

First Session - Thirty-Eighth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
Official Report
(Hansard)

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable George Hickes
Speaker*

Vol. LIV No. 12 – 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, September 24, 2003

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
First Session—Thirty-Eighth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
AGLUGUB, Cris	The Maples	N.D.P.
ALLAN, Nancy	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
BJORNSON, Peter	Gimli	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
CALDWELL, Drew, Hon.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	P.C.
HAWRANIK, Gerald	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri	Fort Garry	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
LOEWEN, John	Fort Whyte	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MELNICK, Christine	Riel	N.D.P.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn, Hon.	Minto	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
MURRAY, Stuart	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
OSWALD, Theresa	Seine River	N.D.P.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack	Southdale	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Carman	P.C.
RONDEAU, Jim	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
ROWAT, Leanne	Minnedosa	P.C.
SALE, Tim, Hon.	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Wellington	N.D.P.
SHELLENBERG, Harry	Rossmere	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
SMITH, Scott, Hon.	Brandon West	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, September 24, 2003

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PETITIONS

Dialysis Services

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba. These are the reasons for this petition:

Kidney dialysis is an important procedure for those with kidney failure who are unable to receive a kidney transplant.

Those receiving kidney dialysis treatment are able to lead productive lives despite the continual commitment and time-consuming nature of the process.

Kidney dialysis patients from out-of-province must be able to access dialysis services while in Manitoba to sustain their health and lives.

Although a person's province of origin covers all of his or her dialysis costs while she or he is visiting Manitoba, individuals receiving dialysis are currently unable to visit this province due to the lack of dialysis nurses to oversee the procedure.

The travel restrictions placed on out-of-province dialysis patients due to the growing nursing shortage in Manitoba's health care system presents concerns regarding freedom of movement and quality of life for those on dialysis.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Health to consider enhancing training programs for

dialysis nurses in Manitoba, such that staffing shortages in this area are filled.

To request the Minister of Health to consider the importance of providing short-term dialysis services for out-of-province visitors to Manitoba.

Signed by C. Prescott, D. Kendrick and Craig Howlt.

Mr. Speaker: In accordance with our Rule 132(6), when a petition is read, it is deemed to be received by the House.

Supported Living Program

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, and these are the reasons for this petition:

The provincial government's Supported Living Program provides a range of supports to assist adults with a mental disability to live in the community in their residential option of choice, including a family home.

The provincial government's Community Living Division helps support adults living with a mental disability to live safely in the community in the residential setting of their choice.

Families with special-needs dependants make lifelong commitments to their care and well-being and many families choose to care for these individuals in their homes as long as circumstances allow.

The cost to support families who care for their special-needs dependants at home is far less than the cost of alternate care arrangements such as institutions or group and foster home situations.

The value of the quality of life experienced by special-needs dependants raised at home in a loving family environment is immeasurable.

* (13:35)

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Family Services and Housing (Mr. Caldwell) consider changes to the departmental policy that pays family members a reduced amount of money for room and board when they care for their special-needs dependants at home versus the amount paid to a non-parental care provider outside the family home.

To request that the Minister of Family Services and Housing consider examining on a case-by-case basis the merits of paying family members to care for special-needs dependants at home versus paying to institutionalize them.

This is presented on behalf of K. Hildebrand, Karen Penner and Lorna Wiebe.

Mr. Speaker: In accordance with our Rule 132(6), when a petition is read, it is deemed to be received by the House.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology): I would like to table the Annual Report for 2002-2003 for the Industrial Technology Centre.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the following reports: the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission, Three Month Report, for the period April 1 to June 30; the Manitoba Hospital Capital Financing Authority Management Report of June 3, 2003; the Manitoba Finance Supplementary Information for Legislative Review, 2003-04 Revenue Estimates; and the Public Utilities Board Annual Report of 2002.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the Report and Recommendations of the Judicial Compensation Committee, March 12, 2003.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 3—The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2003

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I would like to move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh), that Bill 3, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2003; Loi d'exécution du budget de 2003 et modifiant diverses dispositions législatives en matière de fiscalité, be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us Mr. Paul Schurman, who is from Summerside, Prince Edward Island, and is also a member of the Order of Canada and P.E.I.

Also in the Speaker's Gallery we have Keith Hemming, who is from Winnipeg and is also a member of the Order of Canada. These gentlemen are the guests of the honourable Member for Carman (Mr. Rocan).

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you here today.

I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us fourth year nursing students from the University of Manitoba. These students are under the direction of Linda West.

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you here today.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

City of Winnipeg Revenue Proposal

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the mayor of Winnipeg is spending a million dollars to promote his plan to increase the tax burden on Winnipeg residents. Manitobans, whom this Premier has already made the highest taxed west

of New Brunswick, have been saying loud and clear keep your hands out of our pockets.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier says he was not elected to raise taxes and says he is not in favour of new taxes. If that is the case, will the Premier stop wasting taxpayers' time and money and tell the mayor that he will not be receiving any taxing powers?

* (13:40)

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I guess the member opposite is running for the position of mayor. I met with the mayor of Winnipeg this week. I listened to the mayor of Niverville yesterday. I am meeting with the mayor of Brandon tomorrow and I think we should respect the elected representatives.

Mr. Murray: Well, Mr. Speaker, by refusing to come out and say that he will not grant the City new taxing powers, the Premier is leaving the impression that he is considering it. If the Premier is opposed to tax increases, then he will tell the mayor that new taxing powers are not on, leaving the mayor to spend that million dollars on much needed more police on the streets or fixing potholes.

The Premier knows that the residents are overtaxed. He knows they have no appetite for new taxes. Rather than sit on the fence, the Premier should tell the mayor not to waste a million dollars to find out what this Premier already knows, that Manitobans and Winnipeggers in particular do not want new taxes.

Will the Premier today commit to not granting the City new taxing powers?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, I recall the last time the member opposite got involved in a city issue. It was his direction at us to expand the photo radar on a much broader basis, that the Tories would have a photo radar on every street lamp in Winnipeg. But we said then that we had to have a targeted approach, that we had to deal with safety. We looked at intersections. We looked at schools, school grounds and playgrounds and construction sites.

The City of Winnipeg has asked for the ability to have public hearings. Other cities may

have different views. Other regions might have different views. My position stands that we did not get elected to raise taxes.

Having said that, the mayor of Winnipeg and councillors can vote for the various items in their budget. They can decide at City Council what to vote for. If the member opposite wants to run for the mayor of the city of Winnipeg, go ahead.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, trust me, that political advice I do not need.

What this Premier fails to understand is that high taxes kill the economy. They are a job killer. If the Premier believes that, he would just get off the fence and tell the mayor that he will not be granting him any new taxing powers today, tomorrow or anywhere down the road. He would be telling the mayor that he should instead use his relationship with the new Prime Minister to ensure that we provide and get back into Manitoba more of the federal gas tax that gets pilfered out of this province. That is what he should be doing.

It is pretty clear the Premier is either in favour of raising taxes or he is not. Which is it?

Mr. Doer: One can recall just a few short months ago, the member opposite was going to, after they raised taxes in the school divisions in Winnipeg 59 percent, in Fort Garry 48 percent, St. Vital 41 percent, River East 49 percent, Transcona 88 percent, Seven Oaks 48 percent, he was then going to quote: Eliminate the whole school taxes, and he would not even tell us how he was going to do it. He was not even going to tell us how he was going to do it.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I would like to remind all honourable members when a Speaker stands that all members should be seated and the Speaker should be heard in silence. I kindly remind all honourable members.

Mr. Doer: So members opposite, Conservatives, talking about property taxes is like expecting a buzzard to say grace before meals. It just does not ring true with the people of Manitoba. But if

the member opposite is not going to run for the mayor of the city of Winnipeg, we would highly recommend that he try his platform again in four and a half years with the people of Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, the people of Manitoba did rule on the inadequacy of promises made by members opposite.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a new question.

* (13:45)

Public Utilities Board Premier's Position

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): On a new question, Mr. Speaker, the Premier said yesterday that it was bad timing to order the Public Utilities Board to lower its rates when it was entering into a drought year. Interestingly enough that rate reduction cost \$4 million. Yet the Premier raided Hydro to the tune of \$288 million and he did so without seeking the approval of the PUB. I ask the Premier: Who had bad timing?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite will know that in our Estimates we already answered the question about the issue of a dividend and a drought. The dividend is attached to a surplus and if there is no surplus, there is no dividend.

Mr. Murray: It is very interesting because, on the one hand, this Government does not want to speak to current justice issues. The minister says he cannot comment on them because they are before the courts. Yet the recent Hydro rate reduction is currently being appealed and this Premier is out there publicly passing judgment on it.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, the PUB process can be bureaucratic. It can be cumbersome and it can be frustrating as the Premier has said. But as Byron Williams said, Byron Williams who represents consumers, seniors groups and northern Manitoba chiefs, and I quote: Yes, it can be all of those things, but it sure beats the alternative which is political interference and political setting of rates.

Mr. Speaker, I ask this Premier: Does he feel he is above the law? Why is he interfering with the PUB?

Mr. Doer: We never interfere with the PUB, and we fully intend to have all rate applications, including a rate application to keeping the rates at zero, maintained by the PUB. Just like Minister Ernst, Minister Ernst was much more graphic in his comments, talking about some people being "on the gravy train" in 1994-1995.

Mr. Speaker, one has to ask the question: Should the ratepayers of Manitoba who have the lowest corporate rates for hydro-electricity in Canada and North America, should we be paying \$45,000 for large industrial users for their legal counsel, or should the large industrial users pay for their legal counsel? That is a legitimate question, but that does not substitute the principle that we will keep the PUB, we have kept the PUB.

Hydro has the lowest rates in North America, Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation has the lowest rates in North America, and the only rates that have gone up in the last four years are the telephone rates because members opposite sold the telephones.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, the PUB has to be the honest broker that can stand up for the taxpayers of Manitoba. Yet the Premier is trying to weaken their role. Manitobans know that the PUB serves a valuable purpose. In fact, it was the PUB that allowed MPI ratepayers to get \$80 million. That is \$80 million in savings to the ratepayer that would not have flowed if it were not for the PUB, because if it was up to the Premier, he would have spent it.

I simply ask: Why is this Premier politically interfering with the PUB? Does he think he is above the law?

Mr. Doer: Two minutes ago, the member opposite wanted us to tell the City Council how to spend money in their own budget line. Does he think he is above the law, Mr. Speaker?

It is interesting to note that we have brought in legislative policy that was political, dealing with rates. We brought in a law to ensure that the rates were equal for Manitoba Hydro customers between rural Manitoba and the city of Winnipeg. Members opposite opposed it.

The telephone rates have gone up 41 percent in the city of Winnipeg, 71 percent in rural

Manitoba. You people should have stood up for rural Manitoba, Mr. Speaker.

* (13:50)

Mohamed Khan Trial Delays

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): Five years ago, three women were allegedly brutally raped by Mohamed Khan, yet as of today there has been no justice for those rape victims.

I ask the Minister of Justice: How much longer must these three women wait before Mohamed Khan goes to court and these women get justice?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I will not accept the allegations of the member opposite, but I will certainly ask the Prosecutions branch as to the circumstances of this particular case.

Mr. Hawranik: Mr. Speaker, I am shocked by this minister's lack of knowledge in this case. Because Khan's lawyer was busy arguing for \$5 million to defend the Hells Angels associates, the trial of Mohamed Khan was delayed again.

To the victims who suffered from the sexual assaults, will this minister take responsibility for delaying justice to them, or will he simply ignore them as he has done in the past with hundreds of other victims of crime in Manitoba?

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, delays in court cases can be the responsibility of many different parties, independent parties in the justice system, whether it is the court, whether it is Prosecutions, whether it is defence, the accused, whether it is police evidence.

I will endeavour to look into that particular case, but I remind members opposite that for the first time in Manitoba history there is a backlog reduction strategy that is unfolding, and we are determined to reduce the time lines that it takes to process cases in this province, unlike members opposite.

Mr. Hawranik: Mr. Speaker, this has been five years and this falls directly on the shoulders of

the Justice Minister. The Justice Minister has done nothing for the three rape victims of Mohamed Khan, just like he is doing nothing to protect innocent Manitobans whose pictures and statements were released to the Hells Angels.

The Justice Minister has failed victims and he has failed to protect innocent Manitobans from the Hells Angels. Will the minister get his head out of the sand, or will he finally take action and stand up for these three rape victims?

Mr. Mackintosh: The member opposite certainly knows that in that particular case, and I am very careful about talking about particular cases, there were very unique circumstances, Mr. Speaker, but I remind the member opposite that what he is asking for is political interference in a particular case that is being prosecuted in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, if there was political interference, he would be up tomorrow demanding my resignation.

Nursing Profession Full-time Employment

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, nursing students have told me that they want full-time jobs when they graduate, but the Manitoba Nurses' Union says that only one third of nursing jobs are full time and called this a national disgrace.

I would like to ask the Minister of Health: Can he explain to the nursing students who are in the gallery today why only one third of nurses in Manitoba work full time, the worst record in Canada?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question because it is very apparent that when the pattern of full-time, part-time changes occurred in Manitoba, it was in the 1990s when members opposite fired a thousand nurses. Consequently—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Chomiak: I remind members opposite when they had a chance to negotiate a nurses'

collective agreement they actually downsized what they paid nurses.

* (13:55)

In the last collective agreement we negotiated with the nurses, not only did we give them an increase to be competitive with other jurisdictions, but we put in place a council to work with the nurses and with management to increase full-time jobs to 65 percent by April 1 of 2004. Never before targeted or done in Manitoba history, Mr. Speaker. We put that in the collective agreement. We negotiated with the nurses.

Mrs. Driedger: The minister said that in the spring of 2002 he set up a committee and their job is to increase full-time positions in Manitoba to 65 percent by April, 2004. Yet the union has said this committee has only met two to three times since.

Can the minister tell the nursing students in the gallery today: Are they going to have a full-time job when they graduate?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I would like to remind our guests in the gallery there is to be no participation, whether it is through applause or whatever form. I ask the co-operation of all our guests in the gallery.

