some of them, looking at some of the fields, maybe they should have tried burning a little bit, the amount of grief they have gone through to avoid having to deal with the burning question. There are a lot of people out there with a lot of good will on this thing, and I think we will be able to make it work, frankly.

Ms. CerlIII: Well, we will see, and I hope so. I would think, especially at the beginning, because I think there also was a lot of opposition to this, that there would not be a lot of switching of the regulations or it is going to ask for confusion. One of the precedent setting and interesting things about the legislation regulations is that it is going to allow—and I think the minister has in mind the RCMP when it refers to a class of designated environment officers. What will be the RCMP's role, and how will they actually work to enforce the regulation?

Mr. Cummings: Well, I think you are seeing an example here this evening, frankly, of where two or three of us farmers can sit here and actually smile about the fact that this regulation is being implemented, and that we believe there is public co-operation on this. Frankly, I think that verifies what I was saying a few minutes ago, that the agriculture community wants to be able to do the right thing in terms of this issue—

An Honourable Member: Right now we just want rain.

Mr. Cummings: Yes, right now we are looking for rain.

More directly to the member's question, as a matter of fact there is a meeting tomorrow morning with RCMP to more clearly define some of the roles and responsibilities that they may be able to assume.

* (2110)

But in the broad sense, let me answer your question, that the original act indicated that a government employee could be appointed as an environment officer. RCMP did not qualify as government employees under the technicality of the act, apparently, so that is what made for the amendment. Up till now, the RCMP could charge people under emergency measures, they could charge them, I suppose, for criminal activity if it were arson, those sorts of things.

Now they will be able to enforce the aspects of The Environment Act related to stubble burning and

others as far as that goes. But I can see where, on their regular, normal patrolling duties, the police may come across fires that are still burning, that have been left uncontrolled later in the evening than they should be. They will be able to identify the location, and given their communications capabilities we may be able to get hold of the owner very quickly. If we are unable to do that, we will order the fire to be put out, and that will be a cost to the owner.

So I see the fact that they are there, that they are already patrolling in the areas that we are talking about. Very likely it will fit in as part of the overall enforcement package, and they may well be leading in some areas. I can see their response more likely coming in some of the off-hours and some of the odd things, such as I just referred to.

Ms. CerlIII: So their role will be to report it to the department. They will not be actually going and talking to the farmers themselves? Will they be calling on the fire trucks if that is deemed to be the need?

Mr. Cummings: No, their role, I would expect they would be much more proactive than that. They will be able to catch the person right on the spot and do the other things that the member referred to as well, if they deem it appropriate.

Ms. CerlIII: One of the ongoing concerns that I have had about this is that the smoke from the stubble is not just regular smoke, that because of the chemicals used in the fields and the reaction once the fire has started that the smoke can actually contain higher chemical concentration. Is that something that has been looked at? Has there ever been air testing done on burning stubble? Can the minister give us some idea of what the composition of the smoke is?

Mr. Cummings: There are two aspects to the response of this question: No. 1, herbicide application is largely done in June, quite some time before stubble-burning period; secondly, the chemicals would, I believe, have almost completely biodegraded by that point, or completely biodegraded. Thirdly, in order to support that, the department informs me that they did some air quality and some monitoring about three years ago and were unable to detect any chemical residue in the smoke that they were monitoring.

Ms. CerlIII: I think I would be remiss too in this area without asking if there are plans to go beyond the regulations that we have now and actually try to

phrase out this practice, and since it is not done in other jurisdictions, if there are plans through zero tillage or other methods to move away from this practice that is somewhat unique to Manitoba?

Mr. Cummings: I think some of my colleagues are about to burst into song here: "When the smoke gets in my eyes". But, the fact is that I would not anticipate complete regulation as the member is referencing primarily because I believe that we are making tremendous gains today in terms of the reduction that we will see as a result of this regulation.

There is an awful lot of thought, a number of pilot projects, a number of these being put together on pelletizing for alternative fuels, on manufacture into insulation, certain alternatives to wood products are even being contemplated, none of which is particularly new technology, but most of which has never been practical up until now. The recovery of the cellulose out of the straw would make a good alternative to some of our softwood pulp if the process was efficient and practical.

So, no, I do not contemplate going any further than we have gone now. This is an awful lot further, as I said, than I would have contemplated going four or five years ago. But I can say that given this is one of the most productive parts of western Canada, we are likely going to see lots more of those big crops of straw and we will have to deal with them as rationally as we can. Allowing the farm community a few options, as this regulation does, does seem to me to be the reasonable response at this time.

Ms. CerlIII: I will move on to another area that is of concern, this whole system for dealing with waste water. There were some changes that were being made in the training of waste water operators. I wonder if the minister could explain what the new system and program is that is in place now.

Mr. Cummings: I understand that the program is now being offered for certificate at Red River, as we had been stating we expected it to be over the last year or so when we had an ongoing letter war with the association of operators out there, but I would think that now that that goal has been accomplished that they should feel much more comfortable about it because their qualifications will now be backed up by certificate, which we could not do as a department actually.

Ms. CerlIII: So I assume then the minister is aware that that is to their liking and if they will now change their focus to being more of an association for those

that are certified and if the people that are certified now will continue to be, as I understood it, just either council members or that this is not a full-time position, that these are people that are now having to incur a cost to do something that is just part of their duties as part of being an elected official in a rural area. Is that system going to change?

Mr. Cummings: The member referenced their being members of a council. I presume she meant the waste water association?

Ms. CerlIII: Just to clarify, I meant that often these people are just on a local municipal council.

Mr. Cummings: Those days have pretty well changed. The councillor and the operator are not the same. Usually an employee would be considered the operator.

I asked the question directly of staff because I have not had any communication with the association recently and, yes, apparently they are satisfied with this approach.

I use the word "certificate." They do get a certificate, but this is not a certification program, but it does give them a certificate of training.

Ms. CerlIII: So are they then required to go through some other process to be certified, to perform the function, or they just have to be hired somewhere?

Mr. Cummings: No, they are capable of operating. This is to certify that they have now taken a course to enhance their knowledge and capabilities in dealing, depending on the size of—obviously the City of Winnipeg would have much different requirements of their operators than the community of Dunnottar. That is perhaps a poor example but, nevertheless, that is the spread between the two extremes.

The smaller communities do not need a fully qualified engineer to operate their waste water treatment, but they do need somebody who has some training and who can comply with the regulations that we are imposing on them.

Ms. CerlIII: I was thinking more of the individuals that are operating sewage lagoons in the various areas. I have a whole file here of correspondence—I know that the minister also has this correspondence—and it outlines the concern that it seems like more and more people are sharing in this system of the sewage lagoons that are designed for a warmer climate and does not work in the cold climate here in Manitoba.

One of the Clean Environment Commission hearings on the siting of a lagoon, there was a decision made, a recommendation made, from the Clean Environment Commission with some urgency that there should be hearings set on the effectiveness of this type of sewage system. I would just ask the minister to explain how he and his department are dealing with these claims?

* (2120)

For example, the organisms continue throughout the winter and then are not being satisfactorily dealt with through this mechanism of waste water treatment, and there are a variety of other concerns with the way that the tests are done and with the design.

Mr. Cummings: This topic is obviously not a surprise. A couple of things I would like to put on the record; however, there are a small number of people out there who have been making noises about whether or not lagoons work in this climate. I would like to point out that we have literally hundreds of them across southern Canada, but particularly in Manitoba, we have I believe close to 200 lagoons that are operating. None of the discharges are permitted during periods of time when they are impeded by the temperature of the water so that any action that should have taken place can.

In the Clean Environment Commission report that the member referenced, a particular person made a presentation, I believe it was likely Dr. Paton from Brandon, who indicated as the member had just reported, they had concerns about whether or not the lagoons worked in a cold climate and whether or not there was some longevity to some of the bacteria that were in the sewage lagoons.

The Clean Environment Commission did not make a recommendation based on those comments. What they said was that they had heard the concerns that were raised, and they were sufficiently interested that the Province of Manitoba should follow up on them and examine the concerns and determine if there was validity. I do not have the words exactly right either, but it was more that approach than the one which the member seemed to be referencing which was that this was an emergency, that this administration and others have all been incompetent and did not know what they were doing in terms of permitting lagoons in this province, and that they were all emitting all sorts of terrible things into the environment.

The fact is that people have been quoting that report almost continuously ever since, including the gentlemen, I say that in the plural, who put together the presentation. I do not think the public is well served by the thought that all of the lagoons in southern Manitoba are operating inappropriately.

Releases are timed. They are tested before they are released. Biodegradation takes place in the primary cell during the summer and releases are generally made from the secondary cell, or should always be made from the secondary cell, generally, in the fall, and after the effluent tests are able to indicate that the release would be benign.

So while we have agreed to do more review and examination of the matter, because one should never out of hand dismiss concerns that people bring forward, particularly if they are people who should have some good technical knowledge about what they are speaking.

But lagoons will, I think, maintain themselves as one of the more efficient ways of dealing with our waste. They do work perhaps more quickly in warmer climates, but it is all the more reason that we have to put adequate infrastructure in place here. In other words, enough storage capacity in the cells, and enough cells in order to adequately protect the environmental aspects of this.

I guess if one were to compare that to the fact that Manitoba is now considered the one jurisdiction that has more of its effluent as a percentage treated than any other jurisdiction in Canada. That may well be a function of the fact that so many of our people live in Winnipeg, at least a large percentage of our people. Nevertheless, that is the reality of how we compare to other jurisdictions.

You can look at Ontario; you can look at B.C. where they pump directly into the—even Victoria pumps directly into the ocean. I think it is a little bit like picking you-know-what out of pepper to try and talk about the inefficiency of our system when you compare it to other jurisdictions in this country.

Ms. Cerilli: For starters I do not buy the approach—[interjection] I do not know what the minister is picking out of pepper, but I also do not buy the approach of saying that we are doing okay because we are not as bad as the rest of the country. I think that we want to make sure that—[interjection] I think that what we are trying to do is make sure that we are disinfecting effluent so that it is not going to

contaminate the environment, irrespective of what other jurisdictions are doing.

