



Third Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**

**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report  
(Hansard)**

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Sixth Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise, Hon.	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary	Concordia	N.D.P.
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
DRIEDGER, Albert	Steinbach	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	P.C.
ERNST, Jim	Charleswood	P.C.
EVANS, Cliff	Interlake	N.D.P.
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	P.C.
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	N.D.P.
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Lib.
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	P.C.
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane	Osborne	N.D.P.
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	P.C.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn	St. James	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	P.C.
NEWMAN, David, Hon.	Riel	P.C.
PALLISTER, Brian	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PITURA, Frank, Hon.	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
RADCLIFFE, Mike, Hon.	River Heights	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack, Hon.	Niakwa	P.C.
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Gladstone	P.C.
SALE, Tim	Crescentwood	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin	N.D.P.
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	P.C.
TOEWS, Vic, Hon.	Rossmere	P.C.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	N.D.P.

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, April 24, 1997

**The House met at 1:30 p.m.**

**PRAYERS**

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PRESENTING PETITIONS**

**Mobile Screening Unit for Mammograms**

**Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin):** Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Pamela Lebel, Paula Lebel, Lizzie Racette and others, requesting that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik) to consider immediately establishing a mobile screening unit for mammograms to help women across the province detect breast cancer at the earliest possible opportunity.

**Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River):** Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Glenn Olafson, Chris Kushman, M. Sayles and others, requesting the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik) to consider immediately establishing a mobile screening unit for mammograms to help women across the province detect breast cancer at the earliest possible opportunity.

**READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS**

**Mobile Screening Unit for Mammograms**

**Madam Speaker:** I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers), and it complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? Dispense.

*WHEREAS medical authorities have stated that breast cancer in Manitoba has reached almost epidemic proportions; and*

*WHEREAS yearly mammograms are recommended for women over 50, and perhaps younger if a woman feels she is at risk; and*

*WHEREAS while improved surgical procedures and better post-operative care do improve a woman's chances if she is diagnosed, early detection plays a vital role; and*

*WHEREAS Manitoba currently has only three centres where mammograms can be performed, those being Winnipeg, Brandon and Thompson; and*

*WHEREAS a trip to and from these centres for a mammogram can cost a woman upwards of \$500 which is a prohibitive cost for some women; and*

*WHEREAS a number of other provinces have dealt with this problem by establishing mobile screening units; and*

*WHEREAS the provincial government has promised to take action on this serious issue.*

*WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLYPRAY that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik) to consider immediately establishing a mobile screening unit for mammograms to help women across the province detect breast cancer at the earliest possible opportunity.*

**Madam Speaker:** I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), and it complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Madam Speaker:** Dispense.

*WHEREAS medical authorities have stated that breast cancer in Manitoba has reached almost epidemic proportions; and*

*WHEREAS yearly mammograms are recommended for women over 50, and perhaps younger if a woman feels she is at risk; and*

*WHEREAS while improved surgical procedures and better post-operative care do improve a woman's chances if she is diagnosed, early detection plays a vital role; and*

*WHEREAS Manitoba currently has only three centres where mammograms can be performed, those being Winnipeg, Brandon and Thompson; and*

*WHEREAS a trip to and from these centres for a mammogram can cost a woman upwards of \$500 which is a prohibitive cost for some women; and*

*WHEREAS a number of other provinces have dealt with this problem by establishing mobile screening units; and*

*WHEREAS the provincial government has promised to take action on this serious issue.*

*WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Health (Mr. Praznik) to consider immediately establishing a mobile screening unit for mammograms to help women across the province detect breast cancer at the earliest possible opportunity.*

\* (1335)

## PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

### Committee of Supply

**Mr. Mervin Tweed (Acting Chairperson of the Committee of Supply):** Madam Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted certain resolutions, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck), that the report of the committee be received.

**Motion agreed to.**

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Flooding Emergency Response Plans

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Natural Resources):** Madam Speaker, I would like to give an update on flood conditions, and my colleague the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Pitura) will follow with a further update on EMO responses for information for the House.

I would like to report, first of all, that the predicted levels in the Red River Valley are following the predictions that have been put out by the Manitoba Water Resources Branch, and there are no changes in this update in that respect. The Red River levels, Madam Speaker, have risen from less than a foot at Emerson to 1.7 feet at the floodway in the last 24 hours. Levels will continue to rise gradually until the crests are reached in late April and in early May. There is no change in the predicted crest elevations or dates for the Red River from Emerson to Lockport. When this crest arises, the floodway is expected to carry 59,000 cubic feet per second which is well within its capacity, and the floodway can carry considerably more than has been discussed recently in some of the reports that have been made available.

On the Assiniboine River, levels from Baie St. Paul at Headingley have begun to fall at most points as ice has finally begun to move. There will be a danger of ice jamming in this area over the next 24 hours which could result in levels being briefly higher, and I should warn that some flooding has occurred in this area and the possibility exists.

On the Pembina River, the crest is expected at La Riviere late today or early tomorrow, the level one foot higher than the 1995 crest. There is considerable flooding in the Pembina Valley and diking continues in the La Riviere area. Flooding continues on many tributaries of the Red and other streams such as the Brokenhead, the Netley Creek and the Whitemouth River. Most of these streams are nearing their crest elevations and crests on the downstream portions of the Red River tributaries will be determined by the Red River crest elevations and dates.

Madam Speaker, Natural Resources is continuing the implementation to construct 16 miles of dike northeast of Brunkild with the assistance of the military and Highways and Transportation. The purpose of this dike is to keep the Morris River from spilling into the La Salle River. The spill into the La Salle would create flooding concerns for the city of Winnipeg. We have had 400,000 sandbags delivered to St. Adolphe last night to assist in their fighting the levels of the river. An additional 2.5 million sandbags will be available over the next two days.

Flooding has been reported in the Beausejour area and on the Whitemouth River due to ice jamming. The extent of that flooding is not yet known. Flooding is also reported along the Assiniboine River covering a stretch from Headingley to 10 miles west. The department also reports that the Seine River has peaked east of Lorette. We are informed the flood information on the Internet has now been picked up by more than 31,000 hits, and we would encourage those seeking information to use that approach.

\* (1340)

**Hon. Frank Pitura (Minister of Government Services):** Just further to the report given by my colleague the Minister of Natural Resources, I would just like to add some changes that have occurred since yesterday's report. With regard to states of emergency, there are now 12 jurisdictions that have declared emergencies. Some of the ones that are changed from yesterday is the R.M. of Ritchot is added to the list and the city of Winnipeg has been added to that list now. With regard to evacuations, I am advised by the local officials that are co-ordinating all the evacuations that everything is going very smoothly with regard to the evacuations in all the communities, and my sincere congratulations to all those people that are working with regard to the evacuation movement in these communities. Of the total communities that are evacuated, approximately 3,700 have been evacuated as of noon today. In regard to the receptions, my data is only from 8 p.m. last evening, but in the St. Vital arena, approximately 281 have registered; the Altona Civic Centre, 871; at Steinbach, 35; and at Ste. Anne, 177, and those people are from the Roseau River First Nations.

With regard to the armed forces, I am now advised that the armed forces personnel are deployed to provide assistance to local and provincial authorities in the following communities: Emerson, there are 65; Rosenort, 65; Letellier, 38; St. Jean Baptiste, 65; Morris, there are 55; and at St. Adolphe, 110. An additional 250 regulars will arrive today for deployment to the city of Winnipeg and additional armed forces personnel will arrive tomorrow by air in support of flood operations.

Madam Speaker, these are the changes that I have to report since yesterday.

**Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin):** Let me begin by commending both the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Cummings) and of Government Services (Mr. Pitura) for keeping a steady update to the House on the ever-changing conditions concerning the flood of 1997. We appreciate very much the statistical data information that has been given to those of us on this side concerning the water levels of the rivers involved in this flood.

Also, I want to pay some particular attention to some of the other rivers, other than the Red. We have heard a lot about the Red River and the flooding occurring there. I was pleased to note the minister has his eye also on the Pembina Valley where we have also heard of cases of flooding occurring and high water levels. As well, the Assiniboine River, which I think we all figured would—even though there was not as much snow in western and southwestern Manitoba this year as there was in other places we all knew the perennial problems with ice jams and the trouble that can cause when we deal with floods.

I want to pay particular commendation to the Department of Natural Resources for its work and the time that it has spent in collecting this data, from department officials who are working here in Winnipeg right through to the field offices and liaison offices that have been set up outside of the city. I think those folks need to be commended very highly as well.

I also want to pay particular attention to R.M. officials who have been keeping their local folks up to date and involved in the fight of this flood, and all the many volunteers who have been organized by local

communities to help out those people who are in need at this time.

Along those lines, the volunteers at the St. Vital centre and volunteers at Steinbach and Ste. Anne and some of the other rural communities who have been helping out in the receiving and assisting of evacuees from the Red River Valley need as well to be commended.

Again, Madam Speaker, I wish to pledge the co-operation of this side of the House in terms of helping people out in this flood and encourage the ministers to continue with their steady flow of information in the House, as they have been doing. Thank you.

\* (1345)

### TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services):** Madam Speaker, might I have leave to revert to Tabling of Reports.

**Madam Speaker:** Does the honourable minister have leave to revert to Tabling of Reports? [agreed]

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Madam Speaker, I would like to table the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review for Children and Youth Secretariat.

**Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I am wondering whether I require leave to revert to Tabling of Reports.

**Madam Speaker:** We have just received leave to revert to Tabling of Reports.

**Mr. Toews:** I would like to table the Supplementary Estimates for 1997-98 for the Department of Justice.

### Introduction of Guests

**Madam Speaker:** Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have this afternoon 30 visitors from the Salvation Army Literacy Program under the direction of Mrs. Rachele Johnson and Mr. Murray Rider. This group is located in the constituency

of the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickee).

We also have sixty Grades 3 and 4 students from the Daerwood School under the direction of Mrs. Gloria Wur. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar).

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you this afternoon.

### ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

#### Flooding Floodway Capacity

**Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition):** Madam Speaker, my question is to the First Minister and arises out of the information provided today and in the media yesterday.

In this Chamber on Tuesday of this week, the Premier stated that the floodway could handle in excess of 100,000 cubic feet per second in terms of flow, and it was the government's intention to more or less divide the flow between the city of Winnipeg and the floodway. In fact, he projected at that time that they would be sending 75,000 cfs, cubic feet per second, through the floodway and between 60,000 and 65,000 through the city of Winnipeg.

I would like to ask the Premier: In light of the fact that the minister just stated 59,000 cubic feet per second through the floodway, what has changed in those projections?

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Madam Speaker, what has changed is that my memory is not absolutely infallible, and my assumptions were based on many discussions I had had over previous days, and I got it reversed. The 75,000 is more likely to go through the city and the 60,000 through the floodway. That is accurate; that is what the minister has said. I apologize if the member believes I misled him.

\* (1350)

**Mr. Doer:** Of course, this has some impact on a lot of our constituents who were listening to the discussions

and listening to the various choices that the government may or may not make in terms of the water flow.

The Premier stated in the House that the floodway could handle, and the quote was, "in excess of 100,000 cubic feet per second." Then he went on to say that the flow would be divided. I would like to ask the Premier: Why are they not sending more water through the floodway pursuant to his original answer and closer to the 100,000 cfs that he talked about here in the House on Tuesday rather than the reversal that we had from the Minister of Environment today?

**Mr. Filmon:** Madam Speaker, I want to just make a couple of points. One is that we are attempting to be as open as possible. We are making all information available. This is not about playing political gamesmanship as to who is right or who is wrong. We are attempting as much as possible to give accurate information.

I want to correct the preamble of the member opposite. This does not change the projections that have been given for many days to the City of Winnipeg and the people of Winnipeg. The 24-foot level that has been talked about at the City of Winnipeg has been known to them for a considerable period of time. It was the level to which they were asked to prepare their dikes. I think the range that was given was 23 and a half to 25 and a half or something in that vein, so nothing has been changed for the citizens of the city of Winnipeg or the City of Winnipeg. Its understanding was always firm as to what levels were being projected.

The floodway does indeed have a capacity that could go in excess of 100,000. That would have upstream implications, though, and it would have operational implications, one of which was it would change the levels that people were asked to build their dikes to all the way from Winnipeg to the U.S. border. So it would exceed the current levels of construction of dikes.

The second thing it would do would be to create not only the possibility but now the very real probability that the water would come through the back-door route that the minister referred to at around the height of land near Brunkild where we are building 16 miles of dike on public roadways. That would now raise that to a level that we probably could not cope with in terms of

construction. So the city of Winnipeg would get the water, and it would get it in a place it did not expect it, inside and beyond the floodway entrance, and it would cause serious damage.

So these are not decisions that should be made by politicians, not here in this Chamber or not at City Council. They should be made by the experts who are basing their judgments on the way in which the floodway was intended to operate.

That is all I say, Madam Speaker. We are not making these judgments. These are being made by the engineers and the experts who know and are familiar with the workings of the floodway. They are making their best judgment based on that information, and I for one, even as an engineer, would not attempt to second-guess their judgment. I accept their judgment, and, as Premier, I am going to ensure that we do everything to support it and to implement it.

**Mr. Doer:** Madam Speaker, asking straightforward questions and asking for straightforward information that constituents are asking all of us is hardly "political gamesmanship." I resent the term. When the Premier says something on the record and the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Cummings) says something, I think it is appropriate to ask questions.

I would like to ask the Premier: In light of the fact that the Premier has stated on Tuesday that we could have a capacity of 100,000 cubic feet per second in the floodway, and in light of the fact that the Premier has stated that would have dire consequences on the contingency plan that is in place now in communities south of Winnipeg, can the Premier please tell the House and the people of Manitoba what are the forecasts for the use of the floodway, and what is the total capacity of the 100,000 that is available based on the planning and contingencies that have taken place in southern Manitoba? Is it 57,000? Is it 59,000? Is it 100,000? What is the kind of latitude that is within the excess capacity based on the forecasts and based on the planning and the contingencies in southern Manitoba?

**Mr. Filmon:** The intent is that at the maximum flow that will be experienced coming through the city of Winnipeg, 59,000 cubic feet per second will be diverted through the floodway. That is the intent.

\* (1355)

**Mr. Doer:** I guess my question really deals with—and I understand this—you have certain forecasts and certain diking and certain contingencies that have taken place in southern Manitoba. In fact, you have also had—and this is a new question—new decisions that have had to be made—and we understand that and we respect that—on the southwest side of Winnipeg and on the Brunkild side. I know in Sanford they were told on Tuesday night they would not need sandbags, and Wednesday night they were told to sandbag like crazy. I understand that this is changing.

I just want to know—there is a difference between intent and capacity—are the contingency plans in diking that have been made in southern Manitoba—can the Premier please tell us what is the maximum capacity now of the floodway based on decisions and the contingencies that have been made in southern Manitoba? Is the intent the maximum 59,000? Can they go over 59,000 cubic feet per second? Can they go to 60,000, 65,000, 70,000? What is the latitude that has been built into these contingencies plans? I think all people will want to know that. I am just asking the Premier: What is it?

**Mr. Filmon:** I think there is a difference between the capacity and the intended levels. The intended levels are to be used in such a way that the backwater consequences upstream would not be worsened. That is how the engineers who make these decisions have planned for the use of the floodway. They have therefore concluded that by keeping it to 59,000 they will not create a backwater effect that will create a worsening situation upstream.

They have calculated the current expected flows such that, by having the flows of 59,000 diverted through the floodway, they will maintain a flow or a level in Winnipeg at James Street, I guess it is, a maximum level that is—I believe the current projection is still somewhere about 23.5 to 24.5 feet above stage, and the city has been diking to 26.5 feet at that point, which gives them two feet of freeboard. So they are prepared for it, they expected it and that is what it has been anticipated to be. That will result in the optimum usage so that nobody is asked to bear damage in order to help somebody else. This is all a balancing. This is not

something that we are doing because of political decision making; this is based on the best advice of the engineers.

**Mr. Doer:** I respect that. I just want to know what our flexibility is. Now James Street projections last week were 19.3. On Friday it changed to 20.4, as I recall. On Sunday, after Grand Forks, it changed to 23. Now we have the Department of Natural Resources legitimately saying: Prepare for the worst-case scenario.

I just want to know from the Premier: Is the Premier then saying that there is no flexibility whatsoever to go beyond 59,000 cubic feet per second based on the other realities in southern Manitoba and the diking and contingencies that have taken place already in southern Manitoba? I just want to know: Is there any other flexibility built in if we get major rainfall, for example, or whatever? I just want to know that, and I think the people would like to know that.

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Natural Resources):** I know the member is not intending to misrepresent the measurements at James Street. The 19 feet that were predicted, the change could go to 20 feet. I believe that was the night that the floodgates were opened when we were presented with that possibility. In fact, to perhaps give the member an example of how this can fluctuate, the evening that the floodgates were opened, the river was running 15 to 16 feet above datum at James Street. The prediction was that by morning the flows in the river would have reached 20 feet by eight o'clock or nine o'clock the next morning. So the engineers made the decision that they should activate the floodgates in order to stop that eventuality.

The predictions going back to February have always said that the outside range was 24, 24 and a half feet above datum, and that was intended to also recognize that, should dike with two feet of freeboard, which would be 26 feet, perhaps 26 and change. So it is a balance that the engineers are trying to strike, and yes, obviously, given the forces of nature, we will have to work within that flexibility. But the predictions, they have risen to the high level. The predictions today are that those levels are accurate, and we should be able to manage them in the manner that we have indicated



provided we can stop any backwash, backwater from the La Salle.

\* (1400)

**Mr. Doer:** Madam Speaker, we all hope that these numbers are accurate. Believe me, we all hope they are accurate.

What my question to the First Minister and the minister is, and I just want an answer to it—the Premier made a statement on Tuesday. We have corrected it today, and that is fine. The Minister of Natural Resources has said that it is 59,000 cubic feet per second in terms of the floodway, and that is the intent of the plan right now. I want to know whether the intent of the plan right now is actually the maximum. Because of the decisions that have been made on the forecasts and the diking and other decisions that have been made by the government, legitimately with—and I respect the decisions that are being made. Is the 59,000 cubic feet per second flow in the floodway in a facility that the Premier stated had 100,000 capacity—I understand it is the intent of the government—is that also the limit?

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Madam Speaker, I think we have to start recognizing that nobody here is God, that we cannot predict what might happen. We cannot say whether or not we could get enormously unusual conditions. When asked that question, the chief official from Natural Resources, Larry Whitney, said that current levels are assuming that we might have an inch of precipitation during the period of time leading up to when the peak would come through. If we got more precipitation, that could have consequences. If, on the other hand, every one of the tributaries and its flow contribution to the Red River gave us less than expected, that could have consequences. If they gave us more than expected, that would have consequences.

I have indicated to the member that there is the possibility of more capacity being put through the floodway. That would have consequences, and the consequences are higher upstream levels on the Red River affecting people who have already built their dikes and the possibility of backwater coming into Winnipeg. I do not think we should be attempting to

alarm people to say this is what might happen. It might happen and if it does we know what the consequences will be, and we may or may not be, depending on when it happens, in a position to do something about it. But those are choices that will have to be made. When the choices are made, they will be articulated to people to say: Well, are we going to have less consequences by letting more water go through the channel in the city of Winnipeg or are we going to have less consequences by trying to force more of that water through the floodway? That is all we can do. That will be a human judgment decision, and we will make it on the best advice that we get from the officials who are paid and who are trained to be able to make the best evaluations that they can.

### **Flooding Premier's Visit—South Transcona**

**Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson):** The Premier and many of his ministers have been flying to various communities affected by the flood to view first-hand the situation, especially given all the issues that are being raised here about safety, availability of sandbags and equipment, co-ordination, predictions and contingency plans.

When I was sandbagging in south Transcona residents wanted to be assured that their elected officials and governments would be there to see first-hand the situation in south Transcona. I want to ask the Premier if he has been to south Transcona to see the water there standing in ditches of at least six feet, to see water standing in the streets a foot deep, and if he now will tell us if he has gone to south Transcona or if he plans to go there.

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Madam Speaker, I have not been to south Transcona. I have not been to a lot of parts of the province in which there is flooding. I was in south Transcona when I was chairman of works and operations in the City of Winnipeg during the 1979 flood. I was there up to my hips in hip waders, and I walked through all of the streets that she talks about. I walked into houses that were completely inundated up to their main-floor level.

I know precisely the circumstances they are facing, and they are not facing them for the first time. They

have had flooding in that area on numerous occasions, which is why we have offered the City of Winnipeg an opportunity to permanently deal with it through the Urban Capital Projects Allocation, an opportunity that we believe is what they ought to be looking at in the long term. We hope that they will be taking us up on that offer.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Would the Premier not agree to come now to see first-hand the situation in south Transcona given that the city is arguing that because the water is coming from rural Manitoba, from the R.M. of Springfield and flooding into the Winnipeg sewer system, the funding for this project should be above and beyond what the Urban Capital fund allows and should actually be coming from Rural Development? Will he come with his ministers from the appropriate departments to make that assessment and to see if that is reasonable?

**Mr. Filmon:** Apparently, the member for Radisson either is not listening or has not heard, but the fact of the matter is I was there in flood circumstances. I was there in deeper flood circumstances than they are currently engaged in, and I do know exactly what they face, which is why—I do not normally meet with city councillors, but I did meet with a city councillor for that area on two occasions, and I am meeting with her again later this week because I believe that we ought to do something that was not done by previous governments. It was not done by the Pawley government, even though those people knew that they had to find a solution for that area.

We have now offered the money for the first time to the City of Winnipeg through the Urban Capital Projects Allocation. They have never had that money offered to them on a cost-shared basis, and we have done it. The City of Winnipeg now wants to play politics and say: We are not going to take it unless you fund it out of new money. I think that is absolutely absurd, and they deserve to be dealt with.

I would ask the member for Radisson to go and take her people to the City of Winnipeg and demand that they put their money on the line and help in that project and not quibble with us over what pocket we take it from. This is money that we are prepared to put into that investment, which they have never had offered to them before.

**Ms. Cerilli:** What I am asking is for the minister and the First Minister to give the same consideration for the area that I represent that he is giving to other areas in the province of Manitoba that are being affected by flooding. I appreciate they are offering the money from the Department of Urban Affairs, and I bring to this House the questions that the constituents of mine are asking.

The constituents are realizing now that City Hall is claiming that the Rural Development department should be funding this program for flood abatement. What I am asking is: Are they completely ruling that out, or are they willing to take a look and see if that is reasonable, or are they going to just stand by their offer and, as he said, have the residents of south Transcona just deal with City Hall?

**Mr. Filmon:** Madam Speaker, I think that it is unreasonable, and I think it is unreasonable that the member opposite is taking such a narrow view of the situation. The people of south Transcona have never had—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

\* (1410)

#### Point of Order

**Ms. Cerilli:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker, the Premier cannot have it both ways. He cannot accuse me of taking cheap shots when I am representing the views of my constituents and making the very argument here to him that the city councillor is making in south Transcona. I would ask you to have him withdraw those comments.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable member for Radisson does not have a point of order.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Filmon:** Madam Speaker, we have a solution which we have worked very hard to be able to put together. As I said, I have taken the unprecedented step of meeting with local councillors which I do not do because they are an independent government and they ought to have their own decision-making powers and

their own process of decision making. I have done all of this, and we have put together a solution, a solution that will work to the benefit of her constituents. I would ask her to support the solution instead of saying that it should come out of a different department. That is absolutely nonsense. It should come out of the source that is available for it and get the job done.

### **Flooding St. Boniface Hospital**

**Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood):** Madam Speaker, the First Minister has told the House today—and we accept his explanation—that the floodway can only operate to about 60 percent of its maximum capacity without having serious upstream consequences for the dikes of Rosenort, St. Adolphe, St. Jean, et cetera. We understand that and we accept that. That basically means that St. Boniface Hospital has about six feet of freeboard at this point on an inspection of that dike this morning, and so far as could be determined, no work is going on to deal with that dike. The City of Winnipeg has built an earthwork the size of the Great Wall of China down the Wildewood golf course.

Can the Minister of Health indicate when serious diking will begin behind St. Boniface Hospital?

**Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Health):** Madam Speaker, first of all, I thank the member for that question because St. Boniface is not the only facility in the city of Winnipeg that we have to be concerned about in a worst-case scenario. First of all, I think he has rightly flagged that given the levels of responsibility in emergency that the City of Winnipeg, as the municipal authority, has the responsibility to protect that building and to ensure that proper diking takes place.

I am informed in the briefing that I have with my staff on a daily basis that their intention is to begin construction of—I think they have removed some of the sandbag diking or are making some changes to strengthen and expand that dike to ensure the protection of the facility. The concern, of course, a very real one—it happens each year—is that many of the electrical cables and mechanical parts in the operation of that facility are in the tunnels below it. The facility is known to have seepage even in a moderate year, and

that is what is presenting some difficulty in the continued operation of that facility. So we are attempting to manage it with the facility and with the City of Winnipeg.

**Mr. Sale:** Madam Speaker, at least at noon today there was no work going on on that dike that was visible, although there may be some that was not visible going on.

Can the minister tell the House what steps have been taken to pre-position additional pumping equipment, et cetera, from his department or from other departments so that hospital's chances of maintaining operation are maximized?

**Mr. Praznik:** Madam Speaker, St. Boniface Hospital and the Ministry of Health—we keep in regular contact with them and all facilities that we either feel may be at risk or are receiving—facilities. We play a co-ordinating function in that particular issue. St. Boniface Hospital began yesterday—I think there was a press release about their changes to reduce their capacity in the system, but they are attempting to manage this and arrange for as much protection as they can for their facility. Again, the City of Winnipeg is co-ordinating dike construction, and although no construction may be taking place at the current time, there are a lot of logistics to do it—obtaining the supply of material, arranging for the trucks, all of those things. The actual placement of the materials is probably one of the shorter parts in that process. So because no work goes on today does not mean that preparations are not underway.

If the member would allow me as well, by way of time, because I know there have been questions about other facilities, St. Boniface certainly fits into a plan or a concern for the whole city. Members may be aware that of personal care homes and hospitals that could be at risk, if we got to a worst-case scenario, a breach of primary dikes, those types of things, we have somewhere over 1,400 beds in hospitals and personal care homes that may in fact be affected. So Manitoba Health has been working with those facilities and others throughout the province to ensure alternate arrangements are available, and we are building in essence reserves of bed space. Winnipeg hospitals will be taking in the next few days some precautions in elimination of some elective surgery and other things to

reduce the number of people in facilities that are not affected so that we in fact have room should the need arise to move people out of affected personal care homes and hospitals. Within the system, we should have enough capacity to handle a worst-case scenario, and, although one never would like to hope or expect that to happen, we are certainly preparing for it, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Sale:** Madam Speaker, given that St Boniface is the only major facility outside a primary dike and given that it has taken the city two and a half weeks to construct an 800 metre, 6- to 7-foot high dike at the Wildwood golf course, can the minister assure the House that he will contact the city today and ask them when they intend to actually begin the work of trucking and compacting? That is not a short-term process; it has been more than two weeks to do the similar kind of work in Fort Garry.

**Mr. Praznik:** Madam Speaker, I am not going to comment today on the decisions that the city makes in its primary role in emergency preparedness. I would say this to the member: We are in regular contact. In fact, my deputy minister is very much involved in many of these contacts as we try to prepare for what in fact are any eventualities.

Yes, we want to ensure that St. Boniface is properly diked. As the member can appreciate, predictions, a number of things have been changing as we move through the system, and myself and my ministry are very much aware and in regular contact. If St. Boniface Hospital is of the view that their risk is increasing and work is not done, we will take what steps are necessary to be in touch with the city to find out where they are on the priority list.

I can tell the member that a great deal of work has gone on over the last number of weeks in preparing for this. The member may have noticed in many of the evacuations in southern Manitoba deliberate plans were made not to move people into the city of Winnipeg to ensure we were not putting pressure on our bed system, and we are working this through in a very systematic approach. I appreciate his concern. We will make sure that all is done that needs to be done.

### **Tendering Process Guideline Tabling Request**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Madam Speaker, it is indeed actually quite encouraging to see that the different levels of government are co-operating, and we are entrusting and believing that our experts in fact are doing what they can to minimize the flood damage to Manitobans.

Having said that, as the Liberal caucus, we are going to be monitoring and put forward questions when we believe the government is potentially slipping on the issue. Having said that, I want to ask the government, with respect to the tendering of contracts, if there are provincial guidelines and policies and if we could see something tabled to that effect, what those policies would be.

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Natural Resources):** Madam Speaker, I am not sure if the member is referring to some emergency purchases that the Department of Natural Resources and other departments may be making during the flood. I can indicate to him that, for example—and I will table further information if necessary, but in obtaining services recently for materials that Natural Resources needed, they contacted known suppliers, asked for a turnaround of a known number of hours and chose a winning tender.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, what I am actually referring to is the contracting in general and asking the government: Do they have guidelines, provincial guidelines and policies, that in fact they could table that would show how the tendering process actually works and the guidelines that need to be followed within the different departments?

