



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

40 Elizabeth II

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

LIB - Liberal; ND - New Democrat; PC - Progressive Conservative

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BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	ND
CARR, James	Crescentwood	LIB
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	LIB
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WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	ND

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, May 6, 1991

The House met at 8 p.m.

**CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY
SUPPLY—CULTURE, HERITAGE AND
CITIZENSHIP**

Mr. Deputy Chairman (Marcel Laurendeau): Order, please. This evening we will be considering (c) Queen's Printer: (1) Salaries \$1,931,700.

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Yes, I have some information to provide on some questions that were asked this afternoon on the cost of Hansard. I believe it was the Liberal critic who asked these questions.

Last year, for fiscal year '90-91, the cost of printing Hansard was \$67,034, and what we charge for a yearly subscription to Hansard is \$60 for anyone who wants to purchase.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Sixty dollars is a flat \$60 for if it is 50 days or 150 days, it does not matter.

Mrs. Mitchelson: That is right.

Mr. Lamoureux: Okay, thank you.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Shall the item pass?

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Have there been changes in the number of staff working at the Queen's Printer in the last, say, three years?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Three years ago there were three staff reductions I guess in the Queen's Printer, but they have remained stable. The number has remained stable since then.

Ms. Cerilli: With becoming a special operating agency would there be further changes in the number of staff?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that is what the feasibility study would determine but indications are as I said earlier, in the federal government there are more staff in the Queen's Printer as a result of a change to a special operating agency.

Ms. Cerilli: Has there been a change over the last couple of years in the amount of work that Queen's Printer is doing?

Mrs. Mitchelson: There has been about a 29 percent increase in the in-house work that has been done by the Queen's Printer, but there has also been technology that has been updated with desktop publishing and a fast speed printer that has made the work easier and faster to accomplish.

* (2005)

Ms. Cerilli: So there has been a 29 percent increase in the work that Queen's Printer is doing on behalf of government departments?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes.

Ms. Cerilli: Is Queen's Printer responsible for producing all of the annual reports and documentation produced by government departments?

Mrs. Mitchelson: The annual reports are all done through the Queen's Printer.

Ms. Cerilli: Are there some annual reports from Crown corporations that are done at Queen's Printer or outside Queen's Printer?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Some Crown corporations or agencies do use the Queen's Printer, but they make their own decision on whether they do it through the Queen's Printer or not.

Ms. Cerilli: Are there other agencies outside of government that use the Queen's Printer?

Mrs. Mitchelson: The only work that the Queen's Printer does is work by departments, agencies or Crown corporations. There is no work from outside of government besides those just mentioned.

Ms. Cerilli: Would you say that there has been an increase or a decrease in the amount of work that the Queen's Printer is doing on behalf of Crown corporations?

Mrs. Mitchelson: This is the first year that the mandate of the Queen's Printer has been broadened to include Crown corporations—any that want our services. So this is the first year that has happened.

Ms. Cerilli: So prior to this year there were no Crown corporations that were using Q.P.?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I am informed that there was some work being done for Crowns in the early '80s, but it was discontinued by the former administration.

Ms. Cerilli: How does the payment work between Crown corporations and the Queen's Printer?

Mrs. Mitchelson: They are charged exactly the same as any government department would be charged for work done.

Ms. Cerilli: Now though that Queen's Printer is generating more of the income from Crown corporations or more payment from Crown corporations, where does that revenue go?

Mrs. Mitchelson: It goes into general revenue.

Ms. Cerilli: General revenue for what?

Mrs. Mitchelson: In the Department of Finance, where any general revenue would go.

Ms. Cerilli: I see. Those are all the questions I have related to the Queen's Printer.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Item 3.(c) Queen's Printer: (1) Salaries, \$1,931,700—pass; (2) Other Expenditures, \$2,237,600—pass; (3) Less: Recoverable from Other Appropriations, \$3,371,300—pass; 3.(d) Translation Services: (1) Salaries, \$817,000—pass.

Item (2)—

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I do have a couple of questions regarding the Translation Services.

From what I understand, all the translation of Manitoba's acts has been completed. Is that correct?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that is the responsibility of the Department of Justice through Legislative Counsel. It is not a responsibility of this branch of my department.

Mr. Lamoureux: So this branch just provides for the printing of those that have been translated?

Mrs. Mitchelson: This branch does general translation, not legal translation.

Mr. Lamoureux: Can the minister explain why the Professional/Technical would have increased by one staff year?

Mrs. Mitchelson: That is the addition of an interpreter position to meet the needs of the Legislature and the courts.

* (2010)

Mr. Lamoureux: Where are the interpreters now? We have 14. What number at the courts, what number at the Legislature? Where are they being used?

Mrs. Mitchelson: There are presently now, with this addition, three interpreters in this branch. They are used in the Legislature, in the courts, at public hearings, and they all do all of those things.

Mr. Lamoureux: Under the (a) it has justification for it: "Reflects an increase to meet the requirements of Section 23 of The Manitoba Act in the French Language Services Policy."

Can the minister just elaborate a bit so that I have a better understanding of that?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, as a result of the revised French Language Services Policy that was implemented in November of 1989, there was an 18 percent increase in demand for translation and an increased backlog. So, in fact, there have been additional resources put in place to clear up the backlog.

Mr. Lamoureux: Is there currently a backlog?

Mrs. Mitchelson: There is a backlog at the present time, but it is being diminished as of the new resources being put in place.

Mr. Lamoureux: When would the minister anticipate the backlog being resolved?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I would hope within the next few months or so that there would be considerable improvement.

Mr. Lamoureux: Finally, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, in terms of the demands on this service, has it been increasing on an annual basis? I know in the Supplies and Services which tells me that there are more pieces of papers and so forth that are going forward by a substantial increase—is that as a direct result of an increase of demand for it?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, there has been an increase in demand of about 10.5 percent per year over the last five years.

Mr. Lamoureux: Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Item 3.(d)(2) Other Expenditures \$434,500—pass; (e) Provincial Archives: (1) Salaries \$1,288,200.

Ms. Cerilli: The questions I have in this area consider only two areas. One of the key ones is Freedom of Information. This is the area that is responsible for producing the Access Guide?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes.

Ms. CerlIII: When can we expect to have an update?

Mrs. Mitchelson: By September of this year.

Ms. CerlIII: With the last update, what was the distribution of it, and what will be the distribution of the one coming up?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Government offices, public libraries, regional offices, and it is also for sale to the public.

Ms. CerlIII: Where is it for sale?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Through the Queen's Printer.

Ms. CerlIII: What is the plan for making the public aware that the new guide is available?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, according to the legislation, we have to provide for a review process of The Freedom of Information Act, and that will be underway and in process by September. That will be an extensive public process and, in fact, there will be a fair amount of publicity around the new Access Guide at that time.

Ms. CerlIII: What has been the use of the service?

Mrs. Mitchelson: The last annual report that was published will have that information, and I will just get that. The last update that we have—we do not have the final figures for 1991—but for 1990 there were 345 applications received.

* (2015)

Ms. CerlIII: When someone makes an application for information, do they submit it to the Archives or a central location? How are applications collected?

Mrs. Mitchelson: The applications are made to each department that would be responsible for the information that is being requested.

Ms. CerlIII: The departments' staff are responsible for doing the research and finding the information?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Each department has an access officer who is responsible for taking in those applications and having them processed.

Ms. CerlIII: Does the access officer have the sole responsibility of dealing with Freedom of Information, or what other duties do these people usually have in their departments?

Mrs. Mitchelson: The access officers are usually senior officers within departments. They might be the executive director of finance or something like that, and each department is different. They have

other duties as well as assessing the freedom of information request. They do have other people within the department who have the responsibility of assisting them with that.

Ms. CerlIII: How about with any Crown corporations or boards and commissions, how does it work if there are requests for information related to a body like that?

Mrs. Mitchelson: It is exactly the same as with the departments.

Ms. CerlIII: So the individuals who work in the agency would be doing the research and answering the request and actually responding to the individual who made the application for information?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, there might be a combination of people within an agency also that would have that responsibility. There would be an access officer assigned, and there would be people assigned to assist in the process.

Ms. CerlIII: Have there been situations where there has been a problem with having the same people research and give out the information as are responsible for directing the agency that the information is being requested from?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I guess it is laid out in the legislation what process—it was legislation, in fact, that was passed under the former administration and proclaimed under our administration. There is a process, and it does indicate the kind of work that has to be done. There is an appeal process in place. If people are not satisfied with the results that they get, they can go to the Ombudsman and appeal the decision that is made.

Ms. CerlIII: How many appeals have been made?

* (2020)

Mrs. Mitchelson: I might ask for clarification, or maybe I can elaborate a bit on my last answer. There is an appeal process where they can go to the Ombudsman. If they are not satisfied with that, they can appeal to the Queen's Bench. I guess I am wondering which level of appeal she would like information on.

Ms. CerlIII: Both.

Mrs. Mitchelson: We will just have to get the Ombudsman's Annual Report to get the number of appeals that have gone to the Ombudsman. I believe there is one that has gone to the Queen's Bench.

Ms. CerlIII: It seems to me that there are going to be some problems. I know of one situation with the Boxing and Wrestling Commission. There might be others here that are familiar with—there was a request for information and, because of the small number of staff in the agency, it was shown that the information provided under The Freedom of Information Act was, in fact, not accurate information, but because it was the same individuals who ran the risk of getting into problems, because the information being released, that was also the people who were giving it out. There was some problem where, in fact, inaccurate information was given out under the act.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, our department is the department that is responsible for the act and the scheduling of records and the updating of the Access Guide, but specific details on specific commissions or agencies or departments would have to be addressed through the minister that would be responsible. Ultimately, each department and each ministry is responsible for the information that is provided by their departments.

This is the co-ordinating department that is responsible for the act in the way of scheduling records ensuring that they are kept in the archives and updating the Access Guide and getting the information from the departments on that, but if there is a specific request, as I said, there is an appeal process. If there was misinformation that was given, there is the process whereby they can appeal to the Ombudsman. If there is not a satisfactory resolution at that level, then they can appeal to the Queen's Bench, but each minister would have to answer specifically on requests that have come in under their ministry.

Ms. CerlIII: I am surprised that there is no role for staff within the department in the process of requesting information. There is no role for archives staff to verify information?

Mrs. Mitchelson: The role of the archives staff would be to assist departments in obtaining the information and compiling that information, but it is the departmental responsibility to give the information, the respective department's responsibility. As we said, there is an appeal process if, in fact, someone believes they have received misinformation or information that is not accurate. In fact, the recourse is to go to the

Ombudsman with complaint about the respective department.

Ms. CerlIII: You were going to tell me the number of appeals that have been filed.

Mrs. Mitchelson: There were 48 complaints to the Ombudsman in 1989.

Ms. CerlIII: Can you explain the difference in the appeal to the Ombudsman and the appeal to the Queen's Bench?

Mrs. Mitchelson: The first level of complaint goes to the Ombudsman and if it is not satisfactorily resolved to the person who is requesting information at that level, then they would take it to the Queen's Bench.

Ms. CerlIII: So there have been 48 that have been filed with the Ombudsman's office. How many of those have gone the next step?

Mrs. Mitchelson: One.

Ms. CerlIII: Do you have the information of what that case was?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Once it goes to the Ombudsman, it is the Ombudsman's role to provide that kind of information.

* (2025)

Ms. CerlIII: Just to clarify then that the minister has made a commitment that there will be a new guide by September '91—

Mrs. Mitchelson: September, yes.

Ms. CerlIII: Okay, thank you very much.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Item (e) Provincial Archives: (1) Salaries, \$1,288,200—pass.

(2) Other—

Ms. CerlIII: Under the Professional/Technical area, can you explain what position was cut and why?

Mrs. Mitchelson: That was one vacant SY that was cut, and there are opportunities within the branch to reorganize staff responsibilities and create greater efficiencies. So it was a position that was not filled.

Ms. CerlIII: What was the title of the position?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Historic Resources Officer 3.

Ms. CerlIII: What is the function of the position?

Mrs. Mitchelson: It would be a supervisory position.

Ms. Cerilli: Under the Expenditures area there has been an increase in the Communications section. Can the minister explain that increase?

Mrs. Mitchelson: That is for the Access Guide.

Ms. Cerilli: The largest area affected in the Archives has been the Oral History Grants Program. Why was this program cut so dramatically?

Mrs. Mitchelson: We did a review of the program last year, because the intent of the program when it was originally set up, I guess, was to deal with Native history. The focus seemed to be moving away from that, so last year we did a review, and we have come back and refocused the program. It will be dealing specifically with Native history, oral history projects. There has been a reduction, and I guess it is one of those decisions that had to be made in times when the economy is tight. One of the decisions was made that there would be a reduction. We will still be able to continue along with Oral History grants, about three or four this year.

Ms. Cerilli: So there was a problem with attracting applicants for grants from the Native community. Because of that, the people that were applying for grants, not from the Native community, have had the opportunity to apply for those grants cut. Is that correct? The logic of that escapes me.

* (2030)

Mrs. Mitchelson: We have determined that we would reprioritize this program, in fact, to provide opportunities for the Native community to apply. As I indicated, there was a review done last year because there were difficulties within the Native community. We have done some consultation with the communities and have improved the number of applications from the Native community, but the program has been refocused and, yes, it will concentrate just on the Native community.

Ms. Cerilli: Can you tell us the other kinds of communities that had been applying for grants and using the program?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Okay. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I have some examples of organizations that have received grants in the past and maybe you would like me to read those out? Okay. Boundary Creek District Development Incorporated, Business and Professional Women's Club of Winnipeg, Friends of the Library, General Hospital Nurses Alumni, Gillam Public Library, Hanover-Steinbach Historical Society, International Association of Machinists and

Aerospace Workers, Manitoba Child Care Association, Manitoba Children's Museum, Riverton and District Friendship Centre, are some examples.

Ms. Cerilli: My understanding of the intent of a program like this would be to record the teachings or the history from cultures or communities in Manitoba that otherwise would not be able to write or to document their history. Communities like some of the immigrant communities perhaps, elderly people who might have knowledge of, for example, the suffragette movement. Are any groups like that represented? From the names that you read I do not get a sense that those groups would be represented.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I guess you can tell by the types of organizations that have received monies for oral history grants in the past that, and maybe the reason or the rationale for us to try to refocus because I think Native history is the one area of history that is much underrepresented, and there is the most difficulty in the Native community with literacy I suppose and with them being able to write the history of the Native community. We believe it is important that those kinds of communities have the opportunity through the Oral History Grants Program, which it is intended to be.

It is to be for those communities who cannot put their thoughts and their history into writing. The Native community would be the best example of that kind of thing. We believed that it was appropriate to refocus and redirect the grants back to the Native community where we believe we are going to get good value and good history and good documentation in areas that have been traditionally unrepresented in our history of Manitoba.

Ms. Cerilli: You have not refocused the program with the cut that you have given it though. You have slashed the program, and I would think as the Minister for Multiculturalism you might have more of an interest in trying to attract people from a variety of cultures. Besides, I mean I am certainly not saying that we should not be having oral history from the aboriginal community, I fully support that, but I think that the intent of the program, as I have said, is to go into a lot of the other cultures that have existed over the years in Manitoba. I am wondering what other steps have been taken to try and do the kind of outreach that this kind of a program requires so that you find the people that have the expertise

and the stories and the history to contribute to the program.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, as I have indicated that government had to make choices in this budget, and I know that some of the opposition members may laugh. Certainly we would not make the choices here in Manitoba that the Ontario government made. That is a difference of philosophy. We could argue all night long about the choices that they made as opposed to our choices. We believe they were the right choices and, in fact, we will have money at a reduced level for oral history programs. The size of the program this year will allow us to do three to four Native oral history projects.

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

I think the operative word here has to be "oral history." It is for those communities that cannot put into writing the history of their past. In fact, we have over \$1 million in multicultural grants that we give out to community ethnocultural organizations through the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council. If in fact there was a community that indicated a priority for a history project on their community they could apply through the Multicultural Grants and obtain funding in that way to preserve their history.

What we have said is, we are refocusing this program in this line, in this branch of our department, on Native history, where we believe the most focus should be put.

Ms. Cerilli: I had asked the question, what is the outreach component of this program? When you have programs like this, where they are going to be dealing with marginalized communities, you cannot just offer the program, print a brochure and expect people to respond. There has to be some type of outreach.

Mrs. Mitchelson: There are ongoing, continual workshops and outreach done, a consultative process through the department to administer this program.

Ms. Cerilli: I would appreciate for the minister, through the department, to table a more detailed list of the communities that had their oral history recorded from the list that was read, from some of the libraries. There may be more contact than is shown by the names of the organizations that were listed.

I would just like to say as well that, particularly since the minister is a woman and would know that

so much of the history that is recorded in the books that we read does not represent a female perspective, and I would say the same for a lot of the communities, the aboriginal community, a lot of the other immigrant nonwhite communities or populations in Manitoba, that programs like this are very important and, even though there is a restraint and a recession, we have to not lose the heritage that can be lost.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Acting Chairperson, as I have indicated, there is money available in grant form through the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council for anyone who wanted to do a history project for their community. There is money available through the Manitoba Heritage Federation for any organization that would want to apply to do a history project or a heritage project of any sort. We have indicated here, and I will provide that list by the way, that we are focusing this specific oral history project grant program to the Native community.

* (2040)

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Reimer): Item 3.(e)(2) Other Expenditures, 262,300—pass; 3.(e)(3) Less: Recoverable from Other Appropriations, \$28,800—pass; 3.(f) Legislative Library: 3.(e)(1) Salaries 601,800—pass; 3.(f)(2) Other Expenditures, 171,200—pass.

Resolution 23: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$5,585,300 for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1992—pass.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Just a moment. For clarification, if I can ask whether we could, at the same time as we have been dealing with this appropriation or this line, deal with Resolution 25 which deals with Expenditures Related to Capital for this area.

An Honourable Member: Is that 6.—are you looking at 6.(g)?

An Honourable Member: 5.

An Honourable Member: No, it is 6.(g).

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I know we have done or we have passed 6.(a), (b), (c), (d), (e). If the minister is asking if we want to go into (f), (g), (h), (j), (k), (m), (n) just to finish that whole resolution off, I do not have any problem with that. We can go ahead.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes. Great. Thanks.

An Honourable Member: Is this (g)?

An Honourable Member: No, this is 14.5.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Relmer): The item that we are talking about is Expenditures Related to Capital which is item 5.(a) Acquisition/Construction of Physical Assets \$200,000.

Ms. Cerilli: I just want to clarify, at the beginning of the Estimates for this section I thanked the committee and explained that we have actually a couple of critics from our party who are dealing with this department, so what I would like to do is to check to see if we can deal with this area.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Relmer): I would like to point out that item 5. Expenditures Related to Capital only relates to—Can I have order, please. I would like to point out that item 5. Expenditures Related to Capital is—hold on a minute—related to Queen's Printer.

Mr. Lamoureux: I understand we are going to deal with line 5. right now and then we will go on to 6. and finish off 6. Then that will leave us with Citizenship, and that will be it for the department, other than the Minister's Salary.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I would really appreciate that, given that we have staff here and available, and they would have to sit around for a considerable length of time or come back for just a few short minutes. So if we could finish this, this would certainly accommodate letting staff be able to go home.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Chairperson, I will deal then with line 5. if that is the one that has been called forward.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Relmer): Then we are now dealing with 5. Expenditures Related to Capital: (a) Acquisition/Construction of Physical Assets \$200,000.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Chairperson, can the minister give us some type of breakdown of that particular line?

Mrs. Mitchelson: This is for equipment purchase, and maybe I could just read a list of the equipment that is going to be purchased: an audio master recorder, perfect press which produces Hansard, desktop publishing, audio and video systems, book trolleys and carts, and optical disk equipment. This is capital equipment for the Archives, for the library and for the Queen's Printer.

Mr. Lamoureux: Is this something that is ongoing on a yearly basis, or is this just an update of technology-type thing?

Mrs. Mitchelson: This is the third year for updating technology, and this is the third year for approximately this amount of expenditure.

Mr. Lamoureux: I am not familiar with it, but I believe you said perfected press. I might be pronouncing it wrong, but what is it that that press is supposed to be able to do? Speed up production of Hansard?

Mrs. Mitchelson: The existing press for Hansard is about 20 years old and cannot be repaired any longer, and this will provide a new piece of equipment, an updated piece of equipment to produce Hansard.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Relmer): 5. Expenditures Related to Capital (a) Acquisition/Construction of Physical Assets, \$200,000—pass.

Resolution 25: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$200,000 for the fiscal year ending 31st day of March, 1992—pass.

We now revert back to 6.(g).

(Mr. Deputy Chairman in the Chair)

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Item 6.(g) Provincial Archives Grant Assistance, \$54,300—

Mr. Lamoureux: Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am wondering if the minister can give us some type of update in terms of what I believe St. Boniface was giving some thought, or an organization in St. Boniface was giving some thought, of developing an archive in that area. I wonder if she can give us some type of update in terms of what is going on there.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, we have met with St. Boniface Archives, and we are in the process, I guess, of reviewing with them an application that they put forward on a feasibility study, but we have not come to a final decision on that.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, can the minister tell me in terms of last year we had an expenditure of \$104,000—it has been decreased to \$54,000—does she have a list in terms of where that \$104,000 was allocated out to? Which buildings?

Mrs. Mitchelson: That was the Oral History Grants Program that we just discussed with the other critic a few moments ago.

Mr. Lamoureux: Then the \$54,300, I guess it is the Oral History, it is the dropping of that that has reduced it down to the \$54,300. Is that correct?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes.

Mr. Lamoureux: That is fine. Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Item 6.(g) Provincial Archives Grants Assistance, \$54,300—pass.

We will now revert back to—what is the will of the committee here?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I think we just discussed with the critic and it was—what did we do, (e)? Did we do (e) and (f)?

Mr. Deputy Chairman: We just finished (g).

Mrs. Mitchelson: I believe there was a will to continue with (h), (j), (k), (m) and (n).