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, I would like to indicate that the last nursing review done by the University of Manitoba indicated that 80, 90 percent of the nurses graduating were getting jobs, Mr. Speaker.

I might add we negotiated with the union. We did not fight with the union. We have not had all the strikes that occurred in the nineties. We have not laid off thousands of nurses to go to United States as members opposite did. We negotiated with the union to work with the union to have 65% full-time positions, most of which by virtue of demographics and demand will go toward younger nurses who are coming out. I might indicate we negotiated that because we now have a relationship of working with nurses and the part-time, full-time committee has met eight times to work on this particular issue so, as usual, the member is wrong.

Mrs. Driedger: I would like to clarify with the Minister of Health that when my office phoned the union in August of this summer they had indicated they had only met two to three times on this issue. That is where the information comes from.

Mr. Speaker, the most recent CIHI report showed that only 73 percent of RNs who train in Manitoba remain in the province. That comes from CIHI, and it is one of the worst records in the country according to CIHI. The MNU is also on record saying they are witnessing an exodus of new graduates who cannot get full-time work in Manitoba.

When is this Minister of Health going to get serious about this issue and create full-time jobs for nursing students?

Mr. Chomiak: I might remind members opposite there was a distinct change in nursing policy when we came to office. First, we tripled the number of nurses enrolled in nursing programs, a little bit different from the elimination of programs.

Second, Mr. Speaker, we increased the opportunities and put in place a workplace task force that reported back on nursing working conditions.

Third, the last CIHI report the member talked about showed that our record on full-time nurses had in fact gone up since the members opposite were in office.

Fourth, the recent report showed that 80 to 90 percent of nurses graduating were going to get positions.

Fifth, Mr. Speaker, we are increasing programs so that nurses have an opportunity to practice in Manitoba, and all trends show otherwise. In fact, we have been cited as having done the best job of training nurses in the entire country.

Sunrise School Division Labour Dispute

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, in Estimates the Minister of Education (Mr. Lemieux) admitted he felt it was inappropriate for government to intervene in the collective bargaining process in Sunrise School

Division. He said, and I quote, we have no role in this collective bargaining processing. Yet, for the last two days, his colleague the Minister of Finance has admitted that his political appointee, Mr. Schreyer, contacted MAST and intervened in the Sunrise School Division's strike dispute.

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. Does he agree with his colleague the Minister of Education that it was inappropriate for his political staff to intervene in the collective bargaining process in the Sunrise School Division?

* (14:00)

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): The facts of the situation have now been recited in this House more than once.

We had a labour dispute where the employer and the union were not able to come to a resolution without a strike occurring. The civil servant contacted the bargaining agent for the employer, the Manitoba Association of School Trustees, and offered support. After consultation with the school division, mediation was selected voluntarily by both sides to resolve the problem.

I am informed that these practices are commonplace. They occurred in the previous government. What we have done here is we have tried to ensure that children were in school for the last two and a half months of the school year and bring resources to the problem that are available to all bargaining and employer groups across the province of Manitoba.

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, I gather the Minister of Finance is saying now that he is standing by his words that it is appropriate to intervene and was appropriate to intervene with a political staffer in the Sunrise School Division dispute.

I would like to ask, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education then: Does he still stand by his comments that it was inappropriate for his colleague, the Minister of Finance, to have his political staff intervene in a strike dispute in the Sunrise School Division?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Education and Youth): Mr. Speaker, on numerous

occasions we have said that voluntary mediation took place to get the children back to school. We are very pleased that happened. We are very pleased the children were able to resume their normal school days.

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that both ministers are standing by their comments.

I guess I would like to ask the Premier then, who describes himself as, and I quote by the Premier, "the ethics commission of the NDP government," can the Premier advise this House whether he agrees—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable Member for Tuxedo is asking a question. For her to get an answer, the member that will be responding has to hear the question. I ask the co-operation of all honourable members, please.

Mrs. Stefanson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. My question for the Premier, the self-described ethics commissioner for this Government, this NDP government: Can he inform this House whether or not he agrees with his colleague the Minister of Finance, or his other colleague the Minister of Education?

Does the Premier feel it was appropriate for a political staff to interfere in the collective bargaining process in the Sunrise School Division in an attempt to help fix an election in the Lac du Bonnet riding?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the members for the last two or three years have made the issue of modernizing our school divisions this huge, huge issue of the status quo versus modernization. We believe the decisions we made, and they were tough decisions, would move forward with the reduction of a third the number of school divisions in the province of Manitoba; a third in the north, a third in the city of Winnipeg and a third of the school divisions in rural Manitoba would be positive for students, for educators, for choices in education.

Members opposite are still fighting the status quo battle. We chose to go ahead. We knew there would be controversy, Mr. Speaker. If we wanted to avoid controversy, we would not

have modernized the school divisions to begin with. We think we made the right decision for the right reasons for the long haul for kids. That is what we stand for.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I see there are members wishing to have conversations back and forth. I once again would like to invite members that wish to have a conversation, please use the loge. They are free; they are empty.

This way if you are trying to have a conversation back and forth, the members that are asking the question cannot be heard. The members that are trying to answer the question cannot be heard. Also, if there is a breach of the rules, I need to be able to hear that because I am sure each and every one of you would expect me to make a ruling.

I ask the co-operation of all honourable members. If you wish to have a conversation, please do it in the loges.

Sunrise School Division Labour Dispute

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. Can the Minister of Finance today confirm that Lloyd Schreyer directly contacted the Manitoba Association of School Trustees indicating that government wanted to settle the strike before an election was called this spring, between CUPE and Sunrise School Division and that government was prepared to put cash on the table?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, there was no election called at the time the employee of the provincial government contacted the Manitoba Association of School Trustees and even though in retrospect people might think the election had been fixed and the date had been figured out, in fact, there was only one person in this room who knew whether or not there was going to be an election. I can tell you he had not discussed whether or not there would be an election with his colleagues on this side of the House and had not made up his mind finally.

One might recall that there were many things going on at that time. There was the serious threat of West Nile sweeping the country. There was a serious SARS problem in Ontario and other parts of the world and there was a serious threat called terrorism going on across the land. So to assume now that the election date was fixed is utterly false and really looking in the rear-view mirror of history with certainty that did not exist at the time.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Once again I would like to ask the co-operation of all honourable members. We have guests in the gallery and I am sure that they wish to hear the questions and the answers. That is why they have come out today. I am sure of that. So I ask the co-operation of all honourable members, please.

I would like to remind all honourable members if the Speaker is either making a ruling or making a statement to the House and when the Speaker stands for members to be seated and for the Speaker to be heard in silence. I ask the co-operation of all honourable members.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, my question for the Minister of Finance is: Who directed Lloyd Schreyer, a political appointment by this Government, to call the Manitoba Association of School Trustees and put cash on the table through the mediator to settle the strike in Sunrise School Division?

Mr. Selinger: As I have said earlier, Mr. Speaker, on more than one occasion, there was an actual strike in process that was affecting 2000 children that required busing in that school division.

The provincial government employee contacted the Manitoba Association of School Trustees and asked if they would consider voluntary mediation. After consultation with the school division, the employer's bargaining agent and the school division decided that voluntary mediation would be a very helpful way to try and resolve this matter and that process unfolded.

Mediation is a common instrument to resolve labour disputes in this province and it

was applied in this case successfully, which allowed the children to go back to school and the families to have the comfort of knowing those children were being educated.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, my final question is for the Premier. Will the Premier now admit that his Government, through the Minister of Finance or through himself, had direct political interference by his Government through the mediator and put cash on the table, half a million dollars of taxpayers' money, to buy the election in the Lac du Bonnet constituency?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, if I could once again answer the question, the mediation process generated an agreement spread over three years to address salary anomalies that were in the order of up to 60 percent in some cases. The harmonization of those salaries required a financial commitment from the newly merged school division.

One of those units in the newly merged school division had experienced severe financial difficulties just a couple of years before that. The members opposite will recall. They were able to come up with two thirds of the resources required. The Ministry of Education found the remaining third spread over three years to solve a problem and to make sure children were back in school, which is where they needed to be to get their education.

* (14:10)

Red River Floodway Expansion Environmental Assessment

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Conservation. The expansion of the floodway is very important to Manitoba and to Winnipeg. It is important that all aspects be done well, including the environmental assessment. I call on the Minister of Conservation to ensure that there is a joint federal-provincial environmental panel as described under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act to review the environmental concerns related to the floodway expansion.

Will the Minister of Conservation request a joint federal-provincial panel to conduct the environmental review for the expansion of the floodway?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Conservation): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the member. I know he has had some difficulty in whether he supports or opposes the floodway expansion.

We have been very clear, Mr. Speaker. By the way, we say the same thing no matter where we are in the province, that we support the floodway option. We proceeded to put in place an interim floodway authority. We have already started on the first stage of the engineering work. We started with the key elements of moving ahead in terms of all matters, including the environmental licensing.

I want to indicate that we have been in communication with the federal government. Indeed, we wish to see, Mr. Speaker, full environmental scrutiny of the dam. We will be making sure that we have an environmental process that meets our needs, the province of Manitoba as well as the federal need. We are proud of what we are doing on the floodway.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is to the Premier, who yesterday was arrogantly attacking, bashing and biting at the PUB and the Clean Environment Commission and the good work that they are doing.

Mr. Speaker, considering the flippety-floppy approach that the Government has taken to the Wuskwatim Dam environmental review, I would ask the Premier: Would it not be in the best interests of all to have a joint federal-provincial panel do the review on the expanded floodway and to do it once well, rather than risk a repeat of the problems and complications that have arisen with the review of the Wuskwatim Dam?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, one is reminded of windshield wipers when you look at the position of the Liberal Party and the Liberal Leader in terms of the floodway.

You are opposed to the floodway in Selkirk. You are in favour of it and tell us to get it going faster in Winnipeg. I remember that you put out a press release saying get it going faster. At the same time, you were selling Liberal memberships in Selkirk to stop the floodway and build a ditch right around Winnipeg from the

floodway right through the middle of Birds Hill Park, costing a billion dollars, to Lake Winnipeg. That is the other Liberal position.

Mr. Speaker, there is an \$85-million International Joint Commission liability every year for not providing flood protection. That is a federal International Joint Commission report. We will have due diligence under the environmental laws. Remember the federal report that was commissioned after the 1997 flood, the IJC report, that identified \$75 million to \$85 million liability per year by not proceeding with this project.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, we have supported the floodway expansion. There is no need for the Premier to kind of twist things around. What I would do to the Premier—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Gerrard: Why is the Premier reluctant to request a joint federal-provincial environmental panel? We want things done well. So many other provinces, including Alberta and Québec, have had joint panels which are working well.

It is well known that the Premier and the Agriculture Minister (Ms. Wowchuk) have a penchant for fed bashing at every possible opportunity and have rather toxic relations with the federal government. When the federal and the provincial governments are partners, it makes sense to have a joint federal-provincial panel to show the partnership.

I ask the Premier: Why is he so reluctant to have a joint federal-provincial environmental panel on the floodway expansion?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, it is a ditch. It is a ditch that goes around the city that already exists. We want to expand it and we want to deepen it and give Winnipeg people and the people in the Capital Region more protection.

The engineering report and the IJC looked at the Ste. Agathe system which would produce more environmental damage. We want the due diligence of an independent environmental process to take place. We have discussed that

with the federal government. We discussed this with Minister Rock on two occasions. We have discussed both the expediency and the due process for environmental licensing so we have been working with the federal minister responsible for infrastructure in a responsible way.

There is an existing floodway. Is the member opposite suggesting an environmental assessment would say close up the floodway and do not have flood protection?

Public Schools Capital Projects

Ms. Christine Melnick (Riel): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education and Youth authorized Garden Valley School Division to proceed with a new school project in Winkler. Could the Minister of Education and Youth indicate what supports the provincial government has provided to capital projects in Manitoba?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Education and Youth): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased today to authorize Garden Valley School Division to proceed with this project. They are a Grades 5 to 8 school.

On the bigger picture, since the year 2000, the provincial government has provided more than \$250 million in capital, \$125 million more than the previous Conservative government did from '95 to the year 2000.

Livestock Industry Drought Assistance

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, last night a PMU producer contacted me from the drought area. He stated he is not eligible for the assistance program. Can the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) tell this House why the Government is not including other livestock producers when they need drought assistance as well?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): I will take the specifics as notice on behalf of the minister.

Mr. Eichler: Mr. Speaker, that same PMU producer has contributed towards \$50 million in

this industry. He needs feed assistance to haul these animals to house. Would the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) tell this House why the drought-stricken farmers are excluded?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, there is a unique situation with cattle. Normally in a drought situation cattle producers can sell their cattle to deal with cash flow issues. With the situation with the border, it is much more limited in terms of economic options for the cattle producers themselves. It is a unique situation.

The Minister of Agriculture is right now working with her American counterparts in Idaho to try to get the border open. That remains, I would think, the paramount priority for this Legislature.

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

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Before we get into members' statements, I would just like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us students from the second year University of Winnipeg class of Women, Gender and Politics. These students are under the direction of Ms. Marianne Cerilli.

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you here today.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Sod-Turning Ceremony

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, this morning I, along with my fellow Member for Pembina, Mr. Dyck, had the pleasure of attending the sod-turning ceremony for the new performing arts centre at Gretna's Mennonite Collegiate Institute. It was a wonderful ceremony, the culmination of much hard work and dedication by those involved with this worthy project.

* (14:20)

I would like to acknowledge the outstanding fundraising achievements associated with this

project. Those involved with this independent school have raised \$1.5 million for a \$3-million project that is going to be built in Gretna, Manitoba. The performing arts centre will have approximately 15 000 square feet in space. An ample stage and backstage area, seating for 455 people, a large foyer space for historical displays and relational interaction before and after performances are all part of the design of this new facility.

With this new facility, MCI will now be able to offer one of the best high school music and drama programs anywhere in the province of Manitoba. Not only will this facility provide a better learning environment for the students but it will also invite professional groups and performers from across Canada and elsewhere to consider this venue when great acoustics are of primary consideration. No other school in Manitoba has been able to achieve a project of such magnitude, and without provincial funding.