**Hon. Frank Pitura (Minister of Government Services):** Madam Speaker, yes, there is a definite protocol that is put into place with regard to purchasing and tendering of contracts, and there is a definitive process that has to be followed in cases of all purchases made or tenders that are put out. My staff, I think, would be pleased to be able to put that together and supply that to the member.

### Online Bidding System

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** I wonder if the minister could indicate: What role does OBS play with respect to these tenders, online bidding system?

**Hon. Frank Pitura (Minister of Government Services):** Madam Speaker, the OBS system, I guess, is at the present time being replaced with a new system. With regard to the member's question, when the OBS system was in place—with regard to tendering, it is an electronic tendering process which, of course, is available to anybody who was registered under that process and could tender on a number of government contracts right across the country. So, with the Manitoba government being a participant in that, of course, all of the tenders that the provincial government would list on there could be responded to and people could actually bid on those contracts through the OBS system.

\* (1420)

### Independent Schools Funding Formula

**Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley):** Madam Speaker, one of the principles that unites most Manitobans is a shared sense of fairness or an expectation of evenhandedness from their government, which is why one of the most disturbing aspects of this government's educational policies has been the continuous cuts to public schools at a time when private schools have, by political agreement, seen increases of 15 percent, 11.6 percent and 11.1 percent over the past three years.

Could I ask the Minister of Education to confirm that her department Estimates this year allow for another increase of approximately 10 percent for private schools at a time when the public schools have received zero?

**Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training):** Madam Speaker, I look forward to eventually getting into Estimates with the member so we can go through all of those details.

I have indicated on numerous occasions in this House that funding for public schools has increased by \$115

million since we took office. It is a tremendously big increase. I also indicate that it is meeting the needs of the public schools. If you only need to look at the amount that needs to be raised by special levy, it is far less, far less than school divisions had to raise under special levy when the NDP governed this province.

I also have indicated on numerous occasions, Madam Speaker, that we have an agreement with the independent schools that will see them come ultimately to 50 percent of the cost of running public schools and that once it reaches the 50 percent level, which is an agreement going in stages, that 50 percent level will remain the same as school divisions continue to get their costs under control. If public schools go down, then independent schools will go down as well, but they will never be more than 50 percent of the total costs of running public schools.

**Ms. Friesen:** Madam Speaker, could the minister, who has on occasion blamed federal cuts for her reductions to public schools in Manitoba—minus two, minus 2.6, minus two translates into a cut however she wants to present it—explain to the House why such federal cuts are not applied evenhandedly to both sectors of education in Manitoba?

**Mrs. McIntosh:** Madam Speaker, the devastating effect of the federal transfer cuts I am sure will be emphasized in the weeks and months ahead very dramatically to the people. Those cuts are real. They have had a tremendous impact, and we have not passed on to public schools anywhere near the impact that we have received from them and I say—[interjection] The member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale), I would invite him to ask me that question so that I can have the opportunity to answer it and may explain to the people why that kind of statement is extremely misleading. [interjection]

Madam Speaker, may I have leave to continue my answer?

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable minister, to complete her response.

**Mrs. McIntosh:** There are many who would argue and in debate might be able to argue successfully for their position, which is that independent schools actually save the system a great deal of money—\$8 million per year to be exact—by virtue of being funded less and having to pay a user fee to teach our curriculum, hire our teachers and do all of those things, write our standards exams, and if we had to accommodate them overnight, our taxes would rise considerably.

**Ms. Friesen:** Would the Minister of Education tell the House what her response has been to her own Advisory Committee on Educational Finance, which represents all the stakeholders in education and which urged her in November of last year to ensure that she repeal, reverse her decision on the funding of private schools and that private schools be subject to the same accessibility, reporting and accountability requirements as public schools?

**Mrs. McIntosh:** There were several questions in that, and I trust that I will be allowed to answer all of them. I would indicate that, first of all, we are following through on a commitment made by Premier Ed Schreyer, by Premier Howard Pawley, who both said in writing that the best way to deal with this situation is to have an out-of-court settlement, a signed phased-in agreement.

We are following the put-in-writing statements of their two former Premiers, plus one Professor Gerald Friesen who indicated that the constitutional rights of independent schools were similar to the constitutional rights of Francophones in Manitoba.

I do not disagree with those people, Madam Speaker. I trust that she does not disagree with them either.

#### Point of Order

**Ms. Friesen:** Once again, Madam Speaker, the minister is either evading the issue or she is unable to answer the question, but my question was specific. What is her response to her own ministerial Advisory Committee on Educational Finance which has urged the reversal of her policy and accountability for private schools?

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Wolseley does not have a point of order.

\* \* \*

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable minister, to quickly complete her response.

**Mrs. McIntosh:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I was answering the question, Madam Speaker. You are quite right; there was no point of order because I was indicating to the member that—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader):** On a point of order, Madam Speaker. Beaulieu's Citation 417 states very clearly that "Answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and should not provoke debate."

I would note there was no reference in there to editorial comments or the member—and God forbid that the minister is in training to be Speaker, because we do not see any purpose in having her comment after you have made a decision in this House.

I would ask you to for once, Madam Speaker, call her to order and ask her to stop abusing this House with her rambling nonanswers in Question Period.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton). I would remind the honourable minister, indeed, according to Beaulieu, her responses should respond to the question asked and be as brief as possible.

\* \* \*

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable minister has three seconds remaining to respond.

**Mrs. McIntosh:** Madam Speaker, I will simply say in answer to the third question the member posed that—because she had three questions. I think I have answered two. The one was that public schools do expel students. I deal every day of the week with parents who want to know what to do with children expelled from the public school system, and independent schools do take special needs children. Indeed, independent schools take the expelled children from the public schools to help the parents out.

### Independent Schools Funding Formula

**Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James):** Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Education. This minister and her government have kept public education on a starvation diet for the last nine years. While staff and programs in the public system have been cut, property taxes have soared as the result of provincial underfunding. We have seen private, elite schools benefiting from the sweetheart deal this government voluntarily signed. We have now seen another increase to 10 to 13 percent for this year alone. Can the minister tell this House how many staff have been cut in private schools over the last four years when we have seen over 250 positions cut in Winnipeg 1 School Division alone?

**Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training):** Madam Speaker, I wonder if I could get your advice as to which of the questions posed I am permitted to answer. She asked three. Which one should I answer?

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mrs. McIntosh:** I will attempt to answer all three briefly then. The member, first of all, asked if I knew how many independent school teachers have been laid off. No, I do not, but I could find that out for her. She asked if I am concerned about teachers being laid off in public school divisions. I would indicate to her that in British Columbia, for example, two Vancouver school boards have just laid off 475 teachers because of budget cuts to them. When they expressed their concern to the

B.C. NDP Minister of Education, he said: Tough, you cannot have everything you want.

We are not doing that. We are providing increases. If you look at the constant dollars over time, in constant dollars the spending power has increased, what you can buy for the dollar has increased.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. Time for Oral Questions has expired.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

**Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson), that Madam Speaker do now leave the Chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

**Motion agreed to,** and the House resolved itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty, with the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) in the Chair for the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs; and the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) in the Chair for the Children and Youth Secretariat.

\* (1430)

**Madam Speaker:** Because the Deputy Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau) and the Deputy Chairperson (Mr. Sveinson) are not available today, I am requesting the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) to chair the section of the Committee of Supply meeting in the Chamber; and the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) to chair the section meeting in Room 255.

### COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (Concurrent Sections)

#### CONSUMER AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. McAlpine):** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will be considering the Estimates of the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Does the honourable Minister of

Consumer and Corporate Affairs have an opening statement?

**Hon. Mike Radcliffe (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Mr. Chairman, yes, I do. About three and a half months after I became minister, I am now very privileged to make my first presentation of the departmental Estimates. I look forward to this process and to outlining the plans and activities of my department for the coming fiscal year.

A theme that will recur frequently in my remarks is efforts by different branches of my department to increase the amount, scope and access to information available to Manitobans about consumer matters and the activities of the department. Businesses and consumers, as well as landlords and tenants, need a wide variety of information in order to function effectively in the marketplace. Improving access to information, programs and services is a continuing departmental objective.

One of the highlights of the department's operations for the fiscal year, Mr. Chairman, is the change to a special operating agency status for the Property Rights Division effective April 1. The division, which comprises the Land Titles Office and the Personal Property Registry, will now be called the Property Registry and will be the largest special operating agency in the government service employing 157 of the 600 employees of such agencies. Revenue from Land Titles and personal property security registry fees will be used to finance the agency. Under a revenue-sharing agreement, the Property Registry will remit \$1.8 million to the Consolidated Fund in 1997-98. Beginning this spring, the registry as well as the Companies Office is participating in the Better Systems Initiative. As a part of the initiative, new computer systems will be developed to help the public communicate with the government in a variety of convenient ways. The project is expected to be completed in the fall of 1998.

With respect to the Property Registry, we expect the initiative to transform the way the registry does business with clients. Here, Mr. Chairman, the goal is to enable clients, where feasible, to use electronic access to obtain the title information or services they want. It will give Manitoba the framework to

successfully meet service requirements by using a variety of methods including electronic.

Our Residential Tenancies Branch is increasing its efforts to reach out to its clients and the public and make more information available outside office hours. Besides our website, we will introduce a 24-hour Talking Yellow Pages line. The line will answer frequently asked questions and will be updated frequently so the information will be as current as possible. The branch will, again, offer a series of information sessions to landlords of small Winnipeg apartment blocks, and these seminars will also be held in Brandon and Thompson. Staff will discuss key aspects of the landlord-tenant rights and responsibilities and answer questions. The positive responses received from past sessions indicate that they are a valuable two-way link between the department and the community.

In the last fiscal year, the branch completed a comprehensive policies and procedures guidebook. It was written to outline as clearly as possible the role and the activities of the branch. Unlike most such documents which are internal and intended only for staff, we have shared this one with both landlords and tenants. Not only has it increased our efficiency and effectiveness, but it has helped reinforce how The Residential Tenancies Act is fairly administered for the benefit of both sides, helped landlords and tenants prepare for hearings and answered common questions. The French edition will be distributed in May, at least that is the target date.

Mr. Chairman, one of our most successful programs is our community-based volunteer speaker program which has enabled the department to reach more than 7,000 Manitobans. Volunteers complement our services by expanding the range of direct community contact. Besides being a vehicle for feedback, our volunteers bring new insights and energy to our programs. Last year, we made a commitment to broaden the department's Consumer Education volunteer speakers program to include workshops dealing with the landlord and tenant issues. I am pleased to say that we now have 20 trained volunteers; five are now testing workshops for high-risk tenants with groups like the Urban Circle Training Program and Language Training Centre at Red River Community College. We are evaluating and revising these seminars



and plan to have five to 10 more tenant education volunteers by the end of this fiscal year.

Mr. Chairman, the World Wide Web is fast becoming a vital means for both placing and obtaining information. We have given businesses and consumers ready access to information on our programs through our new bilingual Internet home page. Our website outlines the responsibilities of our branches, special operating agencies, boards and commissions. We have tried to make the website as user friendly and helpful as possible. For visitors who are not sure where to go for information or advice, there is an easy-to-use index and e-mail links to connect them with the right program.

Landlords and tenants may find the website of particular interest because the Residential Tenancies Branch has expanded its page to include frequently asked questions, a sample of its policies and procedures guidebook and downloadable forms.

Mr. Chairman, an important part of the internal trade agreement between the provinces and the federal government was the agreement to harmonize legislation pertaining to direct sellers and to disclosure of the cost of credit. This harmonization will make it easier for businesses to operate in more than one province. It will also make it easier for consumers to adapt when the move to another province or conduct business in more than one province. We amended The Consumer Protection Act in the last session to adopt harmonized provisions pertaining to the cancellation rights and contract content of direct sales. These amendments will be proclaimed very soon. The Consumers' Bureau and the Research and Planning branch are continuing to work with other provinces and Ottawa on developing harmonized legislative requirements for the disclosure of the cost of credit. This harmonized legislation will apply to nearly all credit grantors and all forms of fixed and open credit. It would benefit both consumers through expanded consumer protection and businesses which will be able to operate interprovincially within the same set of rules and guidelines, and finally I would like note a change in the structure of the department. We are in the process of merging the former Trusts and Loans Branch with the Co-operative and Credit Union Regulation Branch. This will result in cost savings and more effective use of departmental resources.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my remarks and I am ready for the questions of the members opposite.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. McAlpine):** We thank the honourable minister for those comments. Does the critic for the official opposition, the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), have opening comments?

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** Mr. Chairman, I want to take this opportunity to welcome the new minister of this department and make a few comments about the lack of direction of this department over the last few years. I think, if memory serves me right, it has not been since Ed Connery was the minister that any real activity occurred in this department. I cite at that time the introduction of The Business Practices Act which was quite significant in those days and that takes us back to the minority government period of 1988 to 1990, so one would hope with a new minister in place right now, hopefully not on his way somewhere else like most of the others have been, that perhaps we will be able to address some of the pressing issues in the areas of consumer affairs that we have been arguing for a long time should be dealt with. There is a whole range of different areas that we are concerned with, but certainly one of them was looking at franchise legislation.

\* (1440)

I note that that is being looked at in some sort of detail by the minister's department and a number of different areas. I note in the Research and Planning area that reference is made to activities of this particular department. I will be wanting to ask the minister questions about what, in fact, is developing in there, because there are a number of initiatives that this government should be taking and maybe this minister will be able to put some direction in this department that has been lacking over the last few years.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. McAlpine):** We thank the honourable member, the official opposition critic, for those comments.

Under Manitoba practice, debate over the minister's salary is traditionally the last item considered for the Estimates of the department. Accordingly, we shall

defer consideration of this item and now proceed with consideration of the next line. Before we do that, we would invite the minister's staff to please come forward and that the minister introduce his staff to the committee.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** I would invite my staff forward at this time. I would like this opportunity to introduce Ms. Alexandra Morton, who is my deputy minister, and Mr. Fred Bryans, who is seated at the table with us today. He is the director of the administrations branch for Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. McAlpine):** I thank the honourable minister. We will now proceed to 5.1. Administration and Finance (b) Executive Support (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits on page 24 of the main Estimates book, \$301,600—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$49,700—pass.

5.1.(c) Administrative Services (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$695,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures \$194,800—pass; (3) Less: Recoverable from Legislative Assembly (\$228,100)—pass.

5.1.(d) Research and Planning (1) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$153,100.

**Mr. Maloway:** I wanted to ask some questions about the Research and Planning division, but my colleague has a number of questions on Vital Statistics agency. I know that if someone is here representing the agency that we might want to deal with those questions so that they can proceed to do something else if they wish. So if you wish to do that, we can jump ahead, do Vital Statistics and then my colleague will be satisfied for the moment.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** Mr. Chairman, at this time I would like to invite Caroline Kaus, the director of Vital Statistics, to the table, who has joined us now, and we would be ready to proceed with these issues.

**Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows):** Mr. Chairperson, I have a few questions on a small part, I guess, of the department of Vital Statistics, and I apologize to the minister since I had told him in the House that I would give him my questions in writing in advance and I did

not do that. However, it does mean that if the minister does not have answers today, I would be happy to get written responses in the future. So if you want to take things as notice, that would be fine with me.

My questions have to do with church records that are held by the Vital Statistics part of your branch, specifically, baptism, marriage and death records. Now it is my understanding that some of these records were compiled even before The Vital Statistics Act in Manitoba so we are talking about old records here, and for some reason they became the possession of Vital Stats rather than the church archives. This has created some problems, for example, people doing family genealogy research and also people seeking proof of treaty status.

If people go to church archives, they can do a search for free, but when they go to Vital Statistics, there is a \$25 charge for a search, and I understand that it can be more. For example, it is my understanding that Vital Stats will do a search of a five-year period, and if they have to go into another five-year period, there may be an additional \$25 charge. The result of this is a number of anomalies. For example, I am told that some other provinces do not charge. I am informed that other jurisdictions have information in the public domain, for example, information that is a hundred years old or more, but that in Manitoba the information never becomes part of the public domain. Also, some information that is in church archives is accessible, but identical information in Vital Statistics is not accessible. For example, marriage information, there could be a church marriage register in a church archive and also a registration of marriage form in Vital Statistics with almost identical information, one of which is easily accessible with no charge and the other would cost \$25. One of the problems that has been raised with me is that some people find the \$25 charge excessive or burdensome, especially low-income people. So I think I have outlined some of the problems.

\* (1450)

So some of the questions that I would have are, first of all, is it your department's policy to continue to keep all the records, as they are, without ever becoming part of the public domain?

**Mr. Radcliffe:** Mr. Chairman, the department is researching this matter right now, but their intention is that records that are over a hundred years old will become part of the public domain. That is the intention that they are working to at this point in time.

**Mr. Martindale:** Could the minister tell us when that might take place?

**Mr. Radcliffe:** I believe that the department will be bringing all their records forward to the next legislative session, and they will be seeking permission at that point. I am sorry, all their acts forward to open them up at that point in time and have it reviewed at that point in time.

**Mr. Martindale:** Perhaps you could explain what you mean by that. Does that mean that the legislation will be reviewed by the minister with the intent of amending it, or is it going before a committee for review?

**Mr. Radcliffe:** I believe the process will be that it will be presented firstly to the minister and then would proceed to the Legislative Assembly.

**Mr. Martindale:** Will there be any form of public consultation or input before the amendments are introduced?

**Mr. Radcliffe:** I do not believe there will be anything with regard any public review or consideration on the records that are 100 years old or older, but one of the things which I think is rather sensitive which will require some public consultation will be opening up of adoption records. I can speak to that from some of the background I have had on this issue which is that one must be very careful not to betray the confidences of individuals who have made contracts with the Crown on adoption positions; then subsequently when people become adults later in life to have that position reversed when they are perfectly confident that those records would be sealed forever; so that there are really the consideration I guess or the confidentiality of two innocent parties involved. One must deal with these often conflicting interests with some degree of sensitivity. I believe that there will be some consultation on this issue.

**Mr. Martindale:** I am also familiar with this because of amendments to the Child and Family Services

legislation, as is the minister. When the information that I believe you said is 100 years old or more becomes part of the public domain, will you do that by putting it on-line, or how do you plan to make it publicly accessible?

**Mr. Radcliffe:** I believe that initially the first step will be to make it available in the public Archives, then as our technology advances to put it on-line.

**Mr. Martindale:** Would the information then be accessible, for example, from computers in public libraries?

**Mr. Radcliffe:** I believe the information would be as available as the information that is furnished by the Archives department at this point in time.

**Mr. Martindale:** I would like to zero in more specifically now on the church registers. It seems to me that there are a couple of issues here. One is accessibility to the information and the other is the matter of ownership. Is the minister saying that the information that is going to be made public will be made public as it becomes a hundred years old and older, or are you looking at something less than a hundred years as well?

**Mr. Radcliffe:** I believe that the practice in other provinces which we have been considering and I think will likely adopt would be that as the century advances that information would become accessible, and so it would be an ever-moving target; a hundred years at a time to start with and then one year at a time.

**Mr. Martindale:** Would the minister be willing to get in touch with the archivists at various churches and discuss their concerns about returning church records to them? For example, the archivist for the United Church is Diane Haglund, and that was why I was particularly raising this issue because I am aware that Vital Statistics has church records, some of which are quite old, like Wesley and Methodist records which would be more than a hundred years old.

I am wondering if the minister is willing to negotiate with the Conference of Manitoba, Northwestern Ontario to have these records returned to the United Church.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** There is no dispute that, in fact, these are church records, and the ownership belongs with the church. I believe that Vital Statistics has kept these records to date because they have a system of safekeeping to preserve them because with the advancing years they become more and more fragile and more and more vulnerable. I do believe, as well, that there have been requests for and compliance with requests for furnishing microfiche, microfilm copies of these records, and I think upon request that these records would be returned.

**Mr. Martindale:** Thank you very much for such a positive answer. I am sure that will be good news to the United Church.

I have a couple of more questions. Vital Statistics used to be part of the Department of Family Services. When was it switched to Consumer and Corporate Affairs?

**Mr. Radcliffe:** April 1, 1994.

**Mr. Martindale:** And when did it become a special operating agency?

**Mr. Radcliffe:** The same date.

**Mr. Martindale:** Why did it become a special operating agency?

**Mr. Radcliffe:** Well, to answer that question, Mr. Chair, I guess one would have to reflect upon the advantages of a special operating agency, and I can attest to this from personal inspection, which is that a special operating agency is allowed fiscal control of its own operation, makes a commitment under a business plan to the central government to donate X amount of revenue to the central coffers and beyond that has the obligation and the authority to be revenue-neutral, to sustain its own costs and to provide the service at the level that is supplied in the business plan. So, for example, in Vital Statistics, they have an obligation to preserve and keep and furnish records upon request of major milestones of people's lives, be it birth, marriage, death, baptism, et cetera, as we have discussed. The advantage to this is that there is a significant degree of

autonomy and authority for the management of the special operating agency to meet the exigencies of the management of the department.

\* (1500)

As issues develop through the course of the year, they do not need departmental approval; they do not need legislative approval; they do not need cabinet approval, and so long as they function within the umbrella of their service commitment and the fiscal responsibility, then this is looked on with approval. The reason for moving a branch of government out into a special operating agency is to give them more independence, more pride of being and to give them greater flexibility, so that they can furnish better service at a more reasonable and economic fashion to the people of Manitoba.

I can cite, for example, one particular issue, that when I was on tour of the Department of Vital Statistics I was being courteously escorted about by the director, and we had an occasion to look at an imaging machine. It was explained to me in quite some detail that, in fact, the administrative decision made on her part and on the part of a number of her employees in a collaborative fashion was that they did not need to buy the most expensive machine that had been recommended to them but rather that they could settle for one that was significantly cheaper because in their professional opinion this fit their needs of service.

I remarked and commended them on this, that I thought this was really commendable, and this illustrated to me the idea that they have this administrative capacity, whereas had there been a requisition done for a purchase, there would have been straight-jacketed or very formalized processes which would have been evoked, and then there would be no deviancy therefrom.

**Mr. Martindale:** I seems to me that governments do not have to buy Cadillacs; they can buy Chevys. You do not have to be a special operating agency to buy a Chevy.

Does the fact that it is a special operating agency explain why there are user fees?

**Mr. Radcliffe:** I do not think we can attribute either the existence of fees to the consumer or user of the service nor any rise in fees to the consumer or user of the service to the existence or nonexistence of the special operating agency. In fact, I am told that the custom of the administration in this special operating agency is to observe and keep abreast of rises or decreases in fees in other provinces across the country and to move our rate schedule accordingly.

There is obviously an obligation on the part of the department, or the special operating agency in this case, to recover the cost of service and for it to be borne by the individuals who are using the service, but beyond that any relative change is done consistently with other jurisdictions across the country.

**Mr. Martindale:** I wonder if the minister could table a list of fees for the various services at Vital Statistics?

**Mr. Radcliffe:** Certainly, we would be glad to. I do not think we have them right at this point in time, but we would certainly be glad to do that as expeditiously as possible.

**Mr. Martindale:** One of the fees that I tell people that they do not have to pay is for a marriage licence. If they are regular in attendance at church they can have banns read, and they do not have to pay for a marriage licence, but in the last 16 years I have never had the opportunity to have someone take advantage of that. Thank you, Mr. Minister.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** Mr. Chair, I can advise the honourable member that I in fact did have my banns read in church prior to my marriage, and I would heartily encourage all individuals of the province of Manitoba to comply with that custom and avoid the user fee. Absolutely.

**Mr. Maloway:** Mr. Chairman, just to follow up with a few questions on the SOA. I would like to know if the minister would also provide us with a list of the fees that were charged at the inception of the SOA. So I would like to see how they have changed since they began as an SOA and where they are now and also, perhaps, if we could get a list of the fees that were in place before the SOA became a reality, because I think I would have to take exception with the minister that this is a benign move on the part of the government.

To me and to us in the NDP, I think we see this as an attempt by the government to basically bring in a hidden tax. It allows the public to pay higher fees for services that they may have at one point gotten for free or almost for free, and this saves the government, allows it to make its political claim that it has not raised major taxes for 10 years or whatever it is going to be when the next election comes around. So clearly there is a positive benefit to the government in the process of using SOAs in that it allows them to increase user fees and thereby take a larger chunk of flesh out of the people who need the services and many of these people really cannot afford some of the fees that are being charged and, in fact, I see an increase in these fees over time.

I also have observed that these SOAs, in a way, are just a step towards the privatization process. Privatization has become the rage in the western world ever since 1979 when Margaret Thatcher became Prime Minister in England and over 20 years what most of the rest of the western world have followed to one degree or another in privatization. In fact in New Zealand the entire country has been privatized in one massive sweep. I guess for every benefit that can be shown out of that process, horror stories can be pointed to as well. In fact in England when the bus routes were privatized we saw service deteriorate and buses would not run on time and things would not work the way they had under the old system.

The minister squirms a bit here, but I think if he wants to check into the situation in England that privatization has not necessarily accomplished what the ideologues in the Conservative Party had planned in the beginning other than perhaps make a few individual owners richer but, in general, the wages of the workers after privatization tended to drop. So we have said all along that this government's long-term aim will result, if they are in power long enough, and it has been a long time now, nine years—it feels like 10 or longer—but over time that is the logical extension of the SOAs.

So I would like to ask the minister for his comments and also to tell us how many more SOAs are planned in his department. I believe there are about 14 now. It is moving target. But I wanted to know how many there are now and how many are in the planning stages. Where is this going to end?

**Mr. Radcliffe:** Mr. Chair, firstly, in response to some of my honourable colleague's initial remarks, I would be glad to table the fee schedules that were in place at the time of the inception of the SOA.

I can advise the honourable member at this point in time that there have been two increases in Vital Statistics since April 1994, and that is that there has been a general, across-the-board increase in the production of certificates which is a \$5 rise, and there has been a \$10 rise in the charge for marriage licences. This is the sum and substance of the rises.

With regard to the general philosophy, I do not know that this is the correct forum to debate, only to say that I would suggest with the greatest of respect that my honourable colleague's remarks as to some sort of undercurrent or Machiavellian plan to move to privatize is speculative at best on his part at this point in time and that there is no plan to privatize public service facilities which are in this particular domain. So I would with the greatest of respect challenge his conclusions on that point.

\* (1510)

I would also point out to my honourable colleague that the ownership of the database of the records at Vital Stats remains vested in the Province of Manitoba. I think that is a significant issue which should be taken into account, and I would overlook a number of the other comments that my honourable colleague made with regard to political motivation, only to say that I hope that the Filmon government or its successors are in power for a long time.

**Mr. Maloway:** I would like to ask the minister whether any approaches have been made by people in the private sector to this SOA or any others that he is aware of in terms of privatization or in terms of contracting out services?

I draw the minister's attention to, for example, the province of Ontario, and it may be the same here, in the workers compensation area, which, as the minister knows, is private in the United States, but the Insurance Bureau of Canada has been making representations to various governments to not necessarily take over—while

they would like to take over the whole workers compensation scheme without the debts, as a backdrop, they have been lobbying for handling of the claims. So it is logical that somewhere along the line if outright representations have not been made to take over the entire SOA, be it Vital Stats or be it another one, certainly there must be some private business interest in portions of it or handling certain services that are provided by it.

I would like to ask the minister whether his government has done any studies in this area or whether it has been approached by different interest groups that would like to see the dismantling of these SOAs.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** I have not personally been approached by any private industry group to take over any of the SOAs or any suggestion even that that be done in any of my departments, and I am not aware of any policy that has been developed within the central cadre of our government to even explore any of these sorts of issues.

I can say, if there is a vehicle with which to dispense service under the auspices of Vital Statistics, for example, death certificates and issuing death certificates through the aegis of the funeral parlour, rather than over the top of the counter to make it more speedy service or convenient service to individuals who are involved in funerals, that, as an attempt to furnish additional and superior service, Vital Statistics will not turn something like that down. This is in no way an attempt to privatize or escape its responsibility of supplying a public service to the people of Manitoba.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** I actually had a couple of questions just to do a little bit of following up. Today, SOA for Vital Statistics, do they contribute to the general revenues and, if so, how much do they actually contribute?

**Mr. Radcliffe:** I am advised that any excess revenue right now in Vital Statistics is being retained at Vital Statistics because they are saving up for purchase of an information system. I believe they are very close to acquiring same at this point in time and paying it off. I believe they have the hardware in hand at this point in time.