* (2050)

Mr. Deputy Chairman: In that case we will revert and do Other Expenditures under (a) of Immigration and—

Mrs. Mitchelson: No, we are not going to go to Citizenship until we determine this.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: What is the will of the committee? Is it the will of the committee to deal with (h) Community Places Program: (1) Salaries, \$186,000?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: No? Then we will revert back to—

Mrs. Mitchelson: No. We are not going to Citizenship until we -(interjection)- well, it was just discussed with the Liberal critic, and there was a will to proceed with finishing this off so that in fact staff in the department did not have to stay around in anticipation of those things coming up at midnight again tonight.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Is it the will of the committee then that we deal with (h) Community Places Program: (1) Salaries, \$186,000? Agreed? Agreed.

Item (1) Salaries, \$186,000. Shall the item pass?

Mr. Lamoureux: I wonder if the minister can tell me the number of grants that were approved last year.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, over the four years of the program there were some 1,600 grants approved. I can get information. Specifically, are we just looking for the last year's approvals?

Mr. Lamoureux: Just last year.

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

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Acting Chairperson, there have been approximately 400 per year over the last four years. We do not have the exact numbers because, as you can imagine, some grants are not fully paid out in one year. There is a carry-over to the next year for some of the grants. They might be paid part of their grant in one fiscal year and part in another fiscal year, so it is pretty hard to determine the exact number. Some of them are paid in two different fiscal years.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Chairman, you will have to excuse me if, in fact, they are published in an annual report in total. I will ask the minister, does she have a list or where can I find which organizations have received the grants?

Mrs. Mitchelson: We can provide that list for you. We can get it and provide it to you.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Acting Chairperson, is there an average amount, or what is the cap for the Community Places Program? Has that changed? I believe it was at 79.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Acting Chairperson, the cap for an individual grant was \$75,000. With the extension of the new program into this year and with the limited amount of resources available, we have reduced the maximum amount to \$50,000 for this fiscal year.

Mr. Lamoureux: While the cap was at \$75,000, were there any organizations that actually received \$75,000?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, quite a few.

Mr. Lamoureux: Are there a large number of applicants that—or what percentage of applicants actually go forward and actually receive monies from the government through this particular program? Are all the applications that are received looked at and addressed, or is there a backlog or a waiting list for different applications?

Mrs. Mitchelson: All of the applications are evaluated by departmental staff and recommendations are made on grants. About two-thirds of those organizations that do apply have received. There has never been enough money every year to provide grants to all of the organizations that do apply.

Mr. Lamoureux: Does the government have a priority in terms of what grants will be approved, what grants will not be approved?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Well, there is some criteria that does stipulate. These are matching grants and the community has to provide the half. They are 50-50 matching grants. Certainly, you have to look at the organization that has applied and if, in fact, they have their funding in place in the community. That is part of the criteria and the analysis, if in fact they have their money in place and they are ready to get started. We look at that and take that into consideration along with the approval.

Mr. Lamoureux: I will use a hypothetical example, if you will. If there is a community that wants to expand its community centre and applies for the program, and then on the other hand you have a day care that would like to be able to expand, or a church that wants to expand its space facilities, is there a priority given to the two, either one?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I guess the basic criteria would be that if it is a usable facility, if it is completely usable and viable, and if the facility consultant has indicated that this is the proper way to go, and the best way to go, because they do go through an analysis with the facility consultant, and if they have solid financing in place already, those are probably the main criteria that are used for awarding the grant. Then, of course, within the dollars available.

(Mr. Deputy Chairman in the Chair)

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, can the minister tell me, does she herself feel that certain projects, or certain types of projects, should take a higher priority over other projects when it comes to issuing out these grants?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I think that the criteria states itself the types of applications that can be accepted and received. If there is good community support, and usually if there is good community support there is the financial backing in place, because you have to recognize that the money does not flow from the department until the money has been expended and the bills are submitted to the department. So, in fact, the money flows after bills are submitted for work that has already been done.

There has to be the community support and there has to be the financial backing in place from the community, and I believe that there needs to be a good mix of very worthwhile projects. I think there are community clubs, community organizations,

community facilities—there have been a lot of cultural centres that have received support. There have been a lot of day care centres that have received support. They are all very worthy community initiatives and you know it has to be, as this is one of those programs that is community driven because the community applies based on what the needs are. We respond if they have got a good project that is going to serve a community need and if they have got their finances in place.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I guess given the substantial cut in the community at this particular line from 9.4 to 6.2, that means there are going to be less funds going around for those who are making application this year.

I would have thought that the government or the minister would have some type of a priority for certain projects over others, given that we are in a recession and demands for things, and again I use a hypothetical situation, given the demands for day care, given the demands for additional recreational facilities in a sense of community centres—and it is not to say that community centres should not be receiving grants—but does she not see any benefits in prioritizing some type of order in which the grants should be approved?

If the government, for example, believes that day care is a big issue for this government and they want to provide more day cares, would it not be advisable or in the government's best interests to demonstrate their goodwill?

* (2100)

Mrs. Mitchelson: I guess I have to go back and reiterate that the projects and the applications that come forward have to be community driven. They have to meet a community need and not every community's first priority is a day care centre. There might be a community, an ethnocultural community, that has their cultural centre as their highest priority. There might be a community centre that might be the highest priority in another community or an area of the province. So I think it is a provincial program.

The program was set up to suit a broad range of needs and I guess we have to look at, in this year I suppose, ensuring that existing facilities that might need some upgrading might be given a little higher priority than a new facility, at this point in time. What we want to do is extend the life spans of those facilities that do presently exist, if they can be upgraded, and you know, in some communities, it

might be playground equipment which might be as high a priority as a day care facility.

It all depends on the community and not every Manitoba community is the same with the same needs. I think we want to at least ensure that all parts of Manitoba are served to some degree with the limited resources that we will have available this year through the program.

Hopefully, if things are better next year, we may be able to implement or institute a new program with higher levels, but at this point in time, we felt that this was all we could provide for this kind of program. That is why we have extended the program instead of putting in place a new program.

We will be looking individually at communities as the applications come forward and trying to meet the needs of what the community perceives their priorities to be.

Mr. Lamoureux: When does the government decide on the majority of the applications in terms of approval? When can the different communities expect to receive some type of response, positive or negative?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Normally through the process of the last few years, there has been four approval dates throughout the year, four rounds of approvals. This year, because of the limited program and the lateness of getting the program announced and started up, there will be two rounds, one in the spring and one in the fall.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, can the minister tell me, how many rounds of approval did they have last year?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Four.

Mr. Lamoureux: Can I get the dates, or approximate dates?

Mrs. Mitchelson: They were, approximately, April, June, September and December last year.

Mr. Lamoureux: That was April, June—

Mrs. Mitchelson: June, September and December.

Mr. Lamoureux: Is it fair, then, to say that 75 percent of them were approved prior to September?

Mrs. Mitchelson: That is probably about a fair assessment. Yes, the majority, and because the construction months are earlier in the year. A lot of communities want the spring months and the summer months to construct, and there are

obviously more applications for the spring round of approvals. As it gets into September, it is only work that is inside that can be done.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would not want to disappoint the member for Portage (Mr. Connery). In fact, because I was encouraged to hear 75 percent were approved prior to September, that then leads me to believe that we should be able to have 75 percent approved to this September because whatever applied last year, construction and so forth, should apply this year. Those organizations that are waiting for approval, I would anticipate—is that a fair assessment?

Mrs. Mitchelson: We will attempt to assess the applications and look at those that are ready for a start-up, but I will tell you that I know, because of the reduced dollar amount that is available, that in fact we will not be able to approve as many applications as we have in the past, and there will be fewer people who will receive grants this year.

Mr. Lamoureux: Given that, and given also the fact that you are likely receiving just as many applicants as you had last year—I am not saying in terms of real dollars, what I am saying is in terms of percentages—and because we had 75 percent, I know there are many different organizations out there now that are waiting and have been told that the budget still has not been passed. I can appreciate that. It is a fair thing for the government to say to these groups to a certain degree that we have to wait until the line-by-lines have been passed, even though in some cases it has been approved. I could not say that definitely with this particular program, but I know under different government programs that organizations will receive money before the line-by-lines have been passed.

With that in mind, I would once again ask the minister: Is it, then, fair to say that 75 percent of the groups out there that have made the application will be receiving some type of notification prior to September this year?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, they all will receive notification. What we are in the process of doing right now, because we did have to defer some applications to this year's process because there was not enough money last year to do all of the worthwhile projects that were out there to do, so some of them have been deferred to this year. We are in the process now of determining whether—we

do not want to make a lot of communities go through the application process again.

What we are going to do is contact them and see whether their application is still up to date, whether it is still something that they believe is a community need that they want to go ahead with. So we are evaluating those and then we will be looking too at the new applications. I cannot give an exact number right at this point, but I do know that there will be more applications approved in the spring round than there will be in the fall.

Mr. Lamoureux: Can the minister give us some type of better estimate? She mentioned spring. Spring is fast coming to an end. Does that mean—well, I like to think spring is coming to an end. Has it not started yet? I realize that we have had a considerable amount of snow, but I am an eternal optimist. I like to think that spring will come to an end. We will reach summer before you know it. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, what I am looking for is some type of indication on when, in the month of June, later this month, when the approvals will start to go out to the different organizations.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, as I said, those that were deferred we are speaking to right now. Applications have been coming in. There is a process that has to be followed because the facility consultants have to meet with organizations and ensure that their plans are up to speed and good plans and are going to be structurally sound. So we will be looking at approval as soon as we can possibly get that into place once we have contacted all of those that have been deferred, see whether they are still wanting to go ahead with the project, and then assessing the new applications and ensuring that the facility consultant has a chance to meet with them. The deadline for receipt of new applications for this round will be the end of May. So some time in June we should be able to give notification to those that will be successful.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I would encourage the minister to act as quickly as she did last year in trying to process them, because I think it does give a boost to the economy. Albeit not as large as some would like, but at least it is in fact a boost to the construction industry and there are many side benefits and community benefits by acting faster as opposed to slower on it. I did want to go back to the cap, the reduction from \$75,000 to \$50,000, and ask the minister why she felt \$50,000

was the more appropriate figure. Is that a cap that is going to be with us for the next number of years with this government, or can we anticipate that it will go up, it is just here with this particular budget?

* (2110)

Mrs. Mitchelson: We felt, because of the reduced level of expenditure on the program that, in fact, to allow more communities to go ahead with projects, we would lower the cap this year to \$50,000. I cannot even begin to indicate what next year might bring in regard to a new program or at what level, but for this year because we had limited dollars to work with, we felt that if we wanted to give more communities an opportunity to receive a grant, we would lower the maximum cap.

Mr. Lamoureux: Finally, does the minister have—and if she does not have it with her, she can get back to me on it—the average grant that has been allocated out of that particular program?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Sure, I can provide that. They are anywhere from \$1,000 to—probably the smallest might even be under \$1,000 for a community that applied for a very small project, anywhere, of course, up to \$75,000. I guess you are wanting sort of the number of large projects. I see that there is a \$900 grant. This is a compiled list, and we will get you a list of the grants—'89-90? Okay.

Ms. Cerlill: I would like to go back to the Salaries and staff that have been cut from this program, and to start off by asking the minister to explain under the Professional/Technical staff years what those three staff positions were last year, '90-91.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we cut one facility consultant and one projects co-ordinator.

Ms. Cerlill: The staffperson remaining, what is the—

Mrs. Mitchelson: It is a senior facility consultant who is left.

Ms. Cerlill: I would like to get more information about—the title of the job does not tell me very much. Tell me more about the expertise and what the job was, comparing the three people who were in that position.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I think I understand what the staff do. The senior facility consultant is the position that is left there. That person gives technical advice on whether the plans are structurally sound, whether in

fact there are ways to save costs in construction, so that is the consultant who goes out and works with the communities to determine whether in fact the plans are sound and solid, and whether in fact there might be a more economical way to do a project.

Then there was a junior technical person. There was a senior person and a junior person. That person, because of the reduction in the amount of the program, there was not a requirement for two. We will have to just make do with one. The other person was a projects officer who monitored and assessed projects as they were going along within the city of Winnipeg.

Ms. CerlIII: I want to clarify the difference in the expertise between the senior facility consultant to the junior consultant and the projects officer.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Facility consultants would go out and assess projects before they started. The projects officer would monitor projects as they were ongoing. The senior facility consultant is an engineer. Actually, I guess, both facility consultants were engineers.

Ms. CerlIII: What was the expertise of the projects officer who has been cut, so there is no longer going to be that monitoring function throughout the construction of the project?

Mrs. Mitchelson: There will continue to be monitoring throughout the construction. It will be one of the administrative support staff who remains here that will be monitoring within Winnipeg. Regional Services monitors outside the city of Winnipeg.

Ms. CerlIII: My question was, what was the expertise of the projects officer who has been eliminated?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Are you wanting to know what the job description was?

Ms. CerlIII: The job description, the function that the person played, what kind of skills they brought to the job.

Mrs. Mitchelson: The person needed to do this kind of job would have to have general administrative skills, able to monitor a project and check off certain stages as it moved toward completion.

Ms. CerlIII: Would that person not work with the groups that were applying for the grant and assist them in developing their project ideas?

Mrs. Mitchelson: And helping them to complete applications and that kind of thing? Yes.

Ms. CerlIII: My concern about the way that the cuts are going to affect this program is that we have moved from having someone who is working in a more community development fashion with groups. This is the kind of program that is very important to the ethnocultural organizations, to remote communities, to, again, communities that are in rural areas outside of Winnipeg.

I will get to questions in a moment about the staff who are working in the regions on this program, but what I see as happening is you have gone from having a community development aspect to the program to making it merely a bricks-and-mortar kind of approach where the staff involved are engineers, and they are not going to be providing the same kind of consultation and work with the community groups.

* (2120)

Mrs. Mitchelson: I guess the most important thing is to ensure that when a community organization comes forward with a grant, that the building that they are going to erect is structurally sound, and that they are not going to build—because they do not have the advice or the expertise of an engineer—something that is going to fall apart within two years and have to be replaced.

The most important thing is to ensure that the plans are structurally sound and that, in fact, it can be done in the most cost-effective way. Obviously, the community is providing half of the financial support, and the government is providing the other half, so we have a vested interest in ensuring that it is structurally sound and also the community does, too. It is important to have that technical advice up front.

I suppose when there is a major reduction in a program, we cannot justify the same administrative costs that were there when the program was a lot bigger. In fact, we will have less money to spend. There will not be as many projects approved. I understand the sense that it is nice to work with communities to help them develop projects, but at a time when we are not going to be able to approve a lot of projects in this year, there has been a decrease in the amount of money that we can provide. There are already a lot of community organizations that have their applications in, that have been developed and have been assessed. We just cannot justify

keeping the same amount of staff and having the administrative costs be more and having the money that goes to the community be less as a result.

Ms. Cerilli: My concern is that the smaller organizations that are going to need more support to develop plans to utilize this program are not going to have the support that they need. It is easy for large organizations who possibly do not even need a program like this. So we are going to be looking for trends in these kinds of programs.

I know that you have a list of organizations that have received the grant, and you are going to provide us with a copy of that. Perhaps what we could do, though, is look at trends. Do you want to make a comment on what I have said so far?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Go ahead.

Ms. Cerilli: What are the trends in the kinds of facilities and the kinds of groups? I know, as I have already said, that this program has been important to the ethnocultural communities in the province. What are the kinds of trends that have existed in terms of the kinds of groups that have used the program?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I do not think we have noticed a specific trend. I think there have been a wide variety of applications that have come forward from many different community organizations, as I indicated before, based on the community needs. We do not see a trend. I think we still see a lot of community clubs. We see day care centres applying. We see cultural centres applying. We see playground equipment. I think that has been ongoing throughout the length of the program.

Ms. Cerilli: Is there a difference in the kinds of organizations applying between city, urban groups, or more remote or rural northern groups?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I guess if we want to generalize in any way, I think that there are not as many applications from maybe rural and remote Manitoba for day care centres as there are in the city of Winnipeg, and I think there are probably more ethnocultural organizations that apply for cultural centre grants within the city of Winnipeg than there are in remote and rural communities. We see within the city and throughout Manitoba requests for recreational facilities, whether they be community centres or whatever.

Ms. Cerilli: With respect to the regions, what is the function of the regional staff who work for this program?

Mrs. Mitchelson: They assist people to complete the applications and do a bit of consultative work if they need help in doing that.

Ms. Cerilli: Are there any guidelines in the program with respect to how many of the projects are to be rural and northern, and how many are to be urban?

Mrs. Mitchelson: No, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it is based on need and the communities that apply.

Ms. Cerilli: Can you give me an estimate of the number of grants, urban versus rural and northern, from the program in the last year?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I do not have an exact breakdown of that, but we can provide the list for you, and you can determine that from the list of grants that have been provided.

Ms. Cerilli: That is why I did not want to go to this section yet because I wanted to have that list before we started.

With respect to the numbers under the Grant Assistance—I see that it has gone from \$9 million to \$6 million in the Estimates book—does the \$6 million, because you were explaining earlier how projects are paid for once the bills are in and the work is done, include money that has not been paid from the previous year?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, it does.

Ms. Cerilli: How much is that one?

Mrs. Mitchelson: There is about \$4 million still to flow from last year's projects.

Ms. Cerilli: So really what we have is a program Grant Assistance that has been cut from \$9 million to \$2 million.

Mrs. Mitchelson: It is going to about \$3 million because we will probably approve about \$3 million worth of applications. This year we will flow about \$2 million of that money, and there has to be another million to flow next fiscal year.

Ms. Cerilli: So explain to me again the rationale for this cut.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I guess the rationale is that there were limited resources available this year. There was a determination that we were not going to—in a year where we were asking everyone to share in the responsibility that we were going to have to have a year where there would not be as many projects approved as have been in the past. It was a conscious decision that was made and when times are better we will determine what size of a program

we can run in the future. You must realize that this is an extension of a four-year program that was over at the end of the last fiscal year.

Ms. Cerilli: Can the minister make a commitment to continuing the program such as the Community Places Program?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I believe that there probably always will be a need for some sort of program, and as times get better and as the economy of the province turns around, we will certainly be looking at new programs and probably at increased levels of funding. For this year it just was not something we felt we could justify a really high priority when we were looking at trying to maintain our health care system, our Family Services system and our education system.

Ms. Cerilli: No further questions.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: (h) Community Places Program: (1) Salaries \$186,000.

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): I was wondering if you could explain to me where the staff are located?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the staff who are indicated here are all located within the city of Winnipeg and Regional Services staff are located in seven different regions throughout the province that assist communities in developing their projects.

Mr. Dewar: Could I have a list of those communities, please?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Our regional offices for the Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship are in Brandon, Dauphin, Morden, Beausejour, Gimli and Thompson. I think I have given you six of the seven, have I? Brandon, Dauphin, Morden, Gimli, Beausejour, Thompson, and we are just looking the other one. It is a regional office. The seventh one is in The Pas.

Mr. Dewar: Staff who work in those regional offices are not included in these figures?

* (2130)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, those are Regional Services staff for the Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, and they are responsible for delivering programming or helping to deliver programming throughout the province of Manitoba for all of the programs that we provide.

Mr. Dewar: Has there been a reduction in this staff at all?

Mrs. Mitchelson: No.

Mr. Dewar: Remained consistent for the last—

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes.

Mr. Dewar: I was wondering, to be specific to the Selkirk area, if you could give me a list of who has applied for these grants. Is that possible?

Mrs. Mitchelson: No, that is not possible. We can provide a list of who has received grants, and we will provide you the whole overall list. I do not have it broken down into the Selkirk and area. I mean, we have a provincial list and you can look at that and do the analysis.

Mr. Dewar: Yes, I would like to have that list.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Sure.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Item 6.(h) Community Places Program: (l) Salaries.

Ms. Cerilli: Now that we have determined that the real amount for this year under the program is going to be \$3 million or so, not \$6 million, how many projects do you think that will be?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I could not even begin to estimate how many projects that will be. That will depend on, as I have indicated—the upper limit for project approval will be \$50,000 this year. There will not be any \$75,000 grants approved, so I have no idea until we know how many applications there are, and what staff analysis is of those applications, and how many will move forward. We have approved approximately, over the four years of the program, 400 grants per year at a level of \$9 million, but I cannot tell you because some of the grants were \$75,000 and we are not going to be providing any \$75,000 grants this year. It would be really tough for me to even estimate.

Ms. Cerilli: How many applications have been submitted so far this year?

Mrs. Mitchelson: As I indicated earlier, the revised application forms will just be going out. There were 194 applications that were carried over from last year that did not receive funding in last year's process, and they will be reconsidered this year.

Ms. Cerilli: It sounds to me like no one else need apply for this program, that there is not going to be money to go beyond those applications that you have carried over from last year.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, everyone is entitled to apply if they have a worthwhile project in their community. The

evaluations and the assessments will be done and the grants will be awarded accordingly.

Ms. Cerilli: Are the grant applications approved or reviewed by cabinet for this program?

Mrs. Mitchelson: The final list of grants goes to cabinet for information.

Ms. Cerilli: So the applicants have already been guaranteed that their project has been approved before the list goes to cabinet or before their application goes to cabinet?

Mrs. Mitchelson: It goes to cabinet for information and, as soon as cabinet accepts it for information, the letters are sent out.

Ms. Cerilli: So, in fact, cabinet gets the list before the grants are approved?

Mrs. Mitchelson: It goes for information first to cabinet, yes, and then the letters are sent out.

Ms. Cerilli: I wonder if decisions are changed after the cabinet reviews the list? If decisions from the recommendation of the program are changed once the list goes to cabinet?

Mrs. Mitchelson: No.

Ms. Cerilli: To the minister's experience, that has never happened?

Mrs. Mitchelson: That is right.

Ms. Cerilli: Is there any other involvement of cabinet in reviewing the program applications?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Well, it would be just like an opposition member who came forward with—and I have had members of the opposition come to me and bring delegations to my office, indicating support for a very worthwhile project in their community. I know that members from the Liberal opposition have met with myself, with the community organizations that have applied for grants, just as I have had some of my colleagues indicate support for certain community organizations, and I know that some members of the New Democratic Party have come forward, just as we did when we were in opposition. We went forward to the government of the day and indicated our support for a community organization that had applied for a grant and all of those applications are taken into consideration. I have conversations with my colleagues, just as I have conversations with members of the opposition parties.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Item (h) Community Places Program: (1) Salaries, \$186,000.