The Mennonite community of Manitoba has been able to come together to help make their children's dream come true. Music and drama are a part of our heritage and I would like to congratulate all of the fundraisers at Mennonite Collegiate for a job well done. We look forward to seeing you perform in your new centre.

Volunteerism

Mr. Peter Bjornson (Gimli): Mr. Speaker, Manitobans have a great history of volunteerism and truly volunteers are the backbone of our communities. They make significant contributions toward improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of the places they call home.

Certainly, in the constituency of Gimli I have had the opportunity to meet with community groups who exemplify this spirit of co-operation and civic-mindedness. In Winnipeg Beach, community volunteers have been working hard to support the town recreation centre because of the importance of recreational opportunities for youth. The centre has been open since 1981 and is a valuable community resource. It provides a safe place for youth and in fact all members of the community to take part in recreational activities such as hockey, skating and other sports programs.

Another community committed to expanding opportunities for youth is West St. Paul. There has been a well-developed campaign to build a new community recreation centre. The community has held socials as well as an annual golf tournament as it collects a capital fund to build the new facility to serve the community. There is currently a site for baseball and the plans for the future will likely include a variety of recreational opportunities.

Diabetes is a chronic disease that has no cure and it is a leading cause of death by disease in Canada and affects our communities. In Gimli, the Canadian Diabetes Association is working hard to support research into treatment of this disease. The recent lobsterfest was a part of the fundraising efforts to support research on diabetes. This highly successful event brings together community members for an evening of dining, entertainment and a silent auction.

Proceeds from this event enable other community members to run marathons with Team Diabetes Canada. These runners, Pam Isfeld, Grant Isfeld and Leona Johnson are registered to take part in the upcoming Icelandic marathon.

These three community projects show Manitoba's determination and vision for our future and especially for the youth in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I invite you and my colleagues to join me in recognizing and thanking the volunteers working on these community projects. Through efforts such as these they have a direct impact on improving the quality of their own lives, the lives of their neighbours and indeed future generations of Manitobans.

Boulet Brothers Concrete Ltd.

Mr. Denis Rocan (Carman): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Boulet family of Somerset, Manitoba, and to mark their 40 years in business in Manitoba.

Upon entering the gates of Boulet Brothers Concrete Ltd. in Somerset, one is greeted by an old, green GMC truck with its original cement mixer still safely secured in the back. It was with this vehicle that Omer and Edmond Boulet started their business 40 years ago. In those

days, the brothers were simply young contractors who liked to mix concrete on site and poured the foundation for the development of new barns that eventually marked the beginning of the hog industry in Manitoba.

In 1979, Omer and Edmond established a facility to make ready-mix concrete and their past experience in the hog industry led them to constructing concrete hog pens and feeders in 1981.

By 1995, they began to focus primarily on the progress and development of their own concrete products. Finally, two years ago their business became entirely automated, eliminating the need for manual labour, thanks to the efforts of Edmond's son, Hubert, a civil engineer and also a partner in the Boulet family business.

Last August the Boulets began a new project to enhance their productivity. A very large hopper and conveyor system was just recently installed to commemorate the 40th anniversary year and the success of Boulet Brothers Concrete Ltd.

Currently Boulet Brothers is the largest concrete-producing facility in rural Manitoba and is certified by the MRCA. Most importantly though, the Boulet brothers have always ensured that the wishes of the community and the province are accommodated and satisfied. Hubert commented recently, and I quote, "You've got to listen to the customers and endeavour to cater to them."

Community projects have included the construction of a six-foot diameter concrete cheese wheel for the Trappist Monastery in Holland, the designing of a system to seal leaks in a corroding metal pipe at the local reservoir, work on the local swimming pool and the highway sign with my hometown inscribed on it, Somerset.

Throughout their 40 years in business the Boulet family has been very influential in the Carman constituency and have had an impact in the areas of business and community life. As Manitobans, they should be commended for the work they have done and for their commitment to the people of this province.

10th Transcona Scout Troop

Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to congratulate the 10th Transcona Scout Troop on its twenty-fifth anniversary. I was pleased to attend the festivities marking this occasion, Thursday, June 19, at the 1st Transcona Scout Hall.

Over 100 current and past members were in attendance to celebrate the history of the troop, which was founded in 1978. Mr. Al Patterson, Council Commissioner for Scouts Canada, presented the 10th Transcona Troop with a diamond willow walking stick in recognition of this anniversary.

There was also a special farewell to two long-time volunteers who have contributed to the success of the scouts in Transcona. Founding member Keith Laing was recognized for 25 years of volunteering; Kim Milne was recognized for volunteering with the troop for 14 years. Without dedicated volunteers such as these it would not be possible to continue the good work at the Transcona Scouts.

Scouting helps build a better world where people hold constructive roles in making their societies safer, secure and enjoyable. In addition, scouting contributes to the education of young people. Its progressive and stimulating program focusses on the values of doing one's best, contributing to the community, and respecting and caring for others. Such social activities are very important for community development and are of tremendous value to the fast changing world where so many things are commercialized.

This is a community-based group. For 25 years they have been meeting at Bernie Wolfe Community School. The Transcona Troop regularly takes part in community events such as the Hi Neighbour parade, delivering Christmas hampers, and Remembrance Day memories. Everybody in Transcona knows about the troop's long-time contributions.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to report on this hardworking, community-minded group in Radisson. I myself was a young scout growing up in a small town in India. I congratulate the 10th Transcona Troop on their 25th anniversary of exemplary work and wish them the best in the future.

Red River Floodway Expansion

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I called today on the provincial government to request a joint federal-provincial panel to do the environment—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Could I have the co-operation of all honourable members. It is very, very difficult to hear the member that has the floor. If the members wish to have conversations, please use the loges.

* (14:30)

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I called today on the provincial government to request a joint federal-provincial panel to do the environmental assessment of the expansion of the floodway. This is a major, jointly funded project of Manitoba and Canada.

It is important that all parts of this project be done well, including the environmental assessment. There are serious environmental issues of water quality, drainage and other issues which are very important to be addressed during the expansion of the floodway.

It would demonstrate good partnership between Manitoba and Canada, as indeed Alberta and Canada and Québec and Canada have worked together on joint environmental panels in their provinces. These panels have worked well, including, for example, the Little Bow/Highwood Diversion Project in Alberta, which was the subject of a joint federal-provincial panel which went smoothly and produced a result which was widely accepted.

In contrast, it would appear that the current NDP provincial government is embarked on a path which is a separate track, a path which will continue the adverse and toxic relations which we are experiencing between the federal and the provincial government at the moment with the Premier (Mr. Doer) and his Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) taking every possible opportunity to attack and condemn the federal government in this Legislative Building.

Clearly, the approaches that the Premier has taken to Wuskwatim have been involved in many complications already with a delay of at

least a year. It is a path which is poor, and I suggest to the Premier that he would be wise in this case for the expanded floodway to appoint a joint federal-provincial panel.

MATTERS OF GRIEVANCE

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Lakeside, on a grievance?

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Yes, Mr. Speaker. More than four months have passed since discovery of BSE in Canada. By some accounts, the economic damage in Manitoba alone has exceeded \$120 million. I do not have to look too hard around Lakeside with six constituencies to see the social and economic toll being taken by the BSE crisis. It is deeply troubling to see so many farm families and businesses and industries that supply and service them undergoing such stress.

Despite a flurry of government announcements, Manitoba livestock producers have received only a limited amount of aid. Members of our caucus have repeatedly grilled the Agriculture Minister (Ms. Wowchuk), the Premier (Mr. Doer), Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), trying to determine how much of the \$180 million in BSE aid programs announced by the Doer government has actually reached struggling producers. Unfortunately, we have received no real answers.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that as little as 10 percent of the monies allocated by the Province has actually been delivered to producers to date. For example, on June 30, the Province announced \$460 million in a federal-provincial BSE Recovery Program. In reality, Manitoba producers only received about \$6 million in federal aid under this program and a limited amount of provincial aid.

Manitoba did not receive its proportional share of access to slaughter plants in the other provinces and the program could only be deemed a failure. The provincial government should have done much, much more to ensure that our producers receive fairness, access to plants in other provinces.

On July 31, the Province announced \$15 million from the BSE compensation program

that had been reallocated to a feeder program. Unfortunately, the Province shelved the program weeks ahead of schedule with producers receiving nowhere even near the \$15 million set aside for the program. It initially gave hope and then with a stroke of a pen it was gone.

Also on July 31, the Province announced \$2 million to increase provincial processing capacity but gave no details of how the money would flow.

On August 6, the Province announced a \$100-million loan program; however, take-up on the loan has been limited. As of September 17, only 170 out of 12 000 livestock producers have been approved for loans. Many producers have been reluctant to assume more debt, and others are simply unable to access the loans. Clearly, this loans program is not the solution producers are seeking, Mr. Speaker.

On September 3, the Province reannounced its \$2-million plan to increase slaughter capacity in Manitoba but to date only allocated \$1 million of these funds. We all know that \$1 million will buy little in the way of new equipment or freezer space for abattoirs.

On September 12, the Province announced \$12 million for a new drought assistance program, feed transportation and \$10 million to extend the slaughter component of the BSE Recovery Program to assist producers with depressed slaughter prices.

Only time will tell whether the Doer government actually flows all this funding. If they follow the example set with the feeder program, all the funds will not flow. I have already been approached by producers saying such, people involved in the PMU industry who say how they are ineligible for aid under the feed transportation program. This is a terrible oversight.

On September 19, the Province announced it was signing the Agricultural Policy Framework and committing \$42 million over three years to support the transition from existing programs to their business risk management programs. It should be noted that monies flowed from Manitoba's share of the APF will go to all eligible farmers, not just livestock producers.

Manitoba's livestock producers are being forced to sign a multi-year agreement in order for money to flow to them as advanced under the APF.

Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

The premiums farmers will pay will be costly. We are very concerned that some livestock producers will not be in a position to make that kind of financial commitment in order to leverage aid. As one producer said, and I quote: I do not think it works at all. It is actually going to cost farmers more money than they are ever going to get out of it.

The Minister of Agriculture needs to realize that farmers who are forced to hold a larger number of cattle than normal on their farms may not really qualify for any APF money. Combine the problems of APF with a cumbersome and unbelievable deliverable program being offered by the provincial government and our producers are feeling more stressed than ever.

I find it deeply disturbing that the Doer government has tried to leave Manitobans with the impression that more than \$180 million in provincial BSE aid is following to producers when actually the amount of aid being delivered falls tens of millions of dollars short of that. It is simply reprehensible that the Government would create false expectation with respect to sorely needed aid programs. It is unfair to farm families who are facing such extraordinary challenges.

Equally disturbing, the Doer government's decision to shamelessly launch an advertising campaign, running newspaper ads, radio ads, promoting these programs and thereby the Government, even though they have yet to flow substantial dollars to cash-strapped farmers. Frankly, these ads are an insult to our producers. Our leader, our caucus members are in constant contact with farm families affected by the BSE crisis. Their message to us is simple. They need meaningful assistance now. It is time for the Doer government to provide Manitoba livestock producers with a cash-advance program to see them through this time of crisis. It would cost the Province a maximum of \$20 million in interest charges to run a cash-advance program if it was fully subscribed.

Instead of providing producers with a cash-advance program that will allow producers to best manage their own affairs, the provincial government has instead provided programs that are so complicated and erroneous as to be undeliverable. It is a disservice to our livestock industry, which will ultimately bear the cost of government programs gone bad.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to draw attention now to the added devastation of drought in the Interlake. All producers of the livestock, including PMU horses, bison, elk and sheep are suffering a double whammy due to this act of nature. When the Doer government announced the drought assistance program, all producers should have been included. PMU, emu producers were excluded.

The purpose of the program is, as stated in the program guidelines, and I quote: "To provide assistance to all Manitoba livestock producers who are short of hay and straw due to drought conditions." The PMU industry in Manitoba amounts to \$40 million to \$50 million in cash farm receipts each year. The PMU ranchers have had their contracts cut by 13 percent to 14 percent in production for the '03-04 contract season. PMU producers are all livestock farmers and deserve equal treatment by this Government.

* (14:40)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I bring to you now the attention of the bison industry. The industry, which has been suffering for the last three years, was beginning to recover in 2003 before May 20. This industry, too, is suffering the effects of drought. The bison producer who has developed a direct marketing of meat to the consumer is competing for available slaughter space and grappling with the abundance of cheap meat in the market. The finishing sector has no option in marketing their finished animals. The bison cow-calf sector has no outlet for the 2003 calves. The real need of assistance is now.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I bring attention now to the elk industry, the impact of the BSE crisis in the Manitoba elk industry, its members, employees and dependants. The Manitoba elk industry was established in 1966 as a farm diversification option to enhance economic

benefits for rural Manitoba producers. In order to kick-start the industry, the provincial government entered into a live capture program to provide breeding stock for new entrants. These animals were distributed to draw establishing new businesses, at least by market prices to encourage and promote the industry.

To date, we have 55 elk farms with approximately 3000 animals behind fence. These farms are distributed throughout all of rural Manitoba. The industry is very regulated with all animals being required to have purity, DNA, TB, chronic waste disease testing. These regulations and the respective costs have imposed several hardships on this emerging industry.

The BSE crisis has had a devastating impact on the elk industry, a result in the demise of this farm diversification option. The industry, since inception has been somewhat suffering in over-regulation. Its animals are now considered near worthless and producers are totally frustrated in a financial quagmire.

The BSE crisis has had the following impacts: The Manitoba elk industry has been attempting to establish orderly meat business. With the loss of markets in the USA and other countries this thrust has stalled. The development of a new industry cannot afford negative publicity in the initial stages. As such, the BSE crisis has dealt a devastating blow to our meat industry. People associated with red meat from all ruminants is being suspect to the BSE and, in part, has hurt the sale of elk meat. A case in point is this cancellation of the meat buying group from Europe and the U.S. that was arranged by the Canadian Cervid Council prior to the BSE crisis and promptly stopped when BSE was discovered in Canada.