The proposal for next year, the next fiscal year, which, I guess, would start in April of 1998, is that Vital Statistics would contribute \$100,000 to the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Province of Manitoba and thereafter any funds which were in excess, which were not needed by the special operating agency in the years to come, would be contributed rather than being retained down at the operating agency level.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** I am wondering if the minister would agree that when, in fact, you establish an SOA—and I am looking specifically at Vital Statistics—you could use different arguments for different special operating agencies; but, speaking strictly with Vital Statistics, here is a service that Manitobans require. It is not an option. If you want to be able to get a passport, you have to have your birth certificate.

There are some things in which you do not have too much of a choice, and when the government decides that it is going to provide a service—and I think one could get into a philosophical argument. My friend from Elmwood on the left of me would ultimately argue that maybe service should be provided at no cost. Then I look across the Chamber from where I sit, and they might argue that maybe, yes, we should have money coming in from the Special Operating Agency of Vital Statistics to the Consolidation Fund or into general revenues, in more plain language.

I would ultimately argue that here is a service which Manitobans need. It is not an option for them. By creating the special operating agency, is it really necessary for this agency to create a surplus? Does the minister believe it is necessary for them to create a surplus?

**Mr. Radcliffe:** Mr. Chairman, I think that, as I stated earlier, the fees that are derived from the service, furnishing the service, from the users of the service are comparable to those levels of charge that are made across the country, so that we are consistent with our sister provinces.

I believe that the efficiencies which are granted, which are opened up for Vital Stats to provide this service may result in revenue surplus from year to year,

and other years there may not be, as their operating mandate continues. I believe it would be precipitous at this point in time to say that they ought not to be allowed the flexibility that a special operating agency offers, or that they should be pared to the bone. They should be allowed the flexibility to be able to increase staff in certain cases if they need to, or increase purchase, or avail themselves of equipment or training as need be. The revenue or the income for such improvement would come out of the surplus.

I do not think that we are talking astronomical numbers at this point in time. My honourable colleague has mentioned the acquisition of a passport. I do not believe that he is espousing that his colleagues at any point in time should be granting—or maybe he is—that passports should be issued for free, because I just renewed mine very recently. This is a user-driven service. I think I had to pay about \$60 for my passport. I do not object to that. Certainly, if I want the passport to travel abroad, then that is something that I am obliged to pay for, just as you go to Eaton's and get a pair of socks.

\* (1520)

**Mr. Lamoureux:** The minister is right in one sense, but what I want to focus on is the fact that, yes, one could articulate as to why it is Vital Statistics might require maybe possibly to build a reserve, and they can use some discretion. We do not want to see, for example, civil servants within a special operating service being paid disproportionately more or disproportionately less than other civil servants working from within the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

A lot depends on the expertise, the training, and so forth, but to establish a reserve, you have a base reserve. I would think that, given the service that is being provided, the cost, if you like, of receiving your birth certificate which is different than a passport, a birth certificate, you are going to require your birth certificate at some point in time in your life. You do not have any option. You do have an option with a passport, ultimately. You do not have any option with respect to a marriage certificate. If you want to be married, you are going to have to get a marriage certificate. Now, the member for Burrows (Mr.

Martindale) did point out an exemption, but there are atheists, if you like, that maybe do not want to go through the church.

Mr. Chairperson, what I am suggesting is, does the minister believe that Vital Statistics should be able to, in the long term, make money off of a service that Manitobans, by and large, have to rely on, and if so, would he then not agree that what you are really doing is imposing another form of taxation? You are being very specific on who you are taxing. You are not taxing everyone, or the general population. What you are doing is you are penalizing anyone that requires that particular service, or if they have lost their birth certificate and they require to get another one, or if a person decides to get married twice possibly, I do not know.

Now, you are talking about small fees, relatively small fees, and I acknowledge that. But what we are really talking about here is the principle of it, the principle being, does this special operating agency have—well, obviously it has the authority to generate excess amounts of what it actually costs to function. It has that authority. But does this particular minister believe that that access amount is necessary to the extent that it has to be contributed to the general revenues because, if the answer to that is yes, then what the minister is saying is that that is in fact another form of taxation.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** Mr. Chairman, I believe that the honourable member is correct, that the previous individual asking questions did indicate that if one is an adherent to a religious denomination, one has access to baptismal records and marriage certificates without cost for the production of the actual paper. However, if one does want to rely upon the services of the state, due to the fact that the individuals who are working in the special operating agency are subject to collective agreements and members of different labour unions and that the special operating agency is maintaining database on an ongoing basis, and I am sure I have had the opportunity to observe the honourable member with his computer laptop in the Chamber from time to time, so I know that he is literate and aware of all the ongoing expense of maintaining computers, software and database, there are ongoing expenses for the furnishing of this service.

Further, I think that I would respond by perhaps answering by way of posing another question, which is, if we are talking about equity and fairness and clean hands and all this sort of stuff, is it proper and appropriate for someone to come on a repeated basis and continually use the Land Titles and request time after time out of negligence or disregard for their records reproduction of their records, whereas one person who perhaps might obtain records and save them and be very frugal and prudent and preserve them, that the people of Manitoba should fund the cost of the indolent person or the careless person? I am led to the conclusion that in fact it is appropriate and proper for the users of this service to pay for it and not to have it financed at large through the tax base of the Province of Manitoba.

I know that both my honourable colleagues are looking to the statement, the political statement that we have made in this government from time to time, that we have not raised any major taxes in this province. That is not to say, and we make no bones about it, that we are keeping abreast of inflation as the value of the money deteriorates or as the value of collective agreements rises. This does have to be represented right across the economy. I am sure that my honourable colleagues have a very intimate grasp of economics to know that you look back to the 1950s and look at the value of our money in the '50s versus the value of the money today, that our money has depreciated significantly. So I think the only conclusion is that we are entitled to ask for modest increases, and I do not think that people are being unduly subjected to severe hardship by a rise of \$5 over the last two years, three years for general certificates, nor \$10 for marriage licences.

As my honourable colleague has indicated, he is not looking to the specific charges themselves but, rather, I think addressing the philosophical base in this particular case. So from a philosophical response, I would say that it is appropriate to maintain modest reserves and modest income, and that is in fact what this special operating agency is doing.

Now, if, and this is a totally speculative nature, a database or a technology advance would be made which were to revolutionize the form of record keeping, that my director be the single employee at Vital



Statistics and furnish the services singularly by herself, unilaterally, then would we be justified in maintaining the same fee level? I think not. I think that you would see a diminution in cost and that this would be transmitted back. But, at this point, this would be highly speculative because we do not anticipate that would be the foreseeable result at this point in time.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Yes, I picked up on a few key words that the minister indicates. One was the minister maintained modest increases, and, yes, for all intents and purposes they are relatively modest increases. But the total of those increases allows for the creation of \$100,000 that goes over to general revenues. Expectations might be, I do not know, about what is going to happen with that \$100,000. My friend from Elmwood says maybe it goes into the slush fund potentially, indirectly. How does it have an impact?

The bottom line is that it is some form of a tax increase. That leads to the other key word that the minister brought up, and that was major taxes. The government says that it does not increase or it has not increased major taxes, and it quite often overlooks some of those smaller taxes. This is an area in which we are seeing what I would classify as a tax.

The minister posed the question to me: Would I support someone going in and getting a birth certificate a month? By all means. He is paying for it. He or she is paying for it. In fact, the government is making money off it. The more that person goes in, the more the government is going to be making money. My argument with this particular—and I would not want to say that it applies to all special operating agencies—but with this one I am not convinced that the government should be making money off of this particular operating agency. Yes, it is a necessity to have a reserve.

Having said that, I do have another question that is very, very specific, and it is more of, I guess, a pet question that has been in the back of my mind for a number of years. Since my brother is very quick to tell me that I was born in St. Boniface, not Winnipeg, because on my birth certificate it says that in 1962 when I was born—yes, '62—it says I was born in St. Boniface, he is quick to point out that on my little girl's birth certificate it says that she was born in Winnipeg.

Yet we were born in the same hospital, that being St. Boniface Hospital.

\* (1530)

Now, if I was to go down to Vital Statistics, I understand that in fact it would say that I was born in St. Boniface. I was curious as to the logic behind that. I am sure the government is not going to fall over this particular question, but it is just more out of curiosity.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** I believe that the certificate that is the result of a request for service at the counter of Vital Statistics is a result of the information that is compiled on particulars of a live birth. So I would indicate to the honourable member that when he is born, his mother or some other person, his father at the time or a nurse, would elicit the information, the particulars of the information as to his parentage at that point in time and the location of the birth.

I stand to be corrected, but I believe that in 1962 the area of the city—and I presume he was born in St. Boniface Hospital—that was in fact a separate municipality from the city of Winnipeg under the aegis of metropolitan Winnipeg; but it was in fact a separate municipal government. The Vital Statistics records only reflect the information that is recorded on the particulars of a live birth. So, presumably by the time your daughter was born, you supplied on your particulars, or somebody on your behalf, particulars that child was born in Winnipeg. Therefore, that would explain the anomaly in this situation.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** One final question, and that is, and one should never question my passion and love for St. Boniface as a community—get that on the record—but if someone wanted to make an amendment to that, is that possible?

**Mr. Radcliffe:** I would suggest with respect to the honourable member that in fact the information that probably was supplied at the time of your birth was correct as at that point in time. However, there is an amendment process for a fee with Vital Statistics and, on production of appropriate evidence by way of affidavit or other statutory declaration, there is an amendment process in order to rectify the records in question.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** I appreciate the free advice. It is just something in which I have had discussions with my brother as I have indicated and it is just, as you can tell by the length of the time it took to respond to the answer, one of those little, trivial things which I thought I would raise at this point in time. I appreciate the minister's patience.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** I would also like to put on the record, because my honourable friend has indicated that he received some advice from me, that I no longer hold an active practising certificate as a barrister and solicitor. I would not want, in any way, him to be under any confusion or misapprehension that I was tendering or proffering any legal advice at this point in time.

**Mr. Maloway:** Well, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), who is, I guess, the real organ grinder in this case, is a pretty happy man because he gets to politically make statements that the government has not raised any taxes and, all the while, through the back door, the money is rolling in. I mean, new taxes are sprouting up all over the place as a result of not only the VLTs working flat out but also all these SOAs that are popping up all over the place.

So what you have developing is a series of hidden slush funds and I draw your attention once again to the Workers Compensation Board which is just now building up a surplus. That Workers Compensation Board in the next four years I think is going to build up a massive surplus coincidentally just in time for the next election. There is no secret about that. So when the next election comes the government will be poised with a surplus, in a position to cut taxes and, at the same time along its flanks, will have the option of reducing Autopac rates if it has built up surplus in Autopac, reducing Workers Compensation rates in the Workers Compensation field. I mean, it is there. All you have to do is look at the financial statements. They have got a tremendous surplus that is increasing.

I do not mean to write their election platform but, I mean, it is being done as we speak. We have to recognize that these SOAs are just simply part of that overall plan of theirs to essentially privatize the government, to develop little slush funds through hidden taxes. That is what is really going on here, and I do not know whether the minister is aware of it or

whether he is brought in at that level, because this government is run by one or two people. We know that, and I do not expect him to admit that he is the architect of all of this, but I do solicit his comments as a new minister.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** I guess my first remark would be to respond to the allusion by my honourable colleague that there was an organ grinder at work here, and if one were to extend that simile forward, is he inferring that the present company is the holder of the cup? If so, I would significantly challenge that description.

With regard to the Workers Compensation Board and the Manitoba Public Insurance—

**An Honourable Member:** There are others.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** And as he quite rightly points out, there are many, many other areas and departments of government, special operating agencies which, since the election of the Filmon government, have had the benefit of sound, prudent fiscal management. I think that I would like to take this opportunity to put on the record that I would like to congratulate all the managers and the directors and the administrators, and people who are running these different departments of government, that they have worked very, very hard, and the staff have all worked very, very hard, to furnish a high level of service to the people of Manitoba, and to do it in such a fashion that they are turning around these departments.

I am advised that only a very short number of years ago there was a very significant debt in Workers Compensation Board, and that, with some very frugal management and sound fiscal probity, the particular person, I think it is Mr. Fox-Decent, has been able to turn this situation around. He is to be commended for that.

As to what will be the result once these surpluses are established or these reserves are created and we can forecast that there will not be any significant demand or drain on these funds. I can only speculate at this point, and that would perhaps not be appropriate for me. But I can certainly undertake to my honourable colleague that I can pass his comments on to the Minister of

Finance; I believe that I heard the honourable colleague saying that he was expecting that we would be passing on significant savings to the people of Manitoba by reducing fees for many of these services—

**An Honourable Member:** At the appropriate time.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** Well, timing in life is everything. I would share that with my honourable colleague Mr. Stefanson, and I am sure he would be very appreciative of that advice.

\* (1540)

**Mr. Maloway:** The minister made reference to the computer system being changed at the Vital Statistics SOA, and, in fact, the minister knows that the computer system is being changed throughout the government with the contract recently being given to SHL, I believe. I would like a detailed explanation as to what is contemplated here with the computer changes and what will be the end result.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** I am advised by the director that the computer system that is being anticipated to be installed at Vital Statistics will be consistent and compliant with the Better Systems Initiative of the Manitoba government. The proposal or the request for service was put out across Canada as a nation for response. I am told that the Vital Statistics department responded with choosing the lowest cost and the best quality that was furnished of all the individual proposals that were advanced.

I will refrain at this time from revealing the identity of the individual supplier of the system because they are still in negotiations. I would not want to jeopardize any of the negotiating process at this point in time.

I would add, and for my honourable colleague's enlightenment, that the existing system that was in place in Vital Stats was new, circa 1970, and was not the year 2000 compliant. So Vital Statistics' hand was forced. They were obliged to move forward and move forward very expeditiously because we could not be left advancing beyond 1998, was I think the curtain period by which we have to have a system up and running, in order to furnish service for the year 2000.

The object of the new system, as well, is to be able to produce records more quickly than we are at present under the existing system, so this is an added benefit.

**Mr. Maloway:** So what system, if any, does Vital Statistics have currently? The member says a system from 1970. Well, that can only be a paper system.

(Mr. Peter Dyck, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

**Mr. Radcliffe:** I am advised that the system is a very early version of computerese and the name of it is NGEN, which means very little to me. It has very limited capacity but it can, I gather with some pain, produce the certificates, but is slow and cumbersome and has limited capacity as well for storage of database. So therefore there are problems with space or room on the database. I would say it is—I believe the appropriate vocabulary—a legacy system.

**Mr. Maloway:** So when this new system is put in, will it be the year 2000 compliant? The reason I ask that is that while it is hard to believe that the government is still buying computers— I understand, today they are still buying computers, as are lots of people buying computers in computer stores that are not 2000 compliant—they are going to have a big problem in less than, I believe, it was 1,000 days from now, because they are going to find out that not only the software has to be changed, but also the hardware has to be changed.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** The system that we are purchasing will be the year 2000 compliant and we anticipate that is—well, I have stated that that has been one of the driving forces that obliged Vital Statistics to retool.

**Mr. Maloway:** So the minister is confirming that the new software and hardware is year 2000 compliant, because there is a difference there. I do not want to hear that we find out a year from now that only part of it is year 2000 compliant and we have to spend a whole bunch more money to upgrade it, because that is what is happening over at Autopac and other places right now. There are big messes all over the place. In fact, whole layers of software that have already been paid for are having to be thrown out because it is too expensive to make the changes, and the prices and the costs of the programmers is going up.

Right now if you are a computer programmer your salary is going up almost by the hour it seems, and so people are going to be making a lot of money on this change. The sooner you get at it the better off we are all going to be rather than leaving it to the last year.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** I can confirm to my honourable colleague that the hardware and the software is year 2000 compliant.

**Mr. Maloway:** Now, is this part of the SHL contract that has just recently been signed and is actually about three or four months late? Is SHL in charge of this operation?

**Mr. Radcliffe:** I can advise my honourable colleague that this is an independent purveyor from SHL, that SHL in fact is a desktop software, and this is a different system.

**Mr. Maloway:** Then how many of the SOAs in his department are in the same sort of situation, where they are going to be in a nondesktop situation for computers?

**Mr. Radcliffe:** I am told that Corporations, Personal Property and Land Titles are going to IBM for their programming and, just to keep the record clear, I am told that SHL will be supporting the system, but they are not the provider to the system in Vital Stats or in Land Titles.

\*(1550)

**Mr. Maloway:** When this system gets operational in Vital Statistics, will the same number of people that work there now be required, given that you are moving from a 1970s system to 1997, year 2000 compliant system? Is there not going to be a reduction in staff here?

**Mr. Radcliffe:** I am advised that there will be probably a reduction in staff years and employees of six to six and a half individuals, and this will be accomplished in a number of ways, first of all by vacancy management, by retirements, and there is a major initiative on the part of Vital Statistics that if individuals are going to be terminated that we are endeavouring to make sure that they have marketable

skills so that they can find employment elsewhere either in the public or the private service.

**Mr. Maloway:** Mr. Chairman, what percentage of the total staff does this represent, these six or 6.5 people?

**Mr. Radcliffe:** I am told it is about 18 percent. I would add, for my honourable colleague's benefit, that the turnaround time for response under the new system we are expecting will reduce from a 10-day turnaround to a two-day turnaround for production of documentation.

**Mr. Maloway:** Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the minister is not in a position to tell us who the contractor is for this particular contract, but I assume that he can tell us when the system is planned to be installed and what the total cost will be.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** I am told that the system will be in excess of a million dollars, the acquisition price, and that some of the price is involved with the conversion costs, because a significant amount of the project is converting the existing records into the new system, the new database. The conversion process will commence May 1, 1997. It is anticipated that that will take approximately 12 months. At the expiration of 12 months, it should be up and fully running.

**Mr. Maloway:** Mr. Chairman, now, does this mean then that once this system is up and running, and these systems oftentimes have lots of bugs and do not work as well as they are supposed to, but is this system in operation anywhere else?

Because I know with the Autopac system, it was quite an innovative approach that they took. I do not think they had had one of its kind anywhere else, and it has worked out quite well actually. It has had a few initial troubles, but the system works quite well right now. I understand that next to the pharmacies, who set up, they connected on a big network about a year earlier than Autopac did, that these two networks are the largest and second largest in all of Manitoba. So there are two networks that are working quite well right now.

I would be interested in knowing where you contracted these people from. Do they have any

experience? Do they have any similar sorts of operations that they have got set up and working properly, or are you the test people?

**Mr. Radcliffe:** Mr. Chairman, I am advised that the system that we are looking at right now and negotiating with does exist in four other jurisdictions in proximity to Manitoba. When I say proximity, I mean on the North American continent, and I would not want to be pinned down to anything more specific than that at this point in time, because I would not want to reveal the identity of the—excuse me, I am told that in fact they are not contiguous to the province of Manitoba, that they are in fact in the British Commonwealth. Our administrators have received a high level of confidence that the particular purveyors are able to supply the program which will meet our needs because, where they are existing in other jurisdictions, they are supplying at a higher level with a larger database, and with a higher performance level than in fact are our requirements at this point in time.

**Mr. Maloway:** So, once they set this system up then, is that where their involvement ends, or do they have any involvement that allows them to earn ongoing revenues either through software upgrades or other little hooks in there that keep them in partners for life?

(Mr. Gerry McAlpine, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair)

**Mr. Radcliffe:** I am advised that in fact there will be a maintenance relationship with this purveyor, that in the future I think we have the option for upgrades if we so choose, or if there is an overall decision to make an extension of future development of this system, we would have the option, because of the characteristics of this program, that we could put future development of the program out for tender. It lends itself to that sort of development.

**Mr. Maloway:** So what the minister, I gather, is saying is that this is essentially an open system that is not proprietary.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** Mr. Chairman, I am quickly getting beyond my level of competence here because I am literate with computers, but I am told that it is an open architecture compliant with BSI, but it is proprietary

software, if that is of any assistance to my honourable colleague.

**Mr. Maloway:** I wonder whether SHL really did have any kind of a role in this because SHL just got the contract, albeit three or four months late, but they just got it in the last month. My guess is that they were being asked to approve something backwards in this case; I mean, they would not have been involved at this point.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** I am told that SHL did have the opportunity to bid and chose not to bid in the provision of this database. SHL will provide the desktop facility—and I do not want to mislead my honourable colleague in this respect—but, with regard to the acquisition of this particular database system, they were not involved.

**Mr. Maloway:** Now the minister has already admitted that the turnaround time with the new system is going to be reduced from 10 days to two days or whatever, hopefully, right?

\* (1600)

**Mr. Radcliffe:** That is an anticipated target.

**Mr. Maloway:** Mr. Chairman, when this thing gets operational, and we are reducing our staff by six people or whatever, what then is envisioned in terms of access to this system? Are we looking at remote access where we can hook up to it as I do right now, hook up to, I think it is ISM or something, so I can access the property registries, and the who-is-suing-who registry, and all those other things that we use everyday for Question Period? Are we now going to be able to access into Vital—I do not know why we would want to do this, but are we going to be able to do this and avoid the walk over there?

**Mr. Radcliffe:** I would advise the honourable colleague that we will not have remote access to Vital Statistics because we do not want individuals having access to other people's records without appropriate authority or appropriate reason, and that would in fact be a breach of confidentiality. Therefore, there will be scrutiny of the requests and applications coming in. I regret to advise that he will have to attend at the branch,

the special operating agency, in order to obtain this information.

However, we do maintain fax communication right now, and it is anticipated that type of communication will continue.

**Mr. Maloway:** I must say that it was my colleague from Burrows (Mr. Martindale) who wanted to deal with the Vital Statistics agency. It was not my intention to deal with it at all, and I see we have spent an hour and a half on it.

I think at this point—and we do ask for flexibility in the Estimates given the situation with the floods. Colleagues of mine and colleagues of yours on both sides of the House are out working building dikes and so on. One of my colleagues is in the other set of Estimates right now, and she wishes to come here to deal with the Rentalsman's office and so on. So I would ask you to be flexible enough that we can move back and forth. I would say that we are likely finished. The probabilities are that we are finished with Vital Statistics at this point. I do not see anybody else coming in here on this question right now, so I do not think we will need to call that back again.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** Mr. Chairman, I would ask my honourable colleague—because I look up from the table here and to the audience, and I see a large assembly of very high-priced staff waiting to give particulars—if we could have some guidance from my honourable colleague as to what departments he will be questioning on, or that he and his colleagues will be questioning on. I do not expect a response at this point in time, but if he could give us some indication so that we could be considerate to staff and let them go, and if we could schedule people within a half day perhaps so that people are not inconvenienced.

**Mr. Maloway:** I think for the rest of the day, that is to 6 o'clock today, we probably will not go beyond the Research and Planning department. I think that if we get into details that the minister or the deputy cannot answer, we can always consult and get back to me in writing or get back to me on another day. We have no definite plans as to how long we are going to stay here. We may be here for a long, long time, but in terms of today, I think Research and Planning is enough. Most

of my questions are of a political nature, anyway, that you can answer yourself. I think that would be fair.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** I would thank my honourable colleague for that advice. On the basis of that advice, I will ask the staff if they would excuse themselves, then, and we will be able to give them more specific advice tomorrow as to when their attendance would be required.

**Mr. Maloway:** I would like to deal with the Research and Planning department for a while. In the past years we have sort of ended up usually at the end of the Estimates cycle and so oftentimes, with previous ministers whom we did not get along as well as the current two do, the Estimates would consist of me making a 40-minute speech and the minister making an equal 40-minute speech, and that was the end of the Estimates for the year. I am sure the people who were at those Estimates remember that. So now this year we have rejigged them to put some of these departments up earlier so they would get a little better looking at.

\* (1610)

Research and Planning is something that we have always been interested in because, quite frankly, we never really could understand fully what this department does. If you read what it says it does, it is very, very vague. Previous ministers, when they were asked questions about, really either were not able or were not prepared to answer many questions about it. So maybe the minister would like to just do a bit of an introduction here and go point by point as to what is being done in this department and what stage each of these things that they are working on is at.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** I can advise my honourable friend that Research and Planning has three staff years. There is Mr. Ian Anderson, who is the director and is present with us today. He has an associate, Mr. Mager, and then there is one secretary who works in this department. They are located in the Wordsworth Building. I can advise as well that the secretary is subject to secondment to other areas in the department, and in fact I can advise, much to Mr. Anderson's chagrin, that I am employing her currently in my office as the minister's receptionist and feel quite embarrassed at this point that he is having to stumble along without

his regular staff. But he has been very generous in that respect. So there is some crossover to backfill, because I have staff right now that is away on maternity leave.

My honourable colleague is correct, Mr. Chair, in saying that the research is of a general nature, but I can tag some individual topics which the Research and Planning department does cover, and they are there at the disposal of the minister of the department, and theirs is an anticipatory role to give us future planning.

One of the issues that has come up this winter and since I have had the responsibility of this department is the cost of propane fuel. We have had a number of individuals from the general public who have written us complaining about the cost of fuel, and I have wanted to know who controls the fuel. What are the overall limits in the world market? Why has it gone up so radically? Is it going to drop? What are alternative measures that people, consumers can employ in order not to be subject to the depredations of these radical increases?

Another issue that Mr. Anderson has spent extensive time on is the pricing of petrochemical fuel, and I am sure that my honourable colleague and all members present here today are very aware that when we have price variations, or what they are euphemistically referred to as price wars, there is almost immediate response amongst the different chemical companies, or the fuel companies, and that their prices will vary up and down very radically. So Mr. Anderson has spent significant time in periods gone by researching the price of gasoline, seeing whether in fact there has been any—I will not say collusion because that is perhaps a pejorative term—relationship amongst the different fuel companies, whether there has been any agreement to control the market or control pricing. In fact, I can assure my honourable colleague that we have been able to come up with absolutely nothing, but in fact he has been very vigilant in taking some—

**An Honourable Member:** Not far enough.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** Well, now I hear the honourable colleague for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), who perhaps does not approach this question with an open mind. In fact, he may already have a conclusion. But I would want to assure my colleagues that in fact I approached this topic

with goodness of spirit and, in fact, formed no preconceived conclusions.

Some other specific issues that Mr. Anderson tells me he has spent some time on are the internal trade agreement, the cost of credit and disclosure of credit, the website, the development of the departmental website, monitoring of aboriginal self-government studies to see if they have in fact any impact on our department, because in fact we are, as you are aware, a registry and a regulatory department. Consumer and Corporate Affairs, albeit it is a small department, does in fact touch right across the sector of the population of Manitoba, and impacts on many, many individuals. So any development of the issue of aboriginal self-government is, in fact, a matter of significant concern to us.

The whole issue of life leases, which I do not know if my honourable colleague is aware of, this is a hybrid situation which is a cross between a condominium and a lease situation. There has been an upsurge in the market of life leases. Mr. Anderson has been very, very helpful in developing policy and an approach to the whole life lease market.

So those are a few. Those are by no means exhaustive of the topics that this department covers. It is an ongoing developmental issue.

**Mr. Maloway:** I wanted to ask the minister then about these gas prices. I recall a few years ago when the gas prices were fluctuating, when they were fluctuating upward more than downward in those days. The minister would stand up when I asked a question and say that he was out monitoring. That was what we thought this department did, was monitoring things. Monitoring consisted, I gather, of Ed driving around with a pen and paper writing down gas prices. That was what we thought it was.

But anyway, what I wanted to ask you is: What conclusions have been drawn? I have read stuff from the federal government. The federal government has done studies on price fixing and so on. It is fairly clear to people in the public that there is collusion going on with the gas companies, in the sense that the gas company phones the gas station and tells them that this is the way it is going to be. They do not have any

option to be independent. If they want to be independent, they are not independent for too long. All you have to do is drive down to the refinery, and you will see that all the trucks gas up there. There is the Domo truck sitting beside the other truck, and it is all the same gas. I mean, it is the same stuff. So clearly there is no real competition in the gasoline business.

Maybe we have to be drawing different yardsticks or different standards here because, clearly, and I hate to use this type of analogy but in the United States, until they came up with the RICO laws, which the minister is probably familiar with, to deal with organized crime, until then they were never successful against the gangsters, you know, the organized crime, but the government sat down and they realized that this was not going to go away. They could send the tax auditors after these people and they would catch the odd one but, in essence, the criminal law was not effective in dealing with them. So a brain trust sat down and came up with these RICO laws, which have had the effect of putting away half the gangsters in the United States. I mean, they are deadly laws.

\* (1620)

I am wondering whether that is not, ultimately, the approach here? The current laws just are not working to deal with this situation, so we have to put some thought into maybe changing the standard. I do not exactly how you do it but, clearly, there is not any real competition in the gasoline business. All you have to do is go out and talk to people. During the last two gasoline increases, there was a fellow on Pembina Highway who did truck in gas during the Gulf War, and he started his own little gas war until he was tracked down by spies from the other side, I guess. They tracked down where he was getting his gas, and all of a sudden his supplies were cut off.