I will read from the report just to clarify for the record. It does say that the commission suggests that this issue might be appropriately addressed by a study on the design, construction and operational guidelines for sewage lagoons. Any such study might best be guided by an advisory steering body made up of appropriate representatives from the scientific community, the public at large, consultants, or association representatives, and by representatives of both the provincial and federal governments. The intent would be to ensure that design requirements and operational guidelines adequately protect the quality of servicing ground water resources in Manitoba. The commission feels that some urgency is attached to this need and should receive prompt attention.

So I think that suggests that this is something that requires further study. Just because there are only a few people that have raised the concern and dug this up, it does not mean that it is any less valid. I was going to ask the minister to give his explanation, aided by the staff that he has here, of how these sewage lagoons as designed are supposed to treat the sewage, how the system is supposed to work.

Mr. Cummings: As I said a few moments ago, the biodegradation takes place in the primary cell. The secondary cell receives the discharge and it can be chlorinated or other means of disinfectant in the second cell and then it can be discharged when it is considered appropriately benign.

Now, another question that a number of people like to raise is whether or not these cells will hold water without polluting ground water and all of those other aspects, but that really has not too much to do with whether or not the lagoon is treating the effluent appropriately. The solids—I am looking at a schematic here—settle out in the primary lagoon as well, and the lagoons naturally do turn themselves as a result of temperature changes, certainly the primary cell. That occurs in the spring. That is the one time of the year when you can probably tell with your nose where the lagoon is located. Other than that, it normally will not have a smell coming from these lagoons.

* (2130)

Secondly, I have to indicate I have become somewhat familiar with a variety of lagoons around the province over the last two or three years, and

there are a number of lagoons where there is a fair bit of wildlife in the final cells. It should be noted that cattails, for example, it is now well known, are capable of removing a lot of nitrites from the water just through the natural process of growth in their uptake. In fact, marshes are one of nature's own septic systems in how they clean up a number of processes. Nitrogen can well come from other sources than from the activities of mankind.

Ms. Cerlilli: With this type of lagoon system, what is the depth of the discharge pipe?

Mr. Cummings: I think the member is on to the question that Mr. Dalmyn posed last year in committee about where the second cell would discharge, and it should discharge removing the upper part of the second cell down to very close to being empty. The question is often raised, if you test the top of the cell, whether or not that means the rest of the water in the cell is a homogeneous mix in the cell when you take a sample off the top. Then are you discharging all sorts of pollutants out of the bottom half of the cell? That has not been proven by anything I have seen, and that, in fact, spreading and mixing of treatment in the final cell can be effectively managed, and that one need not assume that the final discharge is not as good as the first discharge.

Ms. Cerlilli: Keeping in line with the suggestions from the Clean Environment Commission, is there going to be some kind of a publicly accountable study on this system? It might even be advisable to put some of the skeptics on to ensure that they are involved. Is that something that the minister is considering doing?

Mr. Cummings: In fact, it was pointed out to me a few minutes ago that Mr. Dalmyn is doing some studies of his own, and we are co-operating with him at this point. I do not think we would say that this study is our response to the Clean Environment's recommendations, but we are involving ourselves with some of the things that are going on out there, and I believe we will eventually reach an understanding of this. The fact is that in northern Manitoba, in case somebody has the impression that we are trying to operate these in the tundra, mechanical batch treatment facilities are what is being established in a number of the northern remote communities.

Ms. Cerlilli: Just to finish up on this area, one of the other concerns that has been raised has to do with

the guaranteeing of the designs of these systems. What is the guarantee that is given, and who is liable under that guarantee if there is a leakage?

Mr. Cummings: The engineer, and the guarantee is his staff.

Ms. Cerilli: The engineer that authorizes it would then be responsible if there was proved to be any kind of leakage?

Mr. Cummings: That would be correct.

Ms. Cerilli: I am wondering if the member for River Heights might have some questions in this area.

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): I would like to go back to some of what we were talking about earlier today and that is in enforcement. The minister indicated that only five cases had been taken by Justice to the courts. What were the dispositions of those five cases? How many convictions were actually received on those five cases?

Mr. Cummings: Staff tell me that they are not sure if they have all been decided yet of those five. I will just ask the member to recall that I also said that we recommended a lot more than that, but only five went to court.

Mrs. Carstairs: I am not questioning that the department probably did indeed recommend a lot more. Obviously, it is Crown attorneys that determine whether there is enough evidence to justify the costs involved of going to court and, generally, they do not like to proceed with a case unless at least they have a 50-50 chance of winning and usually an even better chance than that.

There must be now within the department some records as to the percentage of the number of court cases they take that result in conviction. Is it running 50-50? Is it running 75-25? Any figures on that at all?

Mr. Cummings: Probably the percentage is quite high, maybe like 90 percent, but we are not precise.

Mrs. Carstairs: I think it is, quite frankly, important that the figure be that high, because if it appears the department or indeed the Justice department, because they make the final decision, take cases which do not result in high rates of successful prosecution, then it begins to be considered by the polluter to be just another step along the way, rather than a serious gesture that is taken.

So the number of cases going to court does not particularly bother me. I think that it is wise, if anything, to make sure you have a high conviction rate.

What does bother me, however, and it was mentioned to some degree by the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli), is the very low fines that have been attributed as a result of these convictions. I suspect that what judges are doing is what they do in many criminal cases. They take a look at what has been the assessment of fines in other jurisdictions and they lay a similar type fine in this particular circumstance.

The minister may or may not be aware, nor may the critic be aware, but there is now literally a computer programming on sentencing, and a judge will often go off to chamber, hook into his program and say, okay, there are 15 cases of this nature that have been decided; these are the range of sentences that have been given or fines that have been given, so this is the one I will pluck out. I mean they do not just pluck these figures out of the air, although some people may think they do, it is not quite the way it works.

My concern is that there is still within the judiciary an undervaluation of the importance of cases involving damage to the environment. It is not just this jurisdiction, but it is other jurisdictions as well.

The member suggested that perhaps we need some education of the judiciary on the importance of some of these things. Has the minister ever had, for example, a session with the judiciary as to what kind of goals or objectives this particular department is looking toward in ensuring a clean environment in the province of Manitoba?

* (2140)

Further to that question, has he discussed this with other Ministers of Environment, and I know he has a meeting tomorrow, as to whether they too feel that the fines that they are getting from the courts tend to be less than their departments would like to see achieved.

Mr. Cummings: I have not met with the judiciary. I have had discussions with my colleague the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), and I know the department has had seminars from Justice to show the best way to prepare for a case and the type and nature of information that is required to take a case forward for prosecution. So from time to time I think we would like to see greater activity in this area, and

I believe we are starting to see some headway in that respect, given what I just said.

In terms of a national prospective, I have had some discussion, not a great deal. The discussion that I have had is more recent in terms of contaminated sites and how we attribute cost for cleanup and the culpability to which owner as we go through the history of a particular site that has been contaminated. I know that the jurisdictions to the south do ask for and get far higher fines. I happened to sit between what would be the equivalent of a minister in this province and the head of a very large corporation that had just got dinged for a million-dollar fine. I had a very uncomfortable supper, as one could well guess.

I would have to say, however, that the nature of the type of problems that we have had in Manitoba have not yet tested the system probably to the level of how high fines might go. For example, the Bristol issue is not concluded. That is still an open issue. Nevertheless, as I indicated before, we have got Bristol to spend some \$600,000 already towards mitigating the impacts in the Stony Mountain area. That in and of itself is a lot of money, but we also know that there is a lot of work that has not been accounted for on the site itself and those dollars also will be quite significant by the time it is finished.

Domtar, as I said earlier, is another example of where we have not actually tested the system to see how high judges might be willing to assess fines or penalties, given the gravity of certain carelessness. I think when there is carelessness and intent on the part of operators and the results have dramatic and lasting impacts on the environment, that is the combination of events that will test the system perhaps more than we have up to this point.

Mrs. Carstairs: Well, I think it is clear to say that 20 years ago not only were these companies not particularly concerned about the damage they were doing, but neither was the public and neither were government offices. When we talk about culpability, I think that there is a serious question that has to be raised as to how deliberate was their intent to besmirch the environment. That has changed, and it has changed very dramatically. I think that it is fair to say now that companies, the public and governments are far more aware of the culpability of corporations and their deliberate avoidance of learning what the problems might be of such and such an action. That kind of avoidance, I think, will be determined by the courts to be no longer

acceptable. Maybe it was when nobody was concerned, but it will not be any longer. Does the minister think that his specific legislation is strong enough in terms of the maximum fines that can be levied against corporations in the province of Manitoba who are polluters?

Mr. Cummings: I had to double check, but it is correct that our legislation contemplates going up to a million dollars, which is adequate for anything that I could contemplate at this juncture. On the other hand, when we realize that the long-term collective impacts that have to be corrected at the old Manfor site come to some \$9 million in cleanup costs that there may well be reason to review that, but at this point I do not think we have anything on the horizon that I can see where a fine would be—anything exceeding that magnitude would be relevant to the accidents that occur.

There is one aspect to this that we should recognize that is occurring as well and that is one of the things that is starting to be brought to my attention on a regular basis is that the banking institutions, for example, will not come within a country mile of anything that may have—I emphasize the word "may"—any contamination on it. That in itself is a recognition of the change and mindset, and I guess I am confirming what the member said. The banks to my view have almost gone to the ridiculous level of where a site—an example is a gas station that we were aware of that had a rather small and contained amount of hydrocarbon in the soil on one part of the site, contained enough that the department did not believe they had to issue a cleanup order because it was not going anywhere, but kept it on a list in case the use of the property should ever change. The banks were refusing to grant a mortgage on the property because it was on a list somewhere. So we have almost gone to the other extreme in terms of the practicality of how banks, as an example, deal with this problem.

Mrs. Carstairs: Well, I think it is clear from the banking industry's perspective that as the first mortgage holder they do not want to see that loan go down the drain because of some action of a government agency or otherwise against that particular company for the repayment of something which may have a higher priority than the first mortgage which is in environmental damage and a fine that is placed on a company because of that environmental damage.

In terms of the legislation, I have real concerns about a million dollars being adequate. If we are going to be looking at what might have been a major disaster with regard to the spill, or the two spills, in fact, this year, you could have had, in a wrong chemical mix, lives lost. You could have had children with irreparable damage of some kind where a million dollars would not, quite frankly, touch the legal liability of that company.