Ms. Cerilli: One last question on this program. I am particularly interested in delivery of the program in the rural and northern areas. What in the past has been the office or the agency that would deliver the program in those areas?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, both Family Services staff and Northern Affairs staff have been involved in working with the communities in the past also.

Ms. Cerilli: Has that been the case in all areas of the province throughout the history of the program?

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Order, please. Those members wishing to carry on a conversation, if you could do it out in the hall. It is getting a little difficult up here with the rumbling going on at the table.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, it has always been this way since the inception of the Community Places Program.

Ms. Cerilli: I have no other questions on that program.

Mr. Dewar: Yes, the northern office I believe is located in Thompson?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Thompson and The Pas.

Mr. Dewar: So areas such as Flin Flon and Cranberry Portage, how would they contact these offices?

Mrs. Mitchelson: The regional office is there to serve the total community, but we do have satellite offices in several other communities where regional staff spend a day at a time. This was all part of the Regional Services Estimates and I answered all these questions. It will probably be on record from this afternoon, but we do have a list of all the satellite offices throughout the province. I can provide that list.

Ms. Cerilli: I guess what we are trying to get at, have any of the satellite offices been cut or services been cut?

* (2140)

Mrs. Mitchelson: No.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Item 6.(h) Community Places Program: (1) Salaries, \$186,000—pass; (2) Other Expenditures, \$74,300—pass; (3) Grant Assistance - Capital, \$6,000,000—pass.

(j) Manitoba Arts Council, \$5,530,300—pass.

(k) Multicultural Grants Advisory Council—you want to take a break? Five minutes, 10? Recess five minutes.

* * *

The committee took recess at 9:40 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 9:46 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Order, please. The committee was looking at (k) Multicultural Grants Advisory Council, \$1,009,200. Shall the item pass?

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, this is, in all likelihood, one of the biggest items in which the Liberal Party opposes the Conservative Party. Ever since the Conservatives took away the funding responsibility from MIC and brought it over into this new body that they have created, we have opposed it. We believe that MIC was doing an adequate job when it came to the distribution of the Lotteries funds to the multicultural groups. MIC was made up of community people who were elected from all the different communities. The minister still had influence in the sense that she was able to appoint a number of people to that board, and we do not understand why it is that the government has seen fit to take away the funding component from MIC. We do not believe that it is acceptable. In fact, we believe that the money should be restored. That is the reason why, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am going to move an amendment to the budget on this particular line.

I move that line 6.(k) be omitted and that line 6 be reduced to \$31,717,100.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: The honourable member for Inkster has moved that line 6.(k) be omitted and that line 6 be reduced to \$31,717,100.

Mr. Edward Connery (Portage la Prairie): What was line 6.(k)?

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Line 6.(k) was the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council, \$1,009,200.

Mr. Connery: That line was to be omitted, and we are dropping the other one down to \$31 million from what?

* (2150)

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Dropping down line 6 which is Lotteries Funded Programs from \$32,726,300 to \$31,717,100, which is exactly eliminating the full \$1,009,200.

Mr. Connery: Could I ask the minister what that does to the line? Does that eliminate all of the funding to that group? Would the minister elaborate?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, if I might just speak to that motion for a short period of time, I guess the experience that we have seen over the last year and a half, I guess, or so since the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council was put into place, that in fact services for the multicultural community through this grants line have been well received by the community. In fact, the reason that the funding role was removed from the Manitoba Intercultural Council was a result of the task force report on the Manitoba Intercultural Council and the special audit that was done. It did, in fact, we felt at the time overshadow the original purpose of the mandate of the Manitoba Intercultural Council, which was to give advice to government on issues of concern to the community.

In fact, they had two separate roles. Those roles were one of advice to government and the other one was funding to the ethnocultural communities. There was a Lotteries needs assessment that was done at the time also, and part of the revision to the Lotteries funding distribution system indicated that there should be another mechanism put in place whereby the multicultural community could receive funding.

I want to indicate, although the members of the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council have been appointed by government, they are absolutely volunteers. They are committee members who volunteer their time without any remuneration to serve the communities that require and are receiving funding through the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council.

The response from the community has been a very positive response and, in fact, I think that under the new distribution system we have allowed the Manitoba Intercultural Council to get back to their original role that they were set up for, and that is to advise government on the issues that are affecting the communities that they serve. In fact, they have done a very good job of that over the last number of years.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am being interrupted.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): I just wanted to get on the list, Mr. Deputy Chairman.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Oh, all right.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, in fact, we have reinforced our commitment to the Manitoba Intercultural Council. We just met as a cabinet committee with the Manitoba Intercultural Council, I believe it was last week. In fact, there was a mutual good understanding that we have worked very closely together. I know that the road was rocky in the beginning when we first took over as government and, you know, we have come a long way with the introduction of a multicultural policy for the province of Manitoba which is the first-ever policy.

I want to indicate that the former administration was not able to come to grips with introducing a policy, and we had some 500 members of the multicultural community out to an evening whereby we introduced the policy, the first policy.

I might just like to quote from that policy a little bit because I think that it was well accepted by the community and in the community consultation that we have had since the policy affirming our commitment to multiculturalism and sharing that with the community. The communities have been very positive and very responsive, and I do want to indicate that from the policy our government's view of the multicultural idea is that Manitoba is a multicultural society.

We have absolutely no question in our mind that we, as a government in Manitoba, believe that a multicultural society is not a collection of many separate societies divided by language and culture. Rather, Manitoba is a single society united by shared laws, aspirations and responsibilities within which persons of various backgrounds have the freedom and opportunity to express and foster their cultural heritage and the freedom and opportunity to participate in the broader life of society and the responsibility to abide by and contribute to the laws and aspirations that unites society.

This policy for a multicultural society affects all parts of the community and speaks directly to Manitoba's determination to meet the challenge of living together in harmony and equality. The three principles that we have put forward in this policy are No. 1, that the cultural diversity of Manitoba is a strength and a source of pride to Manitobans.

To reflect that policy and action, we have indicated that we will pursue the following policies: That government will provide leadership to promote intercultural understanding, mutual respect,

acceptance and harmony among Manitoba's many cultural communities. In fact, the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council is promoting that through the grants that they distribute to the community. The government will encourage the efforts of all Manitobans to enhance and develop their cultures within Manitoba society and will encourage the sharing of our diverse cultural heritages throughout the community at large. The government will encourage the retention of languages and the continuing development of artistic activities throughout our multicultural community. That is the first principle of the policy.

Let me just go on to the second principle where we say, Manitobans, regardless of culture, religion or racial background, have a right to equal access to opportunity, to participation in all aspects of the life of the community and to respect for their cultural values. To reflect this policy, or this principle in action, our government has committed to pursue the following policies.

The government will take action to ensure that throughout Manitoba, all members of the community, men, women and children, enjoy the rights and freedoms to which every person is entitled under our Constitution and within the laws of our province. Our government will work to provide services and programs that are sensitive to cultural values and traditions. Government, by its leadership, will encourage institutions throughout Manitoba to follow this example.

Continuing on with the policies that reflect our policy, government will actively support those who are addressing particular concerns, such as overcoming language or literacy barriers or striving to acquire skills in order to become successful members of our society.

Government will also strive to prevent all forms of discrimination through education and through enforcement of provincial laws. Government will ensure that the multicultural nature of our society is reflected in its hiring practices and in appointments to boards, commissions and other provincial offices, so that these institutions are representative of the community.

The policy then goes on to talk about the third principle, which is that opportunities of the multicultural society will best be realized through partnerships with communities and with

government. To reflect this principle in action, the government will pursue the following policies.

Government will provide leadership to encourage mutual help and co-operation in the creation of partnerships among the cultural communities of the province. Government will consult with members and representatives of Manitoba's cultural communities in the development of policies and programs. Government will involve the community in regular review and revision of its policies and programs to ensure that they continue to contribute to the achievement of the multicultural idea.

I just want to talk a little bit in conclusion because in Manitoba, multiculturalism is not a recent phenomenon. We have been, from our very inception, a multicultural society. I think the programs we have implemented in the past, through the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council, which provide for less administrative cost, I might say, as was incurred when the Manitoba Intercultural Council was providing grants to the community.

* (2200)

That means that, in fact, more money can go out to community organizations for very worthwhile community projects. We, in fact, have indicated, through our budget process this year, that we have tried to preserve and enhance support for the community, and we have tried to streamline administrative costs within government, so that, in fact, the communities receive the major portion of the funding, and the administrative costs are streamlined. I think that one of the reasons for implementing the Multicultural Grants Council was to ensure that the communities which needed the project funding for very worthwhile community projects received the maximum amount of dollars available to them.

I think that maybe the critic from the Liberal Party might want to be informed that the amendment that omits a line of a million dollars of funding for multicultural communities, in fact, eliminates all sources of grant funding to the multicultural community, and with no other motion introduced at the same time. In fact we will be short \$1 million to fund very worthwhile multicultural projects throughout the province of Manitoba, and I, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, certainly could not support a major reduction of \$1 million to very worthwhile projects that our multicultural community brings

forward and are funded through the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Order, please. The time now being 10 p.m., what is the will of the committee?

Some Honourable Members: Committee rise.

Mrs. Mitchelson: No, continue.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Continue?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Continue.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: I would like to advise the honourable members that, the hour now being after 10 p.m., there will be no votes taken at this time, so any votes will be deferred until tomorrow.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Chairman, I guess I am somewhat alarmed here at the Liberal Party motion, and I would just like to get a little clarity around it. What the Liberal Party, in protesting its support for the multicultural community, has done—because if I have listened to their hollow rhetoric in the House, they claimed to support the multicultural community—if I understand correctly, what they are proposing to do is to eliminate nearly \$1 million of support funding to maintain the cultural diversity of the province of Manitoba.

That is what I interpret as being the intention of this motion by the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), and I do not know whether this is something that the Liberal caucus has actually talked about and agreed to or whether this is one of these sort of shot-in-the-dark, hit and run episodes of the member for Inkster in his ongoing desire and attempts to get his name in the newspaper, because this, I do not think, would meet with the approval of my honourable friend, my critic, my dear colleague, the member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema). Surely with only the member for Inkster here sort of acting like the Lone Ranger, we cannot believe that this would actually be the Liberal Party policy. It strikes an entirely different tenor from what we have heard the member for Inkster and his cohorts in the House espouse as Liberal Party policy and platform.

Madam Minister, if I might, can you indicate to us how many organizations have received the benefit of grants through this line in Estimates, through this \$1 million? How many organizations will be affected by this motion, this new policy of the Liberal Party? How many new Canadian, new Manitoban communities will be affected adversely by this Liberal Party policy?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, if I can indicate, between August 31, 1989, and August 31, 1990, there were 237 applications approved, resulting in a total disbursement of \$1.7 million, which includes cash grants as well as bingo days, which are not included in this line because we have no way of determining the income. The Multicultural Grants Advisory Council also does distribute bingo days to the multicultural community, to many of the ethnic organizations, so that in fact they can contribute in some way through those bingo days.

I would indicate to you that I believe that the 237 applications that were approved were very worthwhile projects and very welcomed by the community. In fact, this amendment that would remove that funding and deny those 237 applicants the ability to continue on with their very worthwhile projects in my mind is—well, I am somewhat embarrassed to be sitting in the Legislature with a Liberal opposition that would in fact attempt to reduce so substantially grants to very many community organizations. I guess, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I do want to say that I believe that the community out there that does receive this very worthwhile funding is not extremely concerned about the vehicle that processes the applications, but in fact getting the applications approved so that they can continue on with the work that they are doing to serve their communities.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Chairman, you know, I have always maintained that you take the red tie off a Liberal and you have a New Democrat. I do not even believe the New Democrats would be so naive and foolish as to propose a motion like this, and particularly I do not think tomorrow that once it is brought to their caucus that they would vote for this motion. It is going to be very interesting to see the kind of influence that the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) has in her caucus to persuade them to continue government support of the multicultural community and leave the Liberals as the lone pillagers of support funding to the multicultural community.

I guess what I am intrigued with here is that if we had a little further clarity from the Liberal Party as to whether they think a certain number of these grants are inappropriate and that a portion of the million dollars might be better used elsewhere in providing support and services to the multicultural community, I mean, we would be interested in hearing that. We

would be interested in hearing, for instance, if they believe that of the 237 applicants that were successful that 75 of them maybe should have been reconsidered and the monies not gone to them. Surely the Liberal Party cannot be making the case that every single one of those grants and applications for funding were inappropriate. I do not believe that the Liberal Party would actually make a motion making that clear public statement to the multicultural community.

I can understand, Mr. Deputy Chairman, that the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) might be saying maybe there is \$150,000 in here that is inappropriately used and would be better redirected. We would be willing to take a listen to that policy suggestion from the member for Inkster because sometimes we value his input.

* (2210)

I would be fully prepared after I finish my series of questions to have the member for Inkster indicate whether maybe there is an opportunity to make better use of this money serving the newcomers to Manitoba. That is something that challenges all of us to come up with better ideas, better ways to make use of scarce resources. That is what the whole Estimates process was about. None of us in the sectoral groups that we participated in as ministers, as deputy ministers—having our deputy ministers there making very difficult but necessary budgetary decisions. We all had to show a give and take.

That was the whole budget process and now during the Estimates consideration, my honourable friend the member for Inkster, on behalf of the Liberal Party, can maybe reconsider this motion that he has put forward. Maybe he would like to come back and say, well, you know, on clearer second thought maybe there is not the use for all this million dollars, maybe \$800,000 would be suffice, and maybe there are greater needs out there that newcomers to Manitoba are facing, the challenges they face in integrating into our society. Maybe he would like to say that there are other methods, other ways that we can spend the money. I would like to hear that from the member for Inkster, because the way it stands right now, this is a clear and unequivocal rejection of some 237 groups and applications.

That is not the kind of message that we have heard from the Liberal Party in the Legislature, and I am not so certain, given that my honourable friend

the member for the Maples (Mr. Cheema) did not second this motion that it is indeed the Liberal Party caucus. I think it could be errant behaviour on behalf of the member for Inkster.

I guess one thing I would like to ask, that in terms of the application process, this money is to be funded for this fiscal year. Can the minister indicate how many applications and how many individual grants you might expect to flow with these funds so that we can demonstrate to the member for Inkster and to the Liberal Party how many groups they are affecting by this rather ill-conceived motion they have on the table, so that Manitobans and members of the multicultural community can know where the Liberal Party is coming from, and how many groups are potentially to be affected? Is that information available?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Well, I hate to speculate on the number of applications that might come in this year, but all indications are that we are going to have at least as many applications from the community this year as we have had in past years, and I do know that we have been able to maintain the level of funding in these very difficult times.

You know as well as I the very difficult choices that had to be made as we sat around in our sectors, determining what the needs and what the priorities might be for different community programs to serve the needs of the community. You know, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I indicated before that throughout the departmental Estimates when I have been asked by opposition members, well, why the reduction here and why the changes there, I had to indicate that no decision was made without a certain amount of pain. When times are tough and when government is faced with a zero percent growth in revenues and we want to maintain and enhance wherever possible our health care system, family services and education. Those were the three priorities that have been clearly stipulated by all members of this government.

There are many departments that had to take a really close look at what types of activities were happening, what kinds of programs were being funded and where in fact we could make reductions within the system so that, in fact, we could maintain and wherever possible enhance support to the community. There was not, as I said, any decision that was taken lightly. The decisions that were made internally, and I know within my department, as within the sector that we were involved in, with

my department specifically, we did not ask any community organization to take a greater share of the responsibility than we took internally with the decisions that were made.

You know, there was the odd, I suppose, complete reduction, but in most instances, the departmental reduce in administrative costs were considerably greater than the overall reduction to community organizations.

I am really pleased to say that the funding to the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council was able to be maintained at the same level as it was last year in these very, very difficult times. There are many applications that are anticipated to come forward to government through the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council.

I know that the volunteer members of that community take their job very seriously in trying to evaluate and assess the applications and ensure that as many worthwhile projects as possible get funded through this organization, so I have to commend those. In this time, you know, we are expecting community and volunteer organizations to work very hard and work with us as government over the next period of time.

I know that those who are there are contributing their time and putting in a lot of time, I might say, to evaluate and to assess what are the priorities within the community and what should be funded. I have to commend them for the very selfless effort that they put in to ensuring that they are working on behalf of the communities, not only that they represent, but on the broad cross section of communities that make up this wonderful province of ours.

I have to say that we are anticipating and expecting that as many, if not more, applications will come in this year for funding of some very worthwhile projects.

The comments that you made earlier were very valid comments. I would like to hear from the opposition at some point in time, as we discussed with the Manitoba Intercultural Council when we met with them as a cabinet committee in the council. They indicated to us that they would be willing to work with us as a government to evaluate programs and to prioritize program funding.

We indicated a willingness to work along with them to ensure that if they had some concerns about some of the programs that were presently being

funded within government that were maybe no longer meeting the needs of the community, and if in fact there were new priorities that were arising, that in fact we should all collectively be working together.

I would like to hear some of the suggestions at a later time from members of the opposition on whether in fact they feel that money should be redirected or reallocated within the community.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Chairman, daily in the Question Period, for instance, not daily but sometimes we hear from members of Her Majesty's loyal opposition questions around tourism and the issue of tourism.

Successive governments—and you know, that has been only New Democrat and Conservative in the last year. We have not had a Liberal government in the last 25 or better years, so we do not really know what a Liberal government would do in terms of tourism—but since the early '70s, successive governments of this province have built upon the strength of our multicultural community and developed Folklorama as one of the premiere tourism attractions in the province, which had a national and international reputation as a very successful festival.

In fact, its attempts at emulating it have been made in other cities to the West of us and I believe Toronto as well. They still do not have it right. I mean, we have the finest multicultural festival in North America, if not the world, in terms of Folklorama.

* (2220)

I guess my question to the minister centres around smaller multicultural communities' ability to participate in Folklorama by hosting a pavilion. Is it possible that some of the monies which may well successfully flow to grant applicants out of this would assist some of the communities in participating in Folklorama? Is that one of the potential uses of these monies?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I have to agree with my honourable colleague the Minister of Health when he indicates that Folklorama has been of great benefit, and we were on the leading edge, I think, as a province. We can boast, and we often do, that Folklorama is the largest festival of its kind in the world, and I think that is something that all Manitobans should be proud of, including members of the opposition. My goodness, it has

been going on for a good number of years, some 20 years now, and I think that, when we boast, we boast quite rightly so as a province. It is something that we can be very proud of.

If I could just give you a little bit of some of the statistics on the tourism attraction that Folklorama is, we have some 600,000 visits to Folklorama per year, 600,000 visits to Folklorama over the two-year period, per year.

Mr. Jack Relmer (Niakwa): A lot of money.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, it is a lot of money, my colleague the member for Niakwa has indicated. The economic direct and indirect impact to the province of Manitoba is over \$30 million per year, so when we talk about boasting about the variety of communities involved in such a great tourism event, we do not only boast about the people that provide the entertainment and the opportunity for Manitobans and for the tourists that come to our province; we can also boast about the great economic value that it provides to the province of Manitoba.

I do want to indicate that last year was the 20th anniversary of Folklorama, and as a result of it being the 20th anniversary, we had a very special initiative as a government that I announced, that gave an extra \$1,000 to each pavilion. Some, I think, 42 or 43 pavilions, all of the pavilions, did participate in accessing that \$1,000 per pavilion to upgrade their cultural displays because, not only does the Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship deal with multiculturalism, but it also deals with history and heritage.

We felt that the heritage components and the history that each community can bring to this province, to share with other cultures and other Manitobans and the tourists that do attend this magnificent festival was something of value and something that maybe we could highlight in their very special 20th anniversary. We were able to provide a grant of some \$50,000 to \$60,000 to the pavilions and to the Folk Arts Council to promote that very special 20th-anniversary year.

I do want to indicate also that the Folk Arts Council of Winnipeg does receive and will receive this year, through a special agreement that we have through Lotteries agreement, some \$400,000 in a grant, not out of the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council, but through the Lotteries distribution system. What they do, I suppose, is promote the festival

internationally, and the Folk Arts Council does attract some 200 organized bus tours from most parts of the United States, so I think that those from young to old have the opportunity to come to our province of Manitoba to see what Manitobans have to offer.

When we talk about Folklorama, we do not only talk about the Folk Arts Council and the organization behind it, but I think we have to talk about the many, many dedicated volunteers from all of those communities who spend hours and months in preparing. It just seems like one event is over mid-August and they are already starting to plan, prepare and work towards the next year's activities and festivities. There are some 20,000 volunteers throughout the city of Winnipeg primarily, and throughout the province of Manitoba, that do come and volunteer their time at the 43 pavilions that make for two of the most exciting weeks of our summer activities in our city.

I have to say that we are providing some support that might be thrown open to the opposition, though, to indicate whether in fact they feel it might be worthwhile to reallocate or redirect some money in that direction in the future. That is one of the options that we could leave open for comment from the opposition.

Mr. Lamoureux: I do want to respond to a number of things that the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) and the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship have put on the record.

Prior to myself introducing the motion, the minister would have been best advised to have listened to what I was in fact saying, and he would have had a better understanding in terms of what the Liberal Party is, but understandingly so the minister was preoccupied doing whatever. I would like to let the Minister of Health know exactly what the Liberal Party policy is when it comes to funding the multicultural groups.

In a short period of time, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we will have before the Legislature a resolution, and that resolution will be sponsored by myself. I would suggest to the Minister of Health that he listen to what this resolution says so that in fact he will know what it is, that the amendment that I have put forward, an amendment that he and, I would anticipate, the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld) will have to support. After all, he is the one

who came out saying that multicultural groups should not be subsidized.