We got into that kind of thing too of trying to get a tanker and so on and bring in gas and that. This is what we found, that nobody would let us use their tanks because they were afraid of reprisals and so on from the gas companies. So there is a real hidden fear there. If you talk to anybody that has been in the business, they will tell you that the thing is tightly controlled and that they are really kind of slaves to the system. So unless people sit down and work up something that is going to

be effective, we can do all the monitoring we want and all the chasing around on this issue that we want and, quite frankly, I am getting tired of it after 11 years, because it is just endless, and it is like chasing your tail.

So I would like to know what your research department is finding out about this whole thing rather than just checking gas prices at gas pumps.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** I am told that there are two petrochemical supply facilities in Winnipeg, one owned by Esso and the other owned by Shell in the city of Winnipeg, and that is it. Those are the only two outlets, and the different gas companies, I believe you mentioned Domo, buy gas from one of those two outlets.

What this department has done has taken the position that the pricing of this commodity is something of national significance, and one of the issues that they have debated and researched and studied and reflected upon is the cost of the commodity in Toronto versus the cost in Winnipeg versus the cost at the wellhead in, say, Calgary.

There have been a series of consultations between Mr. Anderson and many of the individuals involved in the fuel industry. He has asked a series of extensive, in-depth questions to try and explain why these costs vary. Why can the cost of fuel be cheaper in Toronto perhaps than it is in Winnipeg when you have got a significant more distance from the wellhead?

The response that we have received to date has been that it has been a function of the consumption, a function of the use and the volumes. The cost has been a function of the cost of supply at the wellhead, the international prices, the barrel price of oil that is produced and sort of what the cost is. You know, is it \$18 a barrel at the wellhead in Saudi Arabia or is it \$22 a barrel from Kuwait, et cetera?

I do not pretend to have an overall control or grasp of the situation and, in fact, am just beginning to get into trying to study what some of these responses mean. I am aware, and I can tell my honourable colleagues, that my predecessor, Mr. Ernst, did go to a national conference of ministers of Consumer and Corporate Affairs last year, I believe, in Toronto, and this issue



was raised at that conference. Mr. Ernst did bring a motion to the floor at that ministers' conference saying that there ought to be some common resolution of the problem across the country.

At that point, I think, the collective will of all the different ministers across the country was that this was perhaps preliminary and too early and that they wanted to go away for a year and study the matter some more before they were prepared to make any significant comments on the issue.

It certainly is a matter of public concern, and I can join forces with my honourable colleague when one would reflect and see that the price of fuel goes up just prior to the Victoria Day weekend or the July long weekend and then drops significantly thereafter; perhaps the individual fuel companies know that there is going to be excessive travelling in these particular times.

I could reflect as well, coming out of the private sector as a lawyer, that the Law Society would make recommendations on what one could charge as a fee for doing a particular service, but so often what you actually got as a reward for your service was based on a function of the ability of the individual client to pay the value of your service and whatever the market would bear at that point in time. I am sure that in the unregulated enterprise, which is the fuel supply at this point in time, we are faced with some of these imponderables as well.

So I do not for a moment pretend to say that this is a simple, one-issue world in the supply of fuel. I think there are many, many different issues at stake that come to bear on the cost of fuel at the bowser or pump at our corner filling station, and Mr. Anderson, as you have perhaps facetiously say you know, has driven up and down the street and checked the prices. But his research has also gone far beyond that in a much more sophisticated level to reading reports, quizzing individual members and public relations individuals from the fuel companies and advising the minister and reviewing the proceeds, the proceedings of the last ministers conference. I would just be, you know, touching on some of the highlights of some of the activities on this particular issue.

\* (1630)

**Mr. Maloway:** Well, clearly I think the minister has hit on some of the problems, certainly. It is a market economy, and as long as you have 10 provinces here, you are never going to get agreement here. I mean, Manitoba does not produce any oil and Alberta does, and when the price—well, not very much oil, but relative to Alberta. But when the price goes up—I mean, I never noticed any wars in Alberta in the last few years, but yet they take advantage of the higher price when in fact they may be taking the oil out of wells that have been there for years and years and years. So there is no cost. When the price jumps 10 cents a litre, surely the person who owns the well in Alberta cannot argue that their price just went up overnight by 10 cents, because that is old oil.

So with that in mind, I started to think about this a little more and thought, well, it does not seem that we are going to be successful in beating these people, because there is a monopoly here. So there is probably only one answer for Manitobans, and that is if the minister wants to take a trip up to Churchill in the next little while, I think he might see a solution there. That is, that in the port of Churchill there are huge storage tanks, gasoline storage tanks, and I am not the only person that thinks this way. There are quite a few other people who have looked at it. It is certainly technically feasible to bring in a tanker of gas through however you get through to Churchill in a tanker, and you can bring in gas and basically flood the North with gasoline and bring it down south. You have a railway line up there, and it certainly would be—I mean, if you were looking at economic development, that is one thing to look at.

I mean, we are giving away the whole Churchill base, I believe, to some private company, right now OmniTRAX. Maybe they will come up with the idea. But it made sense to me with all those tanks there, and we did ask a lot of questions. It is certainly technically possible to handle that amount. There is enough storage capabilities up there. As a matter of fact, if somebody does not step in, those tanks and so on have to be maintained. There is a certain amount of work has to be done with them, and I believe that nothing is happening in there right now. Also, you understand, too, that that is a staging area for moving stuff even further north, Rankin Inlet and other places, and a

decision is pending now. I do not know, it may have been made already, but there is a competition between Churchill and Rankin Inlet, I believe it is, to see who is going to be the staging area for moving these supplies. So the point is, the facilities are there, and if there was a will to do it, certainly a good experiment would be to try to do exactly that, to bring in some—because, as you know, the further north you go the more astronomical the gasoline prices get. So what we have been doing conceptually is, we have been hauling this gasoline from the south to the North. Has anybody thought of bringing it around and coming down south with it? So I leave it with you.

I spoke to Costas Nicolaou, who is a bit of an expert in this, and it was clear from my discussion with him that he had also thought of it, and so it bears taking a look at because you could solve a lot of economic problems with one little swoop and certainly get the price of gas lowered down south a heck of a lot quicker, too, with giving the oil companies a little bit of free market medicine, they think they are free enterprisers, but they are not. They just run a little monopoly, but on an east-to-west basis, right? So we just throw in a little bit of north-south competition here, and then watch how the equation changes.

Now another area that you might want to look at, and I am very pleased with—I know I am crossing departments now—the new minister in Government Services. I think he is, perhaps, a little more impressionable and more reasonable than the one that is leaving. But you know, with the fleet of vehicles, I know that you as ministers are involved in a cabinet, you are involved in a caucus, so you do have a say in these things.

It has occurred to me that with Thompson being a test site for Ford and for other vehicles for cold weather testing, I do not know whether you are aware, but in the United States, in the states of California, Arizona, and a couple of other states, they have mandated—and in the Province of British Columbia—that from now and each year hence a certain number of cars have to be sold that use alternative fuels. This is where the major car companies including GM have introduced electric vehicles. These are not the ones we had here in 1977, those old Renault 12s; we are not talking about those,

all right. We are talking about new vehicles with new designs.

It seemed to me that Thompson should be promoted and sold as a test site for these electric vehicles. I mean, Manitoba is well placed with our hydro projects and so on. This California market is going to get bigger and bigger and bigger in their need through legislative changes and their need for power, because it is there. The legislation is in place. They must by the year 2000 be selling—so many percent of the new cars have to be electrically powered, right, and they have offered incentives. In Arizona they have given reductions in the insurance. They have offered different types of incentives, lower driver's licence fees. California has offered different incentives.

So these are things that we should be looking at. Forward-looking people should be looking at how do we position ourselves as compared to, say, Saskatchewan or Alberta or another province to test these vehicles up here, because they are going to have to test them in cold weather and the electrical sides of it have to be looked at.

When I brought this up in Government Services last year, the approach of the minister is that he is just looking at today. It is what can I get for the lowest cost in 1996 and to hell with the future. He is not interested in that, not even one little car of his 3,000 or whatever that he turns over in a year; he would not even look at buying one of them. That is shortsighted.

I mean, we understand that you are going to need—gasoline will be around for a long time. You are going to need that for distances. In Manitoba you have temperature problems. You have all sorts of other problems, but it does not mean that you should just put blinkers on and forget about the problem.

Now another area—there was an article in *The Globe and Mail* just last week, it was on TV last week, and there were a lot of articles in the last six months. There is a company called Ballard Buses. Now Ballard Buses—Ballard is a B.C. company. I think it is BMW or Mercedes Benz have just put millions and billions and gazillions into them, right, and bought 25 percent of them. But they have even had one of these Ballard buses in Winnipeg here. They had a TV clip and the

person from Metro Transit drank the exhaust for the cameras, because the exhaust is water. It is a hydrogen fuel cell bus.

The B.C. government has invested in this thing. There are people in there, you know, with ManGlobe currently developing—I know that is not something that you would want to be too keen about right now, putting money into private companies like this. But I mean this thing has a lot of potential if Mercedes is putting the money in there. The current buses are costing—I think they are prototypes and they are a million dollars apiece, so their cost is quite high. But once again, we have to kind of think of five years from now and 10 years from now. We have to think that we should be part of the solution, not part of the problem. I think if the Manitoba government or somebody in the government took the lead and offered to get one of these things in Winnipeg, you know, sign on to the program and take one of them, then it would be helping out.

You see, where this is heading is that all of this stuff gets us in the forefront of technology, but also combats the gasoline prices. There are just more than—as the RICO law solved the problem in the United States. If one solution is not working, then pull back a bit and come up with another one that might be better.

If the minister is interested in pursuing some of these things, we have a fair amount of documentation on this stuff on the electric-powered vehicles, on the laws in B.C. and California. Matter of fact, second-generation cars are now coming out. You have got to understand the infrastructure problems you have here in that your houses have to be rewired now. B.C. Hydro is involved in this thing, too. They have to rewire the houses for the plugging in of the vehicles, because it is heavy-duty wiring. There is job creation there. [interjection] There is a future after politics, but there is job creation there, and they are working on this.

\* (1640)

But you see they have a smog problem that we do not have here. Their health costs are going up dramatically because of the smog in the lower mainland and so on, so they have a bigger imperative. But I guess my point is that we could be the feeder of this thing. We can

provide the power. We have the power here; they do not. We have the testing and stuff like that, and we should be working on that a little more.

So I am sorry to hear that we are not making a lot of progress on the price of gasoline, but it is a free market. What are our options? We can suggest regulation, but the government's comeback to that is that it does not work in the Maritimes where they had regulation for a few years under the PUB, and, in fact, they had the highest prices in the country under regulation, right? [interjection] They still do; my colleague from Transcona says so.

I mean, clearly if that is not the answer—so I am prepared to do what it takes to get the job done, and it does not necessarily have to be with a system that did not work in the past. There is more than one way to deal with this.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** Mr. Chairman, I would thank my honourable colleague for these ideas because I think that moving from fossil fuel to renewable resource supply of fuel, moving from fossil fuel to renewable resource, is probably a superior form of energy supply. In fact, especially with Manitoba being so advantageously situated with our major northern rivers and the infrastructure, maybe we could get Conawapa up and running, which would be something nice to speculate about.

So I thank him for this, and I would ask Mr. Anderson when he has time in his schedule if he could contact my honourable colleague and access some of the research that you have, and I would be glad to review it. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Maloway:** We covered a fair amount of area there, and so I am going to move up my list here of things that we have certainly asked for in the past. We have asked for the octane levels to be posted on gasoline pumps. That is a common thing in the United States. No one knows at the current time what octane level you are dealing with, with gasoline in your car, and cars run better at different octanes. So maybe you could ask what has been done in that area.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** Mr. Chairperson, I am advised by Mr. Anderson that in fact some of the local filling stations

do have octane levels on their pumps, but it is observed more on the noncompliance than the compliance in that respect.

He does point out that in fact different cars have different fuel requirements, so one must be able to match the octane level of the fuel to the car that you are driving. If you put a higher octane level in a low-performance car, you are not improving the situation at all, so one must be able to match that. Mr. Anderson advises that he has had some difficulty obtaining this sort of information, and he further remarks that even if the octane level is stated on the outside of the pump, that is no guarantee as to the octane content in the fuel. That is another thing of which one must be aware.

Mr. Anderson does advise me, though, that the Alberta Research Council did conduct a number of searches across the country in tests on octane level, and they found some discrepancy, but minor discrepancy, at that point in time. He does point this out, that this is an issue which should be taken into account.

**Mr. Maloway:** Mr. Chairman, the reason I asked the question is because I have been asked that question several times myself by people, I guess, who have those requirements that a certain octane level would work better in their gas. I gather when they go to the gas station, they have three or four options of pumps to use, but they have all got the same octane in them, probably the lowest, you know. In gas, and this goes back a couple of years now, but if you actually ask any of the gas attendants—I tested that one day. See, I do some monitoring, too. I went to, well, three or four different stations and asked the attendants about the octane levels, and I got blank stares on all of them. I mean, there was not anybody that knew anything about octane levels.

If they do it in the United States pretty well all over, from what I can see, then why is it such a big problem here? What do other provinces do in Canada?

**Mr. Radcliffe:** Well, in response to my honourable colleague's remarks there, I can advise him that I happen to deal with one particular filling station consistently, and I in fact asked my operator that question. I drive a Ford Taurus and was told to take the mid-level octane level, which was supposed to be the

best fuel for that particular car, but if you will just indulge me for a moment, I will inquire as to what is being done on this study across the country.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Anderson tells me that in fact the Alberta Research Council did do some consistent reports or research across the country some time ago, found little inconsistency so, therefore, our research department has not done anything recently, although they do believe that the Alberta Research Council is still continuing with their research on this issue. He advises that the information he has received from some of the car manufacturers is, if you use a fuel of a higher octane level than the level that is prescribed for that automobile, you are in fact just blowing the fuel out the rear end of the car and wasting it. So that is an issue of which I think we must be aware.

**Mr. Maloway:** So are you planning to study this more? I did not detect a definitive answer here.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** In response to my colleague's question I would advise that Mr. Anderson is prepared to contact the fuel companies. He advises me that he was told by the fuel companies that they had a toll free number one could contact to obtain booklets on the octane level of their respective fuels. He is prepared to research this matter again and bring back to me the products of this research, so I thank you very much for directing our attention to this.

\* (1650)

**Mr. Maloway:** At this opportunity I would like to ask about the CAMVAP program. This is something that I have done a fair amount of chasing around after over the years, even to the point of going to some of the adjudication hearings in Florida. That was a tough job I must say. It was January, so somebody has to do it.

Florida had the toughest laws. In the United States there was—I do not have any of my notes here, I am just doing this from memory, but about 45 out of 50 states actually have lemon laws in place. Of course, as you can appreciate, some of them are tough, and some of them are pretty weak. Some of them are supporting. I would not expect that in Michigan you would get a very tough lemon law with Detroit sitting there. So you would look to Michigan as probably one of the

weakest. I am not suggesting it is, but it is probably a good place to look.

I believe Florida, New York, other states were really good. As a matter of fact, the minister might be interested in knowing that they have developed it so far in Florida that—and I think Florida is the second or third largest state in terms of purchasing new vehicles, so we are talking about a huge market in Florida. But they have an annual report that comes out. They sent me this annual report that gives a breakdown. It is similar to your reports here. They have refined it to the point where they have even got it on used cars, a lemon law for used cars.

Now to be fair, if you did a survey in Florida you will find a lot of people do not seem to know about it either. In Canada we now have, I would say, a watered-down version of some of the better programs in the United States. What Canada did was, you signed on or your predecessor signed on to the CAMVAP program a couple of years ago. So now we have a national program. The key to this program is that it does not really work very well if nobody knows about it. It is mandated, or persondated, in Florida that every purchaser of a new vehicle must get this booklet given to them, and there has to be an explanation. It is required when a vehicle comes off the lot.

Now maybe it is because Manitobans are driving 10-year-old cars now, and nobody can afford to buy new cars anymore because the prices are so darn high on them. The fact of the matter is that anybody who does buy a new car does not get—I mean, I defy you to find one dealership in town that actually tells anybody about this program. As a matter of fact, I have asked just out of interest a couple of car dealers and car salesmen, who have been in the business for years: Are you aware of this program? They are not even aware of it. So not only are they not handing out the books, but they are not even aware of the program. Quite frankly, it is not something you want to think about or deal with if you are a car salesman. You know, you want to sell the product, get it off the lot and go on to your next one. You do not want to be drawing people's attention to Lemon Aid questions, right? You know, you do not want to be saying to them, well, here is a little booklet and the Florida book has got a picture of a lemon on it,

so that ought to inspire a lot of confidence in the purchaser right there, you see.

So I never said anything about it, having purchased a vehicle in the last, what, I guess, year and a half now, and I am very happy with the car salesman and dealership and everybody involved in it. I am just pointing out that, in that case, I was never given a book. I know enough about it that I know that it does exist, and if I did have a problem, they would be hearing from me, you know. [interjection] What about the public? That is right, the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) mentions. So I guess if I talk long enough, the minister will have time to have read the briefing paper on it.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** In response to my honourable colleague's remarks, I can tell him that CAMVAP began in Manitoba on October 3, '94 and at the close of business in '95 the plan had resolved 31 cases, 20 of which were through arbitration, nine through mediation, and the balance were settled during arbitration hearings. Along with the other awards, 20 arbitrations resulted in four vehicle buybacks and one vehicle replacement.

The 1996 data is expected imminently on this plan, on this CAMVAP plan, and in fact I can tell my honourable colleague that I believe within the last month, we, either through my office or through Mr. Anderson's office, did refer somebody to the CAMVAP people, and they have been in to see me—the people who administer the plan in Manitoba—to apprise me of their function and process in Manitoba, and I was quite impressed with them.

So I think it is something that bears some fruit, and I think some consideration as to your suggestion of publicizing this service, this mediation service and alternative dispute resolution, to in fact move dispute away from court litigation, which I can assure the honourable colleague, although I have found it quite fruitful myself, was often arduous and expensive and less than satisfactory for many of the Manitoba consuming public through the years.

I was involved with a number of motor vehicle disputes between dealerships and consumers, and on the very issue of which you speak. So I think that it is something that bears some fruitful research, and I think

him for the recommendation. I think it very appropriate to use our best efforts to publicize this service.

**Mr. Maloway:** The minister read from the report on the CAMVAP program for whatever year it was, '94-95, I believe. In his list of adjudications, could he tell me how many decisions were made in favour of the car companies versus the individuals?

For example, a good program, a balanced program, at least the Florida program evidently works out at roughly 50-50. At least the hearings that I sat in on in the morning, they were primarily about air conditioning, which you can understand being of interest in Florida. I think it broke down roughly even, that in four hearings or four cases, two would be decided against the car companies, and two would be decided against the individuals bringing the claim. That was supposed to be an indication of a pretty fair program, that if you took 1,000 cases, 500 of them would go against the car companies and 500 of them would go against the individuals. I mean, you could not have a program that went 100 percent against the car companies, right? You could not have a program that went 100 percent against the individuals, because people would say, well, it would be biased one way or the other.

So their program, the Florida program anyway, appeared to—and the minister's office might want to subscribe, phone Tallahassee and get on their list because they are only too willing to send the stuff out to anybody that wants it.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** I thank my honourable colleague for those comments. I can advise that the summer of 1995 CAMVAP awards, the breakdown that I am informed was that there were eight cases where there was no liability found out of, oh, 19 cases heard, there were eight cases of no liability; there were two with a buyback with reduction; two with a buyback with no reduction. I guess those would be liability in whole or in part going against the dealership. [interjection] Yes, Mr. Chair, I believe my honourable colleague has a comment on that.

**Mr. Maloway:** I just have a sensitivity on this issue, and it has nothing to do with anybody in this room. But years ago around 1988, I believe it was, when we

brought in a private member's bill to bring in lemon law, at committee we had the issue blatantly misrepresented by the then president of the Motor Dealers Association, Lefty Hendrickson, and the then president of the Consumers Association, Jenny Hilliard, the subsequently defeated Tory candidate. They worked together hand in glove to deliberately misrepresent what we were doing as being against car dealerships. [interjection] That is right. It was there in black and white that we are dealing with the manufacturers only, not the car dealers.

As a matter of fact when Mark Chipman came on as the president of the Motor Dealers Association, that was the first thing he said to me was, I am sorry about all that. He, as a dealer, said, I love this program. I think the lemon law is a good idea. We fully understand that it is the manufacturers that we are dealing with here, that we as dealers have problems with these manufacturers all the time.

So if we have another piece of legislation here that says, look, you have got to buy—because think about it, the unsatisfied customer is taking it out on the dealer. The dealer is the meat in the sandwich here. The dealer does not want this aggravation. He wants Ford or he wants GM to deal with the car. He did not make the car; GM or Ford did, or Chrysler did. Why should he be pilloried, right? I am sorry, Mr. Chairman, the comment there got me going on this issue.

\* (1700)

**Mr. Radcliffe:** I do stand corrected obviously. I bow to my colleague's superior source of information on this, but I guess my response to that would be also in the form of a question. Perhaps I will finish with the material I have here by way of information, and then respond with another question on this issue.

So we are looking at 19 cases in '95; two were buyback with reduction; two buyback with no reduction; one was a totally replaced vehicle; two were reimbursed for repairs; five were make repairs; one was, the heading is, out of pocket, so that would be that the consumer was compensated for out-of-pocket expenses that were incurred; and eight were no liability. [interjection] Oh, I see, for a total of 21 awards, but there were, in fact, 19 cases, because I gather in two

cases there was more than one award made. My query was I was concerned about the privity of contract issue, and Mr. Anderson tells me that in fact there is a consent to enter into a commercial relationship between the manufacturer and the consumer. That is the basis on which CAMVAP proceeds, because I have been looking only at the limited relationship between, of course, the dealer where the privity of contract exists with the purchaser. So I now understand, and that was going to be the basis of my question. So, thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Maloway:** Mr. Chairman, now what representations has the minister or his department made then to CAMVAP, because, as one of the stakeholders in it, you are in a position, I would think, to review it and see how it is going and make some representations as to where it should go from there. Has there been any research or thought given to trying to expand it to used cars, and, if so, how would that work? If it works well on the new cars—and it works on used cars in Florida—then why can we not do the same thing?

**Mr. Radcliffe:** Mr. Chairman, I am advised by Mr. Anderson that in fact the CAMVAP scheme, as it exists right now, applies to the current year and the four preceding years. So there is some application to used cars, used vehicles, and it is irrelevant how many intervening owners there may have been. [interjection] Yes, so there is some limited application to used vehicles. In fact, I can further add to my honourable colleague that to date I have only had an informational meeting with the CAMVAP people. I have not been in a position yet to give them any direction or reflection as to extending their mediation processes further, but it is certainly something that I am quite open to looking into.

**Mr. Maloway:** Mr. Chairman, maybe we are moving through my list of things here. I am making very good progress, I must say. Maybe I should ask the minister at this point about the cemeteries. He offered some really good advice which I think I took the liberty of passing on to a certain reporter for a future article. So he may get a call on that some day. The Elmwood Cemetery has been in the news for some time now, and his letter detailing what the solutions might be, while he was saying that he did not think this would be a solution for the Elmwood situation, it certainly would

be a solution, in my mind anyway, to avoid any future Elmwood situations. That was that we would increase the amount of money that was, by regulation, required to be put into the perpetual care fund. Once again from memory, I believe the minister said that there is \$1 million in the fund.

First of all, around 1959, I gather, the laws came into effect, and I believe Elmwood Cemetery voluntarily came forward and started doing this on or about that time. So over the years they have managed to amass \$1 million, and with low interest rates the way they are, they are bringing in roughly \$60,000 in income on this fund. The \$60,000 is not sufficient to handle the cemetery because the cemetery is all filled up, or more or less filled up, and so there is no new source of revenue. So that is the problem with it. As you know, the riverbank is having problems, and so this thing is turning into a big, hot potato with the province throwing it to the city and the city throwing it to the province and both parties saying, where is the owner in all of this? Which was what I am saying, because I do not know what circumstances the owner is in, but my guess is that this owner has been making profits out of this cemetery for years and years and years, and now, at the end of the day, it is the taxpayers that are going to be stuck sorting this whole thing out.

So once again, to be proactive and to make sure this does not happen again, I thought that the minister's suggestion in the letter hit the nail right on the head, that what we should be doing, perhaps, is looking at requiring all of the other cemeteries in the province to increase that 30 percent or 35 percent, that they put in right now, to a higher level so that we can accelerate the buildup of funds in their cemetery, so when they get to the point in time when they are full and decreasing revenue hits them, they will at least have something to take care of their problems and not become a football like the Elmwood Cemetery has become. It is a big problem, and nobody really knows how to deal with it.

Now you have a situation where people have surfaced. One fellow surfaced, and I am sure he has the best of intentions, but you know it was reported in the press that he is going to set up his own collection. He is going to be collecting money on behalf of the cemetery. It is close to home, and I do not really like the idea of people going door to door collecting money

for the cemetery. The owner is in Ontario and does not know what is going on, and the city does not want it, and the province does not want it. Nobody wants this thing. It is a big problem, and we have got to somehow solve it. I do not know how you are going to solve the Elmwood problem, I really do not, but certainly in the future could we not look at, right away, increasing those fees? I am assuming that your best advice is that that is a solution, increase the amount put in the perpetual care fund so we do not have this happening again.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** Mr. Chairman, I can advise my old friend that I have spent a significant amount of time looking at this Elmwood Cemetery problem, and there are, I think, about two or three areas of concern.

My honourable friend is quite correct that in fact this is a cemetery which has very little available land for new plots. Therefore, the income that nonfaith-based, nonmunicipal-owned graveyards usually derive, future income, the private graveyards—and I think this is the only one in this particular nature in the city of Winnipeg—is from the sale of new plots, and these are very limited at this point in time. There was additional property that was owned by the individual who owns this corporation and resides in Ontario, and that property was sold off a number of years ago. This is a privately owned corporation, and I believe that the individual in Ontario who owns it, has taken a somewhat hands-off attitude and is looking to the local people here in Winnipeg to try and solve his problem for him, and it becomes our problem.

\* (1710)

One of the issues that immediately presented itself and is a matter of ongoing concern with the onset of the flood which we are facing right now, is there was a real risk with the erosion of riverbank, and I believe there have been up to about 15 bodies that were in jeopardy of being washed down the river with the erosion of the riverbank, so our department, on a without-prejudice basis, donated \$15,000. I think Urban Affairs donated \$10,000. Maybe it was more than that, because the provincial allotment was a total of \$35,000. My math is off a little bit, but we donated \$35,000 on the understanding that the city was going to come up with an additional \$35,000 for a total price of \$70,000 to

move these bodies further inland. So that was a band-aid solution to fix the first problem, but that is only a very ad hoc solution and in fact does not address the real issue of maintenance of this property and the maintenance of the riverbank. That was the solution that was reached this winter on an almost quasi-emergency basis, because we anticipated the flood being very destructive of the riverbank in Elmwood.

Another problem that we are faced with at Elmwood is that I gather and I have observed from driving past it that there is a very significant elm trees forest, urban forest there, and that Dutch elm disease has got into the stand of elm there, and we are facing perhaps a major loss if there is not some significant hygiene exercised with this forest. So we have launched some inquiries internally within government to get an assessment right away—right away, I mean as soon as the trees get into leaf—as to the extent of the dead trees and get some estimates of costs to see how extensive our problem is right now to see if it can be curtailed. So that is another problem.

The third problem which we are faced with in Elmwood Cemetery is that it is an old-fashioned—and I do not mean that deprecatingly, but it is an old-fashioned graveyard with the upright stones. So, therefore, there is a lot of manual labour that has to be exercised to keep the grass down and to keep the place groomed. That is where there is, I think, a good deal of expense with just the cost of labour today to keep the place properly maintained in a respectful fashion. So that is on the debit side of the whole ledger.

On the positive side or the credit side, I am aware that as my learned friend agrees this is an old cemetery. There are many, many families still very vibrant and active in Winnipeg, who have their relatives buried in this graveyard, and it is not an abandoned cemetery by any means. There are still many prominent families, many wealthy families, many poor families that are very interested in this particular site.

One of the issues that, I guess, I had discussed in my office amongst some of my people was with regard to the gravestones. Could we remove the gravestones, and if so, what were the—and this is all, you know, a highly speculative conversation at this point. We have taken no active steps at this point and create a composite wall



of the dead apropos of what was done in Washington, say, with the veterans from the Vietnam War or with the wall of holocaust survivors in the backyard here of this building. I do not believe that we have taken any positive steps with that, but that was one concept that we came up with in an attempt to try and be creative. I think if we were to do something like that, we would have to consult with the local churches who relate to this particular graveyard. I would imagine there are some Protestant denominations in the neighbourhood. We obviously would have to consult with the records of the individual owners of the plots. To date we have not gone very far with that, but that is certainly something on the hopper that we are looking at as a suggestion.