One only has to look at oil spill damages and the fines that have been levied in the United States, as a result of those oil spills, particularly in Alaska, to realize that they have gone much further than we have in terms of not only assessing penalty, but in having the capacity to assess penalty.

So while \$1 million looks like a lot of money, \$1 million has become not very much money. We used to think of someone with \$1 million, a millionaire, as being a huge amount of money. I think today, when one thinks of a millionaire, one does not think of somebody with a particularly large amount of money. Some people may, but in terms of the banking community, that is just simply no longer true. There are several hundred thousand millionaires in Canada today—when being a millionaire was a great rarity.

So I think it is something that should be examined by the department to ensure that the fine is in fact adequate enough to meet all circumstances.

In terms of the Environment department's reaction to both St. Lazare and Carberry, I think the reaction of the department was first class. I think all the employees of the Department of Environment deserve a great deal of credit and congratulations for, along with the Emergency Measures Organization, maintaining the high degree of calm that there was, but more importantly, the high degree of satisfaction for those who had been seriously displaced.

* (2150)

I mean, I was quite amazed at the lack of complaint, quite frankly, from people who had been asked at Christmastime to leave their homes, leave their presents, check into a hotel, which may sound like fun for a couple of days and is not much fun after the second day.

So those department people who had to put in extra hours and worked hard to maintain that level of calm, quite frankly, deserve everybody in this

province's congratulations. They did a first-class job. The minister does not want to comment.

Mr. Cummings: I certainly do not mind commenting. I have indicated before, and I appreciate the comments of the member for River Heights. I know the people in the department will appreciate it as well, because very often the Ministry of Environment is the bearer of bad news. It is not as often perhaps as it should be that they have an opportunity to be complimented for the work that they have done.

It also demonstrates another reality that we were faced with. That is it was not without some pain and some discussion that we upgraded the equipment for the people on the response team. As it turned out, the equipment was used by them and, I believe, other departments in the response, to deal with the situation at Oakville which, without some of that upgraded equipment, would not have gone very well. They would not have functioned very well.

Secondly, the Oakville response did test the federal-provincial agreement on joint responses to these types of situations. The fact is that—I am getting a little lobbying here on the side—nevertheless, the federal response did allow us access to some fairly technical equipment that we might not have been able to provide, in fact, we certainly would not have been able to provide individually as a province. That is something that we are just now learning. The fire response people have been doing it for years, co-operating with other jurisdictions in the exchange of water bombers, et cetera. In emergency response, we are now just starting to do more of that.

Mrs. Carstairs: This is just a technical question but, following work like that where environmental officers are asked to go in and work with what could be potentially highly toxic chemicals, certainly where there is a great deal of heat, certainly where there was protective—what are the requirements after that for medical examination of these environment officers to ensure that their health has not in any way been endangered by what they have just been through?

Mr. Cummings: There has not been a requirement in place, but I am told that we are working with Workplace Safety and Health and that they are interested in this area, and there is going to be ongoing monitoring and follow-up to make sure that any impacts are noted. Hopefully, there are none.

Madam Chairperson: Item 2.(a) Environmental Operations (1) Salaries \$3,598,300—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$996,900—pass.

Item 2.(b) Environmental Management (1) Salaries \$3,355,500.

Ms. CerlIII: I have a number of questions in this area. This is the whole area of environmental assessment and all the standards that are being set with respect to water and air quality. This is, other than enforcement, the main work of the department.

I think I will start off with dealing with some of the questions relating to water policy.

I am looking right now at the water strategy policy application document, the highlights, and I am wondering how far along we are in seeing the rest of this report announced and having this adopted as government policy.

Mr. Cummings: I believe the implementation document has now been approved and is going out for consultation.

Ms. CerlIII: Well, this is the area that I am very concerned about, that we have these policy documents that are plodding ahead, plodding along it seems, and there is lots of consultation and there are all of these kinds of activities, and then on the other hand on a different track, we have major water projects that are booming along, dams that are being proposed, water diversions. I am concerned that we do not have these policies in place before we have the government moving ahead with major diversion projects that are going to not only contradict the policy but are not considering a lot of the policy statements that are being made at all.

I wonder if the minister has any comments on that, how we can see these policy documents being developed and at the same time we are having projects and licences being issued in a fashion that would contradict the policy.

Mr. Cummings: First of all the water policy document is referenced in the Pembina Valley Pipeline document, but nevertheless I think that I would take some exception with the reference to the thought that that particular project or others are out there contravening government policy.

What we have done over the last number of months and years, not only in water policy but in land-use policy and a number of other areas, is to review, upgrade and get public input on existing policies and revisions of them and bring into place

formal policies that in some cases were somewhat less than fully in place from previous administrations.

Let us look at the process in the question that the member raised specifically about the withdrawal of some water from the Assiniboine River. This is a river that, probably if it were not receiving its waters out of the Shellmouth Dam, would be less than knee deep or maybe even dry on a number of occasions throughout the years. This is already a modified water flow.

The amount of water that comes out of the Shellmouth is what maintains the flow into the river and any withdrawals that—and this discussion has occurred in Question Period—but any withdrawals that are being contemplated, it will have to be proven in front of the commission that they do not run contrary to water policies of this province.

Furthermore, those who say that withdrawals cannot be accommodated will have to receive the assurances on their behalf by the commission that in fact the water can be managed or replaced, whatever approach the commission in conjunction with Water Resources and the management of the Shellmouth can be substantiated by the appropriate documentation.

This is not a game of chance, it is not a shot in the dark to say, well, you can take so many cfs out of that river and nobody will notice. But the fact is nobody notices that there were 30 cfs taken out from the Seine not that long ago.

* (2200)

So those are the kind of things that are going to have to be put up in front of the commission and substantiated by documentation, and it certainly will not be substantiated if they should happen to be contrary to the water policies of the province.

Ms. CerlIII: The minister says that this project, the Assiniboine diversion, is not going to be contrary to the proposed policy. Well, the proposed policy clearly talks about ensuring that the provisions of basin-wide plans are achieved through education initiatives and enforcement. Does that mean that there is going to be basin-wide consideration for the diversion proposal? Will that include looking at the accumulative amount of water that is being drawn off all along the river? Will that include looking also at the effects of increased effluent that is going into the river?

Mr. Cummings: A basin-wide plan is obviously an objective that may take some considerable amount of time to fully implement. Let us remember that the beginning of even putting in place a management regime began some couple of decades ago on some of the construction that has occurred along the Assiniboine up to this point. In putting together a basin-wide plan, that does not mean that all existing or potential impacts are totally eliminated until a complete and overarching plan is in place on every aspect of a particular basin.

One of the things that I find most disconcerting about this whole debate, interbasin transfer even is one of the derogatory terms that is very often used, is that it is not very often recognized but, frankly, the supply of Winnipeg's drinking water to date is the removal of water from one drainage basin and putting it into another, even though, in the macro sense, they all end up in Hudson Bay.

Many people have and seem to continue to try and characterize this as some kind of an unmanaged approach that would be less than complete if we did not spend years studying the river. The fact is that the commission will have to be satisfied that the amount of information they have before them, particularly concerning flows, is sufficient for them to make a decision as to whether or not this is an appropriate withdrawal.

Ms. Cerilli: That is what I am asking, is that there will be basin-wide consideration in the assessment in keeping with the policy. I am not saying there is going to be some overall management plan developed prior to this diversion, but that there will be basin-wide consideration of what is happening all along the system.

Mr. Cummings: Yes, I think that will become increasingly apparent at the hearings. The commission will be looking at the broader implications of doing this. That is why the interests of the people at Portage la Prairie, the interests of the people in Brandon, the interests of the residents in Winnipeg, the interests of the people and the users at Shellmouth are all part of the input into this. I just hope that the debate in front of the commission and in other forms is kept to a reasonably factual discussion of what it means to manage a river course and to allow for certain withdrawals from it. In that type of a venue, we can make a clear and reasonable decision. The commission may well make recommendations about future impact on flows or whether future retention should be

impacted, but I truly become concerned when we hear people that I believe have information to the contrary but choose not to believe when they talk about reducing the Assiniboine River to a creek. I could not stand here in good faith and accept that that might be a consequence of anything that this government would put forward. That is really not very beneficial to the debate around whether or not any allowance for withdrawals can be made from that river.

I look to the Assiniboine and I walk along the shores of it very often in the morning, but I am also smart enough to know that the reason there is water down here at The Forks is not because of the particular volume we are releasing that day or the week before from Shellmouth but because of the level that the dam at Lockport is set at. We are looking at modified waterways here, not pristine streams. So this is the kind of debate that I hope we have in front of the commission.

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

Ms. Cerilli: I hope the minister appreciates though that it is reasonable for the City of Winnipeg to ask for a moratorium on any other allocations until some kind of basin-wide analysis can be done. I do not think that we have really kept pace with the kind of licensing that has gone on for irrigators off this river. I look at the increase in the use of water for irrigation off the Assiniboine, and it raises a question of, could an outcome of the hearings be that we have to start having some kind of gauge or monitoring of water use of irrigators along the Assiniboine to see if they are in compliance with what their allotments are, because right now, as it seems, the irrigators are given an allotment, but there is never any way of knowing if that is the amount of water that they take off or not.

I would recommend that there would have to be some kind of system for gauging and monitoring the water that is being allocated and that would be a reasonable recommendation that could come out of this hearing if there is a basin-wide approach taken. Does the minister agree with that?

Mr. Cummings: First of all, let me make it very clear that I do not want to second-guess the commission on what they may or may not recommend. I am simply trying to outline what I believe some of the reasonable areas of debate should be in front of the commission.

The member has asked me whether or not it should be part of the debate, that the city has a fair and reasonable request about wanting to have a moratorium on any more withdrawals until they understand the ramifications of a basin-wide plan. The development of that basin-wide plan and the assembly of the information is ongoing, as I said, and has been for the last 20 years.

The member references irrigation withdrawals that are taking place today and whether or not we have a good grip on the amount of water that is being withdrawn, both licensed and unlicensed, from the Assiniboine River.