The sale of elk velvet is a major part of revenue for this business. The BSE crisis has resulted in the loss of sales to the U.S.A. In addition, China, which is one of the principal purchasers of Manitoba elk velvet, has pulled back from potential purchases of our product. The loss of the hunt bull to the market of the U.S. has caused severe impact on a number of producers and their families. Sales were negotiated prior to the BSE crisis, with no movement of animals allowed. These sales

evaporated. The sale of hunt bulls valued from 1,500 to 5,000 each provides much-needed revenue to elk producers.

The negative impact of the BSE crisis in conjunction with the CWD has cast a shadow on the future of this industry. Potential sales of all products are now in question. The health of this emerging industry is directly related to the new elk producers entering the business, which no new individuals are interested in entering the industry. Breeding stock prices are at an all time low. With the loss of velvet markets, meat markets and breeding stock sales, the industry members and their families are financially strained, totally frustrated and feeling very helpless.

In conclusion, the Manitoba elk industry would have a very positive impact on the Manitoba economy. For an example, the industry could approach the Alberta situation whereby 42 million is spent annually on operating expenses with immediate capital investment in facilities and equipment being 350 to \$500,000 range. The impact of the BSE crisis cannot be underestimated in fledging Manitoba industry. Since the inception of a BSE case, a potential viable industry is now in shambles with producers facing an uncertain future.

The industry needs reopening of all international borders and, in the meantime, a continuation of programs to support existing producers and review the change in developing farming regulations during this difficult time. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable Member for Russell, on a grievance.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am rising today to grieve on the issue of the BSE problems in Manitoba as they face producers. Also, I am going to try to divide my grievance into two parts. One is on the BSE issue that faces Manitoba producers. The other side of my grievance has to do with the way in which this Government has treated the amalgamated school divisions, specifically Sunrise School Division and other school divisions that are facing similar problems in amalgamation.

I begin with my grievance against this Government and against its policies with respect to the agricultural issue that is facing many cattle producers in this province. Cattle producers have been begging this Province to become more actively engaged in assisting them in a time of crisis at a time when the mad cow disease, if you like, has injected untold harm into the lives of Manitoba families.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we do not see it here in the city. We can carry on our lives without seeing the impact that the mad cow disease, the BSE issue, has had on the lives of children and their families. I use the term children and their families because in the times that we have had to embark on discussions with Manitoba families, the people who are most affected by the mad cow disease and by the shortage of revenues to the farm families are the children, because the children find themselves helpless. They find themselves in a position where they cannot understand why it is that although their families are producing some of the finest quality of livestock in the world, this livestock seems to have no value, and therefore their incomes have dwindled down to zero. There is no money for such things as music lessons. There is no money for such things as new snowsuits for the winter. There is no money for skating lessons and all of those other activities that children normally like to take part in and should take part in.

It is the obligation of a government to ensure that its citizenry in a time of crisis is looked after. That is the purpose of government. The purpose of government is to look after its citizens. We did that in the time of flood in this province. When Manitoba was flooded by the flood of the century, government came to the rescue of people who were in need, people who were in need of shelter, people who were in need of financial assistance, people who were in need of food. Government came to their assistance, along with the citizens of this province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we had the fires in the north of this province, government came to the assistance of the people in the North by taking them away from their homes for a short period of time and putting them up in safe places, whether it was in Thompson, The Pas or here in Winnipeg or Portage la Prairie. I

remember those days because I was involved in government, and it was our obligation to make sure that our citizens were safe and that they were looked after.

In the times when we have had tremendous droughts or floods, governments have always looked after their citizens. When SARS hit Toronto, the government of their province was there to look after the people. Indeed, governments from other jurisdictions came together to help those people who were affected by that terrible disease. That outbreak caused not only health problems, but it caused a financial problem for the citizens of Toronto and Ontario. The Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario came together in a meaningful way to make sure that everything got back to normal as quickly and as soon as possible.

I look to Alberta and I look to Saskatchewan, where their governments have come forward with programs for the people who have been affected by the BSE issue in a meaningful way so that families' lives are not disrupted as they are in Manitoba.

*(14:50)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in Manitoba, we have the Premier (Mr. Doer) and we have the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) who put on record words that would suggest that there is some support for farmers. The Minister of Agriculture, the Premier say continuously that they have put a \$100 million dollars on the table to support agriculture and to support farmers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you look at the reality, only \$6 million has flowed to farmers to date; \$6 million has flowed to the people who really need it. There are stories out there that are heartbreaking. I can tell you of personal circumstances of families where there is not only breakdown in the family, but there is complete despair because farm families do not know where to turn.

If the Government is not there to support them, the churches are there, Mr. Deputy Speaker; the communities are there; the service organizations of communities are there. We have seen how Manitobans and how Canadians have

come together to ensure that the consumption of beef has increased by something like 62 percent in our province and probably as much across the land, and that is a sign of support to the people who produce the food in this country.

I have to say that the Government has not lived up to its responsibility. The Government has not put forward a meaningful program that would put cash in the hands of these cash-strapped people until things get back to normal. It is not as though their inventory, their products have disappeared. Their products, their inventory are still on the farm. The only problem is, because the border has been closed to the United States and other countries, we cannot sell our product into those markets.

There has to be a period of time that we are going to go through, we know that, until the borders open up. When the borders open up for export, Mr. Deputy Speaker, things will get back to normal. Everybody is confident of that. How long a period of time is that? Is that six months? Is that a year? Is that something in between? We do not know at this moment. That is why the Opposition on this side of the House has called on the Premier, has called on the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) and has called on the Minister of Agriculture to put in place what we call a cash advance program. That means that you put cash in the hands of these cash-strapped producers for a period of time until their inventory can move.

You are not giving these farmers a handout in any way, shape or form. What you are doing is you are extending them credit by way of cash until such time that they can move their inventory. What is it going to cost the Government, Mr. Deputy Speaker? It is going to cost the Government the cost of interest and the cost of borrowing that money because that money that is put out there is still going to come back to the Government.

Now, why is the Government reluctant to enter into such a very straightforward, simple but true solution to a problem that exists? Why is government so reluctant to do that?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, cattle producers across this province have called on a cash advance

program. Our neighbouring province, Saskatchewan, has implemented a cash advance program. Why is it that Manitoba is reluctant to go there?

The Premier says we have a form of a cash advance program. It is called a loan program with low-interest rates. That is very good except for one thing. A loan program says that there has to be collateral taken for that loan. Through MACC, the Government is saying we need more collateral than simply your calves and your inventory. We need other collateral because we do not know how much your cattle are worth.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

In a cash advance program, Mr. Speaker, the amount of money that is advanced to the farmer, the only collateral that can be used is the inventory, the production that the farmer has, and yet the Government is reluctant to do that because I say they have no confidence in the producers of this country and this province to be able to, indeed, turn that inventory into good cash and profits that we all know will happen.

Mr. Speaker, in a time of need, I say this Government has abandoned the very people who put food on the table of all of the citizens of this province. I conclude there in terms of the BSE issue. I now want to turn my few minutes that I have left to the issue of education.

I said my grievance was going to be in two parts. The second part of my grievance has to do with the way in which this Government has politically interfered in a collective-bargaining process at Sunrise School Division to manipulate the settlement of salaries between CUPE and between the Sunrise School Division just before an election.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education (Mr. Lemieux) has said to us in Estimates that it is inappropriate for government to become directly involved in a salary dispute between two parties, whether it is a school board or whether it is any other entity and a union. The Minister of Finance has indicated in this House that indeed it was his political appointee, his political hack, who contacted the Manitoba Association of School Trustees and offered them cash to settle the

dispute between Sunrise School Division and the union. That is blatant political interference, and that cannot be tolerated in a democratic society.

Mr. Speaker, you and I would not tolerate that if we were on the other side of the fence. By that I mean if we were members of the public who were watching this happen. It is up to opposition to keep government accountable. That is exactly what we are doing here, because government has to account for its actions. In this case, government knew, the Premier knew that he was going to be calling the election on May 1 or May 2. Yet, days before that call of the election, he instructed—I am assuming that it is the First Minister who had to give the direction to his Minister of Finance to instruct a political appointee, a political person, a political hack if you like, to go out and to interfere directly by offering money, by offering cash to settle a labour dispute.

I do not care how you slice it, this smells. This smells of political interference. This smells of a government trying to buy votes in a specific riding in this province. And, yes, Lac du Bonnet was one of those chosen ridings. It was targeted by the Premier. He made no bones about the fact that this was a targeted riding. As a matter of fact, days before the election he moved his whole Cabinet out to Beausejour. It was days before the election that he made announcements regarding capital projects in that constituency. To try and ensure that union people were not on the streets picketing during an election campaign, he instructed one of his political appointees to go out to the, if you like, parent organization of the trustees and bribe them with cash. This is not his cash. This is not his party's cash. This is taxpayer money.

Mr. Speaker, I go back to the Monnin report, where the government of the day was chastised for taking private money and putting it into the hands of a candidate. In this case, I wonder what Mr. Monnin would say to this Premier (Mr. Doer), who takes taxpayer money and puts it into the hands of union and school board officials to buy an election. That is what he was doing, and that is just as blatant as it is. This is a scandal of significant magnitude. In my view, someone has to get to the bottom of this. Someone has to investigate this matter, because

this is far too serious for citizens of Manitoba to be hoodwinked by. At no time should citizens in this province be exposed to this kind of tyranny. This is scandalous, and it has to be brought to the public's attention and it has to be accounted for.

The Premier of this province says that he is the ethics commissioner for his Government. He is the ethics commissioner for his party. I call on him as the ethics commissioner for his party to do what is right. Therefore, tell the public of Manitoba why it is that his Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) did the unthinkable thing of putting a political appointee in such a position where he was offering cash to buy an election in a constituency. You would not do that, Mr. Speaker. I would not do that, but it is unthinkable that this Premier allowed that to happen.

Mr. Speaker, I conclude my remarks in a disgusted mood, because I feel this Government has done a great injustice to the citizens of this province. Thank you.

* (15:00)

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member of Inkster, on a grievance?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Yes, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to be able to take this opportunity to express some concerns that I have. As many members of this Chamber might be aware, I have been a long advocate for the Provincial Nominee Program. In fact, I can recall when there was a severe shortage of garment workers in the province, that I had taken a tour of facilities, went down to Toronto at the time to meet with the Minister of Immigration. The minister told me about the concept of the Provincial Nominee Program. I came back here and there was even some discussion.

Then-Premier Mr. Filmon had talked about the particular program. In 1998 I believe is actually when the program was implemented. It was a trial basis. I think there was somewhere in the neighbourhood of a couple of hundred certificates. What we found is that this particular program has just grown by leaps and bounds. We have seen this program contribute not only

to the social fabric of our society, Mr. Speaker, but also in terms of the economics of our province, where the GNP has benefited tremendously by this particular program. So I asked for the Government to seriously evaluate as to what is taking place within this program in three different areas.

The three areas that I want to focus my grievance on: No. 1 is the issue of resources or staffing; No. 2, that there is a need to implement some changes in regard to the criteria; No. 3, some concerns that I have expressed with the current Minister of Immigration (Mr. Ashton) and, in fact, the Premier.

This particular program and the value of this program to the future of our province, Mr. Speaker, is vastly underestimated. We do need to give more attention to it. I talked about the increases from 200 certificates from its origins to today, where we are probably going to exceed 2000 certificates. Today I believe the agreement is such that at the beginning of the year we indicate to the federal government what sort of numbers of certificates we would like to see. We can say safely, I believe, that we could easily accommodate anywhere from 2500 to 3000, maybe even more certificates. But the problem that I have is that the Government might talk about how important the program is, might talk about its potential, but the actions speak louder than words.

I was encouraged when yesterday in Estimates that we hear that the minister was looking at having additional staff. I would applaud that. In fact, that is the first time that I heard that there was going to be additional staff. We need to get more resources into that particular office. We need to have more processing officers if in fact we want to give credibility to the program. If we want to see this program to continue to grow, we need to be able to ensure that there is the proper and adequate staffing in order to facilitate that.

A good example is the business class. Those business class that are coming through the Provincial Nominee certificates, you are talking about, they believe the number, between 2002-2003 fiscal year, somewhere in the neighbourhood of 130 applicants were processed.

Well, out of that group \$40 million came as a direct result, yet they do not have the adequate staffing to be able to accommodate the type of demand, the potential demand that is out there.

So the first concern that I have is in expressing the importance that the Government take seriously the needs of adequately resourcing these two areas, both the business side and the other side, where we get, as I say, I think this year somewhere in the neighbourhood of 1500 certificates are being issued, most likely more than that 1500.

The other issue is changes that need to be made to some of the criteria. We have skilled; we have semi-skilled. It is interesting that we talk about the need for more nurses. We acknowledge that there is a need, yet there is no recognition given to nurses abroad through this particular program. It is done because—*[interjection]* No, I do not think you have.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Government, the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) needs to work with the Minister of Immigration in dealing with how we can get some of those accreditations acknowledged so that if there is a nurse today they do not have to wait for a specific special program that goes into that particular country. We need to open it up so that nurses, for example, from other countries, outside of one or two, are able to say that, look, I have been a nurse for X number of years, I have got the certification and so forth, I should be eligible at least to apply for the Provincial Nominee certificate.

I mention nurses. You know I had someone that come into my constituency office the other day, an individual's brother who is today a medical doctor in Saudi Arabia, graduated, got his medical certificate back in 1988. Here in Manitoba, we are trying to get more doctors, yet here is an individual who would—

An Honourable Member: Spin doctors.

Mr. Lamoureux: My colleague from Steinbach talks about spin doctors, and, yes, they have been successful at recruiting spin doctors. We know that. There is no doubt about that but that is not the purpose of my grievance.

The grievance is that, look, we have the capability through the Provincial Nominee Program really to cater to the needs of what is happening in terms of our workforce here in the province of Manitoba, and there are areas in which this Government is letting us down.

We have the bigger picture of the numbers, the potential numbers, through family reunifications, to employment opportunities, and making sure adequate staffing is there. Then we have the smaller but just as important issues of the levels of skills that we are not recognizing that we should be recognizing and allowing for more flow into our province.