For the benefit of the Minister of Health: that MIC is a broad community-based organization providing a voice to over 400 cultural groups throughout the province; that the government of Manitoba already has significant input into the operation of MIC through appointments to community groups; that multiculturalism in a diverse, ethnic background are integral components of Manitoba's heritage and future; that it is imperative to ensure that all applicants for funding are subject to nonpartisan—and I underline the word nonpartisan—decision-making process; that during its existence, MIC's community resource advisory committee was providing a fair, equitable and effective distribution of funds amongst its members' groups; that the government of Manitoba has the authority to audit the books of MIC annually; that the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship politicized the process of grant approval for cultural groups by appointing the Manitoba Multicultural Grants Advisory Commission—and now, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, this is the complicated line.

The minister has to pay attention to this last line: that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship to consider dissolving the Manitoba Grants Advisory Council and reinstating—underline the word reinstating—the funding responsibility to MIC. That is where the funding responsibility should be.

This government, in a very irresponsible political-patronage fashion, put together a political board in order to dish out contributions to the multicultural community. MIC was a group that was put together. It is one of the finer things that the previous administration did. One of the first things this government did when it took office was to take the funding away from MIC and give it to a politically appointed board, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. I would ask the minister, who are the members of that board, and why was the funding taken away from MIC?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I think I started my comments a little earlier by indicating the reasons. There was a Lotteries needs assessment that was done that recommended that there would be another body that would distribute the funds. There were recommendations of the task force report and the MIC special audit. There were members from the community that came forward, rightly or wrongly so, with allegations of

misappropriation of funds. There was an audit undertaken. As a matter of fact, those allegations did come forward from the community. I will say that from the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council we have not had any community organization to date come forward indicating that there was misappropriation of funds.

* (2230)

We have indicated that—and one other thing is there is an appeal process in place now, which was not in place under the Manitoba Intercultural Council whereby when a group was denied funding there was no appeal process for them to follow. In fact now we have an appeal process. If an organization feels that unjustifiably they were denied funding, there is that process in place, and it will be re-evaluated and reviewed. That is one positive move forward.

I will indicate also that the administrative costs for administering grants through the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council is less than what the administrative costs were when the funds were being allocated by the Manitoba Intercultural Council by some \$20,000. That indicates that a community organization or two can receive that \$20,000 rather than it going to administrative costs by the organization. That is one positive thing.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I believe that the community is being well served through the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council. We have not had any concerns raised. As a matter of fact, the experience I believe has been positive, with very fair allocations being made. There are many first time applications that are being supported through the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council. As I have said, there is no change in criteria.

I guess I might ask, because we are following the same criteria that was followed by the Manitoba Intercultural Council with no change in criteria, and if in fact the member for Inkster thinks that the funding should go back to another body, obviously he must think that the community organizations would be making some changes in the criteria to serve the community differently, because if the criteria are the same, would there be a reason to transfer it back to an organization that would actually have more administrative costs than the system that has been put in place, and if in fact -(interjection)- well, the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) says, oh, that bottom line.

I guess that means that a couple of community organizations mean nothing to her. If in fact she does not believe that the community organizations deserve to get the most money possible out of a grant program with the least amount of administrative costs, then I question where she is coming from and where her priorities lie. Is it to employ people or is it in fact to ensure that the communities get the best -(interjection)- Oh, well, the member for Radisson says, power to the communities. I believe that the communities have power when they receive the maximum amount of grant that could be available to them to provide much needed services to the many, many members of those community organizations that they serve.

We can agree to disagree on this forever, but I am rather disturbed to think that members of the New Democratic Party would want to see money spent administratively rather than seeing that money go out to community organizations to get to the grassroots of the community and to provide the best service through project grants.

Actually I am quite disgusted, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, that they would have that feeling or that sense that the community organizations are not important, that it is more important to have an administrative structure that is spending more dollars on administering a program than it is having the money. The end dollar is going out to the grassroots communities that deserve that money.

The Multicultural Grants Advisory Council is well represented by many different communities throughout Manitoba and, in fact, we as a government have made a decision based on the Lotteries needs assessment to move the granting to the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council. We believe there is more money going out to the community, that, in fact, the criteria are very much the same and the community is receiving good service based on feedback that we are getting from the community.

If there are some specific allegations that the member for Inkster or the member for Radisson would like to bring forward on how the money is being abused or not spent wisely through the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council, I would like that information brought forward to me and I would certainly look into those types of allegations, but if, in fact, the communities believe that they are being well served through this process, then I have

absolutely no quarrel with the way we have set up this organization.

As I have said before, there is an appeal process in place which was not in place before under the Manitoba Intercultural Council's allocations. Now any community that feels that they have been unfairly treated can appeal and can have that application looked at again to ensure that the right decision was made in the first place. So I believe we have a better system with more money going out to the community as a result of less administrative costs, and it has been a decision that we have made.

I guess the bottom line is, if, in fact, the member for Inkster or the member for Radisson feel that there should be a different structure or that it should go back to the Manitoba Intercultural Council, they must have a reason for it going back there. The reason for it must be that they want to see a change in criteria and that maybe there are different priorities that the Liberal Party or the New Democratic Party would like to see, criteria based on funding, because if we have a system in place now that has for the first time an appeal process, that has less administrative costs and has the community organizations happy with the allocations that are being made, I do not understand why there is great pressure to go back to another way of funding that is more costly administratively, has less money going out to the community and has no appeal process in place.

So I might ask for some comments on that. I might also ask the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), when he is commenting, whether he has any really constructive suggestions on changes in criteria, if that is the reason he believes that changes should be made and a different structure should again be put in place.

What, in fact, would he suggest changes to be and priorities to be for funding within the multicultural community, because I know that he has attended many different functions and has met with many different groups out there, and I am sure that there have been some recommendations that have come forward to him from many of the communities out there on needs that are not being met, maybe things that are being funded that maybe could be changed. There might need to be some re-priority placement on allocation of money. I would like to hear from the member for Inkster what kinds of information he is receiving when he is out there talking to communities and what kind of recommendations he

might want to share with government on ways and means that we could best meet the needs of the multicultural community, and it might be in re-prioritization.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Order, please. Is it the will of the committee that we now carry on the voice vote?

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister has mentioned time after time the criteria, the criteria. The criteria have not changed. Well, in fact, if the criteria have not changed and she is saying that, because of that, why should we change it? Why should we move it from what we currently have back to MIC?

My question to the minister could just as well be, why did she move it in the first place, if the criteria have not changed? She talks about an appeal process. Why not put an appeal process in at the MIC level? It is just as easy to have done that as to do the other. She talks about the fact that they are going to save money on the administration side of things. Well, administrative, MIC had fixed costs to do other responsibilities that have been assigned out from the government. They still have to pay their rents and so forth. I am not too sure, and the minister has not proven, and I hope she will prove before this debate is over, that in fact that is a valid claim. I will wait with baited breath to find that out.

She asked me in terms of—I have gone to events and, yes, I do attempt to go to a number of events every month, and I intentionally do discuss many different issues with the people that I do meet with. Some of those issues are the direction in which this government is taking multiculturalism in this province.

* (2240)

The direction that they are taking multiculturalism in this province in some part is wrong. It was a wrong move to move it away from MIC. The question that one could ask is, why just MIC? Why do you not do the same thing to the Manitoba Arts Council? Sure, the minister does do some appointments to that particular council, but it is very discouraging to hear from the minister that she does not believe that MIC has a role to play in the distributing of these funds. This is a board that is elected from different community groups. It has done the job adequately.

She asks me to bring forward cases which I feel have been mishandled from her creation of MGAC.

Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I ask the minister to bring forward, to show us this evening or tomorrow, what cases she can cite to us that showed MIC's being irresponsible. Is that what she is telling us, that MIC could not deal with it, that MIC could not dish out, could not fairly distribute the funds to the multicultural community?

Those who make up MIC are volunteers too. She made reference to her committee as being volunteers. Well, so are the people on MIC. They volunteer just as many hours, I am sure, as the volunteers that she has on her committee. Yet these volunteers are elected from their own communities. The minister did not say to me in the response, she went on in terms of trying to put across her message, but she never did answer the question, one of the questions that I had put to her, who is currently on the MGAC board?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, we can certainly provide a list, and I think I have it here in front of me. I can provide that. I can read them into the record, or I can pass you a copy.

I guess I want to correct some information that the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) has put on the record, because it is incumbent upon him to know and to understand the process. In fact, when I talk about a volunteer commitment, yes, there are volunteers who are elected to the Manitoba Intercultural Council, and there are volunteers who are appointed to the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council.

Those who were doing the allocations to the multicultural community from the Manitoba Intercultural Council were, in fact, being paid per diems for the work that they did in allocating those grants. The Multicultural Grants Advisory Council does not receive per diems. They come in on the weekend, spend maybe a whole weekend, two full days, allocating those grants, and do not receive a per diem. Under the former system, under the Manitoba Intercultural Council, the members of the committee that allocated grants were receiving per diems on the days that they came in to make those allocations. So there is a slight difference in that respect.

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

The member for Inkster asked why we would not remove the funding from the Manitoba Arts Council. The Manitoba Arts Council is solely a granting organization. The Manitoba Intercultural Council

was initially set up as an advisory body to government. The granting function was given to them at a later date. In fact, we had members of the community who had indicated that and spoke up—and I will say they did speak up and indicated support for separating the advisory function from the granting function, because there was fear, in some instances, that they had to take certain positions in support of advice to government in order to obtain their grants.

That was a fear, a concern, that came forward from some members of the community. They felt that those two functions should be separate in fact, that there should be an advisory function and there should be a granting function. That was something that came forward. Some people who made presentations to the task force even indicated that concern, so it was a concern that was out there in the community. The member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) says, well, what about now? There is—have not received a question or a concern, and, in fact, there is an appeal process.

I am sure that if there were communities that were upset with the way the granting is being handled right now, they would go to the opposition members, raise those concerns and document that kind of information, and members from the opposition would be bringing those concerns forward to government. To date, -(interjection)-

Well, the member for Radisson says, why do I think we are having this debate? I would like her to bring forward and put on the record tonight the concerns that are out there within the community by groups and organizations that have not received funding through the system. If she has valid, legitimate concerns, I will certainly take those back to the grants committee and have them reviewed, but I have not received those concerns and I have not had any letters from the community to date.

Maybe the member for Radisson has some information, and maybe she has some specific instances where community organizations have not received funding. I will certainly be prepared to look into those allegations, if she would share them with me tonight on the record, and I will look into those allegations and bring information back.

Ms. Cerilli: Mr. Acting Chair, I will start off from the beginning in saying that I cannot support the Liberal motion, even though I understand the intention of what they are trying to do. I understand it is

because of the rule of the Estimates process which does not allow for us to take the grant money from MGAC, as it is called, and put into MIC, which I agree is where it belongs.

(Mr. Deputy Chairman in the Chair)

MIC was created initially to not only advise government but also to give some community input into the distribution of grants. That is the issue here.

The minister talks about, what is the problem? The problem is in the process, and now we have the community groups' duly elected representatives having no input into the process. I know that there are 15 members on MGAC, and I am not sure if all of them are political appointments, but I know that a good number of them are politically appointed, similar to the political appointments in the Multicultural Secretariat, where what we have created is, rather than having community involvement and empowering groups to have some say—

Mrs. Mitchelson: Advise government.

Ms. Cerilli: —and advise government, as the minister says. We have set up a system now where we have small bureaucracies which are dictating the process.

MIC has clearly come, I am assuming, to both opposition parties and complained and put forward their objections. I think though what has happened is, some of these community organizations are afraid that if they are vocal with their concerns that they are not going to receive their funding. Those kinds of politics have existed in these communities and I know that often is what happens.

So the main thing that we are dealing with in the intent of the motion is that the multicultural community have some input into the allocation of funds.

* (2250)

The minister was reading from the multicultural policy of her party and the government, and I would wonder what the minister would do without that policy, because a lot of the community groups are also saying, fine, we have a policy and we have a secretariat, but what about all the other areas that we are concerned about.

We have seen in this budget that there have been cuts to the immigrant health program with Planned Parenthood. There has been cuts to ESL. We have just seen tonight that there have been cuts to

the Community Places Program, which is very important to these communities, the Oral History Program. There have been cuts to MIC, which is, as we know, fighting for its life. There have also been cuts to the Heritage Language Program.

All of these reflect that the government really does not have the commitment it continually says it does when it talks about being the first to have a multicultural policy, but you look at the other program areas that would reflect a true commitment to solving some of the real problems that not only the community groups have, but that the members of those groups have on a day-to-day basis.

We will come up with other areas where again the government is dragging its heels. Members of MIC have said that they are waiting anxiously for their report to be implemented on racism, and they are wanting some action in that area. There are concerns about the Affirmative Action program and how the recent cuts have affected the Affirmative Action program of this government.

There are a number of concerns like that that are not being addressed by the government, even though they have a multicultural policy on paper and they have created the secretariat and MGAC.

I guess one of the other issues that comes up is that the ethnocultural community is being plagued by politics. There may have been some problems in the past with MIC. There may have been some difficulties with people concerned about how grants are being allocated, but I would agree with my Liberal colleague that does not mean you have to disband and tear apart the whole organization.

Again, in these Estimates, as in the previous Estimates, we have seen more cuts to MIC. There is nothing more dramatic to show the shift in this government's attitude toward the communities that are represented on MIC than if you look at the Estimates pages where MIC shows—there are one or two roles for MIC. A lot of the roles that formerly were multicultural council roles are now under the secretariat.

I know that a lot of the community groups are very concerned about that. It seems like a lot of the power and decision-making influence that MIC had is being transferred to the secretariat. The problem is that the secretariat has no direct link with the ethnocultural communities.

So in the last Estimates process we asked a number of questions. What was going to be the

relationship between MIC and the secretariat? I wonder how many times members of staff from the secretariat meet with MIC? I wonder what kind of system is in place for those communities to have the ability to provide advice to the secretariat. These are all the kinds of questions that members of MIC and a lot of the ethnocultural communities are concerned about.

I wonder then if the minister can also clarify what plans she has for MIC in ensuring that its role and the contacts that it had established with the community groups is going to continue, to have a role to play in relation to the secretariat and in advising government?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I hope that I can remember all of the thoughts and the comments that have just been put on the record. When we talk about a role, the role of the Manitoba Intercultural Council, I have met with them many, many times and reiterated what their role will be. It is interesting that both opposition parties still keep asking government to reinstate the funding.

When we have met with the Manitoba Intercultural Council, they realize and they recognize that the funding is not with them, that they want to get on with their lives and get on with their role of advising government on issues that affect the community. They have said that many times to me, that in fact we recognize—we would like to have the funding back, but we realize that is not going to happen, so we are not going to stop there. We still want to work with government—

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Order, please. The honourable minister is attempting to answer her question. I would like to be able to hear the answer. Thank you.

Mrs. Mitchelson: —and advise government. The principle for the decision that was made was to separate the two functions, advisory from granting, and have MIC focus their role on advising government on issues throughout the community. So, in fact, we have allowed them to get back to that official mandate that they had before they ever received the granting.

When the Manitoba Intercultural Council was set up, it was set up as an advisory body to government. The granting function was added later on. There was a sense not only by the studies that were done but by some comments from the community that they would like to see those two functions

separated. They have been separated, and they will continue to remain separated under this administration. The Manitoba Intercultural Council is fully aware of that decision that has been made, and they are willing to live with that decision and accept that decision and get on with their role of advising government on the very critical issues that are out there within the community, communities that want to share and work with government.

You know, it has to be a partnership. We have talked about the role of the secretariat versus the role of the Manitoba Intercultural Council and their role with government, and unless you have all community organizations working in partnership together with government, we are not going to see any major advances. There has to be a partnership—and we talk about that in the policy—and I believe that the Manitoba Intercultural Council is willing to be a partner with government to share information that has come forward from the community. In their advisory role to government, they are community representatives elected by their communities to bring forward the issues and the concerns of that community.

We talked about the volunteer role of the Manitoba Intercultural Council. You know, if you are elected as a volunteer to any organization, I guess it is your role to communicate with the community that you represent and bring that forward to the central body to make a decision on how that information is going to be passed on to government or to whomever. In fact that is their role, and I have encouraged them to regularly communicate with those that elected them to ensure that the broadest cross section of their community is informed on the initiatives, on the advice that the Manitoba Intercultural Council is giving to government.

The role of the secretariat is completely different. The role of the secretariat is to co-ordinate intergovernmental initiatives. It is not a community organization; it is a government branch or a secretariat that is to communicate or co-ordinate intergovernmental activities, something which an advisory body to government, which is a community advisory body, does not do.

When I sat down with the Manitoba Intercultural Council in the days before we had the Multicultural Secretariat, when we just had a multicultural co-ordinator within my department and one support staff, there were—I sat down with the executive of the Manitoba Intercultural Council and they told me

that we did not have enough staff within government to deal with the multicultural community effectively. That was one of their concerns, that in fact a multicultural co-ordinator and one support staff was not enough support within government to deal with the very many issues that affected many different government departments.

In fact, as a result, we have a Multicultural Secretariat. It was something that the Manitoba Intercultural Council told us we should develop, that we needed more staff to deal with multicultural issues throughout government. As a result, we have a secretariat now that can work with all government departments to help co-ordinate initiatives that are ongoing, to better inform the community what resources, what programs are available within government.

It is an intergovernmental committee, whereas MIC is a community advisory committee which is elected by the community to bring forward to government the issues that are affecting the community, and then in turn the secretariat deals intergovernmentally with government departments to take the issues that come forward from the community and help to develop them into policy and programs within government. They are two completely separate entities, have completely different functions, and working in co-operation and partnership can only help to fulfill the needs of the multicultural community.

* (2300)

The member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) says, well, they are not working together. That is not from lack of trying on behalf of the secretariat and government and, I believe, the Manitoba Intercultural Council, because I said we met with them last week, they want to get on with their role of advising government in the best possible manner. They have indicated that there may be some programs within government that we are funding for the multicultural community that might be outdated; that they might be able to make suggestions to us on what areas within the community we might better concentrate our efforts on.

I will go back to the budget process whereby we have had zero percent increase in revenues. There have been decisions that have been made and although the member for Radisson indicated that immigrant health was an issue, a concern, ESL programming, the Oral History's programming, the

racism information—and we can deal with that one right now if we want to deal with that, or we can deal with that under the secretariat when we come to that line in the budget. Right now we are sort of going all over the map. In fact, we are not dealing right with the specific issue of multicultural grants at this point, but I am willing to discuss anything at this point in time.

I will indicate to you that decisions were made and difficult choices were made, and we only have X number of dollars with which to work. If, in fact, and the sense is that immigrant health issues are major issues, that ESL issues are major issues, that anti-racism initiatives are major issues, that our community issues that have been brought forward, then we are going to have to take a serious look at where we prioritize our dollars. I will tell you that today there is going to be no more money available in this budget this year for any new initiatives. So we have to work within the resources that we have allocated to us.

I would ask the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) if, in fact, there are certain priorities, where would she suggest that we take the money from? There are only X number of dollars to go around; we have indicated we are not going to raise taxes. So, in fact, we have a certain number of dollars to work with, and I am asking both of the opposition parties for some direction. Where would they take money from to put into programs that you have indicated are priority? Obviously, if they are a priority in the opposition's mind, those must be priorities that have been brought forward to the opposition by the community out there that we are representing as minister and as critics.

I believe health was the first priority, that ESL programming was the second, Oral History Program was mentioned, the Community Places Program was mentioned, and the anti-racism initiatives were mentioned. Those are five specific areas where obviously the community has come forward to the opposition and said these are priority areas. I am saying to the opposition members, tell me where we are going to reprioritize and maybe give government some suggestions on where we can take dollars from within the community and reallocate them into areas that obviously have been brought forward to the opposition from the community as priority areas that government should be funding.

Because I am saying right now—and I know the community because I have talked to Manitoba

Intercultural Council. I have talked to them about budget and the difficult process, and I believe they understood. They understood the difficult times we are going through. I believe that they are prepared to work with us to try and come to a resolution. I would hope that the opposition would be prepared to work with us and would be prepared to make suggestions to us, constructive recommendations, on where we can reprioritize and where we can take money from and reallocate to the initiatives that have been brought forward to the opposition members.

I am looking forward to that because, quite frankly, I honestly believe that if we are going to make an impact and change things, we all have to be working together. I would ask the opposition to work with us and to make those suggestions and those recommendations on where the money should come from to go into very worthwhile and very needed programs that have been brought forward.

Ms. CerlIII: I hope the minister is not saying that ethnocultural communities should have to make a decision between—or that there should be some decision between having funding to maintain the ethnocultural organizations or to have funding going to ESL and immigrant health care. I hope the minister is not saying that. She prefaced some of her earlier remarks by saying that she was proud and pleased that there was no cut in funding under the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council, and I agree. I am glad that there is not a cut, but there have been a number of cuts in other places that have adversely affected a lot of the ethnocultural groups.

The other thing I hope that the minister is not saying is that because we have the Multicultural Secretariat, which has a number of well-paid politically affiliated staff, that because we have that body and the services that it provides, that again we cannot afford to have the immigrant health programs, or programs expanded through the Immigrant Access Centre and Immigration and Settlement which were promised in the last election or programs in ESL. I hope that the minister is not saying that those are the kinds of decisions that need to be made. As I said in my opening remarks, it is important not only to have all those services and to have the services integrated in to each department, but also that the ethnocultural

communities are well developed and that those two can work together.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson if I might comment a bit. I was rather surprised to hear the first comment made that I am hoping you are not expecting any multicultural organizations to help to make decisions.

Ms. CerlIII: That is not what I said at all.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I interpret it to believe that, you know, we are not asking multicultural organizations to make decisions. I believe that we all have to make decisions in our lives, when in fact, we have limited resources and within which -(interjection)-

Mr. CerlIII: Remember this is on record.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Order, please. I would like to remind the honourable members that we are dealing with the motion of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), which is omitting line (k). If we can keep the debate relevant, I would appreciate it.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am just saying we all have very difficult choices to make. We make difficult choices in our daily lives as we run our own households. If, in fact, there is no more disposable income this year than there was last year, we all have to decide whether we are going to go further into debt or whether we are going to try to live within our means.