The Water Resources section of Natural Resources will have to justify and quantify the information that they have regarding those withdrawals. I am sure they will be asked, but I think that I have some increasing confidence in the knowledge that we have about the amount of irrigation withdrawals particularly that are being allowed in the province. What is being drawn directly from our rivers, particularly the Assiniboine, is only a portion of the withdrawals. The larger amount of withdrawal is in fact occurring on the Carberry plains and the Assiniboine delta aquifer. There is a large amount of irrigation occurring there in terms of percentages, not half, but it is close to half in that one region.

* (2210)

That is becoming increasingly closely monitored. As we made an announcement last Friday about the horticulture enhancement studies that will flow from the project that is being put in place, with Carberry as a centre, Carman, Morden, Winkler area, Melita and Roblin areas looking at the alternative uses for land into specialized crops, what are the better alternatives for irrigation, we are going to get an awful lot more knowledge in this area, which added to the existing knowledge that we have about withdrawals, will lead us to getting a lot more use out of the water resources that we do have.

I do believe that we have a certain responsibility, all of us as legislators, to deal with the reality of certain industrial demands that are on the waters out there and make sure that they are not excessive, but neither should we look at them as being necessarily evil, that we have started off by modification of this particular river when the Shellmouth Dam was built. An awful lot of those operations could not even be justified today if there was not some modification.

The city of Brandon has a dam on the Assiniboine. They do not like to think of it as a dam. They call it a weir, but essentially it backs water up for a mile or two down the Assiniboine River and gives them quite an adequate reservoir for the city of Brandon. There is impoundment of water at the city of Portage. There are a number of other impacts on the water all along the river. These are not unknown. The Department of Natural Resources will have to provide the information they have about these impacts and feed that information forward as part of the hearings for this withdrawal.

Ms. Cerilli: Mr. Acting Chairperson, the issues raised of the cost benefits of the type of irrigation that is going on in southern Manitoba and especially from trying to include some of the environmental concerns, are those some of the considerations that can be made within the scope of the assessment on this diversion?

Mr. Cummlings: The project is not an irrigation project. I suppose if you want to look at cost-benefit analysis, you are asking whether or not communities at the receiving end of the pipe have an opportunity to get additional potable water for growth of population and whether or not the water comes from the Assiniboine or comes from the Red or comes from the Pembina, undoubtedly at some point in their future, that part of the province will continue to search for additional waters.

The project that they proposed has a number of stages to it. The fact is, and I note with some chagrin, that a recent editorial in the Winnipeg Free Press still seems to be under the impression that this proposal is talking about some kind of an overland running of the water. The fact is the proposal talks about a pipeline with treatment at the city of Portage to try and provide not only the most cost-effective way of transporting this water in terms of conservation. That is the point that they are trying to make in terms of changing the method of transporting the water, but it also should be fairly clear that if you are talking about shipping treated water it is not going to be used for irrigation water at the other end.

It simply would not be practical nor would I advocate piping of water for those purposes over that distance. The cost-benefit analysis is done in the early stages of the proposal. If the program in this particular instance for potable water for a community cannot be seen to be practical and pay for itself, given the federal program that it is coming

in under, then it would be unable to qualify for a proposal in the first place.

Ms. Corliss: There is another number of issues related to this. What I am suggesting is that this could call into question—if we are looking basin-wide at the irrigation use along the Assiniboine, particularly in the Portage area, and that is what I think is going to come of this, is that people are going to start realizing that 50 percent of the water used in the province is for irrigation. This is in the State of the Environment Report and even though irrigation is the bottom of the priority list for water use, that to me is something that will get looked at.

With the issue that the minister just referred to, I am wondering if there will be an increase in water rates that the towns around Carman that are going to be receiving the diverted water. Will there be an increased cost for those communities? The concern being that, as I understand it, what is going to happen is the treated water that is transferred to that area will then no longer have the demand on the Winkler aquifer, the aquifers in that area that are also being used for irrigation and then the irrigation in that area is already expanding and that the concern is that the water quality and the amount of water will be further depleted because of the increased irrigation in that southern area once this pipeline for treated water goes through.

So there are two issues. There is the issue of the cost for the Carman area once they are receiving the treated water and then that in effect will allow for increased use of the aquifer for irrigation without having to be concerned about water quality for the domestic use.

Mr. Cummings: I suppose we are getting a long way away from what the primary environmental issues will be in terms of the issues that will be in front of the Clean Environment Commission, but you can make the same circular argument about almost any project that one undertakes in terms of use of a natural resource. You can be a drylander in southern Alberta, but you may not make very much off your sugar beet crop.

The same thing is true in the Carberry Plains. You can grow potatoes, but you will not be able to break into the potato market that Carnation has broken into without some kind of quality standard which is assured by probably irrigation in a large percentage of the cases, and certainly a significant and

continuing water supply as part of the basis upon which the industry is built.

You can be a producer of a number of different commodities but you will never compete on the Superstore or the Safeway vegetable shelf if you do not have some security of supply in order to produce those products. We have a very unique climate and soil conditions here in this province that allow us to replace an awful lot of the vegetable produce that has historically been imported into this province.

You may ask, and I think you are asking, what has that got to do with whether or not there is water allowed to go to the communities that are seeking to receive some of—the first volume that they are asking for, over the first decade, as I understand it, is 5 cfs. Well, that is not going to produce very many irrigation offset acres. Believe me, that is not a big amount of water.

* (2220)

But the issue of whether or not there is water, and I might well ask my colleagues to comment if you wish to continue to pursue the irrigation aspect in southern Manitoba, because it is well outside of the discussion that we started on. But the fact that some farmers down there have taken the initiative to entrap some of the spring runoff in order that they may irrigate up to a quarter section out of some of the small ponding arrangements that they have set up, and the fact that there may be eight or 10 or upwards of 20 of these types of enpondments put in place across the region, does not mean that they could have alternatively used that same water for domestic consumption because it is just not located in the right place. So they are making the best use of the resources that they have available to them.

The real issue is whether or not the Environment Commission is going to be able to receive adequate information, and it will be the job of the proponents and various departments of government to make sure that information is available, and then they can decide and recommend based on that, I would hope, complete set of figures, as to whether or not any withdrawals can be appropriate.

The irrigation offset that we see in some of the communities down in southern Manitoba, as I understand it, the Winkler aquifer has been overdrawn for quite some time. That irrigation has been cut off in that area to a number of producers. One of the problems we have is the inability to regenerate the water that is contained in that

aquifer, and in fact, if we were to recharge that aquifer by any forced means, we have every possibility of polluting it. Recharging the aquifers through certain gravel beds that are known to be there and gravel pits that are already open is quite possible, but the quality of water that would be available to recharge it probably contains some agricultural chemicals that we would end up forcing into the aquifer and polluting it, so it would not be appropriate water for human consumption.

So what we have, simply, as I read the dynamics of the population in the area, is a population growth that has exceeded the ability of the area to produce potable water without getting it from further away than what they were able to acquire in the first place.

There has been a lot of growth and some of it is industrial growth, some of it is industries that need some water, but in fact we do not have a big wet industry growth in that area. It is primarily domestic use that needs the water within the population, as I understand it.

Ms. CerlIII: I do not know if it has anything to do with the current population growth there. It has, I think, more to do with what the minister was referring to in his initial comments which was maximizing profits from the agriculture in the region, which had nothing to do with the question I asked.

I am trying to get at the issue which I fear is going to be completely left out of the Clean Environment Commission. Even the base and wide scope will not look at the fact that once this diversion goes through, it is going to free up the quality concerns that are going to allow for even more depletion of aquifers in that area for irrigation.

The minister has himself alluded to the fact that irrigation in that area is the target for growth in the area. I think that is the result or the increase in population that is in the PVC proposal is the result of expansion in potato processing once all of the pipeline is there, and then the expansion in irrigation can take place.

So I was asking for the minister to respond with some concern, and he seems to have alluded to that, that there are problems with the aquifers in the area being depleted. I am concerned that is what is going to happen as we continue to look at the profit that can be made in the area from expanded irrigation without having the proper assessments that go on, environmental assessments that go on before irrigation permits are expanded. I am

concerned that the environmental assessment on this is not going to look at the impact on the other aquifers from the diversion or the consequences of having this diversion go through.

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Acting Chairperson, this becomes almost a no-win argument. I am sure we could stay at this for a long time as to the appropriateness of use of resources close to or further away from population centres that have a potential for growth.

There is another key part of the member's question that I have not addressed, and that is the pricing of water, the pricing of water for irrigation, the pricing of water for domestic purposes, the pricing of water for industrial purposes.

Ultimately, that is how we will be able to put in place a sustainable development in the areas of where the demand and use of water is high, because, ultimately, any use of water has to reflect the real cost of that water and putting it in place for whatever use is necessary.

The City of Winnipeg and other communities across the province, if you track their water pricing policies as opposed to their consumption, you will find pretty quickly the only areas that are able to have significant conservation practices in place are those who price the product.

(Madam Chairperson in the Chair)

Similarly, as we put meters on our irrigation equipment, as the farmers and the users become increasingly conscious, first of all, of their consumption and the recognition of the real cost of that consumption, there is no doubt we will have a pricing policy, both domestic and agriculturally, for waters. Because the society is not going to continue to put into place structures that are not practical and cost-effective in the long run.

The cost-effectiveness, however, one thing that we have not discussed in this debate is the quality of water that is available. I am told in the cost of water treatment plants that—and I look to members of the department here to correct me if I have strayed into an area that I cannot substantiate, but it is my understanding that the costs of treating water for softening it for human use and domestic use from certain sources that would be considered high in dissolved minerals, et cetera, can be so expensive that the offset of bringing in piped water from some considerable distance away, and in the end have

less expensive treatment costs, might well be more efficient.

One has to look at the quality of water as opposed to—when one is judging two different sources of water. I, for one, always believed that the water out of Lake Manitoba could be used for a whole lot more uses than it is being put to today, but I find that it is too high in salt content and other mineralization that makes making it available for irrigation and/or domestic consumption less than desirable, so other sources have to be used.

* (2230)

Ms. Cerilli: I thought the minister was going to address the other issue that I raised when he was talking about cost. That is what will the cost change for the Carman-Winkler area that is going to receive the diverted water be? How will their cost for the utility be changed?