The Premier talks so highly that he wants to hit this 10 000 target. Well, the Premier would be best advised to look in terms of how the Government could be moving more progressively in accomplishing some of these needs within that particular program.

Finally, what I wanted to comment on is an issue which has been brought to my attention by a number of people in different forms, and, in fact, I have had opportunity to raise it to the minister here during Question Period, the Minister of Immigration. I have had opportunity to raise it with the Premier, and, yesterday, I even had the opportunity to raise it in the Estimates.

Yesterday in the Estimates, because we had another member who had tabled a letter that was circulated and that provided names, the Minister of Immigration then acknowledged, Mr. Speaker, acknowledged in committee, that, yes, he was in fact aware. You know it is a little bit vague, but I think that, if we go over Hansard of yesterday, you will see that the Minister of Immigration has indicated that he had heard from others outside of this particular letter.

When I heard those comments, I was a bit baffled as to why it is that the Minister of Immigration is not going out of his way to ensure that something was being done in terms of an investigation into it because it goes beyond just one letter. He acknowledged that himself. You know we are going to be going into the Immigration Estimates. Unfortunately, we do not have the type of time that I would have

welcomed to see because I do believe that we would find out more on that particular issue, and I think that it is important for us to ensure that there is a sense of fairness within that office. It is not necessarily to be a reflection on the people who are processing the cases.

* (15:10)

As I say, I am a tremendous fan of this program, but I am upset because there are a number of people outside of this Chamber, individuals who are familiar with the program that are using the program to some degree that are aware and have made very strong allegations. The minister cannot say it is just a letter that was not signed that he has received because, yesterday, he admitted that he has actually seen faces to some of those allegations. I, too, have seen faces of people who have expressed some of the allegations in the letter that was tabled yesterday in committee.

So we know that there is something there and we ask the Government to come clean on it, Mr. Speaker, not to hide around and try to get the Opposition to fish and try to pull it out. The Government should be going out of its way. It has the resources. It can make the call or two and it can do the follow-up. I am prepared to share the names on a confidential basis with the Minister of Immigration (Mr. Ashton) in terms of how I feel that we might be able to get to the bottom of this.

But it needs to be clarified, Mr. Speaker. The Government should not just be sitting back, just as easy to let things ride over. It is an issue that has been brought up by a number of people, and the Government owes it to this particular program to ensure that the transparency of accountability and other issues are, in fact, being dealt with. I would ask and implore the Minister of Immigration that this program goes far beyond a political party.

All parties inside this Chamber have been a strong advocate of the value and the worth, the potential worth of this program. It is definitely worth having a few hours of the minister's time to thoroughly investigate this particular issue and to report back. If he does not want to report back to the Chamber, report back to the

appropriate critics or others who might be interested. I know that there are individuals that I have talked to who would like to hear what it is that the Minister of Immigration, what it is that this Government is saying about the allegations that have been leveled. I know the Minister of Immigration can put a face to some of those allegations, to who is making some of those allegations, and I do believe that the minister has the responsibility in terms of addressing those allegations.

Mr. Speaker, we collectively acknowledged in the past the important role that immigrants have played in our province. I would conclude by indicating that the potential is just phenomenal, not only in terms of us as a province economically, but this is a program that has so much value in building the fabric of our society, whether it is through family reunification or whether it is just getting more people coming to our province and staying in our province.

Mr. Speaker, I like to believe that there is a great deal of support from this Chamber to act on the issues which I have brought forward through my grievance. All I ask is that the Premier (Mr. Doer) of this province and the Minister of Immigration take it seriously and respond by telling us what the Government's intentions are specifically.

I look forward to any sort of response, whether it is formal or informal. I would indicate that the Government would have my full cooperation in ensuring that the integrity of this program is maintained, because I, for one, see the tremendous value and want to make sure that every individual in this province is aware of the program and that individuals feel comfortable that there is a process and that they are familiar with this process. *[interjection]* As the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) says, around the world. We need to promote this program in certain areas of the world. They would, I believe, jump at the opportunity.

Now, that does not mean the Government goes and spends millions upon millions in promoting the program in every region of the world. Maybe it involves doing some sort of promotional work that would involve the different communities that make up our

province, because I, for one, believe that the greatest asset we have is, in fact, the people whom we claim to represent or whom we do represent and using their abilities to be able to communicate a valuable program such as the Provincial Nominee.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to say these very few words.

Mr. Speaker: Grievances?

House Business

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you please canvass the House to see if there is leave to change the Estimates sequence such that the Estimates for the Civil Service Commission are to be moved on the sequence in Room 254 and will now follow Other Appropriations; that the Estimates for Enabling Appropriations are to be moved on the sequence in Room 254 to follow Healthy Child Manitoba; and that the Estimates for the Legislative Assembly be moved from the Chamber to be placed at the bottom of the list in 254; and that Revised Capital be referred to Supply for consideration at the end of the list at 254. These changes are to apply permanently.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave to change the Estimates sequence such that the Estimates for Civil Service Commission are to be moved on the sequence in Room 254 and will now follow Other Appropriation; that the Estimates for Enabling Appropriations are to be moved on the sequence in Room 254 to follow Healthy Child Manitoba; and that the Estimates for Legislative Assembly be moved from the Chamber to be placed at the bottom of the list in Room 254; and Revised Capital will be referred to the section of Supply in Room 254 to the bottom of the list? These changes are to apply permanently. *[Agreed]*

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to moving into Orders of the Day, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery, where we have with us Alana Swidler from Tucson, Arizona; Mr. Jay Derkach from Los Angeles; and Margie Derkach from Russell. On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you here today.

ORDERS OF THE DAY**GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

Mr. Speaker: The House will now resolve into Committee of Supply.

**COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY
(Concurrent Sections)****FAMILY SERVICES AND HOUSING**

* (15:20)

Mr. Chairperson (Harry Schellenberg): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 254 will now resume consideration of the Estimates for the Department of Family Services and Housing.

As has been previously agreed, questioning for this department will follow in a global manner. The floor is now open for questions.

I think the minister has some concerns he would like to express. Is that okay with the other members? *[Agreed]* Thank you.

Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Family Services and Housing): Mr. Chairperson, not concerns. I made a commitment to the Member for Minnedosa (Mrs. Rowat) that I would retrieve for her some information. The office contacted the Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities on behalf of the member, and I have the 2000-2003 annual report that they provided to the office. I will pass that over to her.

The office contacted the Children's Advocate to get the 2001-2002 annual report for the Member for Minnedosa, and we have that. I will provide that to her as well.

The member had asked for the Child and Family Services Authority's board of directors. These are interim board members until the act is proclaimed, but Métis Child and Family Services Authority board of directors consists of: Mr. Andrew Carrier, the chairperson; Sonia Prevost-Derbecker, member; Steve Racine, member; Giselle Funk, member; Sandra Gagne, member; Judy Mayer, ex-officio; Rosemarie McPherson,

ex-officio; Bernice Potoski, elder advisory member; Dora Mae Gauthier, elder advisory member; and Ted Chartrand, elder advisory member.

For the First Nations of Southern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority, the interim board of directors consists of Bobbi Pompana as chair; Dave Rundle as member; Shirley Cochrane as member; Sylvia Wilson as member; Lloyd Bunn as member; Birma Bushie as member; Stella Bone as member.

For the First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority, the interim board of directors consists of Darlene Osborne as chair; William Ferland as member; Derek Harper as member; Nora Thomas as member; and Arnold Ouskan as member.

Point of Order

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): Mr. Chair, can I just have the information tabled, please?

Mr. Caldwell: I would be pleased to table it. There is one more general Child and Family Services Authority board of directors, and I will read it into the record to complete it.

Mr. Chairperson: There is no point of order.

* * *

Mr. Caldwell: I will just conclude it then, just another half a dozen here. This is the general Child and Family Services Authority board of directors: Jean Ayr as chair; Helen Wang as member; Bea Jolly as member; Bruce Unfried as member; Jan Sanderson as member; Guy Jourdain as member; Allan Fleishman as member; Dale Brownlee as member; Doreen Draffin as member; Patricia Benson as member; and Issie Frost as member. I will provide that copy to the member as well, the Member for Minnedosa.

That, Mr. Chair, concludes the information that I committed that I would get on the member's behalf. The league and the Children's Advocate would be happy to provide this information directly to the member in the future.

Mr. Chairperson: I thank the minister. The floor is open for questions.

Mrs. Rowat: I would like at this time to pass the Estimates for the 2003-2004 year, and I would like to thank the staff for the information and support that they provided through this process, my first Estimates. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: I will read the resolutions.

Resolution 9.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$203,591,500 for Family Services and Housing, Employment, Income and Housing, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 9.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$316,340,000 for Family Services and Housing, Services for Persons with Disabilities, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 9.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$214,612,500 for Family Services and Housing, Child and Family Services, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 9.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$119,976,100 for Family Services and Housing, Community Service Delivery, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 9.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$4,780,800 for Family Services and Housing, Amortization and Other Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

The last item to be considered for the Estimates of this department is item 9.1.(a) Minister's Salary contained in Resolution 9.1.

At this point, we request the minister's staff leave the table for considering this last item. The floor is open for questions.

Resolution 9.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$10,105,700 for Family Services and Housing, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

* (15:30)

This completes the Estimates of the Department of Family Services and Housing. The next set of Estimates to be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply is for the Healthy Child Initiative.

Does the honourable minister have—I will give the floor to the honourable minister.

Mr. Caldwell: I thank you, Mr. Chair. Before turning over my seat to the honourable Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Sale), who is going to deal with the Healthy Child segment of the Estimates, I would like to thank the member from Minnedosa for her Estimates. I appreciate your first time here. I know that sometimes the rough and tumble is a little bit annoying. I appreciate the Estimates process, and I welcome the member to the House and congratulate her on her first Estimates. Thank you.

HEALTHY CHILD MANITOBA

Mr. Chairperson (Harry Schellenberg): We are into our next set of Estimates, Healthy Child Initiative.

Does the honourable Minister for Energy, Science and Technology have an opening statement?

Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology): A brief one, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: All right. We will hear from the minister.

Mr. Sale: I am pleased to be able to present our Estimates on behalf of the seven departments that are part of the Healthy Child Committee of

Cabinet. As members probably know, we meet on a regular basis many times throughout the year to talk about early childhood strategy and the particular programs of the departments and of Healthy Child Manitoba, which is the steering body that provides support.

Our goal as a government is to improve the health and well-being of children and families. That is not a new goal. The previous government had a similar goal. I think the difference is that we have moved from a kind of secretariat stage to a situation where the programs supported by these appropriations are mainstream programs within the seven departments that are partners. The core commitments include a parent-child-centred approach, the healthy baby prenatal benefit and the community support programs that go with that around nutrition and so forth, healthy schools, fetal alcohol syndrome prevention and healthy adolescent development.

We made a major, very significant commitment. Since April 2000, Manitoba has invested almost \$400 million in early childhood development. Of this investment, a total of \$44.5 million has been provided by the federal government through the new ECD agreement. In '03-04, Healthy Child Manitoba has an allocation of about \$22 million which we will be considering today. The remainder of the spending in early childhood comes through the Department of Health, Department of Family Services and Housing, Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, Culture and Tourism, Status of Women, Department of Health and the Department of Justice.

Included in this year's Estimates is \$5.8 million through the regional health authorities for the BabyFirst program. It is important for members to understand that we support line departments and line authorities like the health authorities to deliver programs that are a priority for early childhood development.

BabyFirst is a three-year home visiting and mentoring program for families with newborns based on an initial universal screening, with services offered to families identified that have significant risks of not being able to nurture their children appropriately. Family service delivery through our community health system is one of

the really important functions of our public health nursing staff.

This year's funding will provide service to about 1100 at-risk families. We have allocated about one million to EarlyStart. EarlyStart is a three-year home visiting program for families with preschool children. That is the next stage up from BabyFirst. It is delivered through many licensed child care programs in partnership again with regional health authorities, schools and community organizations.

Based on family needs, the program offers a continuum of support to families including weekly home visits by trained paraprofessionals, referral to community-based services and group programs in parenting skills, nutrition and literacy.

Funding of \$5.1 million has been committed to Healthy Baby. There are two components, monthly financial benefit and a provincial network of Healthy Baby community support programs. There is about \$1.6 million for the prevention of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, an additional \$40,000 to support FAS information in Manitoba, a toll-free telephone line launched in conjunction with the Manitoba Liquor Commission.

The parent-child-centred approach brings resources together through community coalitions across our province which support parenting, improved nutrition and literacy, and build community capacity. The broad range of coalition activities includes parenting workshops, family literacy programs, home visitors, creative playgroups and toy lending libraries. This year this program will share about \$3 million in funding at every local community level in Manitoba.

I am sure that members want to get into some direct discussion of the Estimates, but I wanted to provide a brief overview in the first few minutes to ensure that people had an awareness of the range of the programs and the fact that we work with seven partner departments to ensure the delivery of these programs.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the minister for those comments. Does the Official Opposition critic have any opening comments?

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): Mr. Chair, I was hoping that maybe the minister would be able to table any additional information on the committee's new mandates.

Mr. Sale: Mr. Chairman, I just say for my honourable friend that I shortened the remarks somewhat. I did not read every single sentence of those three pages into the record. If she compares what is on the record with what is in the statement, she will find there are some things additional there.

Mrs. Rowat: I appreciate the information and the comments made by the minister. I am very interested in this critic role. I am a mom with two small children in a community in rural Manitoba and actually served on the RHA board when BabyFirst was introduced. I am familiar with the program and I have seen the success of it, so I understand that program. I have participated in some of the community meetings that you have hosted in rural Manitoba.

I have a great interest in several aspects of this portfolio. Based on the minimal amount of time that we have for Estimates here today, I would just like to thank the minister for the information and we will follow up on the areas outside of Estimates.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the critic for the Official Opposition for those remarks. Does the committee wish to proceed through these Estimates in a chronological manner or have a global discussion?

Mrs. Rowat: Mr. Chair, I would like to pass the Estimates for Healthy Child.