The difficulty we are faced with, of course, is that if the owner abandons the registration of the corporation, will the asset which is the common walkways and roadways in the particular graveyard escheat to the Crown? That is where the province has some liability. Right now I am told that the property is under tax sale. There has been a tax notice registered by the City of Winnipeg, and the City of Winnipeg is also reluctant to take responsibility for this graveyard, because they see it as an ongoing liability and expense with very little upside for them. I would say on the record that it is a responsibility that is going to have to be sorted out, and there are ongoing discussions with the City of Winnipeg at this point in time directed at Elmwood. We are not walking away from it; we are not hiding from it. We have no solutions at this point in time. I want my honourable colleague to know that, in fact, this is a matter of significant concern to us, because we realize that it is a significant shortfall with the income.

As to just undertaking at this point to raise the percentage of asset for perpetual care, that is something we are considering. We are looking at it. I am not in a position today to give a commitment that I am going to unilaterally do it, but it is certainly something that has been under discussion as well. So we are looking at being creative with the solutions for this thing; we know it is a real problem. We know it is not going to go away—and it has got to be reasonably quickly, I would say within the next year. I would think within this growing season, certainly from the elm tree perspective, we cannot waste much more time talking. We have got to come up with some action I would think within the next three, four months, because from my

information from living in Crescentwood, which is also an urban forest area, the elm bark beetle flies in late August, goes after dead wood and spreads very quickly in the circulation of these beautiful trees. So we have got to take some active steps pretty soon.

So nothing definitive yet and that, I guess, brings my honourable colleague up to date with where we are at with the discussion, with the research, and with some of the directions we have been looking at.

**Mr. Maloway:** Thank you—

**Mr. Radcliffe:** If I could interrupt, Mr. Chair, for a second, I would ask the honourable member for Elmwood, are you through with Research and Planning, and we could excuse Mr. Anderson? Or would you like him to stay for a few minutes more? Okay.

**Mr. Maloway:** It has occurred to me that perhaps we should be looking at shoring up the bank at the Elmwood Cemetery. I am thinking of what is at The Forks. There is riprap or stones, whatever, put along the side to keep the river from eating away at it. I am sure there is good reason why the graves were removed on an emergency basis.

**An Honourable Member:** They were going to fall in the river.

**Mr. Maloway:** Right, but if we do not do something to shore up the bank and drop riprap in there or something to keep the bank up, we are just going to be moving another 12 next year and another 12 after that, because we are allowing the water to eat away at the bank. We take 12 this year, then it is going to be another 12 next year. Nobody has done anything with the bank over the last years that I can see.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** I believe that my honourable colleague is correct that we have got to direct our attention to the maintenance of shoring up the riverbank. I think that probably the first step is to research the extent of the wasting of the bank. I presume, with my knowledge of prairie rivers with the oxbow, that this is on the wasting side rather than the building side of the river. We have got to get some idea of cost for shoring it up. I think that is a very reasonable suggestion on the part of my honourable colleague.

\* (1720)

**Mr. Maloway:** I would like to ask the minister whether any work has been done or research has been done to deal with these out-of-province sellers who use the phones? They phone from Montreal, I believe that is a popular place but I believe also from the States. They sell vacation packages. Businesses for years have been getting what looks like invoices from the telephone system, from Manitoba Telephone System, and if you did not look at them too closely you might write a cheque. I guess enough people do, because these people stay in business.

So there are all sorts of these different scams that are perpetrated out there. The police evidently claim they are having problems with tracking them down, because I gather when they get a hold of them these guys run away. So you have countless Manitobans writing cheques and giving their credit cards out to people. They are told they have won a prize, and the prize they get turns out to be a little rubber boat or something, or they buy hundred-dollar pens.

So there is a whole range and variety of these things, but they all turn out to be, when you strip away the veils, just an attempt by some of these shysters to separate people from their money. I would like to know what it is that this research department is doing about that?

**Mr. Radcliffe:** I can be quite responsive to this and in fact give a very personal experience to my honourable colleague. One of my mother's friends was a woman about 94 who lives in the Lions home on Portage Avenue here. This woman is living independently. She has been very creative and in some very striking circumstances. She was brought up to expect great things out of life, and then when her husband died prematurely she was left bereft financially. She, although a person of very modest means, has exhausted every piece of savings of her own on these sort of telephone solicitations. I in fact had to rip up her credit card after she had loaded it up. She had consulted me as a solicitor, and she is in effect judgment-proof so that nobody was able to bring any legal process against her.

But I can assure you that I feel very strongly personally about these sort of solicitations, as well, and was exceedingly angry at the treatment and almost borderline abuse and harassment of these individuals phoning from out of province. Mr. Anderson advised me that the OPP, the Ontario Provincial Police in Ontario, have a phone busters detail, because the problem is that—and my honourable colleague has mentioned it, and you are quite correct—these people are based in Montreal. They are based in Toronto, and they phone into our jurisdiction, so that they are beyond the reach of our police or our peace enforcement officers. The OPP have been quite effective in following up where they can be identified, and we have referred a number of cases from our Consumers' Bureau to the phone busters, and this is one of the issues that Mr. Anderson's department is following up on with the co-operative enforcement where there is potential of Criminal Code violations or breach of better business or breach of consumer standards, et cetera, by way of harassment or abuse. I think that is one of the limited resources we have. The other, of course, is perhaps education.

But I can assure my honourable colleague that in this particular case that I am referring to, I think it is Reader's Digest and Columbia publishing are the two culprits in this case, and they have this particular woman involved with the sweepstakes. She thinks perpetually she is just on the verge of acquiring an incredible fortune. It just seems to be a moving target. It is month after month after month. She will phone me up month after month with these ongoing tales that Ed McMahon is about to come beating on her door and whisk her away in a limousine to Montreal to the opera and buy her a fancy frock. It is just—[interjection] No, this is a friend of my mother's.

This is a woman who was brought up with my mother and been a lifelong friend of my family. She has no other relatives in the city of Winnipeg. In fact, I have inherited her as part of my extended family and look after her to some very limited extent. It has just been something I tear my hair out—I know it is getting thin, like my honourable colleague from Transcona—[interjection] Exactly. We are follicly challenged.

It is recognized as a real social ill, and to date we have not been able to invoke our consumers officers

here, because these people are operating in from out of the jurisdiction. Education is an issue, but if these victims are almost willing to be preyed upon or are reluctant to disclose the extent of their victimization it is very difficult.

I can tell my honourable colleague that in fact I had an appointment for this particular friend of mine at Addictions Manitoba, and I was that morning phoned up from my law office to go and pick this woman up and just to confirm the appointment and she backed off. She refused to go and told me to mind my own business.

So I am personally aware and we as a department are also aware of the depredations and the social ills that this sort of practice effects on our population, and it is a limited element of the population, but still often they prey on lonely and needy and isolated people. Sometimes it is downright vicious.

So Mr. Anderson is advising me that in fact there is ongoing consultation across the country with different members of the Consumers departments in Canada talking about these sorts of people. As I said, I offer that one positive solution has been the OPP phone busters. Now, I am not aware of any positive results of what they have been able to accomplish, but I give you that as information.

**Mr. Maloway:** Well, for the second time this afternoon the minister has read my question, stolen my next question, because I was in fact going to ask him what sort of enforcement results were here to show for this because, I mean, this all sounds good, and on the surface of it it is a pretty big problem. It is difficult to solve, but I would be interested in knowing what sort of results they are getting with their operation phone busters and whether they have actually put anybody out of business, or is it just a case of their moving down the street and changing their phone number?

**Mr. Radcliffe:** We certainly will undertake to make those enquiries and get back to the honourable colleague on this. I would add, as well, that the more publicity that is given about these people, the way that they operate, and the fact that different jurisdictions are prepared to take steps to enforce sanctions against them has, in effect, and does start to change the statistics.

I can advise my honourable colleague as well, and again I am thinking back to the days of my legal practice that there was an individual here in Winnipeg who made it a practice of selling one-write bookkeeping systems. [interjection] Yes, and in fact I believe he has been prosecuted here in Manitoba, and I think that would be imminently deserved, which is sort of an unsolicited opinion on my behalf. I happened again, for another family member, to sue him to recover a significant deposit. I believe this was an individual who was within our jurisdiction, and there were criminal sanctions brought against him because that was fraudulent and the Consumers' branch did, I think, react quite aggressively with him and worked co-operatively with the Winnipeg police.

\* (1730)

That is where he would imply or infer that if you bought the one-write bookkeeping system that he had a whole string of clients that would then support you, and with very little personal effort you could achieve financial independence if you bought his system. Of course, you had to put your money up front and buy his inventory, and it was just an incredible flimflam.

These people seemed to have the knack to locate people who were unemployed or people who were not satisfied with their present system of employment and are looking for additional income and are, in some ways, vulnerable. That, with one case that I do recall, I ended up as solicitor suing him, recovering money from him and, I am aware because I just read something recently, that he was being prosecuted.

**Mr. Maloway:** I would like to ask the minister whether there have been any pyramid schemes operating in Manitoba lately. They roll through here periodically, everything from selling gold sales—well, there is a whole range of things that they do, and, once again, when you strip away the veils it turns out to be a pyramid sale, although there is always another twist to it. So they fool enough people into believing that it is actually legal, when it is not. Have there been any recent examples of this?

**Mr. Radcliffe:** What we could do with that question, I would suggest Mr. Chairman, is to defer that perhaps until Mr. Robidoux from the Consumers' Bureau is

here, because I think he will have more specific information on that.

**Mr. Maloway:** That is fair as far as I am concerned. I would like to ask the minister and his Research and Planning staff about their role in what has become known as the house-flipping ring of 1994, and what sort of research has been done in an effort to make sure that that does not happen again?

Just on the surface of it, I would say that the only advice I can give right now to solve the problem from happening again, and it is actually a simple answer, that is, that the appraisals that are done by The Appraisal Institute, that they are required to be given to all the parties in the real estate transaction. If that had been the case, that would have made some appraisers unhappy, okay, because they appraise the same property three or four times and collect fees for it, so they will be very unhappy, but the homeowners in all these cases would have been very happy because, as you know, when you buy a house and you get a mortgage on the house, the bank orders an appraisal, you pay for it, but you never get to see it because it belongs to the bank.

Now, if you decide you want to sell the house at some point and you need another appraisal, then you have to pay for that yourself. So typically people through the 10 or 20 years they own a house end up paying for appraisal after appraisal, all of which are the property, I guess, of the person that ordered the appraisal, but they are not shared among the parties.

What happened with these house-flipping cases—and I was involved in sorting out about 100 of them in total, and I guess that is what they come to right now. In all cases there was an appraiser involved in this whole thing too. It could not work. If you were looking for the end of the funnel, it was the appraisal, okay, because you had the lawyers from both sides, you had the house-flipping people that were involved in doing the flipping, and then you had the people that were buying it. You had all these different people involved in it to make it successful, but it would never have operated without the appraiser. That was the key. If the appraisal had been shown around, then the people that were buying the house would have known that the house was not worth that kind of money.

So that is what I would like to know what the research department knew back then and what they have done since then.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** If I could just ask a question for clarification of my honourable colleague. These are in the sale of used houses, and you are not discussing the fraud perpetrated by these appraisers on second mortgages or anything like that of overmortgaging. Rather, this is on a sale situation and a series of successive sales when there was in fact nowhere near the amount of equity that these—

**Mr. Maloway:** Precisely.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** Yes, okay. I am advised by my deputy that there has been nothing recent on this, that in the incident that my honourable colleague is referring to there was, I believe, a lawyer involved as well, and there was some disciplinary action taken at that point in time. This would be a matter which perhaps we could raise again when the Securities Commission folk are present because there was some action taken by the Securities people because part of their responsibility is the real estate board or the real estate conveyancing.

**Mr. Maloway:** I was simply trying, at this point anyway, to find out whether your Research and Planning department had any role to play in addressing this problem—

**Mr. Radcliffe:** No.

**Mr. Maloway:** —because this actually became knowledge of the department as early as April, I guess it was, of 1995, when they first found out about it. Presumably, it is still winding its way through, and we will have a conclusion, I guess, sometime before the end of the century. Out of that has to come some knowledge about how to make sure this does not happen again, and the planning department should be involved, I would think.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** I am advised that in fact this might well be something of a policy nature which might come from the Securities Commission because they do adjudicate over the real estate brokers.

\* (1740)

**Mr. Maloway:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to deal with the whole area of negative-option advertising, and I know that is something the Research and Planning department has dealt with over the years. People get right upset when they are negative optioned, particularly in the cable field, and I know that right now the cable companies are asking for back-to-back increases. At least in my cable area, they are exceeding the limits that they are allowed to get from the CRTC. They are allowed I believe it is a 10 percent increase, and they are asking for more than that. They are asking for more than they are allowed, but there is an exigency provision that allows that exception to be made. So that is what is happening right now with the cable people, and I have filed with the CRTC to make representations.

I guess I would like to ask the minister whether it would be appropriate for him to be doing the same thing on behalf of the cable subscribers in the province.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** Mr. Anderson tells me that he was quite active at the time when the Rogers Communications issue was current and before the public. He indicates that he met with both cable companies at that point in time, pointed out what an unsatisfactory effect this could have on the population, received the assurance from both cable companies that, were any complaint brought to them of somebody on a negative-option advertising who had been fished in and then realized subsequently that this was not the service that they wanted and wanted to suspend it and cancel, the cable companies would suspend that service immediately with no ulterior effects, no subsequent bad effects to the consumer.

Mr. Anderson tells me that subsequent to that undertaking he has had no complaints in his department that have come to his attention on this. My honourable colleague is perhaps his first complaint. We cannot say that he has not had any. You are the first complaint that he has perhaps had, and we will take due judicial notice.

**Mr. Maloway:** Mr. Chairman, I actually asked, though, whether his department would be intervening on behalf of the residents of Manitoba to object to this increase that goes in excess of what they are allowed.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** At this point in time, the position of the department is that the department would hesitate to take an advocacy role on behalf of consumers at this point. There are advocacy groups out there who more properly, perhaps, fulfill this role, but it is certainly something that could be considered at a future date.

**Mr. Maloway:** Could the minister tell us what he has decided to do about negative-option advertising? In Quebec, I believe they have banned it. I do not know what the status is in other provinces. I do not know what the status is federally. To give a bit of balance to it, I do not want to argue both sides of it, but I can tell you that negative optioning is done also in the insurance business. You recall the floods of three years ago. There are a pile of people who are very happy that they were negative optioned because they woke up the day after the floods to find out that they were going to collect \$10,000-\$20,000 to fix their new basement, and that was thanks to their being negative optioned.

So I know that we tend to be critical of negative optioning at times, but there is that balance to throw into the mix that, while it is objectionable to a lot of people that some service would be just put on your bill without consulting you, the fact of the matter is, I guess—and this is what the cable companies have argued with me and told me—that it would cost too much to go and put these—they have these plugs—to plug every residence in Winnipeg to cut the signal and then unplug it just for those who wanted to buy the signal, if you understand what I am saying. It would cost them enormous amounts of money to buy this little thing, little black box that they have to buy; then they would have to run around in their little trucks and physically put one of these blockers on everybody's cable; and then they would have to come back in their little trucks as people ordered the service. That is the justification they gave to me for why there was no other way. They said they did not like negative optioning, but they could not see any other way around it.

I know the other example is the insurance business where companies negative-option and the public have the right to take it off, but in the case of the floods I would not want to be on the other side of the fence having said that this is terrible and we are not going to negative-option and then have thousands of people not have their basements fixed.

So where are you going with negative optioning at this point?

**Mr. Radcliffe:** Well, Mr. Chair, I would advise this honourable committee that I have never really understood my house insurance nor the role that my agent plays. I have always suspected the insurance agents, perhaps, with the same level of program that is heaped upon us poor lawyers from time to time.

I can only respond to my honourable colleague that in fact, other than the two cable companies that I have just related to you, there was another corporation in which, Mr. Anderson advises, he pointed out to them, after a complaint, that they were involved in negative-option advertising. They withdrew their advertising from the market at that point in time. Other than that, there has been no activity either in the form of any regulatory or any complaint, so we have not to date seen that there has been a particular need to become involved with this type of activity.

**Mr. Maloway:** Mr. Chairman, so the minister then is saying that there are no plans for legislation at this point in time.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** There are no plans at this point for any legislation in the coming session with regard to this type of advertising. No.

**Mr. Maloway:** Mr. Chairman, I believe the Research and Planning department has spent some effort looking at franchise legislation. They may recall a few years ago we introduced franchise legislation based on the Alberta model or modifications of the Alberta model. In Alberta, at that time, I believe they were the only province in the country that had such legislation. I do not know who in the States had legislation, but I think there was some down there. There were certain aspects of the legislation that we liked in the Alberta legislation. Once again I do not have my notes here, and I will make sure I have them here on Monday to deal with this more fully.

It seems that this is an expanding area. With people taking early retirement and buy-outs and so on, the number of people that are willing to invest their life savings in franchising is frightening. I mean almost everybody, including people today in this very

committee room earlier on, is contemplating what they are going to do with the rest of their lives after they finish their careers and whatever it is that they are in. So what we see is increasing numbers of people retiring as teachers, policemen, and other professions, getting buy-outs and looking around for something to do with the rest of their lives and with this money.

What I fear is happening, in fact what I know is happening is there are all kinds of people willing to accommodate these people. I think what you are going to see is a lot of lost life savings. I mean people who have never spent any time in business are going to jump into buying franchises, not checking them out properly, and are going to lose everything they have got.

Statistically we know that franchising is a more sound way of doing business than just getting in on your own kind of business. Statistically it is better, especially if you lack experience. Whether or not it is enforced slavery and whatnot, I guess that is debatable. You find that out once you have signed the franchise agreement I guess. I guess if you are successful and make a lot of money, you will not complain.

\* (1750)

But Alberta had requirements that disclosures had to be made. One of the things you find in franchise companies—there is no secret as to why they avoid Alberta when they are setting up. Franchise companies that are, for example, operating out of Toronto, when they are setting up their plans to sell their franchises, it is curious that they tend to miss Alberta. The reason they do not like Alberta too much is because they operate on a prospectus basis almost, that before you are going to sell a franchise in Alberta, you have to draw up a prospectus, and you have to give full disclosure to the people you are selling this thing to.

More importantly, you have to live up to the promises you make. What the big problem is with any kind of franchise—and the minister being a lawyer has probably run into this before—you hear it over and over and over again, that the person signs a franchise agreement. These franchise agreements by the way are 100 pages long and nobody but a lawyer—even lawyers do not understand them. But they are always geared against the person signing it. There are all kinds of gag orders

and stuff written in automatically into this thing. So the result is that when things go wrong, and they always do, you never hear about it in the press because one after another these people that want to talk to me cannot because they are stuck with gag orders. They have lost all their money; they are out of business, and on top of that they have a gag order that says they cannot criticize the franchise owner.

Typically what happens is there are promises that have not been kept. A franchise operator with all the best of intentions comes in and says they are going to spend a million dollars in advertising, say in Manitoba. Then they do not sign up enough franchise people, so they are not able to spend the million. They are just taking money from Peter to pay Paul, that sort of operation, because they expanded too quickly or whatever the reasons.

So the franchise buyer, the person who buys them, frequently finds that the promises that were made are not kept. Alberta's legislation spells it out. It says, if you promise to spend a million dollars in advertising in the first 12 months, then you had better spend that million dollars in the first 12 months; not a million over 24 months but a million over 12. If you are going to promise in the first place, then you had better follow through with your promises, right? So certainly if you are franchise operator operating in Alberta you do not want to make many promises, and if you do make them, you are going to want to keep them. There are a whole bunch of other rules that they have that were particularly useful and helpful. If I were going to buy a franchise, I would be wanting to buy it in Alberta; and if I wanted to be selling them, I would be wanting to be selling them anywhere but Alberta, based on the laws.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** Just by way of clarification, I would ask my colleague: Would not the strictures of the civil law apply that, if a franchisor had failed to live up to his side of the agreement, one could either issue civil process against him or refrain from making payments in the franchise agreement and use that as a shield to protect yourself?

**Mr. Maloway:** Well, it is a more widespread problem than you would imagine, and I guess that is because people are embarrassed. They are embarrassed, they are tied, they have got their gag orders. There is a

whole range of reasons. I know your Research and Planning department has been involved in this before because I bring this up every year and I have introduced this bill several times now. I just finally gave up because I just got ministers who were less and less inclined. I must admit that it has been getting better. The list of ministers has been improving and is really improving now, so there is some hope.

But since Ed Connery was the minister—Ed was the last activist minister. Ed really did believe in doing things, and he would go to cabinet and he would browbeat them. He browbeat them until he got his Business Practices Act, and I give him full credit for that. I said I did not care who brought it in as long as it was brought in, and, to his credit he did it. But after Ed left, things kind of fell apart, and they kind of improved a little bit under Jim Ernst but not a lot because he does not really believe in intervention. He was good on the gas price issue because he was kind of interested in that one.

So anyway we should be bringing this back, this franchise legislation, because you know we are nine years down the pike here and people are nine years older than they were when this government took effect, and this government, a lot of them are going to be unemployed after the election. They are going to be looking at franchises, and I want to protect them. I want to see them protected in advance because I do not want them coming back here. I want to launch them on successful careers and see them be successful and not come back here.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** Well, in partial response to my honourable colleague's question, I would say that, of course, members of the Tory government are quite wise as to business practices and we would take due diligence to make sure that these agreements have been well circulated—[interjection] Well, he responds and says that we should consult with Mr. Bessey. I do not think there is a better consultant that has come out of the province of Manitoba than Mr. Bessey, and look how he has prospered and what wonderful things he has done for the good people of Manitoba. Of course, the Tory members of this government would not hesitate to contact and consult expert legal counsel. Of course, we would rely on the wisdom of the legal profession, which often gets short shrift in some circles,

but I am sure that my honourable colleague would agree with me that in fact one should never take a significant step in one's life, especially one's commercial life, without the due diligence and the thorough investigation by a skilled attorney.

But I will inquire of Mr. Anderson as to what steps he has taken with this regard, if you can just indulge me one moment.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. McAlpine):** The honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, with a very short answer.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** All right. Well, perhaps, we can continue this answer tomorrow, but I can start off just by saying that there appear to be two areas of activity. One is the requirement for disclosure and the other is dispute resolution.

**Mr. Maloway:** You are working on it.

**Mr. Radcliffe:** Yes, and this is being addressed under the internal trade agreement interprovincially. I am told that there is a consumer measures committee that is studying this now with some attempt at getting some consistency and harmony interprovincially across the country.

**Mr. Maloway:** So Alberta will collapse its—

**Mr. Radcliffe:** Yes, I am told that Alberta's legislation calls for a good faith body and also resorts to courts for resolution of dispute. In fact, if they are successful with this consumer measures committee, there would be some rectification of that.

**Mr. Maloway:** I think Alberta actually changed their—

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. McAlpine):** The hour being six o'clock, committee rise.

\* (1430)

#### CHILDREN AND YOUTH SECRETARIAT

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Mervin Tweed):** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply will be considering

the Estimates for the Children and Youth Secretariat. Does the honourable minister responsible have an opening statement?

**Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services):** Yes, I do, Mr. Chairperson. I have copies for the opposition parties.

Mr. Chairperson, I am pleased to outline the direction for the Children and Youth Secretariat for the coming year. The secretariat was originally formed to co-ordinate and integrate services for children at risk in Manitoba.

This government has recognized that services for children can best be provided when all government departments work in co-operation and in the best interests of children. This co-ordination means many of us will have to think about how we build better systems to share information, how we deliver programs, about how we form new interactions with families and with the community and about how the skills of staff are best used.

\* (1440)

We will continue to work with families to develop new approaches to obtaining the best possible care for the children and young people we serve. We know that some families are anxious to try alternative approaches to dealing with service providers and are asking government for more options. However, we must be thoughtful in the way we allocate our resources. It is essential to look at approaches that demonstrate they can make a difference, provide better services, as well as result in healthier children and more stable families. We can contribute to the growth and development within our province.

We know some approaches used in the past did not work. We realize many individuals in our communities need support to help them go and development their own skills. To this end, we have several processes underway which rely on the participation of parents and community groups. For example, the Coalition for Families in Support of Children Living in the Community is working with the secretariat on approaches that will enable families to have more say in the way services are provided for their special needs



children. The families have told me they are often frustrated with services that do not fit with their particular circumstances. Therefore, we must be open to proposals that fit families' individual needs while still being fiscally sound.

Over the next 18 months the Special Education Review will be consulting parents, school personnel, and community members concerning service to special needs students in our schools. This comprehensive review will provide a blueprint to improve delivery of services to special needs students and their families.

Through partnerships, I am hopeful that together we can find creative solutions which will ensure government is moving in a direction that supports healthy families and communities. To achieve this result, we looked worldwide for "best practices" and were disappointed to find there was so little research on Canadian models.

I have been impressed with the work I have seen by service providers in our communities, and I believe we must ensure that research takes place so that we can better evaluate the effectiveness of the various programs being used.

We know intuitively that some of the programs we see underway locally are outstanding examples of the direction in which we want to go—Andrews Street Family Centre is such an example. However, too often we have not ensured the research component to these projects so that we can point to their concrete positive outcomes as Manitoba's "best practices." We must be prepared when these "best practices" give us clear examples of change that needs to be made to redirect funding from services which cannot demonstrate effectiveness. We need to be able to point to better methods and to shift our service delivery, confident that it is the right thing to do.

We also need to be building partnerships with the business, community and government sectors. Recently, we co-operated with CEDA, the Winnipeg Free Press, and the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce to host workshops with Dr. Larry Schweinhart from the Perry Preschool project in Michigan. We were reminded by him of the statistics which demonstrate that every dollar invested in early childhood

intervention and prevention can save \$7 for expenditures that would have been needed in the future without these interventions.

Much of the work being done in projects such as the Perry Preschool program is already being done by practitioners in our day care and preschool programs. We intend to more carefully document where Manitoba models have had success and where more supports are needed to achieve optimal results for our children and youth.

Government needs to ensure that we are moving in a direction that supports healthy families and communities. Part of the success of this strategy will be through developing real partnerships with all sectors of our community. One of the early initiatives that we requested the secretariat undertake was an analysis of the programmatic and fiscal status of each of the initial four departments. Following this, the Children and Youth Secretariat collected and analyzed data on the 50 youths identified by each department as having highest need, a total of 198 in all.

From this analysis we learned that we spent \$1.4 million per day, or \$1,000 per minute, on this relatively small group of children and youth. The examination of this group began the careful consideration of what intervention strategies are needed to be effective in creating change. Although we have increased spending in many areas of children's services, we did not see the lives of these 200 children and their families, or others similar to them, significantly improved. As an important first step in a co-operative and integrated delivery system that will see Manitoba's children and their families better served, we are redirecting almost \$9 million. This includes our newly announced ChildrenFirst fund of \$500,000, which, I am pleased to note, has already been augmented by some partner departments.

Funds have been allocated to a number of projects directed at high-risk children. Families and Schools Together is a project that is being funded as a school-based collaborative, family-focused program designed to increase the self-esteem and improve the school performance of at-risk elementary school children. It does this by supporting the natural strength of the family unit.

The Urban Sports Camp is a component of the Urban Safety initiatives under the Winnipeg Development Agreement. The objective of this program is to support measures which enhance the safety of neighbourhoods in the larger community and also prevent crime and violence, particularly among youth. This Urban Sports Camp strategy is focusing on providing alternatives to gang activity. Partnerships with community groups and agencies, such as the Rotary Club, the United Way, Winnipeg Boys and Girls Clubs, Rossbrook House, Andrews Street, and Teen Jeneusse have been ongoing. The Winnipeg Native Alliance has taken a leadership role in this program.

Children and Youth Secretariat will be actively working with my department on the redirection of funds into an emergency crisis stabilization system. This plan will include home-based intervention teams and better use of our child welfare residential care system. The secretariat facilitated the development of a three-phase cross sectoral plan to increase the range and co-ordination of services for technology-dependent children and their families. The third phase is a plan which provides for the equitable distribution of community-based therapy services for disabled children. Proposals for the provision of these services are currently under review.

The Inner City Review Committee was established to address issues of concern to people living in the inner city of Winnipeg. Membership includes the federal and provincial government representatives, the City of Winnipeg, United Way and the Winnipeg Foundation. One of the issues discussed by this committee is the need for adequate nutrition for children and families. The community partners committee has been set up to explore nutrition initiatives for targeted communities with the Canadian Living Foundation. The International Children's Festival is involved with the project for approximately a hundred inner-city youth in the Circus and Magic Partnership, the first such project of this nature in Canada. This is a Winnipeg Development Agreement, Urban Safety initiative. Youth, ages 10 to 13, at risk of involvement with crime, drug abuse and other gang-related activities, will be taught a variety of performing arts to channel their energies into acquiring creative skills. They will then take part in the festival by conducting a workshop called Under the Big Top.