We have made the decision as a government that we are not going to tax and go further into debt. We are going to try. We are going to try to live within our means. We are not going to raise taxes, and we are going to try to the best of our ability to allocate the dollars in the areas where there is greatest importance to the community that we serve.

* (2310)

I have not said they have had to make choices between English as a Second Language programming because, in fact, we have increased as a province our funding to ESL programming by \$200,000 over the last two fiscal years. So there has not been a reduction. We have been able to maintain that funding. When we looked at the Community Places Program, we are not just asking the multicultural community to accept a reduction in the number of applications. We are asking the whole Manitoba community whether it be for cultural centres, or whether it be for community centres, or whether it be for day care centres that serve all

Manitobans. We are saying that this year, this is all we can allocate. This is a tough year and we can allocate this amount of money. So those are decisions and choices that have had to be made. We are not asking the community to choose between ESL programming because we have provided ESL programming.

There is \$1.174 million going from my Department of Citizenship to Winnipeg School Division No. 1 for ESL programming this year, and I am not ashamed to admit that we have increased that funding as a provincial government. I want that to be put on the record, and I do not want the fear of God left in people that in fact this government does not care about ESL service and ESL training, because we do care. We have put our money on the table for Winnipeg School Division No. 1 for ESL programming and ESL training for the upcoming fiscal year, and we will continue to fund that, because we know that it is a priority.

We will continue and we will work with the communities, but, yes, we are asking—and I would hope that the member for Radisson does not think that if she was in government she would not have difficult choices to make if she was minister in a portfolio, wherever it might be. There are difficult choices that do have to be made when there is no more revenue coming in to serve the community that we serve.

It is fine to sit in opposition, ask for the world and ask for everything for everyone, but the reality is that the money is not there. We would love to be able to provide that. I would love to have the \$9.7 billion of deficit that the Ontario government has put in place to run our Province of Manitoba. We could be many more things to many people if we had that money. Mr. Deputy Chairman, we are not prepared to make the kinds of decisions that a New Democratic government would make throughout the country.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Order, please. I would like to remind the honourable minister that we are dealing with the motion of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), which is eliminating line (k) Multicultural Grants Advisory Council, \$1,009,200. I would also like to remind the honourable members, questioning should be relevant to the debate.

Ms. Cerilli: I look forward to the minister explaining where the 160 students who are going to be without

ESL programming from Red River are going to receive that programming and—

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Order, please. I would like to remind the honourable member one more time, we are dealing with the motion of the honourable member for Inkster, which is eliminating line (k) Multicultural Grants Advisory Council, \$1,009,200. I would appreciate if she kept the debate relevant. Thank you.

Ms. Cerilli: Can the minister explain of the members on MGAC, who is an appointment made by, herself as the minister? And where those members of the committee represent? If she has a list right now, we would love to have a list.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Okay. The Chairperson of the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council is a Mr. Arnold Eddy, and he is from Winnipeg.

Ms. Cerilli: That is not the community I am referring to. I mean the ethnocultural community.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the members of the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council are not appointed by the community that they represent. They are appointed as a broad cross section of Manitobans who—

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Order, please. Those honourable members wishing to carry on a conversation, the door is open and you can use the hallway. Thank you very much.

Mrs. Mitchelson: We have a broad cross section of Manitobans who are represented on the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council. They are not put there to represent a specific community. They are there to represent the entire multicultural community.

Ms. Cerilli: Can you table the list?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, I can circulate this, but I can read it into the record.

An Honourable Member: Just read it.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes. We have a Mr. Tom Denton.

An Honourable Member: From the International Centre?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Yes, he is. He has a Winnipeg address. It is a rural route address, so he is just outside of the city of Winnipeg.

An Honourable Member: Where is Arnold Eddy from?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Winnipeg. We have a Beverly Shymko from Balmoral, Manitoba; we have a Jyoti Desai from Winnipeg; we have Surinder Pal from Thompson, Manitoba; Paul Grenier from St. Leon; Linda Oswald from Winnipeg; Lou Fernandez from Winnipeg; Patricia Daly from Winnipeg; Jock Lowe from Brandon; Lorna Tergesen from Winnipeg; Ba Van Nguyen from Winnipeg; Gladys Cook from Portage la Prairie; Sam Loschiavo from Winnipeg; and Philip Lee—did I give you Philip Lee?—from Winnipeg. That is it.

Ms. Cerilli: Can the minister table and describe the criteria that were used in selecting these people?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I cannot table; I will repeat what the criteria were. They were community volunteers who wanted to commit their time and were dedicated to serving the multicultural community. When asked if they wanted to commit volunteer hours in support of analyzing and assessing community applications that were submitted to a council for allocations of grant dollars, they all agreed that they would. I do not think that you would find too many people who did not have the multicultural community at heart and as a main priority would accept working, I suppose it might be—how many days in a year?—a minimum of eight or ten days per year. Most of these people who would have other occupations would not want to commit to volunteer activity unless they had the community's best interests at heart.

Ms. Cerilli: How many of these people work in jobs, then, that are related to the ethnocultural community? I am thinking of being English as Second Language teachers, or cross-cultural education trainers, or that kind of thing?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I cannot give you that kind of information. I could give you a little bit of background tomorrow on all of these people and what their professions are.

I think that all you need to do is have a sensitivity to the community that you serve, and the community has not come forward—I know what I wanted to mention in my last answer. It was that I had asked the member for specifics of community organizations that had come forward and said that the Multicultural Grants Council was not doing a good job, and I did not hear anything put on the record from the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) indicating any specific organization that felt that they were mistreated by the Multicultural Grants Advisory

Council. I forgot to mention that in my last comment. Maybe before the next question, the member for Radisson could put that on the record for me.

I think that all of the members here have a sensitivity to the needs of the community and have the ability to assess the applications as they come forward and make recommendations. The community, to my knowledge, has not indicated that these people have made any decisions that have not been in the best interests of the community. That is why I am asking the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) to give me the specifics on the communities that feel that they have not been funded in a proper manner under this system, and I will look into that.

* (2320)

Ms. Cerilli: The minister raises a couple of issues that I will deal with that I think relate directly to the problem with having MGAC versus MIC involved in allocation of grants to ethnocultural organizations.

One of the things I will start off by saying is, at least when MIC had a role in this function, as she says, there was this open dissent, if we can call it that. At least there were people complaining. I mean, that is natural, I think, when you are going to have a number of different representatives from community groups trying to negotiate how they are going to allocate funds. There is some healthy debate. There is some healthy disagreement.

Now I am afraid what we might be finding is that people are afraid to complain because they are afraid that is going to jeopardize their ability to get a grant. I would also say that might be one of the reasons that I would not say who, what community group, is giving me information because, as I said earlier, a lot of this process has been plagued by that kind of politics.

The minister has just said that the members of the committee of MGAC are representing their community, but she seems to have contradicted herself—

Mrs. Mitchelson: No, I did not say that.

Ms. Cerilli: —initially, because she said that they were selected to represent all of Manitoba and not a specific community. Can the minister clarify? Which is it? Are they representing a specific community or organization, or are they just picked because, as she said, they have some kind of sensitivity to the needs in the community?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I never indicated, and I think I indicated quite clearly, that they are not representative of a specific community. They have the best interests of the multicultural community at heart, and they are people who have volunteered their time without remuneration to do something that they believe is in the best interests of the community.

I have to commend those kinds of people, because you are not going to find too many people who would have an ongoing commitment and volunteer their time so willingly, if they did not have a commitment to the multicultural community at large. They are not representative of a specific community. They are representative of multicultural Manitobans.

Ms. Cerilli: That brings me back to my initial question. What organizations or affiliation do these people have that gives them their sensitivity, that would give them the experience, that would give them the qualifications so that they could make those kinds of judgments and recommendations and allocate those funds?

Mr. Deputy Chairman: I would like to remind the honourable member that the minister has said she will provide that information tomorrow and put some background on the people.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I will provide some information and some background on all of these people who I believe have contributed to the Manitoba community in a very substantial fashion over a number of years, but I will get that information and provide that for the member for Radisson.

Mr. Lamoureux: I want to pick up on a few questions regarding the appointments to these positions. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, to the minister, what is the composition of the selection committee that actually chose the people who are currently on the committee?

Mrs. Mitchelson: That was a government decision. Just like any board that is appointed by government, they are government decisions, and they were Order-in-Council appointments.

Mr. Lamoureux: Can the minister tell us if in fact she had a committee that was looking at who the individuals should be? Were these people who just walked up to her offices and said, pick me? Were there organizations that she went out to? How did these individuals become members of this committee?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Just as any board that is appointed by government, there are recommendations that come forward from throughout the province of those people who have the community interests at heart. These were names that came forward. As in any process, I as minister spoke to these people and asked whether they would be willing to serve the multicultural community by volunteering their time to assess grant applications. They all indicated a willingness to do so.

We do not appoint people without their consent, and so I did speak to all these people individually. I asked them whether there was a commitment, and they were names that came forward from a variety of different avenues. There might be people in their community that I had talked to that indicated that this was a good community person who had done work and had an interest. They came from a variety of sources. There was not one specific source; they came to me as minister. I discussed with them the possibility of them sitting on this committee; they agreed because they have the community's best interests at heart, and they were appointed through Order-in-Council.

Mr. Lamoureux: Being that they are volunteers, I am glad she made sure that she had their consent prior to appointing them. I think that it is important, but can the minister tell me: Did she herself ask anyone without any recommendations on any of the individuals?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, a lot of the members who are on the grants council are people I have met through my responsibility as Minister of Culture, Heritage and formerly Recreation, Minister of Multiculturalism. There are people from different communities throughout the city of Winnipeg that I had met. Some I had met on my travels throughout the province; others were names that were recommended to me from different individuals throughout the province who knew these people and had confidence in their ability to serve the community.

Mr. Lamoureux: Right from the onset, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, it is not once again to attack the credibility of the individuals that she has chosen. What I am trying to address is the process in terms of how that committee was struck and how the minister filled those positions. I would ask her: Were there any recommendations from any of her colleagues to fill any of those positions?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Quite probably some of them did come from some of my colleagues. You know, any elected official in any area of the province meets a lot of good community volunteers, and from time to time I recommend people from my community who are outstanding citizens, who have much to contribute, whom I would like to see on a board in some specific area. That is the process that is followed by any government.

Mr. Lamoureux: Did the minister in fact approach any of the ministers or backbenchers and ask them for their recommendations?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairman, I am sure that I said to my colleagues, look, I am looking for people who have the multicultural community at heart to sit on our Multicultural Grants Advisory Council.

Mr. Lamoureux: Did she ask you? Well, I feel offended because she did not ask me.

Mrs. Mitchelson: I am sure that when the decision was ultimately made to change the funding structure from the Manitoba Intercultural Council to the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council, probably some of my colleagues came forward to me and said, look, I have this person within my community who has worked very hard on behalf of some specific organization, and I believe that they would be an asset and really contribute.

Mr. Deputy Chairman, that is the way we find those very dedicated and committed volunteers from throughout all the Manitoba communities to sit on boards and contribute in a very positive way.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, did the minister approach MIC and ask for any recommendations from MIC?

Mrs. Mitchelson: No, I did not at that point in time, the reason being that at the point in time that the decision was made, of course MIC was not pleased with the decision, and they would not come forward with any recommendations because in fact they were not happy with the funding change. I think since then the Manitoba Intercultural Council has come to the realization that in fact the decision has been made, it is going to be continued to be followed through.

Despite what the opposition from time to time criticizes us about, we will continue to flow funds through the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council to many very worthwhile community projects.

* (2330)

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the minister—

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Chairman, there is a point of order here. I just want assurance from the minister that she did not ask the member for Inkster for any recommendations because he wanted to kill the whole program.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Order, please. The honourable member for Pembina did not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I am somewhat humoured by the Minister of Health's remarks, and I will leave it at that, but he has managed to somewhat make me forget what my train of thought was at that time, so in that sense his point of order was successful.

I believe I was talking in regard to MIC. The point that I was trying to make was that the minister said that MIC's role is to seek to advise the minister on multiculturalism in the province of Manitoba, yet she creates this board which, yes, we oppose. We believe the funds should be reinstated back to MIC, but the question still remains, if she feels that MIC's role is to advise her on multiculturalism, and yet she is putting up a board that deals with the grants out to multiculturalism, she goes and she asks her ministers and the Conservative backbenchers who she should be appointing to this board, why would she not consult with MIC and find out who they might have to recommend?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I guess we have to understand the role of an advisory body to government. We do ask them for advice and from time to time they do give us advice and make recommendations to us. We take that advice under consideration. Sometimes we approve of the recommendations that are coming forward, and we can act on them and move on them. Other times we do not accept the recommendations and act on them. That is the role of any advisory body to government.

I know that under the former administration the Manitoba Intercultural Council made many recommendations to government. Some of them were accepted and followed through on, and some

of them, for whatever reason, the former administration did not act on them and did not take that advice and did not move in that direction. Those are the kinds of things that from time to time happen under any administration.

We accept advice from the Manitoba Intercultural Council. We tell them when we are taking that advice and dealing with it and moving on it, and we tell them when there are recommendations that we are not going to accept and not move on. That is the role of an advisory body to government, and we will continue to follow through the same way the NDP administration did when advice comes to us. There are certain recommendations that we accept; there are other recommendations that we do not accept.

Quite frankly, the decision was made. I know that the Manitoba Intercultural Council would have liked to have kept the funding. The decision was made by this government that the funding would be changed to a different venue, that we would separate the advisory role from the funding role. We did that. You know, the Manitoba Intercultural Council's advice to us would have been that we should leave it where it was. The decision was made that, no, because of some community representation, because of some of the community feeling, that those two roles should be separated, we decided to make that decision and to separate those two roles into two different bodies or organizations. In fact, that has been done.

We are going to continue along that path. Even the task force on multiculturalism that toured the province—and it was initiated under the NDP administration, I might say—reported to us as government, but there was a change of government between the time they started their task and the time they reported to government. Even that task force report indicated that the funding should be removed from the Manitoba Intercultural Council. That was a task force that went out throughout the province of Manitoba, listened to the community at large, and came back with that recommendation.

When they came back with that recommendation, the Manitoba Intercultural Council did not agree with that recommendation, so you have the task force on one hand saying that the funding should be removed from MIC and you have the Manitoba Intercultural Council saying, no, we want to maintain that funding. There was division out there within the community, and government had to ultimately make a decision

on what we were going to do. We made that decision, and we will live with that decision.

What we want to do is work closely with the Manitoba Intercultural Council to ensure that the advice that we are asking them to provide and the advice that they are giving to us as government is accepted by government, is looked at in a very timely fashion, and is acted upon when it can be acted upon. We have to at times let the Manitoba Intercultural Council know that we are not going to act upon certain recommendations that they make.

We are prepared to work with them. I think that they have a very valuable role to play in the overall picture of government working with the community in partnership. We need community partnerships; we need partnerships from community to community; we need partnerships with organizations that represent the community and the communities; and we need partnerships with the secretariat, Manitoba Intercultural Council, and the communities, and government with the communities and all of the different organizations that represent those communities. As we can work together towards developing those partnerships, then we will have truly a more successful operation on all fronts.

Mr. Lamoureux: On many of the remarks that the minister has put forward, know that we will discuss at length—

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Order, please. The honourable member from Inkster has the floor, and I would like to hear his question.

Mr. Lamoureux: Part of those discussions I will enter into when we do get to the Multicultural Secretariat line and the MIC line, in particular. To follow with the grants, the makeup of the committee, were there any other outside organizations that the minister can name that recommended any individuals to her?

Mrs. Mitchelson: I know it was a year and a half ago and, as I indicated, I do not know where all the names came from. I do know that all of the names did come forward to me, and we looked at the names. You know, difficult decisions there had to be made, too, because there are many very worthy people out there in the community that, in fact, could sit on this grants council. You know, there may have been names that came forward in conversation from representatives of many different community organizations that were taken into consideration.

Mr. Lamoureux: Would it be possible for the minister then to let the committee know some time tomorrow those that were appointed by recommendations from her ministers and herself?

Mrs. Mitchelson: That information will be very difficult to provide because I do not have anything in writing that I can draw on. Just as you go out into the community—and I know the member for Inkster is very closely associated with the Filipino community—I am sure that from time to time many recommendations are made to him on people that are leaders within the community, people that might be able to contribute in some way. You take that all into consideration when you are bringing forward recommendations or questions to government on how we are dealing with certain communities and certain ways.

You know, you sort of tuck bits of information about different people within the community into your mind to use at the opportune time when you want to deal with or liaise with or communicate with that community. That kind of information is not down in writing, but I can and I have committed to providing a bit of background information on all of those that are on the grants council.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Chairman, I am rather astounded that you recognized me this time—(interjection)—no, just that you sort of had a little favouritism towards the member for—

Mr. Deputy Chairman: The honourable member for Pembina has the floor.

Mr. Orchard: I think and I have been listening very, very carefully to the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), and maybe as we approach the witching hour the member for Inkster might want to withdraw his motion, because it is exceedingly embarrassing to the Liberal Party and to his Leader and to the rest of the caucus. Not even the NDP, who are the usual soul mates of the Liberals in the House, are agreeing with this motion. As we approach midnight, maybe my honourable friend might consider withdrawing this motion. I think that it is only fair that we give him this opportunity.

* (2340)

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Order, please.

Mr. Lamoureux: The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) has put forward a question, and I do feel somewhat obligated to answer the question. If I felt,

and I guess unlike the Minister of Health, it is a question of principle for this member and for the Liberal Party.

We feel—and I say to the Minister of Health so that he tries to understand why it is that we have moved this motion—that the organization that can best represent the cultural community is, in fact, MIC and they did a very good job in the processing—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Order, please. The honourable member for Inkster does have the floor at this time and I am having trouble hearing him.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, the MIC was doing a very good job in distributing the funds that were being allocated out to the different organizations, and there was no real reason to take that responsibility away from MIC and create a board that we now have before us, that is appointed by the minister. Through MIC we were guaranteed representation from all of the different ethnic community groups. The minister had, through the legislation, ability to appoint members to MIC. So if she wants to give direction, she can give the direction through those appointments.

The minister wanted to know if I would withdraw the motion that I put forward. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, to withdraw the motion that I have put forward is to say that I support what the government has done, in how they have politicized the awarding of multicultural grants by taking it away from the different community organizations through MIC. That is the reason why I, myself, cannot withdraw a motion of this nature.

I look to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), and I say to the Minister of Health, is it not better that we have the organizations that are there in the community, the organizations that elect community leaders to MIC that understand, that have an excellent understanding, that are volunteers, distribute the funds? There would not be any question.

Mr. Deputy Chairman, we are at a time in Manitoba or in Canada in which the public perception of politicians is not as high as many of us would like to see it. The reason why is because we take grants of this nature, we establish boards when there was something in its place that was—the perception was—that it was nonpolitical, and we put it under the responsibility of a politically appointed board. Now, I think what the minister and the

answers that she had given me, or supplied the committee, further gives us reason to question some of the appointments. Why did she not go out to some of the different organizations and ask for recommendations?

Mr. Deputy Chairman, in the list, and I do not know everyone that was appointed to the board but I think there might be a bit of a correlation, just a bit of correlation that I might not like to see on a board of this nature. -(interjection)- The Minister of Health prompts me, what correlation? Well, I will leave it up to the minister to decide what correlation I could be referring to, and maybe that will lead the Minister of Health to ask me another question. I will be more than happy to answer that question in detail, and I will even go into the correlation if he likes.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I think that the Minister of Health asked a very legitimate question, and he asked whether the Liberal critic would contemplate removing the motion from the table. I guess I am rather disturbed that he would want to withdraw this amount of funding from the multicultural community.

I do not know, I might ask some advice of the committee, as to whether, in fact, I might be able to move, seconded by the Minister of Health that we remove the Liberal critic and replace him with the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) as the Liberal critic—I am sorry, the member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema), because, you know, I have been watching with interest the member for The Maples as he has listened through this debate, and I have not had a sense that he is seconding or supporting this motion that has come forward from the Liberal critic.

I maybe would like to at some point in time sit down with the member for The Maples and get his views on where he thinks we are going, because in fact I think he might have some different ideas. I think that maybe from time to time critics need a bit of a change in critic responsibilities, so in fact they do not—when I look at the number of years that we have seen this issue discussed, whereby the opposition keeps calling for changes to the system that this government has put in place, when we as a government indicated when we were in a minority situation—we actually made the decision, a rather forward-looking decision, I suppose, when we were in a minority situation, and we were elected again as government in a majority situation.

All things being well, we will probably be in government for the next four years or so. In fact, I believe that over that four-year period of time that we have already come a long way as far as establishing a relationship with the Manitoba Intercultural Council that is more of a positive working relationship. The road was rocky in the beginning, I must admit. It was difficult as a new minister, and it was difficult for the community out there to accept maybe a new government, a new minister and some change in direction, but I think that we are finally coming to understand and to know each other a little bit better and have developed a much more positive working relationship. I know that will continue.

Given that we have only had three years and we have a possibility of another four years of working very closely with the community, I think that we will continue to make positive strides and continue to move in the right direction. We have the basis for the direction we want to move with Manitoba's policy for a multicultural society. We have the Manitoba Intercultural Council that was quite supportive and worked with us in the development of this policy and will continue to help us to implement some of the recommendations.

They recognize at this point in time that the transfer of funding back to the Manitoba Intercultural Council is not in the cards with this government, so I suppose we have to look to the more positive aspects of what we can do to work together as an advisory body to government and as a government that wants to work with the community. I think we started on the right road. We are moving down the road to an increased partnership and co-operation. I look forward to continuing for the next four years along that same line and to build upon what we have developed.

I know the community now does understand, through the Manitoba Intercultural Council, that we have made a decision. It is a decision that both opposition parties do not agree with, but ultimately government does make the decisions, and we are not going to please all of the people all of the time. We all know that. There are decisions that government makes that from time to time are unpopular with some people and very popular with others, so we are going to have to live with the decisions that we have made.

* (2350)

The Manitoba Intercultural Council is aware of that decision. We are working very closely on their role and how we can work together in the future to promote multiculturalism and to work in a very positive manner. I look forward to the next number of years when we, as government, can continue to promote, having started with our multicultural policy and building upon that policy for years to come.