Mr. Chairperson: We are prepared to pass the Estimates. The staff may come forward at this time and be introduced if they so wish.

Mr. Sale: I do want to introduce the deputy, whom you have met before, Tannis Mindell, who is in my view the most wonderful deputy. Tannis and I became colleagues through my years in Family Services and Housing and I deeply respect her work.

Jan Sanderson is the director of the staff of Healthy Child Manitoba, essentially support staff to the seven departments' programs as well as overseeing the normal administrative processes of a \$22-million budget, which is actually bigger than some departments.

Sitting in the back is Peter Dubiensi, Assistant Deputy Minister for the area of Child and Family Services within the department. He rides herd on Healthy Child in a facilitative manner.

* (15:40)

Mr. Chairperson: We will continue with the passing of the resolutions.

Resolution 34: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$21,920,800 for Healthy Child Manitoba, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

The resolution number was 34.1 that we just passed.

Resolution 34.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$16,800 for Healthy Child Manitoba, Amortization and Other Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

This completes the Estimates for Healthy Child Manitoba.

The next set of Estimates to be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply is for the Enabling Appropriations.

Is it the will of the committee to have a short recess? Is it the will of the committee to have a short recess until the ministers appear? *[Agreed]* We will have a short recess.

The committee recessed at 3:40 p.m.

The committee resumed at 3:47 p.m.

ENABLING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. Chairperson (Harry Schellenberg): Would the Committee of Supply please come to order. We will now do Enabling Appropriations.

Does the honourable minister have an opening statement?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): No, I do not.

Mr. Chairperson: Does the Official Opposition critic have an opening comment?

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): No, other than I was not sure whether the minister was going to table a statement or if he just has no statement.

Mr. Chairperson: Does the committee wish to have a chronological or a global discussion or just pass the resolutions?

An Honourable Member: I want to have a global discussion.

Mr. Chairperson: I hear they would like to have a global discussion. Is that the will of the committee? *[Agreed]* We will have a global discussion.

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

Order, please. A recorded vote has been requested in another section of the Committee of Supply. I am therefore recessing this section of the Committee of Supply in order for members to proceed to the Chamber for a formal vote.

The committee recessed at 3:48 p.m.

The committee resumed at 4:13 p.m.

Mr. Chairperson: Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. At this time we invite the minister's staff to join us at the table. Would the minister like to introduce his staff?

Mr. Selinger: Yes, I have Bruce Gray with me from Treasury Board.

Mr. Chairperson: The floor is now open for questions.

An Honourable Member: We are prepared to pass them.

Mr. Chairperson: I understand we are prepared to pass the resolutions. I will read.

Resolution 26.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$55,615,200 for Enabling Appropriations, Canada-Manitoba Enabling Vote, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 26.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,400,000 for Enabling Appropriations, Sustainable Development Innovations Fund, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 26.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,250,000 for Enabling Appropriations, Justice Initiatives, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 26.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$500,000 for Enabling Appropriations, Security Initiatives, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 26.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$35,000,000 for Enabling Appropriations, Internal Reform, Workforce Adjustment and General Salary Increases, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

This completes the Estimates for Enabling Appropriations.

The next set of Estimates to be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply is for Capital Investment.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

Mr. Chairperson (Harry Schellenberg): Does the honourable Finance Minister have an opening statement?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): No.

Mr. Chairperson: I thank you. Does the Official Opposition critic have any opening comments?

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): No.

Mr. Chairperson: I thank you. Does the committee wish to have a chronological or a global discussion or just do the resolutions?

Mr. Loewen: We will just do the resolutions.

Mr. Chairperson: It is understood, we will just do the resolutions. Does the minister have any new staff to bring to the table?

Mr. Selinger: No.

Mr. Chairperson: I thank you. We will continue with the resolutions.

Resolution B.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$85,000 for Capital Investment, Legislative Assembly, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution B.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$150,000 for Capital Investment, Agriculture and Food, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution B.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$700,000 for Capital Investment, Conservation, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution B.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$300,000 for Capital Investment, Energy, Science and Technology, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution B.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,220,000 for Capital Investment, Family Services and Housing, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution B.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$480,000 for Capital Investment, Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution B.7: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$6,775,000 for Capital Investment, Health, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution B.8: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,060,000 for Capital Investment, Justice, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution B.9: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$27,440,000 for Capital Investment, Transportation and Government Services, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution B.10: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$18,790,000 for Capital Investment, Internal Reform, Workforce Adjustment and General Salary Increases (An Enabling Appropriation), for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

This completes the Estimates for Capital Investment.

The next set of Estimates to be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply is for Employee Pensions and Other Costs.

EMPLOYEE PENSIONS AND OTHER COSTS

Mr. Chairperson (Harry Schellenberg): Does the honourable Finance Minister have an opening statement?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): No.

Mr. Chairperson: I thank you. Does the Official Opposition critic have any opening comments?

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): No.

Mr. Chairperson: I thank you. Does the committee wish to have a chronological or a global discussion or just pass the resolution?

An Honourable Member: Just pass them.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay, we will pass the resolution. Does the minister have any new staff to come forward?

Mr. Selinger: No.

Mr. Chairperson: All right, we will go ahead and pass the resolution.

Resolution 6.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$65,412,500 for Employee Pensions and Other Costs, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

This completes the Estimates of Employee Pensions and Other Costs.

The next set of Estimates to be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply is for Supplementary Appropriations.

SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. Chairperson (Harry Schellenberg): Does the honourable minister have an opening statement?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): No.

Mr. Chairperson: Does the Official Opposition critic have any opening comments?

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): No.

Mr. Chairperson: Does the committee wish to have a chronological or a global discussion or just pass the resolution?

Some Honourable Members: Just pass it.

Mr. Chairperson: We will pass the resolution.

Resolution 27.1.(a): RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a further sum not exceeding \$68,000,000 for Other Appropriations, Emergency Expenditures, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

This completes the Estimates for Supplementary Appropriations.

The next set of Estimates to be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply is for Other Appropriations.

OTHER APPROPRIATIONS

* (16:20)

Mr. Chairperson (Harry Schellenberg): Does the honourable Finance Minister have an opening statement?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): No, I do not.

Mr. Chairperson: Does the Official Opposition critic have any opening comments?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Chairperson: Does the committee wish to have a chronological or global discussion or just pass the resolutions?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

Mr. Chairperson: All right. I understand we will pass the resolutions.

Resolution 27.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$25,000,000 for Other Appropriations,

Emergency Expenditures, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 27.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$790,000 for Other Appropriations, Allowance for Losses and Expenditures incurred by Crown Corporations and Other Provincial Entities, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

This completes the Estimates for Other Appropriations.

The next set of Estimates to be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply is for Civil Service Commission.

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

Mr. Chairperson (Harry Schellenberg): Does the honourable Finance Minister have an opening statement?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission): No, he does not.

Mr. Chairperson: Does the official critic have any opening comments?

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): As we seem to be a little short on time, I will not be making a statement. Clearly, we have a lot of questions that we would like to ask in this area, but perhaps we will do that in concurrence.

Mr. Chairperson: I thank the member for that.

Does the committee wish to have a chronological or global discussion or pass the resolutions?

Mr. Schuler: Pass the resolutions.

Mr. Chairperson: Pass the resolutions. I thank you.

Does the minister have any new staff to bring forward to the table?

Mr. Selinger: No.

Mr. Chairperson: I thank you. We will pass the resolutions.

Resolution 17.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$4,201,500 for Civil Service Commission, Civil Service Commission, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 17.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$72,500 for Civil Service Commission, Amortization and Other Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

This completes the Estimates of the Civil Service Commission.

The next set of Estimates to be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply is for the Legislative Assembly.

Does the committee wish to have a short recess? Is there leave to have a recess? *[Agreed]*

The committee recessed at 4:24 p.m.

The committee resumed at 4:26 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Chairperson (Harry Schellenberg): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

Does the honourable Speaker have an opening statement?

Hon. George Hickes (Speaker of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly): Not at this time.

Mr. Chairperson: I thank you. Does the Official Opposition critic have any opening comments?

An Honourable Member: Not at this time.

Mr. Chairperson: I thank you. Does the committee wish to have a chronological or global discussion or maybe just pass the resolutions?

An Honourable Member: Maybe we will just pass the resolutions.

Mr. Chairperson: I understand we will pass the resolutions.

At this time, does the Speaker have any staff here that he would like to bring forward and introduce?

Mr. Hickes: Not at this time, I do not.

Mr. Chairperson: I thank you. We will then pass the resolutions.

Resolution 1.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$5,154,300 for Legislative Assembly, Other Assembly Expenditures, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 1.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$4,231,500 for Legislative Assembly, Office of the Auditor General, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 1.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,296,100 for Legislative Assembly, Office of the Ombudsman, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 1.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,015,500 for Legislative Assembly, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 1.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$636,400 for Legislative Assembly, Office of the Children's Advocate, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 1.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$143,900 for Legislative Assembly, Amortization and Other Costs Related to Capital

Assets, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

This completes the Estimates for the Legislative Assembly.

The next set of Estimates is for Revised Capital.

REVISED CAPITAL

* (16:30)

Mr. Chairperson (Harry Schellenberg): Does the honourable Finance Minister have an opening statement?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): No, he does not.

Mr. Chairperson: Does the Official Opposition critic have an opening statement? Thank you.

Do we wish to have a chronological or global discussion or pass the resolution? We will pass the resolution.

RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,117,675,000 for the Capital Supply, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

Mr. Chairperson: I will repeat the number again, \$1,117,675,000.

This concludes our consideration of the Estimates in this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 254.

I would like to thank the ministers, the critics and all honourable members for their dedication during this process.

Committee rise.

LABOUR AND IMMIGRATION

* (15:20)

Madam Chairperson (Bonnie Korzeniowski): Good afternoon. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This afternoon this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in Room 255 will be continuing with consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Labour and Immigration.

When the committee last met, it had been considering items contained in Resolution 11.1. Shall the Resolution pass?

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): Very briefly, could the minister tell this committee when he appointed the mediator in the Sunrise School Division dispute?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Labour and Immigration): To save time, we will get the exact information, if the member wants to ask further questions.

Mr. Schuler: Could the minister just tell us who requested the mediation?

Mr. Ashton: I should correct for the record, obviously, about some of the questions about the Minister of Labour at the time, but April 10 was the date. It was requested by both parties, I believe. Actually, the mediation was private mediation.

Mr. Schuler: Who was the mediator?

Mr. Ashton: Michael Werier.

Mr. Schuler: Can the minister tell us: Was the Department of Labour involved with inquiring or advising Mr. Lloyd Schreyer to get involved in the mediation?

Mr. Ashton: No, our involvement is performance, basically. When requests are made we do have our services, whether it be conciliation, mediation and in some cases arbitration. In that sense, that is the role we have, requests are made and we provide that service where the request comes from the parties.

Mr. Schuler: So the Department of Labour had nothing to do with Mr. Schreyer getting involved in the labour dispute in Sunrise School Division?

Mr. Ashton: No. Outside of the actual mediation itself, that would be the extent of the Department of Labour's involvement.

Mr. Schuler: Mr. Lloyd Schreyer used to work for the Department of Labour. Correct? In what position?

Mr. Ashton: Not that I am aware of. My understanding is his background was with the

University of Manitoba. I know him from that context, a number of years ago. He had quite a lengthy career, I believe, with the University of Manitoba as a labour relations specialist, but he does not work for the Department of Labour.

Mr. Schuler: When he was first seconded, I believe, he was seconded to the Department of Labour. I could stand to be corrected on that one.

Does Mr. Lloyd Schreyer have any overlapping duties with the Department of Labour as a labour consultant?

Mr. Ashton: No. I just confirmed, again, that Mr. Schreyer has not worked for the Department of Labour.

Mr. Schuler: I have one last question, and that has to do with job growth in Manitoba. There have been some statistics coming out showing that there is a fairly anemic job growth. Some in the business community, in academia have been asking the Government to perhaps look at some kind of an investigation or looking into why it is that we have such an anemic growth. Is the minister looking at any kind of investigation or looking into that?

Mr. Ashton: I think the general situation economically is anything but anemic. If you were to look at our low rate of unemployment, we have had the lowest, or one of the lowest rates of unemployment, consistently, the last number of years. There are some very encouraging signs there.

I think you will also see evidence of some of the very encouraging statistics in terms of net outmigration, the fact that Manitobans are moving to the province. I actually talked to someone recently who was talking about people moving from Alberta to rural Manitoba. I thought, yes, people are getting the message.

In fact, there is even a report today, which I am sure the member has read, pointing to the fact that one of Canada's leading business publications ranks Winnipeg ahead of all other major cities in terms of being a great city for doing business. If you look at any statistical measures you will see a fair degree of that being reflected. There was even a report out by the

Fraser Institute, and I never quote them, because I find their methodology rather flawed, but even there it showed the relative competitive advantage Manitoba has.

What I can indicate as well, one of the key areas we are addressing to deal with our overall economic circumstance, and indeed the labour force growth, and workforce growth is targeting immigration. I cannot stress how important that is. If we achieve our target of 10 000 people, which is up from the 4500, 4600, 4700 level we have been at, and if we can particularly build on the success of the Provincial Nominee Program, which has seen a 40% increase in the last two years alone, between 2000 and 2002, I do not think it really has to be explained that if we have an additional 5300, 5400 immigrants in Manitoba that will generate new jobs, new investment, new opportunities. I have stated on the record that I believe that is the case.

I can indicate quite clearly that I think the business dynamics in Manitoba is generally very positive, but we need to do more work. One of the areas we will be focussing on in my area in terms of Labour and Immigration is on the Immigration side.

I thank the member for raising the question, but I suspect there is a slightly different lens that is being used here. Notwithstanding, the colour of the skies tonight, or is it this afternoon, I do not see the dark clouds sometimes that members opposite see over Manitoba. I see a lot of potential ahead. I see a lot of people who are saying the same thing. Manitoba is, really, kind of the hidden secret of Canada. We have all these competitive advantages here and all this great unlimited potential.