The Northern Summer Youth Education Program received new funding through the Aboriginal Justice Initiatives Fund to provide summer recreational programming for children and youth, ages four to 20, in isolated northern aboriginal communities. Evaluation of past projects showed a decrease in delinquencies in northern communities where this programming was provided.

Members will recall the secretariat was initially established to co-ordinate the efforts of the Departments of Family Services, Health, Education and Training, Justice, and later, Culture, Heritage and Citizenship. I was delighted in January when the Departments of Housing, Urban Affairs, and Northern and Native Affairs were added. I believe we have seven significant departments which are committed to work co-operatively and to develop programs in the best interests of Manitoba's children and youth.

As examples of areas where energy should be focused, we note the disheartening growth in the number of children born with fetal alcohol syndrome and fetal alcohol effect, as well as growth in the number of children born to adolescent parents. We have seen, however, a growing number of groups coming forward and identifying this as a significant area for work. This year the Association for Community Living is working with the Manitoba Marathon to help develop an aboriginal challenge relay. On Father's Day this year, challenge races will be held in aboriginal communities throughout this province with the proceeds from the races going to support initiatives that deal with fetal alcohol syndrome and fetal alcohol effects. These complex matters require us to work in harmony with families and their communities.

\* (1450)

In the months ahead, we will concentrate on five areas: support for families at risk in the first three years after a child is born, support for preschool children and their families to prepare them for formal learning, reducing the number of adolescent pregnancies, reducing the number of children who are born with FAS, FAE support for a community outreach model that will use schools as a basis for building stronger communities.

As I mentioned earlier, we will examine the matter of adolescent pregnancy. The statistics are alarming. There is a strong correlation between poor families and adolescent pregnancy. Four babies are born to adolescent parents every day. Fifty-five percent of employment and income assistance expenditures can be attributed to sole-support parents who became parents as teenagers, and almost half of all unmarried mothers in the province are aboriginal.

The problem with adolescent pregnancy in our aboriginal communities is growing. We need community-based solutions. As a first step, the Children and Youth Secretariat will soon launch a joint project with Metis Women of Manitoba to examine the issue of preventing adolescent pregnancy. Chief executive officer of the Children and Youth Secretariat and the president of Metis Women of Manitoba will visit six northern aboriginal communities to work with adolescent girls and their mothers to determine possible solutions to this significant problem.

We have begun to work with the various players involved in the issue of fetal alcohol syndrome. We know that, although there are different philosophies to preventing FAS births, everyone is alarmed by the increasing numbers of children born with this life-destroying syndrome. We are also aware that there needs to be a number of players involved in both identifying and working on solutions.

As well as concentrating on emerging issues, we must make sure that successful measures that have protected the security of our children are being shared and applied more widely. For example, to further assure the safety of the children in our schools, we are developing a protocol on personal screening for standardization and implementation in the schools across the province. This protocol will mean that all personnel who have contact with children—teachers, janitors, support staff in all schools across the province—will undergo criminal and abuse registry screening in a regular, systematic way.

We need to keep working to maintain the highest standards for those who work with our most troubled youth. This week I was pleased to announce that the departments of Justice, Family Services, Health and Education are co-operating to fund a child and youth

care worker program at Red River Community College. This program was developed in conjunction with service providers who deal with these very troubled youth in their facilities. On their advice, it carefully incorporates both a proactive and an up-to-date, theoretical component.

Red River Community College will use distance education technology to make this training available to northern and remote areas. They have also designed this course to incorporate a significant cultural component.

There is another step in building a supportive net of services for children in caregiving facilities. The systems that we have in place often need to take special measures to assist those children who are in care of Child and Family Services agencies. The Children and Youth Secretariat has been working with the education and social services communities to develop a placement protocol to transition foster children into receiving schools. We believe that this will not only help the child to feel more secure about making the move to a new school environment, but will also greatly assist the school in helping create a positive environment for the child.

Frequently, what is needed when a number of agencies or institutions are working on a particular issue is a framework and some well-understood guidelines on how appropriate information will be shared. For example, a cross-section of government representatives, including Corrections personnel, educators, social service workers, as well as police, community agencies and other professionals involved in service delivery and public protection, worked on the development of a street gang protocol, which is in the final stages of implementation. This protocol is designed to improve and allow for more effective information sharing about individuals involved in street gangs. The protocol will ensure the variety of professionals who come into contact with a street gang member are not working in isolation from each other.

Most of us are fortunate to grow up in families that provide us with a stable sense of our personal and family history. Unfortunately, this is not always the case when children must be taken into permanent care. The secretariat will work with staff of my department

and child welfare agencies to develop a Know Your Roots project, which will ensure permanent wards of the province have this opportunity to learn more about their personal histories.

Special needs children often have unique considerations as they enter the school system. A transition-to-school protocol is being developed to assist these children to best adapt to the school environment. These protocols are some examples of the steps that are being taken to make sure we are all working in the best interest of Manitoba's children.

Recently I tabled three documents in the House, which were produced by the secretariat and which outline service priorities for Manitoba's children and youth. They were Strategy Considerations for Developing Services for Children and Youth, the ChildrenFirst Strategic Plan, and A Statement of Government Policy on Children and Youth in Manitoba.

The first document is a compilation of the work of the steering committees. These steering committees were established by the secretariat to address priority issues that had been identified through extensive consultations. The steering committees examined five areas: early childhood, adolescence and pregnancy, care and protection of children, critical health incidence, and high-risk children and youth. They also included four working group reports on gangs, the emotional disorders, juvenile prostitution, and youth sexual offenders.

Firstly, I would like to thank those members of the community, as well as the representatives of government departments, who worked so hard on these reports. They were thoughtfully done, and the members struggled with complex issues.

These committees came together to offer the Children and Youth Secretariat written consultation of some specific and very important issues. Each of the committees knew that they were working on one part of the problems facing at-risk children in this province, and that their consultation was part of an overall strategy. Their contribution has been critical to understanding what we need to do to truly help children. My only disappointment is that the hours of

work and intensive effort of these many Manitobans have been used as a political issue. I am impressed by their work and know that is something upon which we will need to build. We are not hiding their efforts; in fact, we have taken the unusual step of having these nongovernmental reports made available through statutory publications.

Recent suggestions that government has buried the reports of these committees detract from the important work that they did and the contribution of that work to our overall plan. Some of the most valuable contributions from the steering committees were the identification by community experts of "best practices." Members had diverse experience and worldwide connections. They were able to steer the Children and Youth Secretariat toward some important examples throughout the world where projects that dealt with some of the complex problems that we are facing had some success. These "best practices" have been extremely helpful in our considerations of next steps.

As a result of the secretariat's analysis of the reports, and information provided from its many other consultations, recommendations were focused on fundamental changes that need to occur. This, in turn, resulted in the directions I have mentioned—that is, early intervention, support for families at risk, a stop FAS-FAE program, a campaign to prevent adolescent pregnancy, and an approach to build better school-home-community partnerships through community schools.

\* (1500)

All of the initiatives we are considering implementing will be based on "best practices." A number of projects are already underway. We know we must keep talking to young people whose lives are affected by the new directions we are taking. We know we must keep talking to the communities who support these young people. To this end, we have supported youth conferences, both in the North and here in Winnipeg; we supported the recent Blueprint for Careers conference, the Aboriginal Youth Justice Symposium, and the provincial aboriginal youth conference '97.

We have already distributed a thousand copies of the strategic documents. We have provided over 20

workshops to date, and more extensive workshops are planned. We have made sure our documents have been available to the youth at conferences in both the North and in Winnipeg. It is evident that considerable work has been undertaken by the staff of the Children and Youth Secretariat in the past two years.

I would like to express my appreciation to the former assistant deputy minister, Reg Toews, who undertook the difficult task of laying the groundwork for the secretariat. I trust he is finding his new challenge in the Regional Health Authority as stimulating as his work with the secretariat. I was very pleased when the current CEO, Doris Mae Oulton, agreed to take up the reins after Mr. Toews had left. Her organizational capabilities have already been in evidence.

I want to offer a special word of thanks to the staff, all of them seconded from the various departments, for their pioneering work. I appreciate their continued effort and diligence as we move forward to build on the foundations they have developed.

Mr. Chair, with these few comments, I would invite questions from my honourable friends regarding the work of the Children and Youth Secretariat. Thank you.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Tweed):** I thank the minister for those comments. Does the official opposition critic, the honourable member for Radisson, have any opening comments?

**Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson):** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will just want to make a few comments. Actually, I think what I am going to do after that is just—with the notes that the minister has provided for her opening statement, there are a number of issues I would like to follow up from there and then get into some very detailed questions about the very numerous reports and documents that have been produced by the secretariat. It seems that recently there has been more activity from the secretariat. It seemed like for a long while there was not a lot of information that was being made public, but there have been a number of reports and clear directions that were given to this Youth Secretariat. There have been a number of government reports from other departments related to children that this secretariat has responsibility for implementing. I

guess I am concerned that of all this information, the reports that are being made public, that are making up the action plan of the secretariat are fairly thin when we look at the tasks that are being taken on by the secretariat. That is one of the things I want to deal with.

It also seems that although there are some positive initiatives from the secretariat, we are concerned that on the big picture, in the larger context in many government departments that have representation through the secretariat, the larger government programs are going in the opposite direction than stated objectives and intent of the Children and Youth Secretariat. In numerous areas, whether it is poverty and housing, support for families and nutrition through social allowance and community programs, health care, education, funding for schools in terms of special needs children through the paraprofessionals, et cetera, there are huge cuts that go directly against the minister's opening statement and the case that she is making for the Youth Secretariat today in their attempt to deal with the large problems that are facing children and youth in Manitoba.

So in that sense, the main objective of the Children and Youth Secretariat which is to endeavour to steer the government's services for children and youth and their families in larger systemic changes and co-ordinating larger changes seems to be missed. Instead of continuing on as they did at the outset with their initial documents going back to 1994-95, Building Healthy Communities and the ChildrenFirst—Restructuring Service Systems from 1995 where they were talking about benchmarks and specific goals, the kinds of goals and specific strategies coming out of the Youth Secretariat now are very much ad hoc. They do not address, other than I think I have seen through—what I have seen so far in the area fetal alcohol syndrome, they do not actually set any goals to reduce things like poverty, child abuse, teen pregnancy, drug addictions by youth, all these various areas that are of serious concern. Instead, we have small projects, some may call them token projects, some of them are good ideas, but they do not embrace the intent of the secretariat, which was to deal with a systemic, co-ordinating role in government in addressing the needs of children and youth who are having to deal with government and community services.

The ChildrenFirst strategy, itself, is a compilation of the numerous working group reports, and it very much has watered down the number of the recommendations that were made. A number have been left out and it seems like a lot of this is cost driven, and I am concerned that although the government has said a number of times in their documents that the needs of children are utmost, it seems like this strategy continues to be guided by cost. There is reference to its going to be integrated with the Service First Initiative which is also a government cross interdepartmental initiative to reduce the civil service and that is of concern.

Some of the reports have produced useful statistics, and that has indeed painted a very bleak picture in many instances, some of the statistics the minister has referenced in her opening statements specifically with regard to the area of teen or adolescent pregnancy. Then when I look at the actual strategies that they are incorporating through their so-called action plan, it just does not seem that they are taking the strongest recommendations in many cases and implementing them.

One of the other concerns that I have is, unlike the mandate of the Children and Youth Secretariat, the initiatives that have come out through the ChildrenFirst strategy and their other activities, as outlined by the minister in an opening statement, is it does not seem that there is an acknowledgement of the links of the different issues affecting children and youth. The links between abuse, mental health and mental illness, poverty, unemployment and how, once someone enters the system in dealing with all these issues, they tend to then become marginalized. It is very difficult for them to function either through their childhood and adolescence or as an adult.

So that is one of the other concerns that I have, especially when we are dealing with poverty, that there does not really seem to be enough of a strategy to address the interrelationship between all these issues and poverty. The minister had mentioned that there is a correlation between teen pregnancy and poverty, but when I look at some of the cuts that are being made, the fact that that is recognized in her opening statement, is not reflected in government policy and even in the strategies that are being put forward through her documents that she has tabled in the House.

\* (1510)

I know that the minister and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) were recently questioned quite extensively on the issue of poverty and children and their families, and it seems that not only with this government, but I would also say in the community with a number of their supporters in particular, there is this attitude that poverty has always been there, and it is something that always has to be there or will always be there, I guess I should say. That kind of sort of resignation and attitude which, I must say, I hear from people that share the government's economic analysis and point of view, cannot be accepted. That kind of attitude of resignation can just not be accepted, and you cannot start from that point when you really want to address the issue. We just have to all agree that we cannot accept the ongoing gap that is growing between those children and their families that are of low means and affluence, that are of low income and those that are increasingly more advantaged.

I am very interested in following up on the funding of the Youth Secretariat and the \$500,000 for the ChildrenFirst fund. I am starting to get a better picture now of how that is going to be allocated. The minister has said that there is going to be some augmentation of that by other departments, so I want to spend some time looking at that.

Just generally, as well, in closing, I am concerned when I read through the opening overview of the ChildrenFirst strategy where there is this ongoing emphasis on the individual and this ongoing emphasis on community base. I am concerned that for this government that is code words for their offloading of their responsibility.

I am going to be asking some serious questions in all of this of what is the government's specific role in dealing with their ongoing responsibilities for protecting children in Manitoba, who are being neglected, abused or mistreated, and who grow up in families where they do not have the means to have the ability to fulfill their full potential. I think that is what we want for all children in Manitoba. We want them to have the means and the conditions, so that when they are growing up to fulfill their full potential as individuals to feel like they are a part of the community

through all stages of their life, to feel like they are loved and cared for, that they have hope and that they do not, as we have heard through the many reports—I have some of them stacked on the desk here with me now. We have heard from the United Way of Winnipeg. We have heard from another group that went to a national conference in Canada last fall. I have the Crossroads for Canada, A Time to Invest in Children of Families, the Campaign 2000 discussion paper—all of them are saying that we are actually losing the battle in terms of elevating the status and condition for healthy, happy, successful children.

Those, I guess, are the main concerns that I want to raise and comments that I want to make in my opening statement. I will, if I might, then just move right into some questions based on the statement that the minister has just made. I think what I am going to do is start from the back.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Tweed):** Before I have you move into that, I want to thank you for your opening comments. I would invite the members of the minister's staff to now enter the Chamber. If I could, I would like to ask the minister to introduce her staff to us, please.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Mr. Chairperson, I would like to introduce Doris Mae Oulton who is the new CEO for the Children and Youth Secretariat; Neil Butchard has been seconded from Education; and Leanne Boyd has been seconded from Health.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Tweed):** If I could ask one of the staff at the table to write the three names down just for clarification for Hansard in the spelling and title.

Now the item before the committee is item 34.1 Children and Youth Secretariat (a) Salaries and Employee Benefits \$434,400.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Just to clarify further, the staff that the minister has at the table with her, the person who is with Education, I did not catch their name.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Neil Butchard.

**Ms. Cerilli:** As I said, I am going to begin by asking some questions based on the minister's statement that

she just made. I guess, first of all, I want to deal with some of the last points that she made in terms of us raising issues about the Children and Youth Secretariat's reports and the disparity between the working group reports and the government's documents that she has tabled as being political issues or having them used as political issues.

Mr. Chairperson, this seems to be the latest government tactic in the House: whenever we raise an issue that is deeply of concern to us and many members of the public, we are accused of simply using it as a political issue. I find this quite offensive. I find it offensive to this House; I find it quite offensive to our role as opposition. As we will see throughout these Estimates, there are serious questions to be raised about the difference in what the government heard from the community and their working groups and what they have decided to include in their strategy. I find that problematic.

For her to go on and then suggest that they are doing some great service to the public with their now disclosing the reports from the working groups when I asked since last June for those to be released and had to go through a Freedom of Information search to get those reports and now find that they are in the statutory publications, I find that also is misleading and does not do anything to clarify the situation for the many individuals that worked on these publications and the members in the community who are relying on some leadership from the government in this area.

I know that many of my colleagues have been asking questions about the recommendations in these reports, and I want to ask a question of the minister about the reference on a number of occasions to the identification of "best practices." I am wanting for the minister to clarify how this is being done and what that refers to particularly in light of the reference in the ChildrenFirst document to this being co-ordinated or also included in the Service First Initiative. Are these "best practices," as the minister's statements suggest, that are being sought out from across the world in terms of the best approaches that are being used with children and youth who are at risk, or is this some type of bureaucratic, operational kind of "best practice" as we are seeing throughout many government departments with the Service First Initiative?

That is one of the first areas I want the minister to clarify. I mean, I get a lot of information through a magazine from Europe on youth services in Europe, and I am aware of some very progressive things being done, particularly in Scandanavian countries. We can maybe move on to some of those specifics later, but right now I am just wanting the minister to clarify what "best practices" actually means and how that is specifically being determined for here in Manitoba.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** I thank my honourable friend for her opening comments. I guess when she talks about the opposition taking offence to some of the comments that the government makes, I think I need to put on the record clearly the whole intent of the working committees. I want to, at the outset, thank very seriously all of the members of the community and government departments that participated in that process.

\* (1520)

I know that, at the start of those committees as the committees were chosen by the secretariat under Reg Toews at the time, on many, many occasions Reg commented to the members of the committee that they were steering committees of the secretariat, working groups of the secretariat, not working groups to make recommendations to government or to a minister or ministers, but working groups that would do their work, make recommendations to the secretariat, have that information compiled. They would look then at what was intersectoral, would look at redirection of money, not new money. That was made clear right up front when the working groups were established, and my honourable friends across the way keep trying to make those working committees something that they were not, and that is committees to make recommendations to government. They were working committees of the secretariat. They were to look at co-ordination of services, help government to understand how departments could co-operate in a better fashion to provide better service to children.

So I take great offence at the opposition trying to use those reports as something other than what they were intended for. They were working documents of the secretariat. It was spelled out very clearly. I have

talked to many volunteers who committed their time to work on those working groups, and they tell me that they knew right up front exactly what their role was and they wanted to provide some support and understanding to the process that the Children and Youth Secretariat was going through.

So that is why I feel very saddened that, when questions come up in this House from the opposition, they take that work out of context and try to use it in some other fashion to be critical of government or the secretariat or the process that was undertaken. So I want to say again, those were working documents done for the secretariat's use in order to compile suggestions and ideas that were intersectoral in an approach to try to ensure that we were breaking down barriers within government and, through identification of where some of the gaps might be and where services could better be provided in a co-ordinated approach, we would take that information and compile it into strategic ways of dealing with the children and youth in our province that needed our support.

So I want it to be clear right at the outset, Mr. Chairperson, that the opposition understood and as—I mean, we can spend a lot of time going through each of the recommendations and each of the working groups' documents, and I will repeat time and time again for my honourable friend until she can understand it clearly what the intent of those reports were and how we have now developed the areas that we want to move on in a co-ordinated fashion within government and also with the engagement of the community.

I think the next issue that my honourable friend raised was the issue around "best practices," and I have said many times and I will repeat again that we want to ensure that the dollars that we are spending are measuring positive outcomes. We want to see good results for the dollars that we spend. We put more money into the system for children year after year through every government department and yet we are not convinced that the services that are being provided are co-ordinated or being used in the best manner possible to ensure that children are being better served. More money does not necessarily mean better service. We need to co-ordinate the efforts that we undertake. We need to break down barriers in departments.



We also need to break down some barriers that are out there in the community. I have held many community consultations that people have participated in and told me that we need to be working more co-operatively. There are lots of programs ongoing out there. There needs to be co-ordination of those programs.

We do not need any more dollars spent on bricks and mortar and administration and overhead. We need the dollars going to the families and the children that need the support and the service. I have challenged the community many times and I will continue to do that and they are up to the challenge, I want to tell my honourable friend. They are looking at how they can work better together out in the community. We are working as government with other levels of government and with other funders to try to co-ordinate our activity.

I know my honourable friend made reference to the United Way report, and we can get into great detail about that report and I hope we do during these Estimates, but the whole exercise was to look at and explore with the community what we could do better, how we could co-ordinate what is happening out there as a result of the economic times and the emerging needs of families and children, what is happening that is working better, what needs to happen in order for us to all get a grip, a handle on how we can better support children and families that need our support.

So "best practices" talks about measuring of outcomes. If we look at—what was the word—Service First, if we have data and information that can be collected as a result of better information systems within government, then we can better measure programs and outcomes, and we can follow children through from birth to 18 years old. We can follow people through into the adult system. If we have better information and better systems, we can better measure what we are doing and determine whether we are having a positive impact on the lives of families and children throughout our Manitoba communities. So that is what we are talking about when we are talking about "best practices."

**Ms. Cerilli:** I want to get into asking some specific questions, but I just want to respond to the minister for one moment and clarify. No matter what you have said

about the working groups and the members of those working groups knowing that they were there to provide recommendations to the government, the government—

### Point of Order

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Here, again, my honourable friend is twisting what I said. Those were working documents. Members of the community and those committees understood right up front that they were providing information, recommendations to the Children and Youth Secretariat; working committees of that secretariat, not of government. They knew, and they still understand that. As I talked to them last week and the week before, they said they understood clearly what their role was. If my honourable friend has information to say something different, let her tell me where she has that information from. I know what we established when we established the Children and Youth Secretariat, and I know what Reg Toews was trying to accomplish with those working groups.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Tweed):** Order, please. The honourable minister does not have a point of order.

\* \* \*

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Tweed):** The honourable member for Radisson, to pose her question.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Mr. Chairperson, if I might continue. This is a time for debate and we can disagree here. Unlike in Question Period, we can debate at this point. This is one of the opportunities as MLAs, government and opposition, that we have a chance to exchange views.

I want to clarify for the minister, as she has tried to clarify for me, that no matter what she says about the recommendations that were made by those working groups, whether it is the secretariat or cabinet that made the decisions of which to include and which to exclude from their plans, that is what they will be held accountable for. When there are recommendations in those reports that are good recommendations—progressive, workable, efficient, wonderful ideas that are not acted upon—then that is what we are concerned about. So I just want her to understand where I am coming from on that one.

\* (1530)

I want to move on to ask a specific question about her comments in her opening statement about the focus of the secretariat. Right now, one of the things is a campaign to prevent adolescent pregnancy. There has been some detail in the opening statement as well about parts of this, I do believe, if I can find the page. I am wanting for the minister to describe for me what all of the components are of this campaign on adolescent pregnancy. Here it is. I see here that there are going to be staff who are going to go to six northern aboriginal communities to talk to girls and their mothers. There is going to be some attention to FAS. I am wondering, I know that there are also a few recommendations in the ChildrenFirst document related to teenage pregnancy, but I am not convinced that this is a campaign.

This is one of the areas, I think, that we have some concerns about the weakness of the government's strategy in really addressing this significant problem. The minister in her statements has acknowledged that there are relationships between educational level, poverty, teen pregnancy. We know that there is a higher incidence among aboriginal young women, and this I would think should be a priority area for the secretariat. So I am pleased to see that it seems like that is happening and that we are on the same track there, but I am wanting for the minister to describe what this campaign involves in its entirety and also, as we go through each of these areas, if you could describe the finances that are going to be attached to that and where those finances are going to come from in terms of which department.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** As you know, we are sort of into approving the Estimates of the Children and Youth Secretariat. There probably will be, as we move through our strategy on dealing with adolescent pregnancy, we will find some projects that will be announced and undertaken. I am not at liberty right now to share with my honourable friend what the announcement will be, but I can—no, well, my honourable friend laughs, but I want to indicate that we have got money allocated in the budget. The strategy in fact and the campaign is in the process of being developed. We have already undertaken a couple of initiatives. I want to indicate that the Baby Think it Over, the computerized doll that is being used in many

of the schools, was an initiative of the secretariat, and we worked with the school system, with the Manitoba home economics teachers.

We have purchased the babies, and they are available to schools to use to work with adolescents. They take the babies home. I am sure my honourable friend has seen some advertisement and some media coverage on this initiative that is presently underway.

I announced in my notes that the Metis Women are travelling with the staff of the Children and Youth Secretariat to aboriginal communities to figure out strategies on how we can best try to reduce the number of adolescent pregnancies in those communities. This past week we have met through the secretariat 300 aboriginal youth around the issue of adolescent pregnancy. I am sure my honourable friend would agree with me when I say that some approaches that I might think might be the most appropriate might not necessarily appeal to the youth in our community that are experiencing the peer pressure and the problems. We need their participation and their partnership in this process.

We will be undertaking a media campaign that will be directed at young men around the issues of teen pregnancy. I do not think we can leave boys or men out of the equation when we are trying to deal with this issue.

We will be looking at some work on the Internet. I know that very often many of those that are living in poverty may not have access to the Internet. I know that many schools are getting up and running, but I think that is one component of trying to deal with the issue and getting information up and running.

There are several different components. We have started a few things, but we are presently working on the consultations with the youth in our community so that we can develop the strategies that will best meet their needs, and we are looking to an announcement around different components in the strategy later on in the spring. So we are in the process now of developing those, and we will be announcing that this spring.

**Ms. Cerilli:** In terms of the computerized doll program, how much is that costing? What is the

number of dolls that have been delivered to schools? Which schools or school divisions are involved? I want to confirm if this is being done through the home economics courses in schools, which we know have been reduced dramatically and we know are option courses and are not necessarily going to be taken by very many students. Because they are option courses, they are not taken by all students. What is the estimate of the number of students that are going to then benefit from this program if it is going to be offered through the home ec courses as an option course?

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** We have 300 dolls presently at a cost of \$8,000—some that are available to be distributed in consultation with the home economics teachers. We agreed to purchase the dolls. They have agreed to do the evaluation. Those dolls will be available to schools on a request basis, and they can be moved from school to school. There are 300 dolls available now, and through the home economics teachers association they will be allocated. My understanding is that it will be in high need areas right throughout the province.

**Ms. Cerilli:** So am I understanding this correctly? The way this is supposed to work is any teacher or professional in a school that is working with young people could call up the home ec teachers association and apply to have one of these dolls delivered to their school where they could use it as a supplement to their course work, whether that would be in health education, in an English class, in home ec class, or what have you?

Further to that, then, my question was: What is the projection for how many students are going to benefit from this program per year? Tell me a little bit more about the program itself. Is there some kind of unit that has been developed to go with this computerized doll to convince young people not to get pregnant? Is there some sort of time allotment that is going to be allocated with this? What does the program look like in terms of the experience of the young people who are going to participate?

\*(1540)

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** There is a whole package developed. I would be prepared to undertake to get a copy of that package and share it with my honourable

friend, but it includes pre- and posttesting of attitudes. It can indicate neglect.

I do not know if my honourable friend has seen one of these babies or how they work, but it is very intensive. If a student was to take that baby home—and boys and girls are involved in the project—I mean it cries at set intervals that, well, the person cannot determine, just like any normal baby would. They are very realistic, and the baby does monitor and provide a tape of how long the baby has cried before it has been picked up and the soother has been put in its mouth, fed and those kinds of things. So there is a tape there that really does indicate whether there has been abuse or neglect. Part of the whole program, too, is talking about budgeting and cost of supporting a child for food, nutrition, clothing, all of the other things. So it is a fairly comprehensive package, and I will undertake to get a copy of that to share with my honourable friend.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I do not want to spend this much time on each of these projects because we are going to be here for 40 hours, but I had asked some specific questions about the number of students, and the minister has said that students will take the doll home. So, if there are 300 units, how many students are going to be able to participate in this? I just want to clarify one thing. She had mentioned that there was \$8,000 allocated. I am not sure if that covers all 300 of the dolls.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** The intent is, that for every student that has the opportunity to take the baby home, it would be for a 48-hour period. Initially, there would be about 12 schools involved and 300 students initially would have the baby to take home for 48 hours, and then that baby would rotate, but there is also practical hands-on discussion around the situation or circumstance of that individual with other classmates. So there is that additional kind of benefit too.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I just also had to ask you to clarify the dollars. You had said \$8,000. Is that for all of the—

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Yes, that is \$8,000; I think it is just over \$8,000 for 300 dolls.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Moving on then, I want to ask about the project in the six northern communities. Am I understanding correctly that this is a project to assess or

plan how to intervene in these communities and reach young adolescent girls or women and their mothers, or is there already a project that is developed in order to do this intervention? Is it an education program, some type of counselling or social work? It seems that the approach that is being taken is not what we heard often works, that young women are less likely to become pregnant as adolescents if they are well educated and see an alternative for their futures than just to get pregnant and not pursue education or work in a career outside the home. I am interested in finding what exactly this project is in the six northern communities.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** The Metis Women in discussion with the Children and Youth Secretariat identified this as a real need in Metis communities outside of the city of Winnipeg, but part of the issue for them, of course, is trying to identify what will work for young girls. So it is a matter of going to meet within those communities in the afternoon with a group of young girls, in the evening with their parents. There will be some professional support available at the time too to deal with specific issues or questions that might come up. For instance, the parents in the community might have difficulty determining how to deal with the issues of sexuality and sexual issues with their children. There would be a professional there to help them if questions were asked on how to deal with that kind of issue so they could better prepare their children. The sessions in the afternoon with the young girls would be to deal with the issues that they face, the reasons why they believe there is a high incidence of adolescent pregnancy and what solutions they might believe could work.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Okay, tell me a little bit more about the program to target young men. I guess the other comment I would make there from my experience in working in a high school in Winnipeg, young women often get pregnant as adolescents to become teen mothers not from young men but from older men who are older than 18 or often older than 20 or 25 or 30. So this is, I think, important, to target the attitude and behaviour of teenage boys, but I just wanted to draw your attention to that common occurrence.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Some of the data that we have for Manitoba—although I know the comments were made that in some jurisdictions where there have been studies

done that it is older men that are involved in getting adolescents pregnant, but the data in Manitoba does not substantiate that. So we are having different issues to deal with.