Mr. Reimer: Thank you for allowing me to get some thoughts on the record here on this motion because to a degree it is confusing because I have listened to the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) with his resolution, and I would just like to repeat it. It may have been lost in some of the conversations here, and it should be repeated because of the fact that sometimes it is missed. It goes, and I am quoting: I move that line 6.(k) be omitted and that line 6 be reduced to \$31,717,100.

In listening to some of the rhetoric that has been put forth by the opposition, there is the illusion that somehow this is tied to the MIC, and I do not see anywhere in this resolution, which is here, which everybody can see, this one-line resolution, that it in no way refers to MIC. What it is referring to is the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council which has a budget of \$1,009,200. Of that amount, the grant assistance is \$919,200.

I would just like to point out, in looking back to the budget exercise which we just went through a little while ago, we were all made very painfully aware of the fact that this government has had to make some very serious and very astute decisions in its budget-making process. In certain areas there were monies that were lost because they had to be allocated to the priorities of health care, education and family services. Other areas had to take a bit of a hit.

In looking at this budget line here in the Estimates book, we look at the amount of money that was available last year which was 1990-91, was \$1,009,200, and this year the same amount has been allocated again. I must commend the minister and her department on the astuteness of being aware of the need for this type of monies and this granting to the Multicultural Grants Advisory Council. In looking at a grant program like this, of allowing I believe it is over 230 various groups to take advantage of monies being made available to them, I would think that is a very commendable job and a position that the minister should be proud that she was able to fight very hard for this.

Now when the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) comes forth with a one-line resolution in a very blunt and very forward manner and saying that we should automatically just cut this out of the budget and let these people, these groups and these hardworking individuals just sort of float off and fend for themselves with no monies available, it just seems unfathomable that we should think this way.

My mind is befuddled because of the amount of—disconcerting that he would go through this. When you look at grants of that amount of money and 230 groups, you are looking at well over 4,000 per group that they will not have the enjoyment of to promote and to come forth with some of their ideas and their programs and highlights of their culture and their pride that they have in this community, because the multiculturalism in this province is something that we are all very proud of.

Manitoba is blessed with so many different, various and ethnic groups. In the member's riding, I would think—in the member for Inkster's—that well over 30 different languages may be spoken in his riding because he has a very diverse riding. I must compliment him on the amount of people of various ethnic groups that he has appealed to. Now he must face these people and say that this money is not going to be made available for them. I would think that is a very hard decision on his part, to go back into the community and talk to these people, that that money is not going to be made available.

I would think that the minister is being very conscientious in her decisions in keeping this funding—and the fact that the member is just saying that this should be disregarded now. As to the amount of people in this province, we are looking at well over 42 or 43 percent people of various ethnic groups in Manitoba.

We are not one homogeneous group of people. Almost half of our people in Manitoba are from various different ethnic backgrounds, and to look at disregarding their needs and some of their programs and some of their functions that they so proudly present to the rest of the people is a disservice to this government, to think that we should not fund some of these programs and to encourage them to expand.

I would ask the minister whether, in looking at this severe reduction, she feels that a lot of these groups may indeed have no other recourse than to possibly

fold their tents, if you want to say, and just sort of slip away, and we would not be able to enjoy some of this life and this exposure that we have had over the last years. Maybe the minister, you know, would care to comment on that before the hour is up.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Well, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I thank my honourable friend from Niakwa for those comments. I wonder if the Liberal critic does realize the real implications of the motion that he did put forward just some few short hours ago. I know the hour is getting late or early.

The seriousness of—if this motion should in fact be passed, we have a million-plus dollars not available to those communities that in the past have received funding, whether it be from the Manitoba Intercultural Council or from the Multicultural Grants Council. From whichever organization they have received funding, in fact, that money through this amendment—is it an amendment or a resolution?

Mr. Deputy Chairman: It is a motion.

Mrs. Mitchelson: It is a motion to amend and to reduce the funding and would in fact signal the end of funding grants, I suppose the largest allocation of grant money to the multicultural community from the government of Manitoba.

I asked for positive suggestions from the opposition parties on what they felt the priorities would be within the limit of resources. If we do not have this million dollars, we cannot even reallocate to priorities within the community. We will just have to discontinue the funding to many very worthy community organizations.

I would hope that maybe we could come to some sense of—maybe the critic would want to respond to my concern and see if, in fact, that motion was the real motion that he wanted to put on the table, and whether he really wanted to see a million and some dollars taken away from the community, forever and a day to be gone. I will give the critic maybe now the opportunity to respond to that.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: The hour being 12 midnight, is it the will of the committee to adjourn?

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, in the spirit of co-operation, I had agreed to go in this procedures, and we had gone on to Item 6. (a), (b), (c), (d), up to (k) where we now are. Actually you will find that in the order of the Estimates book, the Manitoba Intercultural Council is ahead of this particular line, and I would suggest to you that if I could have leave by the committee, I would be more

than happy to move another amendment to that line adding that \$1 million-plus to that particular line. If we have to distinguish—and I listened to what the acting minister of Culture and Heritage had to say about this line and -(interjection)- Yes, it is on the motion. He was speaking on the motion.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Order, please. The honourable member for Inkster has the floor.

* (0000)

Mr. Lamoureux: The acting minister is somewhat confused. There are two issues here. There is the issue of the appointment of this board that gives out these funds, and then there is the issue of the funds themselves and who is allocating the funds. I would suggest to you, when we get to the (e), maybe we will find out where that \$1 million is actually going to go. At no time have we suggested that multicultural grants be denied, not -(interjection)- No.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Chairman, on a point of order, the member for Inkster just said that at no time did the Liberal Party want to eliminate multicultural grants. That is the entire substance of the motion he has before this committee, that he wants to remove multicultural grants.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Order, please. The honourable member for Pembina does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

Mr. Lamoureux: To pick up on dispute over facts, the minister did not hear my preliminary remarks prior to moving the motion, nor did he listen, obviously, to the resolution that is going to be introduced during private members' hour. The dispute over facts that the minister raises is somewhat debatable, because he is wrong again. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, as I say—

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Order, please. I know the hour is getting late. Let us allow the honourable member for Inkster the opportunity to speak to his motion which is before us right now.

Mr. Lamoureux: The \$1,009,200 that we are suggesting be dropped from this line does not mean that the Liberal Party opposes funding of multiculturalism, and it shows on the resolution. If in fact we were moving through the proper order, we are likely to see another amendment that will show

where that \$1 million is going to go to. Something that I maybe should leave, in terms of a closing note, is that the Minister of Health, in his hopes that the Liberal Party will come out bad on this issue, should be patient and should wait until the department in its entirety has been passed, and if the Minister of Health—

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Order, please.

Mr. Lamoureux: Thank you again, Mr. Deputy Chairperson. I do, recognizing the hour, and I know everyone around here seems to want to leave, so let me—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I believe that the motion that is on the floor will be voted upon tomorrow, at least I hope it will be voted upon tomorrow. I will not withdraw the motion. I believe that that money should be redirected to the Manitoba Intercultural Council, as I have said in the preamble prior to introducing the motion, and on that note, I move that we adjourn.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Chairman, with all due respect to my honourable friend, the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), he has now flip-flopped on that principle that he enunciated on behalf of the Liberal Party that they stuck to their guns.

Now, after realizing that he has put a motion on the floor to eliminate the Advisory Council grant function, he now is trying to whiffle-waffle, in the words of that famous Liberal politician, Mr. Taylor, around the issue and say, well, that is not really what we meant in the Liberal Party, now that we are caught in doing what we really meant to do with a motion on the table.

He had an opportunity twice in this committee to withdraw this motion which would take a million dollars of grant funding from the multicultural community of Manitoba. We gave the Liberal Party, as represented by the member for Inkster, not once but twice, an opportunity to withdraw the motion so that he would not put his party through the embarrassment of having this vote take place tomorrow, and he has not taken that opportunity.

This principle that he espoused about three-quarters of an hour ago is certainly a very flexible and pliable and malleable principle. It does not really mean what he meant it to mean.

It is an incredible flip-flop that we have now witnessed from the member for Inkster tonight, and

I find that just incredible to watch his twisting in the wind when he has erred. He has operated potentially without his Leader giving him authority to bring this, because I know there are other members of the Liberal Party, that I will not mention, who are embarrassed about this motion.

Now having given my honourable friend, the member for Inkster, twice an opportunity to withdraw the motion, he will have to live with his Liberal Party policy announcement as indicated in this motion.

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, I just want to add a few words. I think the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) had made it very clear then the policy, and he has made it very clear where that money could be reused and how money should be. I think it is extremely important that money should be in the hands of the community and should not be in the hands of political parties.

That is what he was trying to say, that is what he has said, and I think he will continue tomorrow with the same principle. We have no difficulty with his motion. I think it is an excellent way of reorganizing the whole thing, which this government has ignored it.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: The hour now being after twelve o'clock, is it the will of the committee to rise? Committee rise.

SUPPLY—EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Madam Chairman (Louise Dacquay): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. We are dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Education and Training, page 37, 1.(d) Personnel Services.

Will the minister's staff please enter the Chamber.

Item 1.(d) Personnel Services: (1) Salaries \$318,100.

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Chair, I think the member asked a question with regard to the staffing positions that were terminated. If I might, I would just like to finish the answer, because we sort of left that, I think, up in the air a bit.

The question was with regard to the decreases that were printed and the actual impact. I might just say that the printed decreases in terms of SYs were 147.38. The actual impact was 176.3. Madam Chair, the difference is that, first of all, there were 23 SYs as a result of community college new initiatives.

Elsewhere through the department, there were another 5.29 SYs in such programs as the Management Information Services. If you take the 23.1 and the 5.2 positions away from the 176 you will end up with 147 positions, as was printed in the decrease in SYs.

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Madam Chairman, I am wondering, the minister is reading from a—could he table the document that he has referenced? I did have some trouble following the numbers.

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, what I would consent to do is to have this perhaps printed in a proper format and then distribute it to the members at the next sitting.

Mr. Chomlak: I appreciate the fact the minister will forward that document to me.

My next question is in reference—I guess it does strike me as somewhat strange that at a time when the government is purporting that education is its No. 1 priority, it is rather significant that the second largest impact in terms of Staff Years in positions happens to be from the Department of Education and Training.

While we recognize throwing money at educational problems is not the final solution, nonetheless, a message is certainly being sent out to the public by virtue of that particular action. I am wondering if the minister might comment on that.

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, yes, we had to contribute our fair share of SYs and of staff to be overall decreased, if you like, in the personnel in government. More importantly, I think it should be noted that the decreases were also a form of, if you like, reform within the Department of Education and Training.

As the member has been told, there were 23 new SYs added to the community colleges and those 23 SYs were for new initiatives, new programs. This is about all that we could handle in terms of rewriting new programs in the colleges because it takes time to rewrite the programs, to be able to implement the programs, and, yes, in the next year we will be adding more programs to our community college component. Indeed, it was time to refocus, to reshape, to reform some of the college programs that are ongoing to make them more relevant to today's needs.

If we look at what announcement we made in Portage la Prairie with the \$6 million initiative jointly

funded by the federal government and the provincial government and industry, we know that there is a need for training in the province. Indeed, it must take a different form in that we must be more sensitive to the needs out there in terms of the skill shortages, and we must be more cognizant of the fact that the training that we embark on is going to lead to meaningful jobs in this province, and that all of the training that we undertake is going to be results-based, so that the money that is invested by the taxpayer in training programs will yield some positive results in terms of people being skilled in vocations and in jobs where there are indeed requirements. Otherwise, Madam Chair, we could be training people for a long time, but never getting any results out of the training that we undertake.

In a nutshell, yes, we did contribute our fair share to the reductions, but indeed what is enlightening is that there is going to be a reshaping and refocusing of the training and the education that goes on at the community college level in this province.

Mr. Chomlak: Of course, the minister realizes—and I suspect we will get into this in more detail when we get to the specific appropriation item—that commensurate with the 23 positions that were added, 96 positions were eliminated from community colleges.

In fact, it is a bit curious that the government should go about this rationalization prior to introducing its major legislation dealing with college governance and new directions. It strikes me as curious—is the cart being put before the horse, or what does this mean in terms of the actual legislation coming down the road in terms of governance? Is the government going to be still directing centrally the activities of the community colleges, or is this a sort of last-gasp effort directed toward community colleges?

Mr. Derkach: No last gasp for community colleges. Indeed, we want to ensure that our community colleges are strengthened. I would indicate, Madam Chair, that when I came into the department some three years ago, we had a community college in this province that was taking its last gasp, if you like, and that was Keewatin Community College in The Pas.

Since that time we have strengthened the Keewatin Community College substantially. We have given it a new focus and given it a new life within this province, and indeed we intend to do that

with each and every college, so that they become very important structures and very important entities in the communities that they serve.

The fact that community college governance is coming down has nothing to do with the actions that were taken this year. Indeed, once the colleges receive their independence from government, they will be able to be more responsive and, yes, much more accountable to their boards for the actions that they undertake.

I see a bright future for our community colleges in this province. Yes, their mandate has to change. Maybe their delivery has to change, and indeed some of the programming that they have at the college level has to be changed. Madam Chair, I tell you that we are looking forward to a community college system in our province that is going to be at the same level or on the same level playing field as other community colleges in other jurisdictions across this land.

I might indicate, also, that the community college governance is not going to be completed until 1993, so between now and then we certainly have many things to do with regard to programming at the community college level.

Mr. Chomlak: Well, we will discuss this in more detail in terms of that appropriation, but we have heard the same thing from members on the opposite side of the House when it came to things like the ACCESS programs, the Winnipeg Education Centre and the like.

I am wondering if the minister would entertain just a quick reference by myself back to item 1.(c), strictly in the form of some advice or a suggestion to the minister, and that is, during the break period I had an opportunity—one of the lines of questioning that I was following vis-a-vis the reform process for legislation, one of the items I was leading to the last session when we met was the question of protocols between various departments. I think I mentioned it to the minister, and I could stand to be corrected, but I believe in the new B.C. Education Act there is a provision within the act that provides for co-ordination, a sort of mandate within the act, within the Public Schools Act itself that says activities will be co-ordinated between the various government departments.

If the minister recalls, that was the type of reference I was making when we were discussing that particular idea of reform legislation. It strikes

me as something that, regardless of whether it is reviewed in this next reform process, it is inevitable that it will have to be discussed. I am wondering if the minister can take that suggestion and comment on it.

* (2010)

Mr. Derkach: As always, Madam Chair, I will take that comment under advisement. That is about the only comment I can make at this point in time.

Madam Chairman: Item 1.(d) Personnel Services: (1) Salaries, \$318,100—pass; (2) Other Expenditures, \$25,700—pass.

Item (e) Financial Services: (1) Salaries.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairman, I note in the reference to the Schools' Finance Branch that there is reference on page 33 of the Supplementary Estimates book to the timely and accurate disbursement of '91-92 funding to 53 school divisions, remote school districts, et cetera.

I am wondering if the department has given any thoughts to the possibility of implementing a system to provide a multiyear plan for local school divisions. The minister might recall I have made mention of this in the House on several occasions that, for example, North Dakota does provide such a process of advance notice.

It strikes me when going around and talking with school boards that one of the knocks against the funding arrangements and models, and all governments have been guilty of this, is that it does not provide for proper advance notice of changes in funding. We have had the political discussion about school boards budgeting for inflation or better grants, and then signing collective agreements on that basis, and then being told no, it is no longer inflation or better. Leaving that point aside, I am wondering if any thought has been given to a kind of multiyear budgeting for school divisions.

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, there are several factors that come into play when you talk about multiyear budgeting. First of all, I think this is the first government—in my recollection since I have been a member of the Legislature—that embarked in a general sense on multiyear revenue forecasts, and also in that way doing some projecting in terms of what budgets might be. I guess this year we did that in Education to a certain extent when we took our fiscal plan out to not only the legislators in this building, but indeed to all the school divisions around the province where we indicated very clearly

what our revenue projections were for this year and what they might be for the following year.

If anybody was paying attention and you looked at the charts that were presented, and if we were to contain our expenditures at 3 percent or less, it would still mean that we were going to be looking at deficits that were in excess of \$400 million. That should give a signal to school boards as to where they should be looking in terms of funding for their next year.

If you try to project, with any accuracy, what levels of funding school divisions would receive over a period of two or three years, that would be very difficult because, first of all, we do depend on the federal government to a certain extent for the transfer payments. Secondly, the budgets for departments are not finalized till the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) brings his budget down on an annual basis. Therefore, that becomes a very difficult thing.

I think it is reasonable to expect that we can give some general overview, or general picture, in terms of where divisions might be looking for target revenues for the next year. I guess that is what we did this year by telling school boards, telling universities, telling all of our communities that depend on us for funding that next year's picture does not look that much different than this year's picture did in that, if our expenditures are contained to 3 percent, we are still going to be looking at a substantial deficit even if our revenues increase to 2 percent or 3 percent.

So I think the signal is out there. I think the school boards have accepted that and, indeed, are planning, not with great expectations, in terms of what they are going to see as their revenues from the provincial government for next year. If we can give them those kinds of signals, Madam Chair, I think that does at least help them to begin the process of thinking where they can anticipate their increases and how they can deal with such things as salaries and other expenditures.

Mr. Chomlak: I thank the minister for those comments but it does not answer the question.

The fact is that last Estimates process, when we sat here in November, the minister mentioned on several occasions how funding of public schools had been at inflation or better and 50 percent of the collective agreements in all school divisions around

the province had already been signed for two or three years.

The signal was not out there until the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) put his charts together for I guess it was late or mid-January and, consequently, I do not think it is a very efficient system at all. It certainly is a constant sore point amongst school representatives, school trustees who speak with me. It is a constant complaint and I think that when the new funding model comes in, a proper allocation to subsequent year funding would be a vast improvement in assisting school divisions preparing their budgets.

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, I can only respond to that by indicating that you cannot do that for a single department within a government, and if you try to do that for all the departments in government, then you are really talking about multiyear budgeting and bringing budgets in long before they are ever acted upon. We do not know that, Madam Chair, because we do not know what our revenues are going to be, first of all, from taxation; we do not know what our revenues are going to be from the federal government in terms of transfer payments. So there are so many variables out there in terms of what can happen. We do not know what our economic climate could be like a year from now. We know we are going through a recession.

I would dare say that very few people in this province, economists, predicted that we would be in this type of situation provincially at this time this year. Nevertheless, that is the reality. I think that we can provide general overviews, general pictures in terms of where we could be, given our best possible guesses or best possible projections. But trying to be very specific and give divisions, the accurate figures, I think, would be misleading to begin with and, certainly, would prove to be somewhat devastating because of the changing climate.

Last year when we were in Estimates, yes, I indicated that we were trying to maintain our level of support to school divisions and our universities at about the level of inflation. We indicated very clearly to our school board trustees, to our teachers last year, to the presidents of the universities, to the boards of governors that they could not expect that same level of support, because even then our projections were that our revenues for the province were declining rapidly, and that we were not going to be financially as able to provide that level of

support this year. Unfortunately, that projection came true perhaps even a little more severely than we had expected.

So, Madam Chair, I would say that we can give general pictures, but in terms of being specific on a multiyear basis, I think that is very impossible. Indeed, I do not know any jurisdiction in Canada that does it at the present time, even to the level that we are doing it at here in the province.

Mr. Chomlak: I take it the minister's answer to my question is, no.

On page 33 under the same appropriation the Expected Results from the Schools' Finance Branch are, and I quote, administrative and financial accountability from school division districts at independent schools.

I am wondering if the minister could outline for me in point form what the accountability referenced in this quote is for both the public schools and the private schools.

* (2020)

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, in terms of accountability, we could talk about two forms of accountability, first of all, program accountability and financial accountability.

In the area of program accountability, we ensure that school divisions, both the public schools and the independent schools, deliver the programs as are stipulated by the Department of Education and Training. We talk about the core or the essential programs that are authorized by the Department of Education and Training.

Secondly, in terms of financial accountability, we ensure that school divisions, both public and independent, live according to the same rules, if you like, with regard to reporting to the Department of Education and Training financial matters, and they report those financial matters in accordance with the frame accounting procedures that have been laid down.

School divisions, both public and the independent schools, must have school boards that are elected in the independent school system from the parents who send their children to those schools and, of course, the member is quite familiar with what we do in the public school system.

In terms of reports that are submitted to the department for the school year, there is an audit and supplementary audit reports that are made to

independent schools and audited financial statements that are reported to the minister. So, in essence, the independent schools and public schools are accountable in very much the same ways to the Department of Education and Training. There is one difference. The independent schools do not get any support for capital facilities at this point in time. Also, revenues that they receive in terms of donations I do not believe need to be reported. However, in the public school system, as the member knows, we do support capital facilities for all school divisions.

Mr. Chomlak: The minister will agree that the independent schools do not submit frame budgets.

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, that is one of the conditions that was set in the negotiated agreement, that they would have to abide by the same rules in terms of frame accounting as do the public schools of the province.

Mr. Chomlak: Does the minister or his staff review the frame budget submitted by the independent schools?

Mr. Derkach: With regard to the budgets themselves, we do not approve budgets for the public school system or the independent school system. Those are aspects that are approved by their own jurisdictions, but indeed they do submit their financial statements to the Department of Education and Training, to the Finance Branch. Yes, they do.

Mr. Chomlak: Are the statements submitted by the independent schools audited statements?

Mr. Derkach: Yes, as I had mentioned in my first answer, they are audited financial statements that are submitted.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister account for the increase of \$12,000 in the Communications budget for Financial Services?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, if the member would look down the right-hand column, he will note that there are increases in all of the other expenditures. This is a result of the transition, if you like, between the responsibilities of the Public Schools Finance Board and the Finance Branch. So the increases there all relate to that changeover in terms of the responsibilities that are undertaken by the Public Schools Finance Board in accordance with the aspect set down by the Provincial Auditor.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairman, I understand that I guess basically I am curious as to why there is an increase in Communications per se. What is anticipated to increase by virtue of the costs?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, those are costs that used to be paid by the Public Schools Finance Board which are now undertaken by the Finance Branch, the Schools Finance Branch. They are such things as the costs for fax, telephone services that are sort of encumbered by the Schools Finance Branch.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairman, I assume I should ask my questions with respect to capital and the Public Schools Finance Board later on when we get to 3.(c). The minister is nodding, so I will take that as affirmative.