Mr. Cummings: I cannot speak to the details of the agreement, but they will be paying at cost or cost-plus, I would presume, to the City of Portage la Prairie for treatment and pumping of the water.

Ms. Cerilli: Will that information be part of the hearing process, the Clean Environment Commission hearing?

Mr. Cummings: I expect the agreement will be aired in front of the commission, yes.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Madam Chairperson, if you would allow me, just for clarification sake, it will probably help the honourable member asking the questions.

Most people probably do not realize that the towns of Altona and Gretna, and two other villages of Sommerfeld and Bergthal, have bought water from the United States for about 25 years, I guess, when the Manitoba Water Services Board and the Americans came to an agreement to allow the piping of water from the Pembina River at Neche and to establish a treatment plant at Neche for the supply of water to Altona.

Had that not happened, the town of Altona simply would not have had a supply of water, nor would the town of Gretna or the other two villages.

Most people do not realize that the ground water in that area is probably saltier than the ocean. I say that in all seriousness, that most of the water up until about 10 years ago, virtually of the water about 10 years ago used in that area, was trapped in two different ways, either by building ponds on farms

and ponds very often for villages and towns such as Rosenfeld—built a large, large pond to supply its water needs.

Those waters became so salinated from the salt in the ground that they became virtually impossible to treat and to make use of for human consumption to the point where animals, when the animals drank the water, they developed severe cases of diarrhea because of the salt. I am serious. The member laughs. This simply indicates that she has very little knowledge of water in that southern part of the province.

Similarly now, today, there are only two irrigation projects in that whole southern area. One of them is Kroeker Farms, which takes water out of a gravel pit that accumulates there every spring and uses that water and irrigates out of that. The other one is by a number of farmers that have dug huge ponds at huge costs to them, up to \$100,000 a pond. They dig them out of the prairies and then build high embankments and pump water out of a creek running by in spring into these ponds and store the water over there that they can use that water to irrigate. That is how they irrigate. That is the only irrigation that is done in southern Manitoba now. There is absolutely no water taken out of the aquifer for irrigation purposes, has not been for years.

The honourable member again smiles at this because she does not believe it. The Department of Natural Resources is seriously considering dispensing with the licence to Kroeker Farms and their ability to irrigate out of the gravel pits, because the gravel pits have been known to recharge the aquifer. Therefore, it is questionable whether there should be irrigation allowed out of that gravel pit because of the rechargeability there.

It is important to note that three years ago the towns of Morden, Carman, Winkler—and Winkler drew down the aquifer, if I remember correctly, by some eight feet and withheld the supply of water there. Had they drawn it down much further, there is question as to whether the salinity, the underground salts, would have come upwards and polluted the water in the aquifer. That is how dangerously close in water consumption use we are in that area.

Some of us were quite involved in building a pipeline and treatment plant at Letellier, Manitoba, to take water out of the Red River. Yes, the river that you people would not even dare swim in in this city.

Well, we drink that water. We treat it. We filter it, and we drink it. That is the only water we have got.

We built about 250 miles of pipeline to supply that area with water. Water is one of the precious resources that we have got in southern Manitoba. There is no other resource more precious than water, than potable water.

Therefore, I thought, Madam Chair, it would be interesting for the honourable member—and I would invite her out there. I would give her a personal tour of the area to show her what people think of water and the use of water and how conservation-minded those people are of water and how jealously they guard water.

Maybe, Mr. Minister, that is why they vote the way they do. Certainly, water is a very, very precious guarded commodity. When people talk about our ability to get water from the Americans, or us supplying some of the American towns with water, we know what that is all about. We know what that discussion really means.

So I sometimes sit here in this House and wonder whether we really know what we are criticizing when we become critics of certain projects, because the water supply that we are talking about out of the Assiniboine is such a small amount of water compared to some other users of water along that river.

I want to say to the member that there are some farmers that have larger licences for water use than this whole project would use in 50 years. When you take that into proper consideration, as to the draw on the water out of that river, it becomes virtually a minimal, a nonissue is really what it becomes. I know that she is talking—she wants to instill a political fear into the people that there will be a movement against this project. I cannot, for the life of me, understand why any politician would want to do that because we are dealing with the livelihoods of people, of towns, and the lifeblood of towns, the lifeblood of those towns that we are talking about: the Carmans and the Mordens and the Winklers and the Altonas and the Gretnas and the Plum Coulees of the world. Their lifeblood is water.

Mrs. Carstairs: I am pleased that the member put some of his concerns and comments on the record. But I think the accusation of political fearmongering is quite incorrect and very inaccurate. There are a number of very serious questions that have to be resolved, and not just by this government, but

hopefully by the authority of the Clean Environment Commission.

The Clean Environment Commission needs to have raw data. It needs to have information. I think that there is no question that any Manitoban who believed that it was essential for another Manitoban to have potable water would not grant that potable water. I do not think there is any question about that. But that is not the only question here.

This particular project that has been proposed has been proposed not just for potable water. That is what they would like us to think, but if they honestly believe that, then they would be prepared to put in their proposal that no further uses could be made from any other water presently serving that area for irrigation purposes. They will not put that in.

So they are not just concerned about potable water. Because they are just not concerned about potable water, there are long-range studies that must be done in order for the Clean Environment Commission to make the kind of evaluation that is essential. It is not just one project. It is the long-term benefits to the entire province. The question that I would like to ask the minister, because we seem to be in this whole process and he is talking about it.

* (2240)

What is this government's intention with regard to the report of the Clean Environment Commission? Are they going to ignore it, as they did the most recent Clean Environment Commission report in Nopiming Park, or are they going to accept it? Are they prepared to in fact state publicly before the Clean Environment Commission begins its hearing that they will abide by whatever it is that the Clean Environment Commission recommends?

Mr. Cummings: The answer is yes. There are a couple of implications in the member's comments regarding the previous licence surrounding Abitibi that I would want to comment on, because I take some umbrage on the suggestion that we may have ignored some aspects of the Clean Environment Commission report, particularly regarding forestry in the park.

The member may well recall that the recommendation was that there be a plan for the elimination of forestry in parks. What we have indicated is, and the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) has been working diligently forever since and in fact had started the process sometime prior to that, the criticism of Manitoba's parks, being the parks that

allow multiple use, the only ones left in Canada that allow for multiple use—I am not sure if they are the only ones or not but that is certainly the criticism—the fact is that when the boundaries were drawn up they did contemplate multiple use.

You can look at Riding Mountain National Park as an example of what has happened over the years. Flying over Riding Mountain National Park, you can see areas that were logged before that ever became a park. We can see that an awful lot of cutting areas were enclosed in our park boundaries. When people decided to draw the boundary they said, well, this is going to be a multiple-use park, so it will not hurt if we include the harvesting areas in the park's boundaries.

Therefore, I think it was quite a legitimate response to the recommendation of the commission that we look at what are the reasonable boundaries to parks and designate areas of the existing parks that they be treated differently. In the final analysis, almost every recommendation that the commission made in that report will come to fruition, it just simply will not come to fruition in the manner in which they recommended.

Frankly, they exceeded the guidelines of their recommendation; I think there is a very serious question at issue here. I have no desire to put myself or this government in conflict with the recommendations of the Clean Environment Commission. I fully expect and intend to accept the recommendations that they may make in respect to the Pembina project. I simply have to defend myself, however, in response to the criticism of whether or not we adequately responded to the Abitibi licensing process, because the bottom line is that at least we had enough moral fortitude to deal with the issue head on rather than simply do what has occurred previously in this province, and that is, when it is recommended to stop logging in one park, simply move it into another one.

I only have to look into my backyard to see the last decision that was made in this respect where logging was stopped in Atikaki, but where did it go? It went into the Ducks and into the Porcupines up north of where I live. So is that good management? Not particularly. The Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) and this government at least have had the moral and, I believe, the intestinal fortitude to look at the whole issue and deal with it in a more complete and, I think, ultimately appropriate manner.

Mrs. Carstairs: If the minister is absolutely clear on this, and I want to make sure that I am clear on what it is he is saying, that if the Clean Environment Commission comes back with a report which says that the Pembina Valley project is not a valid project for the province of Manitoba, the government of the province of Manitoba will not proceed. Is that what the minister is saying?

Mr. Cummings: The member is asking me to respond to a hypothetical scenario. There may be a dozen different scenarios in the form of the report. What I have said is that we will accept and follow the recommendations of the commission.

Mrs. Carstairs: Why is it that the minister cannot just answer the question, which is, if the Clean Environment Commission recommends that the Pembina Valley project is not a valid project, then will the minister accept that recommendation? Because my concern, quite frankly, is that this government has already made up its mind what it wants to do with this particular project and everything that the minister has said tonight about this project—[interjection] The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) has his own Estimates and can ask it or answer his questions then.

The problem is that if you are going to, as a government, make up your mind that this is a good project, and since they have already had one resignation from their government because he believed that the government had made up its mind—whether that is true or not, he believed they had and is proceeding even to take them to court over the matter. The reality is if they have made up their mind and the Clean Environment Commission says no, are they going to do what the Clean Environment Commission tells them to do, or are they going to do what they have decided is their own political will?

Mr. Cummings: Madam Chairperson, the member asked me a question and then proceeded to qualify that question. The question was asked, if it is recommended against, and then put some qualification behind that. I said that we would accept the recommendations of the commission. I am not trying to be cute or not answer directly. The commission might well put some conditions on its recommendation, so to say that the recommendation is yes, no or maybe is prejudging it in any manner which I will not do.

We have given our word that we will accept the recommendations of the commission, and I will stand behind that. The fact is that if one were to look at recommendations of the commission over the years, they very often do put conditions on their recommendations.

I cannot get into that debate here tonight, as the ultimate receiver of that recommendation, when we will have to deal with it. I think I have probably said as much as I should in terms of what the commission may or may not do. Simply let me say, however, that we will accept their recommendation.

Mrs. Carstairs: Madam Chairperson, but just to make perfectly clear to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) that, in the opening remarks that I made to this department, I spoke about the Clean Environment Commission.