We have done some focus groups with young men around the issue of adolescent pregnancy and obviously, I suppose, sexual activity and the reasons, I suppose, young men participate are not necessarily—I guess the reasons they participate in getting a young—I am having difficulty trying to figure out how to say this—getting a young girl pregnant are different issues than girls. Young girls very often, as adolescents, become pregnant because they have a need to feel love, to be loved; they feel they need something that belongs to them that they can love and nurture, because they maybe have not had that kind of family support or nurturing.

In young boys, of course, the issues are very different, but most of the young men that we did talk to through the focus groups did indicate that there was a need for young men to take responsibility for their actions and for support of that child and that young mother. So I think the issue of responsibility is an area that we have to focus on in our messaging to young boys, and we will be developing that.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I would agree. After just participating with high school girls in the LEAF conference, Women In Motion—it was an equity conference for young women—they talked a lot about the attitudes of their male peers in high school, but it sounds like this is—again it is focus groups. Am I understanding that correctly? I am wondering if there is a larger plan in terms of the public school system or the curriculum for our school system in terms of how to intervene with this age group of young men.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Of course, once we have a complete understanding on what is going to work and what message will work on young people, that message will be incorporated into school curriculum. It also will be incorporated into any type of media campaign that we might do, and that would be in conjunction with—I think we want the messages to come from youth in any type of media campaign and speak to their peers, rather than having us speak to them around the issues.

\* (1550)

**Ms. Cerilli:** One final question in this area is—I know that the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) has raised this to some extent recently, and it has to do with the reduction in the sexuality education unit being taught in the school system, the reduction in health education being taught. There has also be a reduction in the public schools in Manitoba in the number of school counsellors in the last 10 years under this government, and I am wondering if, through the Youth Secretariat or co-ordinated through the Youth Secretariat, there will be any study of the impact on this change on the rate of adolescent pregnancy in Manitoba, if there is any attempt being made to determine if we are going backwards in this whole area.

I know that in the last couple of sessions we have asked a lot of questions about the reduction in health education. It is now being transferred to be part of the physical education curriculum, and it is difficult when it is being handled in this way to ensure a number of things, that there is going to be adequate time spent on this area, that there is going to be an assurance that trained qualified individuals are teaching sexuality education. The minister was just saying she was having difficulty finding the words to describe her intentions. That is common in talking about sexuality, particularly with young people, and it does require someone who is specifically trained in the area. I am concerned that there has been no attempt by this government to ensure that we correlate the strategies through her campaign in this area with what is actually happening in the schools and on the ground in terms of the resources available, the time slots, the teachers and the trained staff available in schools to actually be able to implement what sounds like could be a good new project through her focus groups with youth to develop some type of campaign to address the attitude behaviour of young teenage boys or men.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** I do have to admit to my honourable friend that I probably never would be able to teach family life or sex education courses, and I am not a teacher by profession, probably not one of my strengths. So sometimes they have difficulty finding the words. But I do want to indicate that, although there is programming in the schools, the schools are not the only place that support and reinforcement needs to

be provided for our youth today. Any of the research that we do have, I am told by staff that have read and understand the research, talks about early intervention, and that is intervention with children under the age of six, has been traced, and there have been outcomes measured that do say that there is, if there is good preschool preparation and early intervention, less risk of adolescent pregnancy. So that is one of the very strong reasons why we need to be looking at a very focused early intervention program which we are in the process of looking at right now. There are activities underway.

But my understanding is, and I think you probably have to get into some detailed discussion with the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) during her Estimates around the whole curriculum and education system, but it is my understanding that the Department of Education has hired Heather Willoughby who is a phys ed teacher to look at this whole issue of curriculum and what needs to happen in the education system. I cannot get into detail around curriculum development in the Department of Education, but I do want my honourable friend to know that we all need to work at it together, and there will be components from Education that will have to be implemented in the whole overall strategy and announcement as we move to that later in the spring.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I am sure, especially with the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) here, our Education critic, that we will be asking some questions of the Minister of Education in this area. But it seems that the role of the Youth Secretariat is trying to sort of be the watchdog in all these departments for the interests of youth and to ensure that changes are going to be made that are not going to contradict the objectives that it is setting. So with that, I am going to move on.

I wanted to just point out that in the minister's statement she said that the strategy considerations for developing service for children and youth was the compilations of the work of the steering committees, and I think that is an error, that the ChildrenFirst Strategic Plan—and I could tell her the number of the pages for her opening statement, but they are not numbered. So I think that there is an error in the statement, but that is not a large concern.

One of the larger concerns I have is to do with the protocol that is being designed to deal with sharing information of those involved with street gangs. This is going to include a number of the departments that are involved with the Children and Youth Secretariat, Corrections, Education, social services, police. This is the kind of initiative that I think the Children and Youth Secretariat is really designed to do, to develop these kinds of structural interdepartmental systemic changes, these types of protocol agreements.

I am wondering why this particular one is focusing only on gangs. I think, if I could remember the statistic, that the numbers of youths under 18 that are involved with gangs in our province is somewhere around a few hundred, and there are way more children and youth who are involved with the child protection system that are otherwise just involved with youth corrections system that are not necessarily gang involved. It would benefit them, hopefully, and it would certainly benefit the number of community and government staff that are trying to support them and work with them to have the use of this type of protocol.

I am wanting for the minister to describe this protocol in a little bit more detail, and also explain if it is sort of being piloted with those children or youth that are involved with gangs, and it is going to be expanded to be used with a wider number of children and youth, or, if because it was recommended, I believe, from the street gang working group it is going to simply end there and be limited to that few number of young people involved with the "system."

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** You are right. It is one of the areas that the Children and Youth Secretariat should be working on, and that is interdepartmental co-operation, sharing of information so we can best deliver the services and make sure that what one department is doing through way of programming is not contrary to what another department or programming is doing.

So there are protocols that are being worked on, and there are all kinds of them. One is on personnel screening for abuse in criminal records and schools. I think I mentioned that. The development of a placement protocol for foster children to transition them into schools, the development of a street gang

protocol, development of transition into school protocol for special needs children.

Can I indicate that there are all kinds of information-sharing protocols that need to be developed to provide the best service for children. I guess, because street gangs seem to be sort of a narrow focus, we could develop it. It seemed to be the one area where all the players agreed we need to have a co-ordinated approach, and they all want to be a part of sharing information so we can get to the bottom of the issue of gangs and try to find some positive intervention. It was an area where there was unanimous agreement, and we could get everyone together around the table to develop those protocols, that we will develop them and learn from that experience and possibly be able to get into some of the more complex areas where protocols need to be developed. So that one is underway. We have full co-operation from everyone, and I think we will be able to develop something that will be very positive for intervention around street gangs.

\* (1600)

**Ms. Cerilli:** So this protocol would be used with all the government departments that could be involved with these young people, as well as community agencies throughout the province. Is it sort of using the model that has been implemented in Brandon for some time, the MAPP project? Is that the model where they have a computerized system and forms that are used by all of the agencies and departments and that can be accessed by the appropriate personnel and youth workers or teachers or counsellors so that, as the minister has said, they are all using the same procedures and they have access to the same information about these young people?

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Mr. Chairperson, I guess I was trying to get an update on what is happening in Brandon. It is similar to what is happening in Brandon. The kids in Brandon are preidentified as high risk, and it is one central co-ordination of the—it is the MAPP program.

In Winnipeg, it will be sort of community or by neighbourhood, because the demographics are much larger in the city of Winnipeg. It will not necessarily be predetermined high risk, but it might be those kids that

are identified as belonging to a gang that may have not been involved in any significant criminal activity but that might be on the edge or on the verge of getting into that kind of activity.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I had asked a couple of other questions there, too, but just specifically: What is going to be the process for having young people included in this system so that they are a part of this protocol?

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** The MAPP in Brandon is a program that has already identified kids that are high risk and involved in activity, and it is a case-planning model. What we are doing here is a protocol which is sharing of information between the City of Winnipeg Police and other departments or agencies that are dealing with these same children so that the sharing of information is part of the protocol. It is not really a case plan.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I understand that. My question was: Then how do young people become part of that system to have their information shared? That is my question.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** This is a nationally accepted standard that we are implementing that is accepted by all police departments right across the country, and if in fact there is some identification of criminal activity or high risk or association, that name can be identified and put on a list to share with other agencies, organizations or caregivers.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I am still not clear on—is it the police that keep the list then, and how do other agencies access that list? Is it schools, child care workers, you know, social workers with CFS? The focal point then is the police, and then other agencies have to access the information through the police. Is that correct?

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Yes, the police service will compile the list, and the protocol that is being developed will in fact determine how those other agencies and organizations and departments can access the list. That is what the protocol is all about.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I understand. Moving on then. One of the other things that I am pleased to see is that, finally, as of today I guess, the government has announced that

they are going to follow through with a long-time promise to implement this child and youth care worker diploma program at Red River. I just want to ask one question about this, and that is: How many people will be able to enroll in this program per year?

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Mr. Chairperson, it is 25 full-time equivalent positions. Not everyone may be full time. There will be a distance education component, but it is 25 full-time equivalent spaces.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Back to the issues of the protocols that we were just discussing, I am wondering, similarly as with the gang protocol, the one that is—let me see here—standardizing the protocol to review and screen personnel in schools. Again, is this a process that is going to sort of be developed for school personnel, and then it will be expanded to include other staff or people in the community who work with youth, whether it is in recreation, Justice, health care agencies? I would be interested, especially after we have heard all the concerns this past year about coaches in a variety of sports. Is this something that is going to be then able to be adapted to be used in other settings besides just the school system?

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** I understand that in some schools there is a process, and in other schools there is not. This will try to standardize that process right throughout our school system.

Around the issue of coaches, the Manitoba coaches' association have already approached the Children and Youth Secretariat and want to work with them to look at development of some process or protocol.

**Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples):** I thank my colleague from Radisson. I have been following the debate on television downstairs, and I just asked if I could get in here to ask a couple of questions with regard to the protocol before you go on in regard to information sharing with the police. I just want to see if I understand it correctly. If, for example, a worker at Marymount has a runaway come back after three or four days, that worker now will be able to phone the police and find out if that person has gang connections, Is that how the protocol is going to be working?

\* (1610)

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** I hope I have gotten the question right. If I do not answer, we can follow up. If, in fact, in the scenario that my honourable friend put forward, that child came back to Marymount and showed some evidence that they might have been involved, while they were out of Marymount, in some gang activity, then they would consider calling the police and having that child put on, checked out to see if they were on the list. But they would have to have some clear evidence or suspicion—you know, if they came back with drugs, colours or that kind of thing.

**Mr. Kowalski:** My experience is more on the informal level, and I know the exchange of information is probably, on the formal level, a lot more practical and works a lot better than in the informal process, and what I am hearing from the minister is the worker cannot just arbitrarily check every kid to find out if there are gang connections, but if there is a cause, they can check it out because that would make a difference on how that worker counsels that child, and I understand that.

What other information in this protocol, other than that they are on that registry that the police have of 1,300 gang members and there is a strict criteria to be placed on that list, what other information can the worker at Marymount or a teacher, anyone else, get from the police under this proposed protocol?

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** I guess that is one of the reasons this has not been finalized yet for implementation, because some of those questions have not been answered. We want to ensure that there is no invasion of privacy, provisions as a result—so that is why—I suppose it would be very easy if we did not need to worry about protection of anyone and their privacy, and that is probably what makes it so very complicated.

**Mr. Kowalski:** The other question is, sounds like this information flow is going one way, that the worker is phoning the police, but what benefit can there be for the police? For example, a teacher notices that a child is not performing well in school, that all of a sudden has got a new set of friends and that. Will there be information going the other way under this protocol to the police to do some preventative, proactive policing to those kids at risk that are in danger of getting involved with gangs?

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Yes, absolutely, that will be part of the process. I guess we want to make sure though, through the protocol, that the right information is going forward and that we are not just out on a fishing expedition.

**Mr. Kowalski:** Thank you very much for the answers to those questions. I will be listening to this debate intently. I have many more questions, but I think my colleague from Radisson has many more questions also, so I think I will allow her to proceed.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I appreciate the member for The Maples asking those questions. I think we can go into a lot of detail in a lot of these areas, and I know my colleagues in a variety of other departments will have a number of questions.

So one of the things I wanted to clarify then—I know in past years when we have gone through these Estimates, sometimes the minister who has the lead responsibility for the Youth Secretariat says ask the Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews) or ask the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh). If my colleague the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) has some similar questions in the Ministry of Justice Estimates, will the Minister of Justice be able to answer the questions about the protocol and provide him with information? He will have a lot of the same information about the Youth Secretariat side of things. The minister is nodding yes.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Yes, and he will probably be able to give more detail than I can. I am the lead minister and sort of responsible for taking the lead on ensuring that things get moving forward for approval and projects get undertaken, and that kind of thing. I will not have great detail on the Department of Education or the Department of Justice, but I think accountability for co-ordination and looking at initiatives that are happening interdepartmentally I can try to speak to as much as possible.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I know one of the concerns that people have in this area, since we were just discussing the issue of privacy and confidentiality with respect to sharing information about young people between different agencies and departments—it has to do with the whole area of young people particularly performing, so



to speak, up to the level of their expectations. There would be the concern, particularly in the school setting, that a number of teachers or staff, personnel would have access to information about young people that may affect their expectations of that young person in terms of their ability to academically succeed, and that type of thing. I see that some of the staff are nodding.

I am wondering, specifically, what is going to be there to protect young people from that occurring, whether it is in the education side of things or any of the other agencies that have access to information. What is specifically there to protect the confidentiality of the young people and their families?

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** We did indicate that the protocol had not been finalized, the one on the gang protocol. I do want to indicate that it is on a need-to-know basis. We cannot have fishing trips or expeditions going on, you know, people requesting information without any just cause for requesting that information, and I think that has to be part of the protocol. It has to be the understanding. We cannot have information being shared when it is not necessary or important to share that for the best interests of the child and their education or their protection or whatever. So, I mean, that is part of the final process, to ensure that privacy is protected, but on a need-to-know basis for better care or support of a child in the school system or any other system. Some things are important to know, and some information is important to have.

\* (1620)

**Ms. Cerilli:** But, if I am understanding it correctly, there will be a lot of information on their health, perhaps health information with respect to—particularly mental health, abuse histories, some of that kind of information that could be through Child and Family Services that would be accessible through this network or system.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** The health issues are not a part of what we are talking about in any of these protocols at this point in time.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I notice that the Department of Housing is now involved with Children and Youth Secretariat. It has been added, as well as Urban Affairs, as of January.

Yet in this budget there was a 20 percent reduction in the Shelter Allowance for Family Renters program which was singled out or specified in a recommendation put forward by the early childhood working group which recommended to promote that program so more low-income families would benefit from it. The minister probably knows, as did the members of the working group on that committee for early childhood education, that the uptake of the Shelter Allowance for Family Renters program has not been to the maximum dollars allocated for the last couple of years, that in the last couple of years there has been approximately \$300,000 unused in terms of grants in the budget for that program in the Department of Housing.

It seems like a good idea to have the strategy to promote that program so that families with children can save, on average, \$125 a month on their rent costs and then put that money into food, into clothes and other essentials, as well as perhaps even some of the other things that kids need in terms of recreation and other activities. So I am curious that, you know, here you are adding this department, and it makes sense, recognizing that housing is so important as an essential basic for quality of life and health for families. I have not yet really had an explanation of why this program recommendation through the early childhood working group was not included in your strategy. On the other hand, that dollar amount has been eliminated from the SAFER program.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** I know I was in the Estimates of my honourable colleague the Minister of Housing (Mr. Reimer), and I believe he tried to explain this several times to my honourable friend across the way. It is a program that is there and as people apply for it, if they are eligible, they get the support. It is one program, I suppose, in a list of many interventions that need to be undertaken for those low-income families that are going to need support.

There are other initiatives that we are looking at as far as children are concerned that will co-ordinate our services and our support. So it is one thing; it is a program that is there and available in the Department of Housing. If there was more uptake, there would be more money in the program. Because there is not the uptake, there is not money allocated in the budget. If in

fact that budget was overexpended, I know that there are means to go back for extra support, for more money for the program.

So, you know, it is there. I have heard the Minister of Housing explain, and it is one of many programs and initiatives that will be available for children and families that will need support because of low income.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Well, this minister has given me a little bit more information by suggesting that if the existing budget in that program, which is now \$250,000 less than last year in the Estimates book, is used that there will be more money available for families in that program. But she is not really dealing with the issue, which is that her working group did not suggest to put more money into this program. Her working group suggested promoting the program, because I suspect they knew full well that the uptake of the program was not there, and that it is a program which does exactly what we need to have happen to provide rent supplement and housing support for quality housing for low-income families, which has so many benefits.

I will not go into it in detail, but I want the minister to explain to me, you know, why that recommendation to promote the program, to have a strategy to promote that program so the uptake is improved was not followed?

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Mr. Chairperson, again, I will go back to my honourable friend and say that those were recommendations that were made to the working group. They compiled information that would look at intersectoral strategies to provide better support for children and families, and our priority areas have been outlined in our strategic documents. We will work on those aggressively, intersectorally, and many of the approaches and interventions that we will be taking will improve the status and the lives of children in families throughout Manitoba. Many of those will be families that are living in poverty.

So it was a recommendation made by the working group to the secretariat. Out of the secretariat came the intersectoral initiatives that would benefit families, and I make no apologies for the priority areas that we have chosen, as the Children and Youth Secretariat, to move forward on.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Well, I thank the minister for that answer. I will move on to my next question.

The Northern Summer Youth Program, which is going to receive funding through the Aboriginal Justice Initiative Fund, to provide summer recreation for children and youth aged four to 20 in isolated northern aboriginal communities, is this the replacement for the Fly-In Sports Camp program that the member for Riel (Mr. Newman) likes to talk about? Can the minister tell me: What is the dollar amount allocated for that program this year?

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Yes, Mr. Chairperson, it is the replacement for that program, the Northern Fly-In Sports program, that the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Newman) has talked about, and I believe the allocation is \$100,000.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I am wondering if the minister knows if the program is going to operate the same way, to train aboriginal people in the North to be recreation leaders, and bring all sorts of equipment and supplies in for the summer to train young people to be recreation leaders in their community. Then, if she can also tell me how many communities will be benefiting from this program this summer.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Can I indicate, Mr. Chairperson, that the intent of the program is the same, but I would undertake to get information from my colleague the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs about the detail, and bring that information back the next time we sit for Estimates.

\* (1630)

**Ms. Cerilli:** One of the other things that we had started discussing related to the Youth Secretariat was in Interim Supply and had to do with the nutrition programs for children and their families that were highlighted also in the budget speech. I know that the minister had said there was \$300,000 for these programs. Again, I am wanting to have the minister indicate the number of children, or families that she anticipates this is going to provide nutritional support for.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Mr. Chairperson, there is a budget allocation in the Department of Family Services, but I

want to indicate that we are presently working with the Inner City Review Committee around this specific issue. There have been meetings with the Winnipeg Foundation, the United Way, federal officials and civic officials that have been meeting to look at—they have done an inventory of what nutrition programs are available in certain neighbourhoods and communities and have determined as a group of funders that there needs to be more co-ordination of that kind of service, and we are presently working towards seeing where we can best utilize the dollars in conjunction.

One of the criticisms from other funders has always been that sometimes levels of government go off on their own and fund and start new programs without looking to what is already there. We also need to be looking to see whether we can co-ordinate the kind of activity that is happening in neighbourhoods and communities in a better fashion.

So we are working pretty aggressively to try to determine what needs to happen where and in what neighbourhoods. I cannot give an exact number of children who might be helped or supported as yet through that program, but I want my honourable friend to know that there is a major commitment by all of the funders to ensure that whatever we are doing is meeting a need and not duplicating something else that is going on out there. So it is not a very straightforward answer, but we are not at a point yet where we can announce a program in any one specific neighbourhood because we are all working at it together.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Well, I wonder if the secretariat has done an inventory then of the agencies that are currently involved in nutrition supplement programs, including schools, and if this money is going to be available to schools, because I know the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) has made some comments suggesting that this type of program is not a responsibility in Education; so if this \$300,000 is to be used by community agencies, if there has been an inventory of those types of agencies throughout the province—if this is not just a Winnipeg initiative but throughout the province—and if it is also to involve schools.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** I am going to say that I certainly agree with my colleague the Minister of Education when we talk about—I guess the issue for me is not to

say that children do not learn better and should not be nourished and well fed before they go to school. If there needs to be that kind of support, I believe it has to be there. We all need to work together to ensure that it is.

I think my feelings are probably the same as the Minister of Education's. We should not be spending Education dollars, dollars that are there for education, to provide that kind of support if there is a need for it. We might want to use the school facility to deliver those kinds of programs, or other community facilities, because our ultimate goal should be to ensure that children do not go to school hungry.

The best place to provide that kind of programming might be the school facility, but it should not be Education dollars that are used to provide that support. What we are looking at is a comprehensive plan to ensure—and we might have to look at different ways of delivering that in the school building, but our main goal or objective should be to ensure that school dollars, Education dollars, are not being used to deliver those programs. So we will be working with communities.

I mentioned that the Canadian Living Foundation has been speaking to us, and they are doing projects right across Canada. We have talked to them, and they have been meeting with other funders and business partners within the community, our Manitoba community, to look at how we can partner together. They do have some seed money that they can provide for co-ordination of services, and we are working with them to see whether there are identified communities throughout Manitoba that could benefit from nutrition programs.

So there is activity ongoing, and as we are ready to announce what communities, what neighbourhoods, what specific projects are needed, we will announce those.

**Ms. Cerilli:** The minister, I guess by implication, may have answered my question which was, then, are schools—school divisions, we know, are already putting some funds into this area, and she said that schools may be a site, but what I am wondering then is if this money is to deal with the schools need for programs, this money then could go to schools and we could have

programs delivered in schools through these funds. It could then, I am understanding, be delivered by school divisions or by other community agencies. So I want her to confirm that.

The other part of my question is if her secretariat has done an inventory of these agencies, and if I could get a copy of that to see what kinds of agencies in our province are trying to meet this need to ensure that kids do not wake up and go to school hungry. I am also interested in finding out the amount of money that the Canadian Living Foundation would be able to contribute to this type of project.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** The Canadian Living Foundation has about \$25,000 in seed money for the city of Winnipeg and about \$15,000 for outside the city of Winnipeg, and we are presently working with them. What they want us to do is to ensure that whatever is delivered in Manitoba is co-ordinated and that is why we are working with the other funders. They have been meeting with the United Way and other business partners to try to ensure that the seed money is used for the co-ordination and the implementation of something that is identified as a gap in service.

So it is in the initial stages. We have met a couple of times with them, and the seed money will be available if we can get things together and identify which communities, which neighbourhoods might need support and what that kind of support might be. As I said, it is only seed money. It would have to be augmented with money from other funders, from levels of government to provide nutrition programs.

I go back to the question my honourable friend asked about giving money to schools or school divisions to do nutrition programs, and I go back again to saying that I do not believe it is an education responsibility. It might deliver programs in schools in some instances if that is the right need in that neighbourhood, but I believe that the community has to be involved, not the school division, in delivering the program, a community delivered program possibly in the school facility.

I am very strongly committed to ensuring that community is involved in that in some way, because I do not believe it should be the function of a school board to have to determine the nutritional needs.

School boards should be there to ensure that policy is there to educate our children. If there are additional supports that children need in order to be educated, I believe that is a community responsibility, and I think we need to look at how we deliver those kinds of programs.

I honestly believe that our school buildings need to be used in a much more significant way for community use. You look at a hospital facility that is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week and is meeting the needs of many Manitobans. You look at many school facilities, which we pay the same capital costs to construct, and they are open nine to five, Monday to Friday, 10 months of the year, and we need to creatively think how we can better make community use of our schools.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Well, the minister has made that point a number of times now, but she is not really answering my question. My question is the agencies that are already delivering some programs, and I would think already some community-based agencies, nonprofit groups, parent co-ordinated groups are running programs like this in schools. What I am wondering is: The existing programs, are they going to be eligible to apply or to be funded through this \$300,000? The minister keeps emphasizing they do not want have duplication of services so that is why I keep asking about doing an inventory. I am interested in knowing if you know already which agencies are doing this kind of programming, and I am interested in getting that kind of information from the minister so we could see how this \$300,000 is going to be utilized.

\* (1640)

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Yes, indeed, in some neighbourhoods in some communities there will be community-based delivery programs right now that are working really well. In other communities they may need to be developed. I guess what I am saying is we have been working aggressively with the other funders, and we have an allocation within my department of \$300,000, but we are not going to put those dollars towards bricks and mortar. We are identifying where the gaps are in the system, and we will then deliver appropriate programs wherever they are needed based on hungry kids.

**Ms. Cerilli:** We always get suspicious when they resort to rhetoric. I guess I do anyway, because you are not answering my question. I do not want to spend too much more time on this, but the United Way and the Winnipeg Foundation are listed as a couple of funders that you are working with. But those are not the agencies that are directly delivering these programs.

What I am wanting is to know if the existing programs, if you know who they are, who the agencies that are running them, and if they are going to be eligible to receive some of this \$300,000?

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** I will try again. We have been working aggressively with other funders. We have been talking around the issue of nutrition, nutrition for children, those that go to school hungry, those that need support. The United Way funds many organizations that deliver those kinds of programs; the Winnipeg Foundation does. We do not have a list within the Children and Youth Secretariat. What we are doing is working with the other funders, federal government, civic government, United Way, the Winnipeg Foundation. Through the Inner City Review Committee, they are gathering data and information on what is out there right now.

We have to also recognize that there are certain community organizations that do some of these kinds of activities that are not funded by anyone. They are doing it as a result of community fundraising activities. So not only do we need the inventory of what we fund, but we also need the informal programs that are happening presently and they might be in church basements. They might be able to enhance their programs with a little bit of additional support.

I think we need to look at that, but it will not be a broad application process that sort of asks everyone to come and apply for money. I think we need to identify, neighbourhood by neighbourhood, where the needs are, and then see how we can augment those needs. We are not going to do it as a provincial government in isolation in ensuring that the other funders are not supportive and possibly our \$300,000 could become significantly more if the United Way, the Winnipeg Foundation bought into and supported or matched our provincial dollars.

So we are working on it. It is an announcement that was made and this year we will be talking about how that money will be spent. [interjection]

**Ms. Cerilli:** The member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) is just saying the list of the inventory of all the agencies and schools that are providing these programs should be easy to get, and I would think that—[interjection] I did not say just schools, agencies and schools that are providing these programs should be easy to get.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Tweed):** Order, please. The member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) has been recognized for a question.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I was just saying that this list should be easy to get. I think it would be very useful, especially if what they are trying to do is co-ordinate all these agencies and ensure that they are working together like she said. My last question on this area is: Does she have a total dollar figure for funds available in this area of nutrition for kids from all the different agencies that are funding, the United Way, Winnipeg Foundation and the other ones that she has mentioned, and could she tell us how much is going to be available that could be co-ordinated through this process that she is undertaking through the secretariat?

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** No, I cannot. I can indicate to you that we all want to ensure that, as we move into new programming, we are not setting something up that is competing with something else that is ongoing.

We will be looking at needs community by community. We may be looking at targeting a couple of very significant high-need communities in our inner city of Winnipeg through that process, and it might be around a school catchment area. We are looking at that right now, and we will have to be determining what communities we might go into, and then also outside the city of Winnipeg what the answer might be.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Does the minister have information on another program which was in her opening statement? That is the Urban Sports Camp Program. This is a program that is mentioned a lot, and in her opening statement the minister has mentioned a number of groups that have—it looks like they have actually received money to run urban sports camp programs.