I wonder if the minister can inform me whether it is in this area of the department that private vocational schools are monitored?

Mr. Derkach: No, Madam Chair, that section is under the PACE area, (XVI) 5, I believe, as I am told.

Mr. Chomlak: Yes, I noted last year under this appropriation that they used to say that the branch was formed for the purpose of funding an equitable finance arrangement. I note the word "equitable" has been removed this year.

I am just wondering if the minister might comment on that.

Mr. Derkach: No, Madam Chair, there is no intent to make any part of the delivery of services less equitable. Indeed, the intent of the entire department is to have all the services, including financial distribution of funds, more equitable throughout the province.

Mr. Chomlak: I am certain that is the intention. I think it is just curious that the word "equitable" is removed this time around, but perhaps I am reading more into it than I need read into it.

The minister made reference, we know that extra staff people were hired last year to do monitoring of the independent schools. Can the minister just outline those positions for me, please?

Mr. Derkach: Yes, Madam Chair, there was one position hired within the Schools' Finance Branch to monitor the financial aspects of the independent schools. There was also one person hired in the Program Support Services to do the program monitoring and co-ordination.

Mr. Chomlak: I take it these are both full-time staff positions to monitor and account for the activities of independent schools.

Mr. Derkach: Yes, Madam Chair.

* (2030)

Mr. Chomlak: There was a discussion earlier in the day with respect to the transportation and the transportation study, if that is the correct word, going on. I am wondering, when does the minister anticipate the report will be into his office for action?

Mr. Derkach: As I indicated earlier this afternoon, Madam Chair, that report will be coming down to the department between mid-February and mid-March of next year.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairman, does the minister anticipate an interim report?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, it is customary that we get a draft report usually to give us some indication of what the final report would include. I would anticipate the same will happen in this particular instance.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister indicate how much money has been allocated in this year for that program?

Mr. Derkach: Yes, Madam Chair, I indicated that earlier today and it is \$40,000 that is allocated to the pilot project.

Mr. Chomlak: Why do I recall a figure of \$3 million with respect to that particular program?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, I do not know where the \$3 million figure would have originated from, so I really cannot answer that question. The nature of the bus pilot, if you wish me to elaborate on it, was that school divisions who wish to participate in the bus pilot program would be eligible for a grant of \$3,000 for each bus that they contracted. That would then allow us to make comparisons between those buses that were contracted and also provincially owned buses. There was no figure of \$3 million that ever entered into the picture.

Mr. Chomlak: I stand corrected, and I thank the minister for that answer. It is now becoming clear as to the policy and the minister is correct, obviously, in terms of the specific figures.

Last year the regulations were changed as I recall with respect to the designation of certain areas of the city of Winnipeg being rural versus urban and as the minister is probably aware it has resulted in a fair amount of controversy in Seven Oaks School

Division. I wonder if the minister will indicate for me why that decision was made.

Mr. Derkach: The decision actually originates as a result of the growth of the city to include municipal areas that were once outside the city boundaries, and I think that was prior to 1972. I guess I could be corrected on that date, but nevertheless there were school divisions within the city boundaries who were transporting students, kindergarten to Grade 12, whereas neighbouring school divisions that perhaps are not originally outside the city limits, were not receiving those types of services.

Because we have got city transit now in most of these areas, and to try and put some equity into the system, we have decided to withdraw, gradually, bus transportation services that were being made available to those jurisdictions that were once outside of the city limits.

We are doing that by, first of all in 1991-92, allowing students who are in kindergarten—students who are in kindergarten in 1991-92 will not be transported. Pardon me, it is 1990-91 we did not transport kindergarten children. In '91-92, it is kindergarten and Grade 1; in '92-93, it will be kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2, until we get up to the Grade 12 student some 12 years down the road. At that point in time all jurisdictions within the city limits will be treated in the same fashion.

However, I should indicate also that there was another regulation passed whereby we will be transporting all kindergarten students to schools who live beyond the, what is it, one kilometre distance from the school.

Mr. Chomlak: I am sorry—just for clarification, the minister said that the additional regulation was to transport kindergarten children beyond one kilometre?

Mr. Derkach: It is not only kindergarten, but kindergarten through Grade 3 who live more than 1.6 kilometres from the school. Okay?

Mr. Chomlak: Does the minister have a figure roughly as to how much money the department is saving by virtue of this, I will call it, rationalization?

Mr. Derkach: I do not have the precise figures here, but I can certainly get them for the member when we reach the section on 16-3. When we get into that section, I could probably have that information for the member, or I will provide it to you tomorrow.

Mr. Chomlak: I thank the minister for that response, and just in addition, has any thought been given by the department because some divisions, specifically Seven Oaks, have felt the impact of the change in the transportation regulations quite significantly on their budgets. I am wondering if any special arrangement or provision has been made, or will be considered to be made for Seven Oaks School Division.

Mr. Derkach: There are several school divisions that are impacted by this policy, but the reason we did not enact the regulation from kindergarten right through Grade 12 was to allow school divisions to adjust gradually to the regulation, and we would phase it out over a period of 12 years. So there will not be any special accommodation made for any particular school division, but on the other hand, we have committed ourselves to make transportation grants available to any student from K to 3 who is 1.6 kilometres away from the school. So it is sort of a bit of an offset, because now students who were never transported, even within the city limits, do have eligibility for transportation grants. So, although I know that there are some school divisions that will be impacted on more harshly than others, it is nevertheless a gradual phase-in of the policy.

Mr. Chomlak: With respect to the comprehensive audits that are undertaken within the Internal Audit Branch, are these documents made public?

Mr. Derkach: No, Madam Chair, the internal audits are again for internal departmental use and are not public documents.

Mr. Chomlak: I am aware that audits imply a wide variety of different types of audits. There are different types of audits. What kinds of audits are undertaken by the Internal Audit department with respect to these comprehensive audits?

* (2040)

Mr. Derkach: In terms of the areas that audits cover and the process, once again, I think I went through it this afternoon, but I will go over it again.

The audit approach, in carrying out a comprehensive management audit, the approach to be used is a combination of traditional auditing combined with techniques common to management consulting. A comprehensive auditing depends heavily on the interviews with the management of each of the branches. The detailed work that is carried on would allow for reporting to the department of a variety of things.

In terms of the areas that it would include and the areas that would be reviewed, I would list the following:

First of all, under review would be the setting of objectives by management, planning in a general sense, both mid-term planning and operational planning, program review and evaluation, ongoing reviews, such things as meeting memoranda, et cetera, quarterly management reporting, formal program evaluations in terms of criteria that are set down by the department, program efficiency and effectiveness, key indicator reporting, planning, efficiency indicators, effectiveness indicators, organizational soundness.

Then there is a whole area of internal controls and checks, such as cash and banking, petty cash, accountable advances, receivables, inventories, purchases, personnel payrolls, contracts, agreements, signing authority revenues, disbursements, computer security commitment systems and fixed assets.

Then they would be audited in terms of the legislative and administrative requirements, such as acts and regulations, Treasury Board requirements, central government manuals and departmental policies and, lastly, financial reporting and control in terms of monthly financial reports and financial planning within the branch. So all of these areas then are taken into account when audits are done of various branches.

The audits are not done on a yearly basis with each branch, but on a cyclical basis. So that means each branch would probably be reviewed every three to four years.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairman, it has been past practice that the minister has provided a list to opposition members of the grants to the various independent schools. Would I be requesting that under this section or under the 3.(a) section?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, I think it would be more appropriate if we did that under 3.(a).

Madam Chairman: Item 1.(e) Financial Services: (1) Salaries, \$1,620,900—pass; (2) Other Expenditures, \$271,800—pass; 1.(f) Communications.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairman, on paper we see a significant reduction in staff from seven to two in the Communications area. Can the minister indicate who was let go and whether or not these people were actually transferred to Culture,

Heritage and Citizenship or are no longer with the government?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, as the member knows we have—well, the two positions that were retained, one was retained for the purpose of the Ed Man issue and the printing and the distribution of that issue on a regular basis. The other one was retained for translation type services and co-ordinating the translation format of the many services that the Department of Education and Training provides.

One individual was terminated. The rest within that particular branch were reassigned to other positions, and they had the same privileges of bumping, et cetera, as the rest of the department had. The bottom line was that one individual out of this entire branch had his employment terminated.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister indicate who that individual was and what that individual's experience was who was terminated?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, I am very reluctant to name anybody who may have been relieved of his or her responsibilities and that also goes for that experience of the individual. May I say that the individual who was released was an information writer. As I said before, it is not an easy task to terminate anyone's employment. It certainly was not an easy time for me as minister or my staff to have to go through the exercise we did. It is not something that I relish.

For the protection of the individuals who lost their employment, I would prefer not to dwell on names and experiences, but rather indicate the positions that were terminated. In this particular branch, it was an information writer.

Mr. Chomlak: I can appreciate the minister's concerns, and I will accept that. However, I would like a better understanding as to how the determination was made as to who would stay and who would go, whether it was based on functionality, experience, compatibility, or whatever.

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, I think it is important to note that when these reductions were made, we did not look at individuals or positions that we were eliminating; rather the first criteria were programs that were going to be eliminated. After decisions were made with regard to programs, we looked at positions in terms of the vacancies that were available to, first of all, not fill.

In other words, if we had to reduce in a particular area, we first of all sought out the number of vacancies, and we eliminated the vacancies first to allow individuals to remain. After that, we looked at the job function that went with the program that was being eliminated, and after that, of course, it was all based on a seniority basis as per the Civil Service Commission. We looked at the skills of each of the employees within the given job classification.

Of course, bumping or reassignment occurred if the person laid off in one job had more seniority to satisfactorily do a job within another area. All of that has now been completed, I would say. Yes, indeed, there will probably be grievances from some of the employees, but I think that is expected in any circumstance when you undertake an exercise such as we went through.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairman, so I take it from the minister's response that the determination as to positions to be eliminated was firstly based on a program analysis followed by job function and then the normal characteristics.

Then can the minister inform me as to how the program prioritization was made? Was it by an internal departmental group or was there some other body or agency that determined the prioritization as to programs?

* (2050)

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, this was one of the very difficult tasks that we had to undertake and indeed senior staff in the department had to undertake. We had to take a look at the priorities within the department, the priorities of government, and we had to look carefully at what we thought was of lesser importance vis-a-vis another program, and decisions were made on that basis. At no time did we in the department look at individuals and say, well, these are the individuals we want out of the system. Rather, we looked at setting priorities, looking at programs in terms of their value to the education system as a whole, to the department as a whole, to Manitobans especially.

Some of these decisions, or all of them, were very difficult, because you could justify each and every one of the programs that were eliminated, but it was a process of looking at which programs were of greatest priority, making sure that essential programs were maintained and then eliminating those that were of lesser priority.

Might I say, that is what led us to believe that we could restructure the entire Communications area and have it function out of a central pool if you like, although it would be of benefit to our department especially to have a separate Communications branch. In an overall sense we can probably function quite effectively by not having a Communications branch as such, although it will be more difficult, we recognize that. For the overall good of government it is better that we eliminate it as one of the lesser priorities.

Mr. Chomlak: Just staying briefly on this theme of the prioritizing of programs to be eliminated, was there a target number that the department had to reach?

Mr. Derkach: I guess I could elaborate a little on the Estimates process. That is that we embarked this year on a different process than we have undertaken in previous years. This year we went to an envelope system, as I have indicated, as Mr. Manness, the Minister of Finance, indicated in his report to the legislators in January, and that was to group departments that had similarities.

In our case, we had Education, Family Services, Labour, Justice, Health. The deputy ministers of these departments came together, and yes, they had a target which they worked towards, but more importantly they looked at the programs within that envelope if you like and determined which programs within that envelope system were of greatest need or of greatest priority and then worked on that basis. They also looked at where there were duplications of programming and where more efficiency could be achieved through streamlining and combining and that sort of thing. That is really how the Estimates process evolved this year.

I do not think we would ever say that this was the perfect solution to undertaking the Estimates process, but I think it did show that departments can work together, something that the member has already alluded to in terms of The Public Schools Act, and we need to do more of this. I would acknowledge that hopefully in the next round of Estimates we can even work more closely with departments that have similarities and have some overlap to ours.

Mr. Chomlak: I thank the minister for those comments, for elaborating in a little more detail as to the process. I guess of all of the other departments in the envelope together with you—

do not know how to put this—you are either the big winner or the big loser depending how you put it, because the numbers are fairly high in terms of Education and Training.

I think on that note we could certainly pass that.

Madam Chairman: Item 1.(f) Communications: (1) Salaries \$76,500—pass; (f)(2) Other Expenditures \$59,500—pass; 1.(g) Administration and Professional Certification.

Mr. Chomiak: I believe the member, the Leader of the third party, referenced the increase in staff. If the minister can briefly indicate to me why there is an increase in staff in the Administrative Support area and the Professional/Technical or a switching of staff?

Mr. Derkach: Yes. In this area, as I indicated this afternoon, there were 3.26 staff eliminated in the Professional/Technical area of the teacher ed and certification branch and there were 3.29 staff added to the Management Information Services in this branch. It is a matter of ensuring that our whole computer system, if you like, the information system within this branch, within the department, become more current than it has been over the past number of years.

This is one area I would have to indicate that we have some difficulties in in terms of the data that the department has and the way it keeps its information. This is one area that we felt we needed some support in terms of staffing. For that reason, if you like, we shifted or we eliminated staff in one area but indeed boosted in another area to allow us to become more current and address the needs of the department in a much more appropriate fashion.

Mr. Chomiak: Comparing the description of the job functions from this year and last year, I get the impression there was a fair amount of reorganization in this branch. Can the minister outline that for me?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, one of the areas within the whole department that we felt needed some attention in this next year would be the Management Information Services that are provided by the branch.

These services are provided for the entire department. It is a matter of keeping accurate data within the department and being able to collect the data in a fashion that could be used not only by the department but by other users of the service. I might use an example. We as a province have just

signed on to the whole national indicators project which I feel is an important project, because it will give us an indication of what standards are across the country of a certain age group of students. It will give us an indication of how we compete in our programs with other provinces.

What we need to do, though, in order to be able to participate fully in a project like that is to ensure that the information we have on our students in this province and on our whole system is accurate, and it is put into a form that can be used in a useful fashion when we want to tap into a project like I spoke about. We need to have access to the information if we are going to be making intelligent decisions on education down the road.

I think we are living in a day and age where we can talk about technology and its importance to other areas, but we have to be able to use the information technology to better organize our data, to collect and analyze our data, and to be able to share it in a more effective way with the education community.

* (2100)

In talking to the players in the field of education, I can tell you that each and every one, whether it is the universities, our school divisions, our Teachers' Society, anyone out there who has anything to do with education will admit that this is an area that we have to pay much more attention to in the near future, ensure that we have a consistent approach to it, and that the information that we have is accurate and can be shared on a timely and very effective and quick basis, if you like, with all of the community.

Mr. Chomiak: I thank the minister for those comments, and I could not agree more. I have actually made that comment on several occasions, so I am very pleased that greater attention is being placed on this particular area. If I wanted statistics on enrollments in the high schools of the province of Manitoba, can I now obtain a computer printout that will give me that relevant detail?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, when we embark on a project like this, one of the things we have to keep in mind is the fact that, number one, you have to have not only the computer systems in place but, in order to have that computer system in place, you also have to spend a significant amount of money to have that kind of capital equipment around.

We are targeting for that particular kind of information the school year of 1992. At that time, we would hope that we could very quickly and very accurately get the student enrollments for each and every school and school division in the province when it is requested. Up until that time we will be working towards getting the system in place and getting the necessary computer equipment in place to be able to store and to be able to have that information at one's finger tips.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister indicate for me what official in his department is heading up this particular program?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, there are many people who have a share or have an ownership in the entire system, but the entire system is being headed up by our manager and director of Management Information Services, Mr. Ric Borlase, who is here with us at the table.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister indicate for me the types of information that I can have access to, or members of the public, in terms of the system that is on line at present?

Mr. Derkach: Much of the information that we have on line now is not necessarily available to the public. For example, information on records of teachers, student academic records, student records, for example, for independent study programs, records on the GED program, those kinds of things, professional school personnel that we refer to, teacher records and that regard, much of this information is not necessarily available to the public, but is available for the department and for department use purposes.

Mr. Chomlak: I assume that statistical data of dropout retention rates, et cetera will be generated out of this particular area?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, all of this type of information should be available through this kind of a system, but it is not something that will be available overnight and indeed we will be putting more resources into this area as time goes along to ensure that the system is developed where it can perform to those very functions that the member speaks about.

Mr. Chomlak: I am wondering if the minister can inform me whether or not this was the area of the Education Technology program within this particular—

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, that is under the Distance Education Program and that is (XVI) 4 that we will be coming to later.

Mr. Chomlak: Last year, when I asked the minister whether or not any consideration was being given or any review given to looking at a different approach to organizing teachers professionally as a body, he said no. I am wondering if any consideration has been given towards looking at teachers as a professional organization separate unto their own.

Mr. Derkach: The answer this year, Madam Chairman, is no, except that in the consultation paper that was released last week there is provision for that kind of discussion and input from the public and from the teachers to address that very issue that the member speaks about.

Mr. Chomlak: I thank the minister for that response, because that was my next question. I am wondering, is that the only area, the only issue to be discussed from the minister's vantage point, or are there other issues with respect to teacher certification that the minister is anticipating public discussion on?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, I guess when representation is made before the panel, teachers and the Teachers' Society, perhaps, who wish to make representation before the panel will have the opportunity to address all the issues as they relate to the responsibilities and privileges of teachers under The Public Schools Act.

Mr. Chomlak: Student Records has been decentralized—it is in the process of being decentralized. Can the minister give me an update as to the status of the process, how many people are planning to move, how many are not, and where physically the records branch is going to be located?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, we had some discussion on that earlier this afternoon. Again, there will be 11 positions decentralized in the immediate future. There could be a possibility of more positions decentralized at a later point, but we are targeting the fall of 1991 as a target date for decentralization of the teacher ed and certification branch to the Russell area, or specifically to Russell.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister indicate specifically where that branch will be physically located in Russell?

Mr. Derkach: No, the building has not been identified at this point in time. Indeed that is

something the decentralization committee and Government Services have responsibility for, and once those decisions have been made we will be notified. We have been told that everything is on line for going ahead with the project in the fall of 1991.

Mr. Chomlak: Of the 11 positions or staff positions moving, does the minister have any idea how many are relocating from Winnipeg and how many will be new positions in Russell?

Mr. Chomlak: At the present time, Madam Chair. I could not indicate precisely how many might be going, but indications at this time are that none of the 11 positions that are going to be relocated are intending to move out of the city.

Mr. Chomlak: I take it from the minister's response then that 11 new people will have to be hired to staff that branch in Russell.

* (2110)

Mr. Derkach: Yes, Madam Chair, there will be 11 new people who may be hired, or it may be, in fact, some of those who have been terminated in terms of their employment with government elsewhere who will be eligible for applying for those positions. We are quite confident and hopeful that we are going to be able to attract the necessary qualified people to staff that office.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairman, I can anticipate the response, but nonetheless I feel incumbent upon myself to ask the minister this. Given that all 11 staff positions have, at this point, expressed their reluctance to relocate, given there is no facility at present in Russell, Manitoba, has any thought been given to the possibility of changing this particular aspect of the decentralization plan based on the obvious result?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, I would have to indicate that a great deal of work has gone into planning the decentralization of this particular branch, as also with other branches. I recognize the fact that with any decentralization of a service like this there are going to be some problems in terms of having staff physically relocate, but nevertheless we intend to relocate the entire office. It has been identified for the Russell area, and we will continue our plans in that direction.

Might I indicate that we have decentralized several positions from the Department of Education and Training, some to Dauphin, some to Brandon. I might indicate, at this point in time, although there

was reluctance even in the stages of moving those positions in those areas, from my discussions with the staff, who were working in those areas to date, it seems like there is a high level of satisfaction and comfort of the people who have moved and also those who are working outside of the city in these branches.

So far, the moves, the decentralization of our staff has been extremely successful. The services that are being provided, I think, are being provided at as high a level as they were from the city, perhaps in some cases even to a better level, because the services are closer to the areas that they are being provided for.

To come back to this particular branch, I would say that our plans are proceeding as scheduled. Yes, we will have to hire some new staff, but nevertheless we are determined to decentralize some of the services to allow some of our rural communities to grow and to perhaps prosper in these difficult times in rural Manitoba.

Mr. Chomlak: With respect to the decentralization, are the costs borne by a separate government account, or are they accounted for within the budgetary Estimates that we are reviewing right now, recognizing that, of course, salaries will remain equal? It is a question of the capital.

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, I think it would be safe to say that some of the moving costs and the costs of decentralizing will be born by a separate entity or a separate department, if you like.

Mr. Chomlak: So just for my own understanding, therefore—effectively, whether decentralization took place or did not take place, the Supplementary Estimates, as we are reviewing today, would remain equal, more or less.

Mr. Derkach: There might be some additional costs, but they will be fairly insignificant in an overall sense.

Madam Chairman: 1.(g) Administration and Professional Certification: (1) Salaries, \$1,223,600—pass; 1.(g)(2) Other Expenditures, \$497,000—pass.

2. Statutory Boards and Commissions (a) Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund.

Mr. Chomlak: I am wondering if the department has at this time any plans or is in the process of reviewing any aspect of the Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund, whether or not there is any review

contemplated or in the process of being undertaken?

Mr. Derkach: No, we do not have any intentions—or there are no plans at the present to review any of this area. Indeed, there is a board that manages the functions of the allowance amount, the Retirement Allowances Fund. As I indicated earlier today, the increase of some \$6 million in that pool is the result of the fact that No. 1, there were more retirements than we had envisaged, and No. 2, we had probably underestimated last year the number of retirees that we would have this year.