I said that we had not accepted, philosophically, the recommendations of the Clean Environment Commission about Oak Hammock, but we had gone on the record to say that we would abide by what they recommended and we did. You heard no further criticism from the Liberal Party about Oak Hammock Marsh from the day the Clean Environment Commission came down— [interjection]

We did. That is true. We did exactly the same thing with respect to the Abitibi-Price application, and we are prepared to do the same thing with regard to the Clean Environment Commission with regard to this project.

* (2250)

The reality is that, if you are going to have a board and a body that is independent of government, there has to be a willingness to respect what it is they have to say. We are prepared to respect what they have to say.

The minister has said that he is prepared to accept the recommendations, and I have just one more further question. Is he prepared to act on those recommendations?

Mr. Cummings: I am a little puzzled by that question actually. The commission makes recommendations which may or may not allow for action or may require action if a certain decision to proceed is accepted.

Perhaps the member would like to rephrase the question because, if she is implying does this mean that the project will start turning dirt the day after we receive a positive recommendation, there is no

precondition in that respect. Does she mean that some other action will flow? I am not sure that I follow the question.

Mrs. Carstairs: I have seen a number of governments of a number of different stripes accept recommendations and then proceed to act in ways that are totally contrary to those recommendations.

It is one thing for a government to say we accept what the Clean Environment Commission has to say. It is a whole other thing for the government to then act in a way which reflects their acceptance of those recommendations.

Mr. Cummings: I think the most direct answer is that this department interprets the recommendations of the commission into licences as far as the environmental conditions that might be associated with a licence are concerned.

They might also make other recommendations that would be outside of the mandate of this department to respond to. Health studies, for example, are an area of recommendation that we cannot directly in and of ourselves respond to, but I think, without trying to determine whether there is some hidden meaning to the member's question, the answer has to be yes. We will act on the recommendations.

Mrs. Carstairs: There is no hidden meaning to what I have to say at all.

The Clean Environment Commission made recommendations with respect to Nopiming Park which the minister said went outside their mandate and which the minister then chose to disregard because, in his opinion, they went outside their mandate.

So if indeed we now get a group of recommendations that the minister determines are outside their mandate, I can believe any of their recommendations, quite frankly, with respect to Abitibi-Price and Nopiming Park were outside their authority to make, but the minister did and he used that as a justification for doing things contrary, in my view, to the recommendations which the Clean Environment Commission made.

Is this the kind of political game that we are going to see, quite frankly, with regard to their report on the Pembina Valley project?

Mr. Cummings: Well, that is the beauty of this process, that the members of the opposition can attempt, with greater or lesser degrees of success,

to put words in the mouth of the particular ministry that they are interviewing. Because, frankly, if a commission recommends outside of its jurisdiction, then the government has to examine what those recommendations are.

The Nopiming Park recommendation, as I indicated, I believe that by the time we are finished with the process that we embarked upon, that the intent and the recommendations of the commission will have been complied with. That is one area of which I believe I have an entirely defensible position. I have said without restriction that I am prepared to accept the recommendations of the commission.

The proponent was given guidelines then, which it was to structure its response. Those guidelines outlined in the broad sense what the regulator believed were the areas that needed to be reviewed for the protection of the environment. The commission recommends within that area as a result of their inquiries, then I will have no problem accepting their recommendations.

Ms. Cerilli: I want to get back to the issue of the water consumption in the Carman-Winkler area. I appreciate the comments that the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) put on the record about conservation, and that one of the questions that I had wanted to ask was: What kind of conservation has been undertaken in that area, if they are so water-conscious? Can the minister describe the water conservation program for that area? If there is one, I do not—from the information that I have received, that there is not really a concerted effort to conserve water in the area.

If that is going to be part of this program, to divert water at an increased cost to the area, is water conservation—I guess that could be one of the recommendations made by the CEC, that there could be a stipulation attached to this program, that they would have to have an extensive water conservation program in the area. What are the minister's comments?

Mr. Cummings: I suppose more appropriately, the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) could respond to the aspects of what might be done in terms of a water conservation system within the region.

My view is that as the water costs, water pricing more accurately reflects the costs, conservation will be following quite rapidly on the heels of those costs.

I believe that in terms of domestic use, that is a very direct relationship. The communities, not only in this area but in other parts of the province, are going to be moving towards more of a cost recovery and true-cost accounting for the value of the water that they are dispensing to their population.

I cannot speak to any direct programs that might be in place. I think that it follows logically that they will be practising—in fact they are practising it to some extent today, as I recall some of the things that have occurred in these communities.

Ms. Cerilli: Well, it only makes sense to me that as an Environment department and minister, there would be an all-out effort to conserve water before you start putting millions of dollars into a scheme that is going to divert water in this fashion, and it does not seem that has happened.

What is the explanation for that? Why are we not conserving water in an area if it is so dry before we look at spending millions of dollars or diverting water? I am talking about things too like retrofitting and having not just some kind of cost accounting.

Mr. Cummings: The member is quite right that conservation projects and conservation practices must follow and proceed in many cases any additional supply being made available. I cannot speak, again, directly to some of the proposals that may be in water services and other parts of government, but the communities in this part of the province, in 1989, if I recall correctly, there was a number of them that—'88 perhaps it was—had their water supplies dramatically curtailed. Stephenfield Reservoir was very low at a point, I believe, in '89, whereby water consumption was cut back in the various communities.

They have been forced into some fairly severe curtailment of water usage. If the member is asking, is there mandatory changeover of their toilets and their shower heads and those sorts of things, I think I can probably safely say that that has not yet occurred. On the other hand, it has not yet occurred in any other jurisdiction in this province either. The demand is still very prevalent, and I believe that pricing will go further towards influencing the householder, about whether or not they water the garden on Thursday night or Sunday morning or whether or not they put in a conservation shower head in the bathtub if they are paying an appropriate price for their water. Every jurisdiction in the

province is guilty of not being totally up to speed in that area.

* (2300)

Ms. Cerlill: As a provincial government, though, dealing with rural areas, especially being the authorizer of these kinds of water-use permits and authorizing of these kinds of diversions, does the minister not think that it is incumbent upon this provincial government to require that there be water conservation before any of these kinds of proposals would even be considered?

Mr. Cummings: There are some projects under consideration today where that is a very real possibility. There is one small community in my area that we are considering a pilot project. I believe Morris was considering a pilot project in terms of water conservation practices, but there is nothing in place today.

Ms. Cerlill: I would suggest the Environment department is not doing its job if that is not the case. This is one area, I think, that there can be a lot of legitimate criticism of this project and the scheme for this area. You talk about water policy, I mean that would be the basic premise of any water policy that there would be conservation first.

One of the questions relating to this, and I do not have a clear understanding of the way that this scheme of diverting water from Portage will now work and how it will hook up with the existing water servicing in the Carman and Winkler townships, but I understand that there are people who will be intervening at the Clean Environment Commission hearings who have done quite a bit of research and can show that the amount of water that is going to be transferred could be saved through conservation.

If that is the case, is the minister aware of that kind of information? Has his department done that kind of research in preparing for these hearings? Is there that kind of research available and can that still happen with the change in the project and how the water is now coming from Portage, or will that change the place on where the water is hooked up? As I understand it, particularly Carman, there is a lot of leakage in the underground system. I am wondering if that kind of consideration has been made.

Mr. Cummings: No, I cannot speak to some of the mechanics of this project nor would I be the best one to do so. I have to repeat that conservation

programs will follow pricing rather closely and obviously the end users of this water will be paying for it particularly when it is treated before it is put into the system for piping.

The fact is that you can do models very easily assuming a certain percentage of savings following given conservation practices, but even what you reference in terms of whether or not there is a poorly functioning infrastructure in Carman, that will very quickly become addressed just on a cost-recovery basis if they are finding that they cannot afford to keep the water in the pipe.

Ms. Cerlill: I guess just to emphasize again that that should have been done, I would think, before Carman would be looking at this kind of a diversion. I do not know if that would be something that would have to come from their municipality, but I would think that there would be that kind of direction from the provincial government.

Another area that I wanted to deal with still in terms of the diversion is why are we not having a joint review of this project? It seems to me that it would qualify because of its clear fulfilling of the federal guidelines in terms of a EARP process, and it seems that on all three criteria that there should be federal involvement. I know that the minister said that there still is a chance that there will be federal involvement. After seeing what other projects similar to this have gone through under this government with the same kind of pressure being applied, I do not—hopefully, I am wrong. Hopefully I will be proved wrong, but I would think that saving all of that and with the work that the government has gone to in developing the amendment to The Environment Act providing for joint assessment, I do not see why we are not saving ourselves all of the bother with having the federal and the provincial process and just having a joint assessment.

Mr. Cummings: Well, it simply is a reflection of the way the law of the land is written today, that the federal authorities have a responsibility to make a decision, and we have to make sure that we deal with our responsibilities. I think it is very unfair to compare this to Conawapa or to the North Transmission Line, when it was very obvious that the federal responsibility was probably more significant than our own in those projects in terms of the triggers that would require them to become involved.

I suppose that one should point out that it is actually very unlikely that there is a federal trigger, for lack of a better word, to require them to come in at this point. If they were to commit dollars, and people are making assumptions that they will, of course, but in terms of the decision-making process, there may not even be adequate reason to require them to do more than to make a decision as to whether or not their concerns have been adequately dealt with, and they will look at our process very carefully in that respect.

It is a confusing system. We do not have the new environment act in place, because the regulations have not been written so that it can be used. If it was in place and could be used for this process, then it would be very clear. I dare say that the process would not be an awful lot different than what we are embarked upon right now. The problem we have today is that the decision-making process, I do not think, is particularly clear.

The other unfairness that very often arises about this debate—and I thank you for not inserting it at this point—but the fact is that every time a comparison is made to the two projects in the West—Rafferty and Oldman—and saying, well, look what happened when you did not have the feds in, the bottom line was that they erred in making the decision. They did not make the decision before the work began, and we are not going to allow any work to occur until all of the clearances are in place, provincial and federal. They will either screen it out or they will have a hearing. That is entirely their decision and we cannot make it for them. It is not a clear-cut process, but one should not lose sight of the fact that the responsibility for natural resources was devolved to the provinces in the, what, the late '30s, mid-'30s, 1930? That is 60 years ago. So the fact that federal authority might have some responsibility does not all of a sudden make them God and that everything all of a sudden flows back to them in terms of making the decision.