I can tell you our Government is absolutely committed. I note that my legislative assistant is here, the Member for The Maples (Mr. Aglugub). We work co-operatively on this. We think we can make a difference. I will tell you this department is prioritizing immigration, and then some. We are going to reach the 10 000 target. I can tell you that we are absolutely committed, and that will drive the kind of economic dynamics. We have the foundation, but we need to add the kind of level of immigration we need.

*(15:30)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Chairperson, it is encouraging to hear the minister's comments to that on that particular point. In fact, just prior to the Estimates here, I spent my time on my grievance and emphasized the importance of the Provincial Nominee Program.

Believing that we have limited time, I wanted to at least get on the record in terms of what mine and the Liberal Party's thoughts are in regard to this particular program. We invite the minister, if he gets a chance, to maybe have someone review and pick up on some of the points.

It is wonderful to hear 10 000, but we have got to make sure that it is adequately resourced. Right?

Mr. Ashton: I was listening.

Mr. Lamoureux: The minister was listening, so he does not have to read that.

Mr. Ashton: I was there in spirit.

Mr. Lamoureux: But I am glad to hear that he has firmed up with the 10 000. Having said that, I do have some very pointed, short questions that I would like to ask the minister. First of all, the semi-skilled, can the minister indicate to what degree the difference—and I should not say the difference. If you are a skilled worker, my understanding is you are able to apply for the Provincial Nominee Program without having any work experience here in Canada. Would that be correct?

Mr. Ashton: Yes, that is correct. The work experience would still be assessed in terms of the country of origin.

Mr. Lamoureux: Now, just for clarification, and for the semi-skilled, are they required to have any work experience here in Canada?

Mr. Ashton: Well, in fact, one of the areas that we will be moving on in the next period of time is actually dealing with semi-skilled applicants under the program, because this is one of the

areas that we believe that we can improve the program. I want to stress, by the way, that 70 percent of the Provincial Nominee applicants across Canada are to Manitoba's Provincial Nominee Program. So we start from a very good base. We have had that 40% increase. But we will be making announcements within the next week or two that will, specifically, move the Provincial Nominee Program to look more at skilled and semi-skilled applicants, more at skilled applicants in terms of waiting, but also look at semi-skilled applicants.

I realize we are short of time here, but to give the member an example of the kind of things we are dealing with, I met with the head of the Trucking Association. The Trucking Association needs truck drivers. There is a shortage, but it is not necessarily classified at the national level as an area that has a labour shortage. Maybe there are lots of additional truck drivers in other parts of the country, but here there is a shortage. What we are trying to do with our program, our own Provincial Nominee Program, is recognize that, work with the industry. I just gave one example, but I can probably provide other examples of either skilled or semi-skilled applicants where jobs are clearly available in Manitoba that we want to actually move the Provincial Nominee Program to recognize.

So that is where we are moving. You know, when I mentioned greater recognition of skilled, semi-skilled applicants, more recognition under the program of the existing skilled stream but also expanding our consideration to semi-skilled, it could be truck drivers, it could be the garment industry. There are various skills there, for example, that are in demand, but we see some real potential to match job needs for Manitoba and people that want to come to Manitoba.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Minister, I recognize that we are going to make some of the changes. I think that is a positive change, if we can recognize more of the skills, semi-skills that individuals have to offer, and not necessarily have to obligate them to have had work experience in the province or in Canada. I think that can be a very strong positive. But my question today is: In order to come to the province as a semi-skilled worker, to get the

certificate, are you required to have work experience in Canada?

Mr. Ashton: Well, essentially, at this point, the only semi-skilled applicants that we have, have been recruited by specific companies, Maple Leaf, et cetera. Part of what we want to see happen with the program is to provide an opportunity that moves beyond semi-skilled applicants coming to Canada under work permits. That is an opportunity that, perhaps, may suit some people. But, and this is a personal statement here, this is not necessarily formal department policy, I have always felt that one of the key elements with Canadian immigration, again, is not relying on a system that essentially has people come when it is convenient to work, but not providing the opportunity for landed immigrant status and citizenship afterwards.

What we are trying to do now is to increase, to look at semi-skilled applicants as part of the Provincial Nominee Program. That will move far beyond the limited bringing of people right now and, I hope, provide an opportunity for some people who currently would end up under the work-permit system to, under the Provincial Nominee Program, be accepted. You have to remember, under the Provincial Nominee Program, of course, this is immigration. We are not talking about strictly a simple work situation. I could get into more details, but I realize we are short of time. That is our intent, to broaden the program now beyond professional and skilled to include semi-skilled as mainstream applicants. There still will be a point process.

There will be other changes that we are bringing in that will, I think, give further opportunities for people with community sponsorships, whether it be ethnocultural community sponsorship, sponsorship by geographic communities. There currently is a weighting that is given to communities outside of Winnipeg to reflect the fact that just as in Manitoba relative to other parts of Canada there is a disparity in the distribution of immigrants, there is also a disparity within Manitoba. A good example where we have had real success is the communities, particularly, of Morden and Winkler. There has been some very successful work done by geographic communities, particularly many immigrants coming from

Germany and actually being able to access jobs on an immediate basis.

So we are taking some of the almost pilot project things that we have developed and we are extending them. But the key message here is that we are going to make semi-skilled applicants an increasing part of the Provincial Nominee Program. That, by the way, fits in with every prediction that is out there in terms of labour market trends over the next number of years. There is going to be a shortage of pretty well everything in the next three, four years. I think, as a country and as a province, we have to wake up to the fact that, if we are not gearing up our education and training programs and our immigration programs, we are going to wake up in about two or three years and we are going to ask the question: What happened? We will have a mad scramble to attract immigrants. We think Manitoba can be out ahead of the curve, and one of the areas we are targeting—I have stated this on the record that we will announce the details in the next week or so—is semi-skilled applicants.

I remind the member, and I know he knows this. This is another thing that I find very frustrating about immigration policy, generally, it is that most people or immigrants today, including myself, would not have been admitted to Canada with a lot of the point systems that have been developed the last couple of years, in particular at the federal level, with some of the increased requirement on official languages, on education, et cetera. You have to have some scales that look at that. But the reality is, most Canadians who are immigrants would not have been admitted under the current criteria. Yet I can point to hundreds of people I know personally, many who came without knowing English or French, many who came with no skills, came with no money, and what have they contributed to Canada—the dream of building a better life. I can show you the second and third generation now. You will see people who came with absolutely nothing and worked their way to a point where now their kids are being educated. You see doctors; you see lawyers; and you see politicians, too. I think we are almost forgetting the immigrants' success story, quite frankly, that Canada is.

We have to remind ourselves that before we hit this labour shortage in this country, we have

a great opportunity here, I think, to my mind, to renew our vision of immigration. Take, for example, Manitoba, our target of 10 000, and we are around 4600 or 4700. I think, over the next couple of years, we can achieve the 10 000 by having in mind that we have to stop just looking only at professionals and only at certain job categories. We have to look at any and all situations where people can come and contribute to Canadian society.

Here is the dilemma. We have a target of 10 000 people, and there are probably tens of thousands of people, hundreds of thousands of people who would love to come to Manitoba. We are trying to bridge the gap in a way that is fair to everyone.

* (15:40)

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chairperson, I am just going to give two very specific examples, and then ask for as short and concise answers as I can get from the minister.

There is a wonderful East Indian restaurant on Mandalay. I met with the owner, and I highly recommend it. I have had many lunches there. I know the minister himself likes East Indian food, also.

Having said that, there is a need for cooks. Right now, today, he will apply for a working visa and then, in a period of time, once they are approved, once they are here then they can apply for a provincial certificate. At least that is my understanding of the program.

The question there is that, in the future, changes the minister is talking about that might then allow for this individual to apply for the Provincial Nominee certificate, if that person has been working in that area for numerous years back home, and so forth, and has a track record—as of right now, my understanding is that they have to get a working visa.

What I am going to be telling this particular constituent is that he has to get the working visa. If I am wrong and he can apply for the Provincial Nominee Program today, I would appreciate knowing that.

The second question I would ask is: If someone has a working visa today, are they eligible or what would make them eligible in order to apply for a Provincial Nominee certificate? And we will use the same industry.

Mr. Ashton: On the first question, the same applies. I have talked to other restaurant owners, the owner of a Filipino restaurant, for example. You have a very specific skill set that is required, whether it be for Indian food or for any food that is often only available in the country of origin in that sense.

This is one of the areas that we are looking at. Currently, by the way you can apply, if you are working on a work permit and can go through the normal process, so that opportunity is available, but what we are going to be doing—

An Honourable Member: So a work permit, not a nominee certificate.

Mr. Ashton: No, you can apply for the Provincial Nominee Program. If you are on a work permit or not on a work permit, you are not prohibited from applying to the Provincial Nominee Program. Whether you are accepted or not is dependent on the various factors that go in the Provincial Nominee Program.

What the review will encompass, by the way, in terms of semi-skilled applications though is, both in the immediate sense, but also, we are going to conduct an overall review of the program, an internal review. It is aimed at one very specific thing, again, which is to make sure it is far more reflective of that end of the labour force that is out there, that there are all sorts of job opportunities.

In fact, you have this paradox. I have probably talked to some of the same people the member has, restaurant owners saying that I cannot get cooks that have that skill, and people saying they want to come to Canada with that skill. We want to increasingly build on that.

As I said, you can apply to the Provincial Nominee Program, currently. There are various factors. Part of what we are aiming at, just to sort of finish the answer, is to make sure we can bridge that gap, far more than is being done,

currently. I can assure the member, for skilled and semi-skilled applicants we are going to look at some short-term changes, some immediate changes. This will impact on the 2003 applicants. But we are also going to be reviewing on a long-term basis how we can build far greater weight and far greater focus than we have on the semi-skilled side and, to some extent, the skilled side as well. In the immediate sense you will see some real differences. In the longer term you are going to see some even more significant differences. We are going to take a good program and we are going to make it better.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Chair, I had indicated I would attempt to have everything passed up to the ministerial salary by 10-to. I think we only have a couple more minutes so we will have to continue the dialogue. Hopefully, in concurrence we will get the chance, because I am a little bit unclear. Anyone can make application for the program, but actually getting accepted is another thing.

My understanding is that if you are in, we will use the restaurant on Mandalay as the example, you can apply, but you are not going to get accepted unless you have had work experience here in Manitoba. I noticed the minister has staff people that are here. Maybe, after we break, that can be further explained, if the minister is comfortable with having a staffperson talk to me, so I am clear in giving my advice. I would really appreciate that.

The minister knows full well, as I do, that there are many, many different types of immigration cases every year. I suspect I probably do more immigration than a number of MPs in our province. I enjoy doing it. It is good. It is challenging, and I look forward to it.

There are two cases, one of them I started dealing with back in the late nineties. It is an individual that, and I will say this quite candidly, it would be a mistake to see this person leave the province. I have had the Department of Health, in the past, involved. She was a live-in caregiver. There was a health complication. For the record, I will just say her last name is Aurora [phonetic]. I will provide the minister the letter that I am going to be sending to the embassy.

The reason why I raise that is this is an individual that I truly believe we need to act on. The second—

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. We have to recess for a recorded vote in the Chamber.

The committee recessed at 3:49 p.m.

The committee resumed at 4:11 p.m.

Madam Chairperson: The Committee of Supply will please come to order.

Mr. Schuler: My question to the minister is there are quite a few people who have locked in retirement funds in the province, and what they are doing is they are calling for the Saskatchewan model where they can access those pension funds.

Where is the Government currently on this issue?

Mr. Ashton: The Pension Commission was directed to do a public review of our pension legislation, the first one in about 20 years. That review was conducted. A report was given to the Minister of Labour. What we have announced is that report will be released. We are actually going to put it out on the Internet, in particular. That will be done. We just have to get it translated and up on the Net.

At that time there will be a consultation period. This, I am sure, will be one of the issues that will be raised, but we are not prejudging the pension committee's report. We will look at legislation in 2004 based on the Pension Commission's report, the public feedback and, obviously, any decisions. I am sure this will be one of the issues. I know there have been various letters to MLAs on this, but we are not prejudging the consultation process. We want to hear from Manitobans.

Mr. Schuler: When does the minister see the site being up and running?

Mr. Ashton: We are translating it. Then what we are going to do is, once it is actually up on

the Net, we are going to put out a press release. We will inform people at that time. This is similar to the process we used for the Workplace Safety and Health review.

Mr. Schuler: Does the minister see legislation coming forward in the November-December sitting, or is the minister looking at the session in March-April?

Mr. Ashton: We are certainly not looking at this year, because the consultation period we are envisioning will go into next year. We want to make sure there is full opportunity for people to participate. I mean, there are a lot of Manitobans with pension plans. We have one of the highest numbers in the country. So we are going to have an adequate consultation process.

At that point in time, obviously, we will be looking at a decision from government on the specifics. When I say we will be looking at 2004, it will not be until 2004, after the consultation is done, that we will make the decision on the specific timing. So there will not be new legislation this year.

Mr. Schuler: We would now be prepared to finish passing the rest of the Estimates.

* (16:20)

Madam Chairperson: Resolution 11.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$15,008,100 for Labour and Immigration, Labour Programs, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 11.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$10,398,000 for Labour and Immigration, Immigration and Multiculturalism, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 11.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$897,200 for Labour and Immigration, Amortization and Other Costs Related to Capital

Assets, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

The last item to be considered for the Estimates of the Department of Labour and Immigration is item 11.1.(a) Minister's Salary \$29,000, contained in Resolution 11.1. At this point, we request that the minister's staff leave the table for the consideration of this item.

Resolution 11.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$650,800 for Labour and Immigration, Executive, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

This completes the Estimates of the Department of Labour and Immigration.

This concludes our consideration of the Estimates in this section of the Committee of Supply. I would like to thank the ministers and the critics for their co-operation.

Committee rise.

EDUCATION AND YOUTH

*(15:20)

Mr. Chairperson (Conrad Santos): Would the Committee of Supply come to order, please. This section of Committee of Supply has been dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Education and Youth.