I am not sure if that is what is mentioned here, but the Rotary Club, United Way, Boys and Girls Clubs, Rossbrook House, Andrew Street, Teen Jeunesse and the Winnipeg Native Alliance. I want to find out the amount of money that has been allocated to each of those agencies if it indeed has been for an urban sports camp program.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** The Rotary Club does not receive funding from government. The Rotary Club would generate and raise funds in the communities to support government activity. The Rotary Club, though, is involved as a service organization, as is the Boys and Girls Club, in trying to co-ordinate activities.

I think as a result of government and these community organizations getting together, they have determined that the model that the Native Alliance group has put forward is a good model for an urban sports camp concept, and so they are now being funded to develop the program that might have outreach or satellite offices at Rossbrook House and other locations in the city. I guess it has been determined by that group collectively.

There is some \$900,000 available. Native Alliance has been funded in order to co-ordinate that activity and to help identify locations to set up recreational programming.

**Ms. Cerilli:** So how much of that \$900,000 is going to be available for Native Alliance to co-ordinate programs then, as I am understanding it, at other satellite or agencies in Winnipeg?

\* (1650)

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** I would ask my honourable friend if maybe her colleague from St. Johns could note asking this question of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews) in his Estimates to get the real detail.

All I know is that the Native Alliance, and I think it was announced just recently—I mean I could try to get the detail on it, but has been given developmental money in order to co-ordinate these activities, help identify locations to deliver the programming, and the money will then flow to service delivery people in order to deliver the programs. There has been an

amount of money given to Native Alliance to start this process.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I am pleased to see the Native Alliance is involved in this. I have met with them, and I know that the minister has received letters from me recommending that they support this organization, but then are they also going to receive funds to operate their program that is ongoing, particularly because it does try and help kids who are street involved have an alternative and a safe place to go to get off the street?

Then, besides answering that question, if the minister can clarify from her opening statement if there are also additional monies, other than what is going to the Native Alliance, that are going to go to the Winnipeg Boys and Girls Clubs, Rossbrook House, Andrews Street, and Teen Stop Jeunesse for additional urban sports camps projects, or if those are some of the sites that the Native Alliance is expected to offer their programs through.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Those are going to be the sites that Native Alliance is going to co-ordinate their activities through, and the answer to the first question is: yes, there will be ongoing support for Native Alliance to do their programming, and they will help to co-ordinate the programming that is going on at all of those different sites.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I appreciate the minister has not got the specific dollar figure right now for the amount for Native Alliance, but I am wondering if part of that money is to go and pay for staff or recreation leaders or sports camp leaders who can work out of these centres, because what we often find in this whole area is a reliance on volunteers, and it has not been feasible in a lot of areas. I know that this is one of the problems the Native Alliance has had. They wanted to be able to have someone full time who could work, provide continuity and develop programs. That is a need for organizations like are listed in your opening statement, is that they get support for personnel.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Absolutely, there will be support for staff, and ongoing support for staffing. I too have met with Native Alliance, and I really think that they offer a real option and an alternative for children that have been involved in maybe non-productive activities and

try to focus them and redirect them I think. Some of the peer influence and the programming that is available is the right approach. I recognize and realize also that there needs to be ongoing support for staffing that can assure these programs are successful.

**Ms. Cerilli:** One of the other things the minister mentioned in her opening statement was a statistic I think that would shock a lot of people, that you collected data through the secretariat on 50 youth identified by each department as having the highest need, a total of 198 in all, and from the analysis you learned that you spent \$1.4 million per day or \$1,000 per minute on this relatively small group of children and youth. I am wondering if that also included the staff that work with those young people through government and other agencies, if you can tell us how many staff are involved in that figure of \$1.4 million per day, and how you figured out salary, hours, that type of thing. Of course, if it is including staff, they probably work with many young people in one day or many families in one day. So I am just wanting to understand the statistic better.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** It is pretty hard to give a specific answer. What I have to indicate is that this was a compilation of 15 of, I guess, the highest-needs kids in each of the four departments, and it looked at the total cost.

So there would have been staff support; there would have been hospitalization in some instances; there would have been respite; there would have been therapy; there would have been treatment, and it would be the compilation of absolutely every intervention that they had had.

So it would have included staff costs. It would have included hospitalization, medication, respite, other support and other interventions, the total cost.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Does the minister then have a more detailed breakdown of the figures that make up that statistic?

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** We do not have it here, but I can get that information.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I guess more broadly then, I know that this is the approach that other jurisdictions have taken,

where they have identified the high risk but also the high-use, highly serviced clients, youth and their families, and then have tried to figure out how to better co-ordinate the services that are being used by those families and children.

I am wondering if that is what is going to happen with this analysis and the work that is being done to compile this information.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Mr. Chairperson, what we have tried to learn from the compilation of the activity is what the trends are, where individuals are at today; is there sort of a common thread or theme; can we better provide service, and we will be looking at better co-ordination to make sure that our dollars are being utilized to the best of our ability right across the four different departments. So the whole exercise was done in order to determine how much we were spending, how we were using those dollars and whether there could be a better approach.

I suppose for those who would have been involved with the Child and Family Services agency where the children were moved from one placement to another to another, was there additional cost incurred as a result of those moves and reorientation, or would there be a better way of trying to deliver that service?

**Ms. Cerilli:** So are you planning on producing a report on this to include the trends, to include any problems that you identify, to include any recommendations or plans that may flow from that, if this is included in the statistics that I know the minister has tabled in these documents that I have, A Statement of Government Policy on Youth, and Strategy Considerations?

\* (1700)

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** I guess what we have learned from compiling the information together is that possibly if we move to doing things differently a lot earlier in children's lives, we might have a much more positive impact on the end result and a reduction in the costs later on in the system. So there are a lot of the issues and a lot of the initiatives around early intervention, around co-ordination. I guess some of the things we are looking at, through the closure of Seven Oaks and better utilization of our resources in a significant way

earlier on and a more co-ordinated approach using the mental health system, psychiatric beds, mobile crisis units, to deal with problems up front, could hopefully save us from the kind of warehousing that has been happening at Seven Oaks that is very costly and really is not good treatment.

So a lot of the things that we have learned from compiling that information, the trends where people have come into the system, how they stay in and where they end up, you know, after they move into their adult life, can give us some indication on how we can better treat them, better deliver services earlier on.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Just to clarify then from the minister's answer. I appreciate what she said, but is she—I saw when she was answering the question she was looking at the document, Strategic Considerations for Developing Services for Children and Youth. Am I to understand that that has the information or report on the analysis that was done on these 50 high-risk youth and high-service youth from each of these four departments?

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** The secretariat used the information that they gathered to develop a strategy that you will find in the document in front of you. That is only one small—they did not develop a report on it. They used the analysis in order to develop strategies and interventions that would better serve children.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Tweed):** At the request of the Chair, would there be a willingness to take a five-minute break? The committee will break for five minutes.

*The committee recessed at 5:03 p.m.*

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#### After Recess

*The committee resumed at 5:14 p.m.*

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Tweed):** Okay, we are back at it.

**Ms. Cerilli:** One of the comments the minister made in her opening statement was that there is very little

research on Canadian models in dealing with the best methods or practices for providing services to children and families. I am wondering, based on that, if there are some plans through the Youth Secretariat to address this through funding research in areas that they decide there is a need. It sounds like some of that is going on by the discussion we just had about the identification of the high-risk youth service by the various departments. I have with me one program from the University of Victoria school of child and youth care, and its integration of services to youth at risk in their communities. It is, I guess, an example of a model that is being used in one part of our country. I am curious to see if the minister is now going to put some priority on developing research in this area.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Mr. Chairperson, absolutely. There is not any project that will be undertaken through a co-ordination of the Child and Youth Secretariat that will not have a research component to it. Even the Baby Think it Over program, which is starting up in the schools, will have a research component.

We will want to measure how successful the program is in helping kids understand that pregnancy is not their way out of poverty and the ideal life as an adolescent, that it really does provide many disincentives—there are a lot of drawbacks—and that it is not easy when you have the additional responsibility of looking after an infant to turn your life around into a very positive, proactive, independent life, that there are many more barriers to access to education, a lot more issues to think about in balancing the life of motherhood, work and all of the other activities that will have to be undertaken throughout the rest of their life are much more difficult when they have the addition of another person to look after and to think about and to do that, in many instances, alone. So we certainly are going to ensure that there is a research component.

I guess part of the problem right across Canada has been in the years when money was flowing and government departments were experiencing increases year after year, and I can remember those days. You know, there would be allocations in the Department of Health of a 10 percent additional increase or budget year over year, as there were within all government departments. Departments were busy trying to develop new programs and ways to spend that money without



looking at the old programs and seeing whether they were meeting the needs of the day. So new programs were implemented on top of old programs without any measurement, without any data collection, without any research, and we are not unique here in Manitoba. It happened right across the country and, as a result, we do not have the benchmarks or the data that indicates to us where we have succeeded and where we have not.

It is going to be very critical into the future that we start to measure, get that benchmark and that data collected to see whether we really are having a positive impact on the lives of the people that we support through our government programs. Not only do we need to be developing those benchmarks and ensuring that our programs with our scarcer resources today are doing the right things, but we need to ensure that all those other levels of government and other funders are working together with us to develop those benchmarks and that, you know, from time to time we evaluate and have the courage to say, no longer is a program working or is it meeting the needs of our community today. Let us look at changing the way we do things and serving people better.

**Ms. Cerilli:** One of the other comments that you made just more recently as well when you were talking about the study that was done on the 50 youth identified by each department was what you learned from that was early intervention is key. I am wondering if, then, you have looked at how this is going to affect the more broad policy areas in government such as child care, such as pregnancy prevention, such as—you know, we have talked a little bit about some of these, about the nutrition program. I am trying to think of some of the other more broad areas that would—you know, child abuse, support for families with small children who are identified as at risk for child abuse.

Can we expect to see some major funding allocation changes or program changes in areas like that in dealing with child abuse and dealing with child care, particularly?

\* (1720)

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Mr. Chairperson, I think absolutely we can see new ways of thinking about delivering services, and that is exactly one of the reasons why we

have looked to the community to add to the expertise in the secretariat, some profile people who have done some really good work in our communities. I just look to Dorothy Dudek who has agreed to move into the secretariat for a year and work with the secretariat around new vision and new direction. It is very critical that we look at the resources that need to go into early intervention for children who are living in poverty, are disadvantaged, to get them off to a better start to life.

We need to look at the kinds of skills people need to deliver those programs. I have a lot of confidence in the training and the skills of those who work in early childhood education in our child care centres, and some of the expertise that they have in being very valuable resources and helping us look at how we deliver new programming or enhanced programming to children early on in life. So, therefore, I think Dorothy will be a very valuable asset to us as we look at those programs.

We have had a fact-finding mission ongoing for a year on the whole child care system. We do know that, predominantly, most—90, 95 percent—of single-parent families are women. As they move into the workforce, we are going to need accommodation for child care, but we do know that the needs are changing. As jobs become more nontraditional or shift-work jobs, there is going to need to be a change in focus around how we provide that child care to the working woman who might be working the midnight shift and need the kind of support that might not be able to be provided in a centre, or that might not be the ideal way of providing service. We need to look at new approaches and new flexibility within our child care system. I think that the augmentation or the implementation of new early intervention programs need to be looked at not only in the context of how we in our government departments co-ordinate our programming but how the community fits into that programming with us. We need the combination of both. We need neighbourhood and community assessment of what the needs are and then we need to find the right people to deliver the programs.

There are many out there that I have talked to that have great ideas, and I know that Dorothy Dudek is one person that has a good connection into the community, and one that will be able to assist us. I believe in a very

positive way in identifying who can best deliver the programs, what kinds of programs need to be delivered and how we can co-ordinate that activity. So we are reaching out beyond the bureaucracy within government and saying, how do we partner in a more positive way with community, who are the leaders we can identify in the community, in the education system, in the health system, in the family services system that might want to come into the secretariat? Just as we rotate people from departments from time to time into the secretariat, how can we rotate people from the community to come in and work with us to see whether we cannot find the very best solutions for our families and children out there?

**Ms. Cerilli:** The minister keeps talking a lot about partnering with community groups. One of the things that she also recognized in her opening statement was the outstanding example of the direction that you want to go with the Andrews Street Family Centre. I am wondering if the minister could clarify for me what she sees as making this centre so good or successful. Specifically, what is it?

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Mr. Chairperson, I guess I could go on and on about Andrews Street. I will try to keep my remarks as brief as possible, but I think there is a lot of activity ongoing that merits consideration as a model that could be adapted to different neighbourhoods and different communities. When Andrews Street Family Centre started up, before they even opened their doors they went door to door in the community. There was a group of individuals, Josie Hill was one, I think the person that was hired to co-ordinate and get the project off the ground. They went door to door in the community and assessed community needs and as a result of that developed a program and found a space that met their needs and opened it.

They developed several programs. What they have that is really great, I think, is a real good connection to William Whyte School, which is right across the street from them, so the school and the community are working together. I know they have programming and they also have Pritchard Place Drop-in Centre which is adjacent to Andrews Street Family Centre, so they have ongoing activities at Pritchard Place that they have developed and that are growing, but they have programs that are connected to the school too, so not

only do they have after-school programs and activities for kids at Pritchard Place but they have the school gymnasium four evenings a week where they can develop programming and provide programming and they have young individuals that organize and co-ordinate that programming. They have a community kitchen where—

### Point of Order

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Tweed):** The honourable member for Radisson, on a point of order.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Just to clarify for the minister. I am really quite familiar with the Andrews Street Family Centre and the programs they offer. I am not interested in your describing the programs. I am interested in your telling me what you believe is really positive about them or why it is that this model is something you are interested in. You said that it is the model, so that is the kind of thing I am wanting you to describe, maybe mentioning a specific project that they are undertaking but to highlight in terms of your function as the Youth Secretariat why you think it works, why what they are doing is going to work.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Tweed):** The honourable member does not have a point of order, but I will ask the minister to respond to the question.

\* \* \*

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Thanks, Mr. Chairperson. I appreciate your ruling, but I guess when my honourable friend wants to know what I think is positive and what is working and why it is working, it is all of the programming. It is the co-ordination with the school that is very positive. It is the community kitchen that not only teaches parents how to cook nutritional meals, but it provides them with the opportunity to take those nutritional meals home to feed their families. It has a store there that allows them to buy diapers one at a time or a bit of laundry soap in an individual package for 18 cents that allows them to do their laundry. It has a washer and a dryer that allows people when they are coming in for programming or classes to throw a load of wash in. It is practical, hands-on application. It teaches them how to budget.

\* (1730)

They have also developed a small business whereby now they do catering. We have used their catering services from time to time. I have for different meetings and activities. So they are able to generate some revenue to put back into their community. It is the moms-helping-moms program where they have mentors for mothers that need support in the community. It is the development of job opportunities for people in the community, and most of the people that are working at Andrews Street Family Centre started off possibly on welfare as single parents, many aboriginal, who have developed their skills and been hired to work, now having a job in the community, feeling some pride and taking some ownership over their community and over their family activities.

So I just really think that the concept is great. It deals with many aspects of a family's life, and I think that model, although it might not be perfect for every neighbourhood, is one that can certainly be adapted in many other neighbourhoods throughout the city. I mean, they have connection to business, and they are able to get donations or day-old meat or whatever at a reduced price. They have got such a network and such a partnership within the community, but along with that they have the ability to learn to develop their skills around how to provide for themselves, their families, and develop a support network which can only help and benefit their families and their community. And they have got all kinds of programming that is ongoing.

I think the best part about Andrews Street Family Centre is again the number of community people that are actually working and many community people that volunteer their time. I think out of the staff at Andrews Street only four are professional staff. The vast majority of the staff at Andrews Street are community people that have grown and learned, maybe started off volunteering and have ended up with job opportunities.

I think that that is the kind of thing. It is community taking ownership, people taking ownership and actually working and supporting others in their community that very desperately need support. I think the most positive things are the community developing and growing; having employment opportunities right in their own neighbourhoods; understanding their neighbourhoods;

who is there, who needs help, who they want to bring in; the whole safety issue of course for children before and after school; and the recreational opportunities and activities that are positive activities that are available to those children.

They also do provide a nutrition program after school. They say the first thing that happens when the kids walk in the door is they get a nutritional snack, and the last thing that happens before they leave is they get something in their stomachs before they go home. There are so many good things about that kind of a concept that I am so supportive of and I think need to be shared. I have often asked whether they could not look at developing satellites of Andrews Street in other neighbourhoods. I think that is a real possibility.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I want to pick up on that and continue talking about this as a model, because I think one of the things you emphasized then in your last statement is that they are doing a real variety of things. It is not one agency that tries to meet one need and then another agency trying to meet another need. They try to interconnect a lot of different programs so that they are getting the best impact that they can.

Given everything that you have said, I am wondering what you see as government's role and the Youth Secretariat's role in dealing with agencies like that. If this is the kind of model that you think is working and you really think is great, what is government's role vis-a-vis these types of agencies and the kinds of services that they are providing, because they are meeting a lot of needs that are highlighted in the Youth Secretariat documents? So that is what I am interested in finding out.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** I think government's role very much is a facilitator, a supporter. Of course, there is financial contribution by government to the activities that are ongoing. I guess it just goes to show you that—quite frankly, I think the start-up money came from the federal government for Andrews Street Family Centre and it was a federal grant, but as a result of the activities and the good things that are ongoing, we have come in with support at the provincial level also.

But, you know, government cannot take the place of a community that identifies its own need and then

develops its programs uniquely for the individuals. They know better than I what meets the needs of their community. We want to be there to support, we want to be there to encourage, we want to be able to facilitate if there are connections and we want to be able to fund those kinds of programs and projects, but we do not want to dictate to a neighbourhood or a community what is best for them.

We believe if they can develop, from the community up, programs that meet the needs—you know, from the day they opened, or the first time I visited, to today, I see significant changes and positive changes because they just keep adding to as the needs arise, new programming, new activities. They can do that better than we can, but we are there to support, we are there to encourage and we are there to fund when those kinds of initiatives by a community really work.

**Ms. Cerilli:** I am trying to remember because I think that the Andrews Street Family Centre is one of the results of the William Whyte neighbourhood study which was a housing project that began as the north end housing project through William Whyte School, the William Whyte neighbourhood. I think that is how the study was actually done, is they went door to door and their first concern was about the number of—well, they had a number of concerns, but they were concerned about the number of boarded-up buildings and sniff houses and that in the neighbourhood. I think that a lot of the offshoots were a result of the study that was done by going door to door, related to that William Whyte neighbourhood study. I know that was the kind of study that was done through the north end housing project.

I am also wanting to see if the minister is aware that the types of projects being done through the Andrews Street Family Centre are also being done through many public housing development tenant associations and that there are staff in government through the tenant relations officers. They basically act as community development people that try and encourage and support the development of groups that are going to take on the kinds of initiatives that the Andrews Street Family Centre has—and if that is one of the ways that she sees either Housing or any other government department could help facilitate. She had said that she sees a role

in government as trying to facilitate, because one of the things I have often thought is if we had fewer people, for example, on social allowance, that were doing policing work of people on social allowance and more people that were doing community development work in trying to start, like the work that is being done with the entrepreneurial catering business and the work that is being done again through the housing projects where they have developed a co-op to help renovate homes.

That is also the kind of community development work that could be facilitated. I see the minister doing a lot of nodding yes, so I am assuming she is agreeing and is aware that those kinds of projects are also available through other government departments, and I just want to say one more thing about that. If that is what she means by partnering—you know, a lot of the phrases that are used in your documents: partnering with community; having community-based programming—she can guarantee us that this is not going to mean that government no longer has a role, but that perhaps there is going to be more clarity in when government's role is to support and fund and to assure that some things can be done at the community-based level like that, but there are essential services and things that only government can do, that have to be done directly through government, or if this is something that the Youth Secretariat is looking at at all. This whole idea that there are certain delineations that have to be made between essential services through government departments and agencies, and then other things that can be better done through community-based, nonprofit or existing agencies in the community.

\* (1740)

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Mr. Chairperson, I was nodding in agreement. I think that I am probably more familiar with the Lord Selkirk housing complex than I am with this one in The Maples that is sort of—I cannot remember the name, but I know just in my discussions with members of the community from the Lord Selkirk area and CEDA, I have certainly gained a lot of insight into some of the things that are taking place and some of the community consultation around how they can make their neighbourhoods safer and better. I am very supportive of working very co-operatively around the issues that they have raised.

I want to just share with my honourable friend some of the comments that were made by the community in some of my consultations and that leads us to a lot of the direction we are taking. I know the word "partnership" has been used so long and sometimes so loosely in many different contexts that it is almost an outdated word and you need to find something else because "partnership" means very little or very much, depending on whether it is really a working relationship. So I sometimes have difficulty with that word only because it has been around so long that people do not seem to take it with any sense of any meaning any more.

The comments that were made to me when we had several community consultation processes around our Families First document asking the community what they thought of it and what they felt needed to happen, they talked about strengthening partnerships and that some community agencies are not aware of existing resources that other community agencies are providing, so we need an inventory of that kind of thing. I have come to realize that within the Child and Family Services system, there are certain agencies and certain organizations that are used on a regular basis as referral or support for families in need. I also know that the mental health system or the health system has another inventory of another group of service organizations or community agencies that they use, as do Education and Justice, and they might not even know what each other is doing.

So there is not any sort of common inventory of services that are available. We do know that we have over 400 agencies in the core area of Winnipeg that are providing support services in some fashion, and there certainly are not 400 different services that need to be provided, so there is some overlap and duplication. We can probably get on to some discussion around how we are trying to work on that, because not only is it what the provincial government funds, but other agencies fund organizations to sometimes do the same things that we fund organizations to do.

So we need to co-ordinate that, and there seems to be a sense by community people that sometimes they do not know what other agencies are doing. They made the comment that there needs to be a holistic approach to addressing community needs. The areas they talked

about focusing on were family involvement, employment, housing, education, community services, volunteers and policing.

So, I mean, your comments that you make around housing and housing complexes and how they can be a part of a community solution are very valid. We heard that nonmandated agencies and nonprofit agencies are involved in informal partnerships, and perhaps it is time to formalize some of the partnerships. Co-operation, though, should be voluntary. It should not be forced co-operation, but we need to try to encourage, facilitate, more formalized partnerships.

The community needs to take—or wants to, not needs to, but wants to take responsibility and identify its own needs. I guess that is the Andrews Street concept. They have identified their needs, and then they develop programs around them. There are many underutilized people resources in the community. Many are willing to help, but we need to link them up to resources and the ability to be able to help.

Comments were made that we do not always look for people's strengths, and we need to focus more on what people's strengths are and focus on the assets of a healthy community and should develop directories of strengths and assets that are in a community. So very often we focus on the negative. We do not focus on the positive or look for people's strengths and try to channel them or direct them in certain areas, and there is a fine line between dependency and direction.

These are all people from the community who expressed these thoughts and that we need to constantly re-evaluate. I guess that is what we are doing right now. Volunteers should be recognized, encouraged and rewarded, and that is sometimes something that we forget to do. The whole issue around motivating and mandating schools to be community-based—school buildings are natural centres which could be better utilized by the community. That is why we are focusing on trying to break down those barriers.

We need to identify leadership within the community to enable them to build the bridges. We need to define neighbourhoods' resources, mandates, networks and leadership. We need to take responsibility for prevention out of Child and Family Services—that was

a very interesting comment by the community—that Child and Family Services cannot be all things to all people, that the front-line workers are critical components of the whole network and that they need to be consulted, too, and worked with.

This is an interesting one: Programs are more successful when the family is part of the solution—they were talking about young offenders in some instances—and that there are more success stories with kids when their parents are involved in the activity and the programming and the case planning, that we need to co-ordinate our resources, and we have to remember that not all children are involved in sports, so although we have several community centres, there needs to be a focus, as well as on sports, on other activities for kids who are not sports-oriented.

They talked about long-term solutions; prevention is long term. They said to us that government has to do business in a different way, that we have to look at ways outside of government to help families.

Those are some of the comments that were made by community, and I find it very interesting that not everyone wants government to be all things to all people, that people want to develop their own solutions. They really believe that families and parents are an integral part of that solution, and families are healthier when they are all involved in a process of making their lives better.

So a lot of the things that we need to do, as far as co-ordination goes, in the secretariat is to look at the comments that people are making and help facilitate that kind of community need and desire to take some responsibility and action for their own lives with, sometimes, the superimposed bureaucratic solutions that may not necessarily meet the needs of the people out there who are looking for a different way of doing things.

So I really feel that we are moving in the right direction when we start to bring government departments through the secretariat and the community into a process of trying to find the solutions.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Well, the minister, in answer to my question, read a very long list, recommendations that

were made to her in some consultation. I would just like it if she could provide that list and an indication of where the consultation was or the number of agencies and sort of the date or when that occurred.

\* (1750)

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** If I could just indicate, there was more than one consultation meeting. I think I had four in the city of Winnipeg around this document. It is probably all in the record because I have read it into the record now, but what we did was just compile notes that were informally taken. So I can provide those comments, but there were many, many agencies. I could probably get the list of agencies for my honourable friend, too, that were involved in the process.

**Ms. Cerilli:** Before we break, I do want to ask a few questions about funding of the secretariat.

There has been an increase in the Salaries and Benefits line, to start off with, by, I guess, about \$15,000. I am just wanting to clarify, when I also look at the organizational chart that the minister has provided with the Estimates information, how this is working with the Children and Youth Secretariat in terms of staffing.

I know that a number of staff are being seconded from different departments, so if there still is an agreement then where their salary is being paid and accounted for in that department and if we could go through this organizational chart and confirm where that is occurring and where there are individuals such as Ms. Dudek who is from an agency that is not a government agency. So her salary must be included in that salary line, if I am understanding this correctly, the \$434,000.

So could we just go through that process, starting perhaps with Family Services, with Dale Brownlee, an indication of if that person's salary is accounted through this department or if it is paid by Family Services, and what salary level that person is at?

If I might just continue, a number of staff—it seems like the ones, for example, on the second rung on the organizational chart, like Dorothy Dudek, are seconded

to the secretariat. They perhaps are the only ones who are the full-time employees of the secretariat, and are the others who are indicated, some who were at the table, are they also still responsible for other duties in the department that they are from?

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Yes, I think I have this, and I will get my staff to nod as I go through this, and if I am making a mistake, I will correct it immediately.

The salaries that are noted in here, the staffing of seconded staff is for the five departments that were initially a part of the secretariat, and they are staff years, and people do rotate into those positions from time to time. Not everyone is constant staff. Neil is going back to the Department of Education soon, and there will be someone else who will replace him. Sometimes, from time to time, a term is extended based on the need in the secretariat for the kind of support that Neil can provide.

But Dale Brownlee has not always been the person from Family Services. She happens to be there right now, and there might be from time to time someone else that moves into the secretariat, depending on the needs, the projects and the kinds of activity that will be ongoing, and they will change and evolve.

So we have someone now from Housing. We have not yet got anyone from Northern and Native Affairs to fill a half-time position. Then the positions—Dorothy Dudek, Roberta Vyse and Elizabeth Moore are people who are there for specific purposes, for specific projects, and so they are not included in the Estimates staffing, but they are paid for with a staff year. It is an additional staff year that has come in for a period of time to look at project-specific initiatives and as we need people from departments.

Dorothy Dudek will be paid for through a contract with the Department of Family Services. It will be a one-year contract, and it will be over at the end of that time. So from time to time, there will have to be contract people hired, and that is probably—if we are sort of seconding people from outside of government into the secretariat for project-specific things, they will

be hired on contract. There will not be a staff year in the secretariat because when their work is done they will—

**Ms. Cerilli:** Just a point of clarification, there are no staff years indicated on the Estimates information that I have. I guess that is something that is usually in an annual report which we are going to talk about because I know that the secretariat did not have to do an annual report in the past.

But what I am wanting to find out really is, if we go across the board here from Dale to Theresa and Neil, if those salaries are being paid through the departments where they come from, and the only staff salaries for the secretariat are the CEO, the administration, the support staff, and the two staff years that you said had been added.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** The only staff salary that is paid for through the secretariat is the CEO's staff salary, and the only staff year. The rest of the staff years are seconded from other departments. Does that make sense? Any staff year would be a staff year and a salary seconded from a department. They are paid for through their department, and the staff year is located in the department, but they are seconded for a period of time.

The only people who would not have a staff year in a department would be the people who might be brought in on contract from outside of government. Then there would not necessarily have to be a staff year. It could be contract dollars that are paid for by a department. The Department of Family Services happens to be paying for Dorothy Dudek to be seconded, on contract, from the community.

**The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Tweed):** The hour being 6 p.m., committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

#### IN SESSION

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tweed):** The hour being after 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Friday).

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, April 24, 1997

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