The interim guidelines were set up as guidelines to make sure that the federal authorities dealt with their responsibilities, and it will be my job and the job of others in this government to make sure that they adequately discharge their responsibilities as well before we allow anything to happen on this project.

* (2310)

Mr. Brian Pallster (Portage la Prairie): The Clean Environment Commission, as I understand it, is an

excellent illustration of participatory democracy in action. One of the problems that could arise in terms of people participating in the process is if they feel that they are powerless to influence the outcome. The accusation or the implication of some of the questions from the member opposite and others who questioned this issue in the House has been that there is some kind of so-called hidden agenda here. I would like to put on the record that in my brief time in this building I have not seen any evidence of that at all, that I would like to ask the minister to clarify that issue in terms of what his feelings are on it and to put it on the record as to how he feels about that accusation, because I think it is very important in terms of this process.

Mr. Cummings: Well, that is exactly the issue in terms of whether or not this water is seen to be going for some purpose other than for domestic and industrial use or as to whether or not it is somehow of sufficient volume so that it is going to have uses available far beyond its original intent. While there are certainly lots of people in southern Manitoba who want to see additional opportunity for vegetable production or special crops production, they are not going to get it out of this pipeline. It was not intended that way, and I have not seen any aspects of it, and the guidelines, which we as a department are responsible for writing, I do not think that they contemplate that type of scenario either.

Therefore, if that is the concern that people have, certainly I do not have any evidence that is what will occur. The fact is, however, that those who are concerned about the project will continue to point to these types of issues until we get all of the facts out in front of the Clean Environment Commission, and that is where it will have to be aired because, believe me, I am on thin ice every time I comment about anything in respect to anything other than process in front of the Clean Environment Commission. It is the facts of the withdrawal and the intentions behind it, really are something that I cannot comment much beyond what I have already said.

Mr. Pallster: I think that to further clarify for the benefit of the process, if the minister would, the concern is not just in terms of some undisclosed motivations on the part of the proponents but also in terms of this government. It has been implicit again in questions in the House, whether in Question Period or in this process, that there is somehow some motivation on the part of the government to carry forward with this project, as the member for

River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs) alluded to in her earlier questions, regardless of the recommendations of the Clean Environment Commission.

Is the minister aware of any such motivations that hitherto have been undisclosed on the part of this government?

Mr. Cummings: There have been no commitments, verbal or otherwise, in terms of completion of anything that has crossed my desk, but the fact is that the process has to come first before the second part of the decision-making process can kick in. If the proponents cannot achieve a licence, then they cannot apply to PFRA or to any other sources of funding in order to be able to consummate the deal, if you will.

Ms. CerlIII: Well, it is interesting hearing the member for Portage with his comments on this project. He was not a member when we went through a similar process with the authorization of the Ducks Unlimited building at Oak Hammock Marsh. That is where we saw the Clean Environment Commission hearings, which are now being reviewed in federal court, by the way, compromised, I would say, in that other studies and information became apparent after the hearings to suggest that all the information was not there. In fact, studies which condemned the project were made public after the Clean Environment Commission hearing.

Like other members in the House, I would like to think that the Clean Environment Commission process is impartial and is fair and is an example of participatory democracy, but when interveners have less than two months to prepare when they are notified of the hearings, when they do not have intervener funding—and that is one of the main reasons we want to have more federal processes for large projects such as this—we have to be skeptical. I think it is legitimate that people are skeptical and ask all the right questions and ask that all the information be made available.

That raises the issue I raised in the House the other day in Question Period: with the minister's authority to request all information that the PFRA has been made public and available before the Clean Environment Commission hearings. I, again, would be worried if the minister would not use his full authority to make sure that all of that information is available. We have heard concerns of the city already, that there is not enough base-line data, that

we are not going to have adequate information to assess the full impact of the process.

We have the federal government. I am surprised to hear the minister say that there may not be enough of a trigger. They are, as far as I understand it, already committed to over \$60 million for the project. We have the PFRA which is in a process, I hope, of going through some screening of the project, and to do that screening, they would have to be doing research and studies.

I would ask the minister: Is he in contact with the PFRA to understand the research that they are doing on this project? Will he be in contact with them to make sure that all of the material that they produce in their research and the studies be made public and available for the Clean Environment Commission?

Mr. Cummings: Madam Chairperson, first of all, our process around Oak Hammock is not what is being questioned in court. The process that we are about to embark on with Pembina Valley, however, there is no reason why the Clean Environment Commission cannot require and there is no reason why it should not be able to obtain any and all information that they believe is relevant. They do have the power of subpoena, as I understand it. Therefore, there should not be any information that is out there that would be useful to them that they would not be able to get for the purposes of this hearing.

Ms. CerlIII: Why would the minister hesitate to use his authority to ask the PFRA to make their information public?

Mr. Cummings: Madam Chairperson, it is not a matter of hesitancy, I do not need to. The commission can ask and will get the information. I am not going to predetermine the type of inquiries that the Clean Environment Commission may want to embark upon now that they have started on the process.

Ms. CerlIII: It just raises one to wonder why the amendment was made so close to when this project was coming through. The minister must have known about this all along, why the request would not be made by the minister. The minister is interested, I would think, in having all of the information made public. He has said that before.

My concern is that we are going to see another situation where the timing of the release of the information is not going to be—that it will be made public during the hearings when other interveners can have access to it. I think that is one of the concerns. So that would be all cleared up, and there would not be any of the kind of suspicion or confusion if the minister would just make the request now, while there is ample time of having it made public, so that all of those concerned during the Clean Environment Commission process could have access to that information.

Mr. Cummings: The Clean Environment process has to be kept open and unimpeded to operate. To now say that I should turn around and involve myself in saying they must look at particular information from this particular angle, that is not the type of requirements that we place before the commission in the proponent when we lay out the guideline. We lay out the areas of study for which information has to be prepared.

There is nothing to impede the Clean Environment Commission from getting information. If they deem this information to be what they want to see, then they can ask for it.

Ms. Cerilli: How could they not deem this significant? This is the information, I would think—and I was going to ask the minister this as well, if he knows of how far along the federal agency is and the federal departments are in screening this project, because he seems to be indicating now that they may not feel that they have to have a review on this project. He seems to think that it is not being triggered. So I would just say, how could they not think that it was necessary to look at the information that the federal departments are researching related to the project? I mean, it only makes sense.

Mr. Cummings: Their process requires that they begin a screening process, if there has been a trigger identified that would require them to do so. They may well start a screening process at some point. We have said that we will not allow anything to occur on this project until all of the provincial and federal requirements are satisfied. If one wishes to be hypothetical, we could finish the Clean Environment Commission hearings and have to wait until the federal authorities have decided what direction they would choose to go. They may in fact use the results of our process. They may decide that has been adequate. They may decide that there is other information that they require. On receiving that

information, that could allow them to screen it out. I cannot predict what they will do, but this is not the first time that we have been involved in this type of a situation.

Pelican Lake is an example of where we waited for a federal authority before we allowed it to proceed. Interestingly enough, what we were doing there was reopening what was an old channel, but we put it through the complete system, and we had to wait for a federal screening process to finalize whether or not they would grant it clearances without going to a hearing.

It is a process that needs to be thrown out. It is a process that shows what is wrong with this, how you cannot govern this country. You cannot even adequately protect the environment when you have this much confusion because, instead of debating the environment, we are debating process, and that does not save one duck egg or a frog. All it does is burn up a lot of paper and time of everybody that is involved. Until we get the new environment act in place and have some clarity to this, we are just going to have to put up with the confusion.

The difference in the way Manitoba handles it, however, is that we will not allow anything to happen until the provincial and federal clearances are all in place. You are just going to have to take my word for it that we are not going to allow construction until that occurs.

Ms. Cerilli: Well, the minister is right. He is the minister, and we are just going to have to take his word for it, but I guess it is our job to try and raise the issues. I agree that this federal legislation is not adequate, and oftentimes it seems what happens is governments hide behind the process that the minister is referring to—

An Honourable Member: And critics use it to confuse things.

Ms. Cerilli: Well, no, I do not think we use it to confuse the issue, critics. I think that what we are trying to do is ensure that a process that is supposed to ensure participation and information is followed, because we have seen in other projects that has not happened, and that is just since I have been here.

One of the other questions that the minister alluded to that I was going to ask is, with the new regulations or legislation at the federal level, how would that change the assessment of this particular project, especially since some people are thinking that that is what we should be waiting for and some

people think that maybe those changes would be in place by the fall?

I do not think that they are going to do anything with the federal election coming because they have managed to stall it this long, but what would the minister see as the changes that would affect this particular project? Would it be guaranteed that there would be some kind of joint assessment, or it would be for sure handled through the federal authorities?

Mr. Cummings: I cannot say precisely how it would be different from the process that we are in today, but I can say that if the new act were in place with the regulations attached to it that we would know at the start what the process would be.

There would be none of this waiting in the weeds, if you will, on the part of the federal authorities because this is always invariably what causes the grief. They cannot make a decision, but then when they do, they catch everybody by surprise because they come along behind in terms of their decision-making process. Under the new act, my first reaction was that it might well be fully delegated to the provincial process, but that is probably not the case.

Whatever process it was going to have to go through, this project, we would at least be able to decide first what the process was and do it. This way we cannot, and we have to proceed to take care of our own responsibilities as best we can and hope that the work we have done is good enough to satisfy the federal concerns and of any other concerns that they feel need to be answered that they can get them answered adequately without going to a hearing or you will end up with two processes.

Ms. Cerilli: So the other concern that I have, and I do not claim to understand the federal changes to the act well enough, that I think that the federal process is terribly flawed because it provides for this—which could be a perceived conflict of interest with the PFRA—where they are both the funders on the books. They are going to be given more than \$60 million to the project, and then again, they are the agency that recommends if it is going to have the full federal review or not.

Does the minister agree that this is a problem when we are looking at protecting the environment? I will let him put his comments on the record.

* (2330)

Mr. Cummings: I agree with the member's rationale that the process is not working the way it should and that there is a better way to do it and that is where we should be heading, but courts and others who wish to scrap over principle more than perhaps environmental, questions of strictly environmental degradation or protection, will continue to use and interpret the guidelines as they are written today until a new law is in place.