Would the minister's staff please enter the Chamber. We are on page 59 of the Estimates book. The committee is having a global discussion.

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Chairperson, I just wanted to say that today in Question Period I think we saw an interesting display of what happens, you know, when ministers do not have their stories straight on certain issues. Certainly, we have seen that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) sees it as appropriate to intervene in collective bargaining

disputes, particularly this one, concerning the Sunrise School Division. As the Minister of Education (Mr. Lemieux) has stated in the past, he was opposed to that. He said time and time again that it was the school division that came forward and requested funding from the Government.

We know from his Minister of Finance that that was not the case. It was in fact an employee of the Minister of Finance who contacted MAST and offered money to help end the dispute just prior to an election in a targeted NDP riding, something that we feel, Mr. Chairperson, is completely inappropriate.

I think, you know, judging from what the Minister of Education has said in Estimates before, I believe he believes that that is inappropriate as well. He has certainly stated as such. I think certainly the Premier was not able to sort of answer a question as to whether or not he is on the side of his Minister of Finance or his Minister of Education. I think it is rather alarming that the Premier does not even know what the policy is when it concerns and affects the taxpayers of Manitoba and does not know what the policy is when it comes to intervening in collective bargaining disputes for this Government.

I think this Government has shown a very poor display of planning, a lack of planning when it came to the harmonization of contracts. It is almost like they did not anticipate the challenges that lay ahead. To not anticipate those challenges, when we had laid it out time and time again, the significance of the cost that would result from harmonization of contracts and so on, I just find it very difficult to believe that this Government did not have a plan in place to deal with this.

The Premier, the other day in a scrum, told reporters that this Government, and I quote, knew generally that there were wage gaps.

So they knew about it, yet they did not plan for it. If the Government knew that there were wage gaps, I guess I would ask the Minister of Education if he and his department did any analysis to determine how much additional assistance would be needed in the area for

funding for the school divisions in the area of this harmonization of contracts.

* (15:30)

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Education and Youth): I thank the member for the question. First, I want to make sure that the record is absolutely clear, that when we are talking about a representative of the Province of Manitoba representing the Government to the school board, or to MAST, MAST official, and this is how the question was put: Who told the government representative how much the money was?

Well, it was the representative from MAST that told the government representative what the gap was and what they found, that they could financially be able to deal with two thirds of the gap with regard to harmonization, and they would need government assistance on the other one third. It was the school board superintendent, my understanding is, as well as the high-level person at MAST that informed the government representative of exactly what the gap was.

Just prior to my further answers and comments, I just want to again mention that, as of yesterday, we knew that the impact on children in Prairie Rose appeared not to be overwhelming in the sense of a lot of children missing school. Today, I have received another note from staff that attendance patterns are reported as normal for this time of the year and that there are six schools affected overall by the busing strike. There are about roughly 800 students or thereabouts that are transported out of the 1200 total students.

So, once again I want to reiterate that, with regard to Prairie Rose, which is going through a strike, currently, that I would recommend voluntary mediation that took place in Sunrise School Division where, if the parties have a dispute, they cannot solve their differences, that they look at a voluntary process, a voluntary mediator to sit down with them. By voluntary, I mean it is not someone that is imposed by government or imposed by one party or the other because I guess what you can do is have voluntary mediation. I do not pretend to know all

the ins and outs of collective bargaining, but I know that there is voluntary, there is conciliation, which broke down in Sunrise and it also broke down, the process, and then went to strike and then to voluntary mediation, that the two parties selected a mediator they thought that was acceptable to both parties.

In Prairie Rose, you have a situation where you have conciliation that broke down. Where conciliation has broken down, the two parties now are just apart and they are not talking or maybe talking to the conciliation person, I do not know. I hope they are. But there is also a process available to them. They can choose voluntarily a mediator. They can select or we can even recommend someone if they wish, someone that would assist them to break down the barriers that they have with regard to the collective agreement.

Also, they can, one or other of the parties, I understand, can also write a letter to the Minister of Labour (Mr. Ashton) requesting a mediator or the Minister of Labour, I guess, can impose a mediator. So there are a lot of options open to the Prairie Rose people, as was open to the Sunrise people and so the collective bargaining process took place as it should.

Where government was involved was when the MAST representative spoke to the government representative about the gap that they faced, this huge gap of 15 percent to 60 percent, and they wanted and they needed some assistance in order to help them to get through this obstacle dealing with harmonizing of salaries.

Now, with regard to the school divisions, the other amalgamated divisions, I guess there are another 12, that they vary with regard to the different unions that are involved in the different school divisions, as well as some have numerous unions that represent the workers and some have associations.

There are also a number of different school divisions, their collective agreements are going to be expiring and some have already. We know that through the discussions with MAST, which I am not privileged to comment on, they are private meetings that we have had. Certainly, in

April there must have been one or two. These discussions took place with regard to, not only pension, but with regard to harmonizing salaries and many other issues that school divisions normally deal with, not just harmonized school divisions, or not just amalgamated divisions dealing with harmonization.

We know as a department there are a number of challenges on the horizon and we are certainly prepared to take a look at what kind of challenges these divisions have. We know that there is declining enrolment, depopulation in some places. Other places have increased enrolment. So the amount of \$50 per student that we are giving now will affect their financial situation.

We are looking at all of these different areas and have been, and so I can tell the member from Tuxedo, my critic, that we are looking at all the divisions and taking a close look at their financial situation and what we provide them, what we have provided them not only just for education but also taking a look at any inequities they may have because of a declining enrolment and so on.

I just want to mention to the member from Tuxedo that there really is no difference in opinion from the Minister of Finance and myself, other than to state that he mentioned, and has mentioned repeatedly, about how it was important that something had to be done and that the strike would have been prolonged and the children would have continued to miss opportunities to go to school and to let us not forget over 2000 of those 2700 children require busing.

If that dispute had dragged on, members would have accused us of being irresponsible, irresponsible for not doing something and not caring about the children. I can hear it now, had that strike been prolonged and had continued, the members opposite would have screamed blue murder. They would have climbed to the top of the Legislature, on the top of the Golden Boy, yelling out across Manitoba how the Minister of Education should be doing something for the poor children that are not being bused to school and so on. I think it was a very responsible approach that we took. Thank goodness they

went to voluntary mediation and then the strike was settled and the children were able to get back to school. Thank you.

Mrs. Stefanson: We have asked a number of questions surrounding the Sunrise School Division and time and time again the minister has sort of refused or sort of talked around the real issues at hand. I think at this point we have asked, again, a number of questions on this but no answers. I am not sure the minister is going to change his strategy when it comes to this, and so certainly at this point, Mr. Chairperson, we would be prepared to start passing some of the lines, or we would be prepared to go line by line.

Mr. Lemieux: I believe that over the past week we have discussed many different issues around Sunrise and the different, Louis Riel and Pembina Trails and Prairie Rose, now that is on strike. I understand the position of members opposite. Again, I just want to reiterate, they certainly are entitled to ask any question they wish. That is their prerogative and we have provided all the answers.

Now, if they do not get the answers they want, I mean, that may be leading to their frustration level, but we have provided all the answers. Again, they can ask any question they like, but the answers they are getting may not be the answers they want. That is regrettable because we have laid out exactly what has happened. I am certainly prepared to go through the current Estimates and I think Manitoba taxpayers would want that, to go through the programs and go through what Education is doing and the Department of Education. We are certainly prepared to do that.

* (15:40)

Mr. Chairperson: The last item to be considered for the Estimates for the Department of Education and Youth is item 1.(a) Minister's Salary contained in the resolution.

At this point, we respectfully request that the staff of the minister leave the table for the consideration of this item.

Point of Order

Mr. Chairperson: Point of order.

Mrs. Stefanson: Just on a point of order, Mr. Chair. Is it not normal procedure to go through the Estimates, the other lines line-by-line, and then the Minister's Salary is done at the end?

Mr. Chairperson: At the initial proceedings, there has to be an agreement. Once you have chosen one route, you stay on that route. You said global. It will be global. Then we just read the resolution and the item-by-item matter will not be taken up because that is the new procedure.

An Honourable Member: Is it not normal practice to—

Mr. Chairperson: In the past.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: Resolution 16.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$25,710,200 for Education and Youth, School Programs, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 16.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$8,562,500 for Education and Youth, Bureau de l'éducation français, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 16.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$179,550,200 for Education and Youth, Education and School Tax Credits, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 16.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$813,403,700 for Education and Youth, Support to Schools, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 16.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$6,079,600 for Education and Youth, MB4Youth, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 16.7: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$27,950,100 for Education and Youth, Capital Grants for School Divisions, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 16.8: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$602,100 for Education and Youth, Amortization and Other Costs Related to Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

The last item to be considered, as we have indicated, is item number 16.1.(a) Minister's Salary. At this point, we cannot move until the member's staff leave the table for the consideration of this last item.

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Chairperson, I just wanted to say a couple of things with respect to this area. First of all, the Minister of Education and Youth, we believe, has shown enough reasons on record that he is not fit to run his government department.

First off, he has refused time and time again, we believe, to answer direct questions asked by members of the Opposition with respect to the Sunrise School Division strike dispute.

Secondly, it has become clear that this minister was privy to information that proved he was aware of the fact that a political appointee of the Treasury Board, Mr. Lloyd Schreyer, interfered in a collective bargaining process, something that the minister is on record as saying is not an appropriate role for the department.

Furthermore, it is obvious that Mr. Schreyer was acting on behalf of the Government in an embarrassing strike dispute in a targeted NDP riding before the Premier was going to call an election.

Fourthly, the minister must take responsibility, Mr. Chairperson, for circumventing his own department to make a political decision to direct funds to end this dispute.

Number 5, the information he has given both in Estimates and in Question Period has often been conflicting with information given by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) in Question Period, leading one to question the Minister of Education's leadership ability of his own department.

Mr. Chairperson, overall it is very clear that no plan was ever put in place by this Government to deal with ongoing costs associated with harmonization of employee contracts; direct costs, I might add, of the Government's forced amalgamation of school divisions.

Number 7, Mr. Chairperson, the minister is also a member of Cabinet. He must have approved the minutes of Treasury Board where it stated that \$428,000 was agreed to in June of '03 to go to the Sunrise School Division to help end a strike dispute that was settled two months earlier, before the election.

Mr. Chairperson, I therefore move, seconded by the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson),

THAT the Minister of Education and Youth's salary, Budget line 16.1. (a) be reduced to \$1.

Motion presented.

Mr. Chairperson: The resolution seems to be in order. Is there any debate on the motion? No?

* (15:50)

Voice Vote

Mr. Chairperson: All those in favor of the motion, please signify saying yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Chairperson: All those opposed, signify saying nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Chairperson: In the opinion of the Chair, the Nays have it.

Formal Vote

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Chair, I request a recorded vote, please.

Mr. Chairperson: Is there a second member who will second it?

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Yes.

Mr. Chairperson: A recorded vote has been requested.

Report

Mr. Conrad Santos (Chairperson of the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in the Chamber): In the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in the Chamber, the Estimates of the Department of Education and Youth, a motion was moved by the honourable Member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson), seconded by the honourable Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson).

The motion reads:

THAT the Minister of Education and Youth's salary, Budget item 16.1.(a), be reduced to \$1.

The motion was defeated on a voice vote. Subsequently, two members requested that a formal vote on the matter be taken.

Formal Vote

Mr. Chairperson (Conrad Santos): Call in the members.

All sections in Chamber for formal vote

The question before the committee is the motion of the honourable Member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson).

Point of Order

Mr. Chairperson: A point of order being raised.

An Honourable Member: I hate to interrupt the proceedings, Mr. Chairperson, but I am wondering whether you might read the entire motion, because members were in committees in other rooms and therefore do not have the benefit of the rationale behind the motion. I am wondering whether the motion and its rationale can be read to the Assembly.

Mr. Chairperson: I will read the motion a second time:

THAT the Minister of Education and Youth's salary, Budget item 16.1.(a), be reduced to \$1.

The motion was defeated on a voice vote. Subsequently, two members requested that a formal vote on the matter be taken.

Why is the member standing?

The rule of the House prohibits interruption of voting proceedings. But, if there is an important thing to deal with, we have to deal with it. Does the member have any other point of order?

* (16:00)

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): I am only rising to ask for clarification on the motion. I asked, Mr. Chairperson, that for the benefit of all members in this Assembly that the motion together with the rationale that was provided for the motion be read in the House to ensure that all members understood why this motion was placed before the House. I did not get a response to that. I simply had a rereading of the motion. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: The duty of the Chair is just to read the motion as written. That has been done twice. In the motion, there was no rationale whatsoever. What will the Chair do? Add the rationale?

The honourable Member for Tuxedo, on a point of order. Please state your point of order.

Mrs. Stefanson: On a point of order, Mr. Chair, if the Chair wishes, certainly we can read the—there is a fairly long rationale that we gave earlier with respect to this motion. I would be happy to go ahead and read this.

Mr. Chairperson: That will not be appropriate. It will be modifying what has happened in the proceeding. This cannot be done.

We are in the process of voting. In the process of voting, there should be no interruption unless for good reasons.

* * *

Mr. Chairperson: The question before the committee is the motion of the honourable Member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson).

A COUNT-OUT VOTE was taken, the result being as follows: Yeas 21, Nays 29.

Mr. Chairperson: The motion is accordingly defeated.

This section of the Committee of Supply will now continue with the consideration of the departmental Estimates.

The last item to be considered in the Estimates of the Department of Education and Youth is 16.1.(a) Minister's Salary, contained in Resolution 16.1.

Resolution 16.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$4,745,200 for Education and Youth, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2004.

Resolution agreed to.

This concludes the Estimates for the Department of Education and Youth. We have no other business in this section of the Committee of Supply meeting in the Chamber.

What is the pleasure of the members for this section? Shall we recess? *[Agreed]*

The committee recessed at 4:13 p.m.

IN SESSION

—————
The committee resumed at 4:37 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it 5:30 p.m.? [*Agreed*]

Mr. Chairperson: Since there is no business for this committee meeting in the Chamber, committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

The hour being 5:30 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Thursday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

September 24, 2003

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