Ms. Cerilli: Will the changes in the federal regulations deal with that as it would affect this project? Is that something that has been discussed at the federal ministers' committee—what is it called? You know the one I mean, with all the ministers from the different provinces.

Mr. Cummings: CCME?

Ms. Cerilli: Yes, that is the one.

Mr. Cummings: This project was not discussed specifically. I can tell you the hope for the new act is that while there are some areas that the federal authorities take responsibility for that clearly seem to infringe into provincial matters, at least it will provide some clarity in process. I do not think there is any one of us who would not prefer some clarity to the situation where we cannot make decisions.

While we are not down to that bogged-down process again where we are not able to make decisions, there is a very significant possibility that we will get into the area again of where we will be waiting on the federal process to come to a conclusion before any decisions can be made based on a licence or a lack of licence from the commission.

The problem we have is that the federal authorities are working on the regulations and they are the aspect of the act that will spell out some of the details as to process. It has taken three years to get this far. I have been involved with it right from the start, virtually, although there was a lot of work done in writing I suppose before I became minister. It is just like pushing molasses up a hill. When it gets into the federal system—it has literally taken two years to get a bill through the federal system, and they still do not have the regs for it.

Ms. Cerilli: Will the changes deal with this problem with conflict with the federal agency that is funding or also has some other involvement screening out projects?

Mr. Cummings: I have not seen the regulations or the most recent version that is being worked on, but because there will be less discretion there probably will be less of the type of conflict that you are talking about.

Ms. Cerilli: One of the other concerns about this project has had to do with the base-line information on flow. The two issues, as I understand them, are that the minimum flow is not agreed upon between the city and the province and the proponent and the other is that the minimum flow for the project has been year round and has not been based on the low estimates. Can the minister deal with both of those? First let us deal with the issue of the minimum flow.

Mr. Cummings: The Clean Environment Commission will deal with the question of the amount of water that is available and what that means in terms of flows.

I am starting into an area where I have difficulty answering the questions because essentially the responsibility for this regulation of that aspect lies with the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), plus I am the regulator in terms of the licence that may or may not flow from their recommendations.

But I would invite the member to read Hansard, and the responses of the Minister of Natural Resources, where he very clearly indicated that the report that was in the newspaper was not correct inasmuch as the two different figures that were referenced there, the 100 and the 180, were numbers that were used for computer modelling and that they were not part of what was designed to be a minimum or any other standard. They were used to lay out scenarios, and people who are looking at that are putting a different interpretation on it. I cannot answer any more questions on that.

Ms. Cerilli: What is the number that the department deals with in minimum flow coming into the city of Winnipeg? What is it that the Environment department deals with?

Mr. Cummings: I am going to simply answer this by saying that the issue will have to be addressed in the assessment. The work that is being prepared for the Clean Environment Commission will have to address these figures, but I have to remind the member of what I said before, that this is not to be interpreted as having been a minimum.

Ms. Cerilli: Well, there must be a minimum flow, and one of the policy statements in the proposed

policy also says: To also—where is it here? I am going on this page—to look at establishing in-stream flow levels for all water basins or all rivers. So I think that there must be a figure that is used by the department. I think this is one of the ways that ministers and departments can be accused of hiding behind process, when we say, well, it is going to be up to the Clean Environment Commission to wriggle through all of this information. I mean the minister's staff is there. The department deals with the river every day. So I think that even just putting that kind of factual information on the record is reasonable.

Mr. Cummings: The numbers that we deal with are the numbers that are in the reports that are available for the Clean Environment Commission and are on the public registry right now.

I really look at this area, and when we see concerns from the City of Winnipeg about wanting minimum amounts of water and concerns about biota in the river, these are types of questions that will be answered by the Clean Environment Commission when they are answered in context. I would probably not be able to adequately answer your question and put it in a correct context.

The one thing that I fear from this debate this evening is that I am going to start reading back some of my comments, that somehow impairs my ability to react to the Clean Environment Commission report when I receive it. I do not want to get into the debate that properly belongs in front of the Clean Environment Commission.

* (2340)

Ms. Cerilli: I am not asking for context. I am just asking for flow numbers. I know that this question will be asked of the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) in Estimates as well.

Mr. Cummings: We can provide information with which the member can choose to do whatever she likes. I do not have the specific information with me here at this moment to answer the question, but we have the record of the flows. If I, however, make some comment that appears to defend or prejudge what would be appropriate flows, I will have compromised my position, and I cannot do that.

Ms. Cerilli: I am not asking for what is going to be set to be an appropriate flow. I mean the minister knows what the concern is. The concern is that the flow has been reduced to allow for this project, the minimum flow has been reduced, that level has

been reduced, and right now we have the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) inferring that the engineers at the city are either misrepresenting the facts or are misinformed or are outright lying. I mean that is what it appears to be.

So I think it is legitimate that we should try and just get factual information, and I do not think that this jeopardizes what the Clean Environment Commission is going to do at all. I mean, they will be dealing with the same facts, and I would think that the Department of Environment would know the facts about what the allowable minimum flow or the allotted minimum flow of the Assiniboine River, coming into the city of Winnipeg, is.

This is, I think, a very significant kind of dispute that is going on right now. I would agree that it is interesting that it has become more public only now, if, as the city is saying, this was changed in August of 1991. But it is clear that the proponent for the diversion is basing their proposal on a minimum flow of 100 cfs. Now is that the figure that the minister's department uses on a day-to-day basis?

Mr. Cummings: The Department of Environment does not regulate the flows of this river or any other one. That is handled by the Department of Natural Resources. They may respond to licences that we may impose as a result of hearings or usages that have required hearings, and they might be required to maintain flow or volumes in some bodies of water.

But if one looks to page 3510 of last Friday's Hansard and looks at the answer of the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) regarding the water levels and the volumes in the river, then that is the answer to the question.

I think the Minister of Natural Resources presented his position and adequately explained the response of the Department of Natural Resources. When we are talking about volumes in the river, that is the page she should look at.

Ms. Corlill: Well, I would say that the department does deal with flow on a day-to-day basis when they issue licences that are going to affect the minimum flow from the river. If the minister wants he can refer to the Minister of Natural Resources' (Mr. Enns) comments and give me an answer based on that, but I think this is a significant issue in respect to this project, and I think it is legitimate for me to ask that there be some response.

Mr. Cummings: Madam Chairperson, I have never thought of myself as being unwilling to answer

questions, but I am even more unwilling, however, to put myself in a position where I somehow compromise and prejudice what the commission may recommend. I would more than enjoy getting into an argument about what flows are available in the river, but I am not going to enter into that debate. I am sorry if it disappoints the member not getting the answers to the questions that she thinks she should receive, but I think it is more important that I be able to receive whatever recommendations come from the commission and then allow the department officials to see whether or not those matters can be quantified in any possible licence.

Ms. Corlill: Well, the commission's task in this case is not to determine what the minimum flow of the river is coming into the city of Winnipeg. Their task is to assess the effect on that flow, the impact from the project. So, again, I think that the minister is playing games here. I think this is an issue that could call into question the proposal and we will just have to wait to see how this is going to be dealt with in terms of—[interjection] Well, I appreciate that the minister is not wanting to put himself into the middle of that. But I do not think this has to do with what the Clean Environment Commission is going to be assessing. Because, as I have said, their job is not to determine what the level is for the minimum flow, so they are going to be getting factual information hopefully.

Mr. Cummings: I am trying to put this as delicately as I can, but they will be assessing the withdrawal in the context of what is available. They are looking at the impacts along the river and we are just going to have to wait until that debate has evolved. I do not think that we can settle it here, nor should we even think in terms of whether or not we can settle it here. If the member wishes to score some political points, that is fine, but the ability of us to sit here without having the information from the Department of Natural Resources, without having a whole lot of other information that will be brought together in front of the independent commission, I think we are simply spinning our wheels. I would encourage all of us to look to the hearings and see what may transpire there.

Ms. Corlill: I do not have any further questions on this topic. I would recommend that we call it midnight.

Mr. Cummings: Is it the intention of the opposition to leave the Sustainable Development Fund for another opportunity?

I am not suggesting you should do it tonight, but I assume we are agreed that the Sustainable Development Fund and questions on that will be scheduled sometime, at the agreement of the House leaders, at a future date.

Ms. Cerilli: I was intending just to deal with that after we finish the departmental Estimates for the Environment department. Now, I understand the minister is not going to be available tomorrow. So we are going to have to just continue on when he is back, I guess, the following week, since this is also a short week this week.

What I was planning to do was that we would just continue on after this department. If he wants to make other arrangements of that, we can talk about it after.

Mr. Cummings: There is one matter that I could add to the record, Madam Chairperson. It has to do with the treatment of the Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation and whether or not this is being responded to.

I think I put on the record earlier that there were 8,000 and—confused between two figures of 8,000 and 4,000 generators. There are 4,000 potential generators of hazardous waste in the province. I think I used that figure interchangeably with the fact that we have 8,000 storage tanks and locations of storage in the province. So I want to make sure I did not leave somebody with the impression that we had 8,000 generators of hazardous waste out there. We have some 8,000 sites where storage occurs of fuels and other petroleum products. Thank you.

* (2350)

Madam Chairperson: Shall item 2.(b) pass? Pardon me.

Ms. Cerilli: No, we are not passing it. We are just going to recess.

Mr. Cummings: Call it twelve o'clock then?

Ms. Cerilli: That is what we just said, we would call it twelve.

Madam Chairperson: Is it the will of the committee to call it twelve o'clock? [agreed]

As previously agreed, the hour being 12 a.m., committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Madam Deputy Speaker (Louise Dacquay): As previously agreed, the hour being 12 a.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Tuesday).

Erratum

On Monday, May 31, 1993, Volume No. 73A, page 3555, right-hand column, Mr. Alcock's first and fourth comments should read:

Mr. Alcock: So when we are talking here though about image-and-voice transmission, we are really talking about a video capability for Distance Education as opposed to an internal LAN connection. The second would be exciting. The first is ordinary.

Mr. Alcock: The LAN that is being referenced here, is this part of the Wang system that is being built around government or is this a separate system internal to the department? If so, what is the backbone?

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

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