Mr. Chomlak: So can the minister indicate whether any major difficulties or any major proposals have been brought to his attention with respect to the fund?

Mr. Derkach: There, of course, is the whole debate of the unfunded liability but that cuts across not only just this department but indeed all of government. Other than that, I would say I do not have any specific problems that have arisen with regard to this particular fund, or have I missed something?

Madam Chairman: Item 2.(a) Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund, \$37,165,000—pass; 2.(b) Other Statutory Boards and Commissions, \$25,000—pass.

Resolution 28: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$37,190,000 for Education and Training Statutory Boards and Commissions for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March 1992—pass.

3. Financial Support - Schools.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairman, I may have one or two questions in this area.

There is considerable negative response—I may have alluded to it in some of my statements, in fact my opening remarks—with respect to the funding announcement on January 22. I refer to it as chornay Monday or black Monday or Tuesday, whatever day it was.

One specific area that I wanted to spend some time on with respect to the funding announcement was a change in the regulation as it affects Level I teachers. I will go through my understanding of the previous regulation and my understanding of the new regulation so the minister can understand where I am coming from.

* (2120)

Prior to January '91, the Regulation 186 governing the details of provincial funding for Level I detailed Level I as a support for various services by specialist teachers, but the definition of these specialist teachers required the staff occupying such a position to provide services to exceptional students, to be qualified and hold a special education certification recognized by the department.

As a result of the funding change in '91-92, funding is allocated simply on the basis of eligible units calculated, regardless of whether or not teaching positions are staffed by persons having the appropriate qualifications.

Can the minister outline for me the reason for this change in designation?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, I think it will be fair to say that nobody is trying or is attempting in any way to take services away from children, but I think it is also important to allow school divisions the flexibility to be able to utilize those funds in the best way that they see fit.

I think we are probably at a stage in development, if you like, of the whole special needs area where school divisions, together with the professionals that they have within their jurisdictions, can make some important decisions about how they can best deliver the services within their jurisdictions.

For that reason, we have allowed school divisions that flexibility to utilize the funding to the most effective and the most efficient use that they possibly can. In some instances, it may mean that the funding is not necessarily tied to hiring a professional to provide that service, because they may be able to pool their resources so that the service can still be provided in the same effective and efficient manner. That is a decision, I think, that the school divisions can make. It does not mean that they can no longer use the funding in the way they did before. All it means is that they now have a greater amount of flexibility. They can make decisions at the local level which best suit the needs of the children who they have responsibility for.

In an overall sense, I would have to indicate that school divisions have accepted this fairly positively. Yes, there are some concerns from some of the resource teachers and some of the professionals that, perhaps, we are not going to be providing the same level of support to students and the same level of professional service to students. Let me indicate

that is not the intent at all. It was merely to give school divisions more flexibility to use those funds in a way that they best see fit in their own jurisdictions.

Mr. Chomlak: I can certainly appreciate and accept the minister's statement that that was not the intent of the change in regulation, but I am wondering if the minister would not acknowledge that the effect might not be a decrease in a type of professional service offered to particular children?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, let me say that we have the Child Care and Development Branch within the department that will be monitoring the situation through the year, and if indeed we find that, all of a sudden, school divisions are using the funds in an inappropriate way or that school divisions are hiving off funding for special needs students to shore up something else, we will certainly be paying close attention to that. Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that we do monitor programs and program services throughout the province. If we, for example, begin getting complaints that the services are not being provided, then I can assure the member that we will look at this policy and see whether or not it is the most effective policy for students.

Mr. Chomlak: The minister indicated that the intention was to provide maximum flexibility. Can the minister indicate what generated this particular change at this time?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, there has been discussion over the course of the last two years with regard to allowing flexibility, and this is why we had the change in the Level I funding. Where at one time we were negotiating the funding for each and every child within a school division, we changed that funding to more of a per-people grant based on the total enrollment of a school so it would give more flexibility to school divisions.

Now this is another step in allowing that flexibility. It is not a decision that was made overnight or for no substantive reason. It was to allow school divisions, who do have very highly-skilled, professional people within their jurisdictions, the flexibility to use those funds where they best see fit.

That is really all that was behind the whole decision. Also, although they have the flexibility, it must be kept in mind that under the document, the green book, if you like, that was sent out from the department, there were guidelines that were set

down for school divisions and schools whereby they had to report to the department about such things as individual lesson plans, if you like, or program plans for students who were taking those programs. So there is accountability by the school divisions and by the schools to the department of what is really happening to those special needs children.

I will acknowledge that maybe the special needs guidelines are not perfect, but I would have to indicate that school divisions, now that they have adapted to them, are feeling that it is a positive step to providing the kind of programming for students that they really need and then there is a consistent approach throughout the whole province in the way that special needs education is applied.

A student transferring from one area to another will still have the same criteria applied to him or to her with regard to special needs programming, so it gives us an overall provincial approach to special needs programming.

As I indicated, it may not be perfect. We are getting feedback now from school divisions on how we can improve it and, indeed, it has to be a living document where we continue to improve it on an annual basis, so that we can supply services or deliver services to these students in the most effective way that we possibly can as a department.

Mr. Chomlak: I take it in the minister's response when he was referring to monitoring, he was referring to the ADAPTs that have to be prepared by the school divisions.

What I am curious about, just returning to my initial point, the minister indicated they will be monitoring the reaction of school divisions to this change in Level I funding. I am wondering, does the minister have the information and can he provide it to me that would show what the effect is? Does he have at least the base information, so that I can compare it next year to see what the effect is in terms of the change in Level I funding?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, I would have to say it would be somewhat premature at this point in time to give an overall evaluation of the procedure. To this point, the information that we have would indicate that the flexibility, if you like, the guidelines are working quite effectively. However, the department will in fact be monitoring it very, very closely. Should there be any problems of accountability or of money not being spent in areas

where it should be, we will indeed be addressing it at that point in time.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairman, can the minister indicate for me how the department will monitor this particular function, by what means?

* (2130)

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, although we probably should be talking about this whole area in the PDSS area under Child Care and Development, I will, of course, answer the question now. There are several mechanisms that we can use. First of all, we have staff in all regions of the province who deal constantly with school divisions throughout the year. We have also our own staff in the department in terms of our consultants and so forth, who are in constant contact with school divisions. So, through a series of meetings with school divisions, through in-servicing, through staff visiting school divisions, we can keep a fairly close eye, if you like, on what happens in each school division.

Besides that, every school has to submit its plan, every school division has to submit its plan, and we do monitoring through that process as well.

I can tell you also that my deputy meets fairly often with the superintendents, both on a regional basis, and their executive. Staff from my Program Development Support Services Branch are in constant contact with principals and with schools, so there is constant communication going back and forth between the department and school division.

Now, that is not to say that there could be a situation emerge where we have not caught something, but indeed if that is brought to our attention, we will certainly get on it as quickly as possible, but the intent is, and the practice is, to stay in touch with school divisions almost on a constant basis.

Mr. Chomlak: I certainly appreciate the minister's comments and I am pleased that this contact is taking place, but I guess the difficulty I have is that this particular change in the regulations has occurred prior to the system, as it were, being put into place. So I do not know if we are going to have a base year on which to base whether or not the change in regulation will have an effect on teachers at this level, and I guess that is my concern, as to what the minister will use as a base and how he will compare whether or not the change in regulation has affected the provision of service to children or not.

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, I guess one of the ways that we can monitor the situation is by the staffing complements in the enrollments of students that are received by the department at the end of September. At that point in time we can compare the number of staffing positions with the number of students, and do a comparison of the ratios to previous years, and then get some idea of whether or not there are severe reductions in terms of the ratios of staff to students. Also, there is the program that is developed by the school division, and then the plan that is sent into the department. Through that process we can also monitor whether or not, in fact, the delivery of service is at the level that it was last year, improved or decreased.

Based on that information that is received by the department, we will be able to make some decisions and some, I guess, analysis of whether or not school divisions are indeed investing the money in an appropriate way to deliver services to children.

Mr. Chomlak: I thank the minister again for those comments, and I guess my point is, will that be done? Is there a line item in the departmental inner Strategic Plan or not that says, we are going to monitor this change to ensure that this change in regulation does not adversely affect exceptional children?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, of course that will be done. As a matter of fact, that sort of process is done in each and every area of the department on a constant basis. Staff of the department are constantly reviewing to ensure that the money we invest in education is spent in an appropriate fashion to ensure proper results. The monitoring that goes on in this department is, I would say, second to none in terms of staff who are sitting here at this table and the many staff whom we have within the branches who monitor what school divisions do in terms of providing services to students with the monies that we invest in education.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairman, I am wondering if the minister will therefore table for me the student-staff ratios in this area for every school division in the province. Effectively, when we get to the appropriate part of the Estimates process I will be making many specific inquiries regarding the ADAPs but, in this particular area, I want to be able to have some kind of understanding. So if the minister could undertake to do that I would appreciate it.

Mr. Derkach: Although we do not have it here with us tonight, Madam Chair, I would indicate that we would be prepared to do that for the member.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairman, I thank the minister for providing that undertaking to provide information.

Turning to another area, a matter that I raised last Estimates process, and I raise again—I will do a bit of an overview so the minister just understands where I am coming from.

One of the matters that astounded me when I was elected and came into the Estimates process, and again I recognize that it is not anything different of this particular government than when the New Democratic Party was in government, although we put in the supplementary process. However, the matter that concerns me is when we come to the public schools grant and we see this humongous chunk of money, this huge chunk of money, there are no specifics attached to it.

I do not think we are doing the public of Manitoba a favour if we say we come into this Legislature and deal with an extraordinary amount, literally over half a billion dollars of money in the Estimates process, and all we are dealing with is a line item that says \$543 million. Last Estimates process, I provided the minister with my recommendation as to how it would make eminent sense to me to have the items reported, and I am wondering if, particularly in light of the fact that we have the frame budgets—I do not understand why there is no linkage between the frame budgets and the Estimates of the province. The frame budgets are fairly concise and fairly logical, school grants and other systems, regular program, exceptional program, vocational program, community education and services, school division district administration, instructional and pupil support services, student transportation services, operations and maintenance, fiscal services.

It is all laid out very concisely in frame, and I do not understand why this process cannot project information on that basis so that we can make some determination as to various expenditures within the grants to schools. I am wondering if the minister would comment on my suggestion.

* (2140)

Mr. Derkach: I think the book, the Supplementary Estimates and the information that is provided, is meant to give a general overview of the sums of money that are supplied to each of the areas of the

department but, indeed, if the member would like a copy of the frame budget, for example, that can be provided upon his request.

If there are questions that he needs further breakdown on, we will provide him with that information, but if we were to try and provide the information to the level that he requests, I am afraid we would have documents that would be several inches thick to provide that kind of detail for him. I do not know what use it might be to him. However, Madam Chair, I would indicate that if the member wants the frame budget for last year—they usually come out in October, as I am told—it can be made available to the member on his request.

Mr. Chomlak: I thank the minister for those comments, and I will be requesting the frame document, but just to return to the comment of the minister, I do not see how it would be necessarily that difficult to provide breakdowns of the 53 separate school divisions, their allocation, for example, the regular programming, the exceptional programming or the vocational programming. That does not strike me as overly complex and given the age of computers, why it should be difficult to get a grasp as to how much is being spent overall by all school divisions in specific program areas.

Mr. Derkach: There is a format that is followed when the supplementary Estimates are being put together. It is a consistent approach that is used for each department so that we do not necessarily stray from that format that has been developed over years. However, I guess it would be appropriate for the member's caucus to address this through his leader to government to ensure that perhaps a different format is developed for supplying information on various departments. I would not be opposed to that, provided that it was, again, a consistent approach that is used by other departments. I think it is something that is beyond this particular department in terms of the detail that is provided in the standard format that is distributed in the House.

Mr. Chomlak: I guess I am having some difficulty comprehending the difficulty of obtaining the information. I do not mean to belabour the point, but the frame budgets come in and the allocations are therefore made by the department with respect—well, by Public Schools Finance Board with respect to the allocations back to the various school divisions. Is that not made on some kind of a consistent program basis?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, there are a lot of factors that come into play and one that has been brought to my attention is the fact that the final budgetary or the final budgets are not submitted to the department by March 31. Indeed, some do not arrive in the department till somewhere in mid-April or later and, therefore, if you wanted to combine or compile all of this information, you could never do in time to have an Estimates debate at this time of the year. So that is one of the factors that comes into play.

Also there are 53 school divisions in the province that we would have to compile this information for; on the other hand, if there are certain questions that have to be asked on various allocations, indeed, we will try to provide that information for the member. There is no intent by me, as minister of the department, to withhold the information. It is a matter of following a format that has been established and adhering to the criteria so that they are consistent with other departments in government.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairman, I was not suggesting that, in fact, this was an attempt by the department to not provide that information. I recognize that there is a bit of history involved in this. So let me return to my base question. Is it possible for us to obtain information with respect to the allocation of funds on a program basis to the public schools in Manitoba so that I would be able to know how much funding the regular program receives, how much exceptional receives, how much vocational receives, community education, et cetera, following the general frame format?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, we have a document here that shows the breakdown in terms of the various categories of funding to school divisions. I am not sure whether this is what the member is looking for, because if you wanted the breakdown for each school division, then you are going to be looking at 53 different documents to look at. In terms of the overall budget that we have, and the areas that it is broken down into, we have that information. I can supply it for the member and would be pleased to do so, and I would have enough copies for the House tomorrow.

Mr. Chomlak: I thank the minister for those comments, and I would very much appreciate having an opportunity to look at that tomorrow. Just one further question in that regard: Does the minister have separate designations for the

public-private schools sector of that particular document?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, if it will allow for the debate to carry on more smoothly—as a matter of fact, I will table the documents now.

I have a document here that shows the various breakdowns of funds that are made available to school divisions, and then it also shows the amount of the global funding that is made available to the independent schools. I also have a list of all the independent schools that received grants from the Department of Education and Training. It is a summary of grant funding to private schools.

I might ask the member, when he is reconciling the statement, to note that there is a minor difference between the figure on this sheet and the figure in the book, because the figure in the book is rounded off to the nearest hundred dollars, I think. That is why there is somewhat of a difference.

* (2150)

Mr. Chomlak: I thank the minister for those documents. Since we are in the process of tabling, I am wondering if the minister could also table for me the documentation that he tabled last time during the Estimates process, which was very useful, which was the breakdown of the grants to each individual school division and the increase-decrease, as well as the special needs grants and the increase-decrease to each school division.

Mr. Derkach: Yes, Madam Chair, we can make that available for the member either later this evening or tomorrow morning, or perhaps in just a few moments. As soon as we find it, we will make it available, if we can continue with the questions.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairman, again I thank the minister.

In July '89, the minister appointed an advisory committee to the minister on Education Finance. What reports has this body provided to the minister since its formation two years ago?

Mr. Derkach: Madame Chair, I would like to table the document, first of all, on total special needs support to various school divisions that the member requested.

Also, with regard to the question he posed on what the advisory committee, or the activity report of the Ed Finance Advisory Committee, I might indicate that the first task was to provide direction

and perhaps advice on the funding that we were going to make available to school divisions for the 1990-91 school year. Indeed they did that and provided some very useful information on how we could better distribute the funding to school divisions across the province. As the member knows, we were getting into a situation where there was an enormous discrepancy between school divisions across the province, so there was a lot of work that went into establishing a more equitable, if you like, approach to distributing funds throughout the school divisions.

Following that, the advisory committee has been directing its attention to the Ed Finance model. During the summer they were not all that active. Indeed this fall they came together again, and since their initial meeting on Ed Finance reform, I think they have had something like 18 or 19 meetings. They will be bringing down a report to me on the preliminary report on the Ed Finance model which then will be taken out to school divisions and the interorganizational committee to look at and to make some comments on. Hopefully, by the end of June or mid-July, we will be in a position to announce some Ed Finance approach for the 1992 school year.

Mr. Chomlak: That is a fairly ambitious schedule. Can the minister briefly take me through the time frames as he anticipates it happening? When does he see the report going to the intergroup committee? When do they hit the road, as it were, meeting with presumably school divisions? When will the public have input, if they do, et cetera—just a little tighter time frame so that I can understand.

Mr. Derkach: Madame Chair, I would have to say that the entire department has been embarked on a fairly ambitious agenda, and although we are often criticized for not taking leadership and not giving direction to education, I would have to indicate and point to two very significant documents that I have before me, the Strategic Plan and the Legislative Consultation Paper, which took some considerable time to develop and now are public documents and are now action documents for the department.

In the same sense, Madame Chair, the department has been working tirelessly, I might say, at developing an approach for Education Finance reform. We have changed our approach several times because we have found, as we were going through the process, that there was a need perhaps to regroup, to bring in other partners. As an

example, my deputy saw the need to bring in the program people in developing the Ed Finance model. Since that time the two groups, the finance people, the program people, have been working very closely in developing the new Ed Finance approach. We are determined that by the end of the summer we will be in a position to share with school divisions the Ed Finance approach that will be used for the 1992 school year. So that the school division budgets will be based, for the 1992 school year, on the new formula.

I would have to say that in this entire process we have been consulting with the interorganizational groups, MAST, MTS, MASS and MASBO, all of the players in the education field, very closely. The representation on the Ed Finance Advisory Committee is made up of the key players in education. So, there has been input over a three-year period of time into this process. Indeed, when we finally come out with the final form of the approach that we are going to use, it may have some little flaws in it. We are not going to indicate that this time it is going to be perfect. We will have to monitor it for at least the first year to ensure that in fact it works to the best possible advantage of every school division, if that is at all attainable.

Madam Chair, although it is a fairly ambitious agenda and a time schedule, I would have to say quite clearly that we think we can meet every one of the deadlines. The first one is that the advisory committee will report to the minister by the end of May. The second one is that we will meet with the interorganizational groups and their responses will be in to us by the end of June, the middle of July, in that time frame, and that we will be in a position to have a final formula or approach in place by the end of the summer, at which time we will then go out to school divisions and share the formula and share the approach so that school divisions have a very clear understanding of the approach that is going to be used for the 1992 school year.

Mr. Chomlak: Madame Chairman, one of the reasons for my concern in this area, and I have mentioned this to the minister on previous occasions, is that we have been waiting for a white paper on this matter, a white paper promised in the 1989 throne speech. I have a copy of the throne speech here, and I referred to it briefly before I entered this session, and clearly the throne speech promised a white paper on Education Finance.

* (2200)

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, you know, with the greatest of respect, I do not recall that there was ever a promise made on a white paper on Ed Finance. There was a consultation paper commitment made, and indeed that is the paper that went to the organizations and to the advisory committee for discussion. But there have been several documents that have been prepared on the topic of Ed Finance reform that have been shared with the interorganizational groups. Indeed, each of the groups, the Teachers' Society, the trustees, the secretary-treasurers and the superintendents have each submitted reports and their own vision, if you like, of what the new Ed Finance model should be.

We talked about a constitution paper on The Public Schools Act, but I think that is separate from Ed Finance reform. So there is not going to be any white paper or any public consultation paper on Ed Finance reform, because that is really a topic that although many people can talk about in general terms, it is a very complex area and you need people who have worked with the formula, have worked with the approach, who understand the concept of funding schools to have the input rather than just the broad population at large.

Mr. Chomiak: I stand corrected, Madam Chairman. I did refer to my notes. In fact, my copy of the throne speech indicated distribution of a consultation paper, proposed education funding measures. So the minister is correct. It was not a white paper, it was a consultation paper. Was that paper tabled in the Legislature? Could that be tabled in the Legislature?

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hour being 10 p.m., what is the will of the committee? To continue?

Mr. Derkach: I think there was agreement that we should continue for some time yet.

First of all, Madam Chairman, I might say, with regard to the question posed by the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) on the consultation paper, there was no formal consultation paper, if you like, that was made available for tabling in the House or to the public.

Indeed, after many starts, it was decided that a different approach should be taken, so the consultation paper, if you want to call it that, were concepts that were discussed and were deliberated with the advisory committee. The reason for that was that when we approached it, we found that we were missing one major component, as I had

indicated, and that was the program component. So then we brought the program component together, and now the advisory committee is in a position where they are going to be able to report to me by the end of May on the approach that they are recommending. That paper will be taken to the interorganizational group that is going to respond to the paper, make recommendations back to the minister. At that point in time, we will put the final formula together.

Mr. Chomiak: The current advisory committee that put in place the funding formula for '91-92 is the same advisory committee that will be putting together the final consultation paper for review by the minister?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, the committee did not put any formula in place. The approach that was used was that of the department. The committee made recommendations on what approach to use in the '90-91 school year. Indeed, it is the department that really makes the final analysis and the final approach as to how we are going to fund schools, so we cannot lay the blame or the credit, if you like, on the advisory committee. Their role was to advise the department and the minister.

Mr. Chomiak: Is the current membership of the committee the same as it was when announced in July, namely Laverne Cherry, Brenda Leslie, Donna Goodman, Clarke Burnett, and Denise Lovatt?

Mr. Derkach: There was one change in the committee. I am advised that Dave Bell has replaced Laverne Cherry on the committee.

Mr. Chomiak: I am wondering, off the record, do we want a break for everyone here for five minutes?

Madam Chairman: Is it the will of the committee to have a five-minute recess? Agreed and so ordered.

* * *

The committee took recess at 10:06 p.m.

After Recess

The committee resumed at 10:13 p.m.

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

Mr. Chomiak: Can the minister repeat the name of the new individual on the advisory committee? I am sorry, I did not take it down.

Mr. Derkach: It is Dave Bell who replaces Laverne Cherry as a representative of MASBO.

Mr. Chomlak: With respect to the advisory committee, I was of the impression that past practice had the advisory committee provide annual reports or recommendations to the minister. Has this committee continued that practice?

Mr. Derkach: I think it should be noted that the advisory committee on Ed Finance was disbanded several years ago. When I came into the department, I felt that it was important that the committee be re-instituted, and we did that. They reported to me after their recommendations of the funding approach that should be used for the 1990-91 school year.

Shortly after that, they met to discuss in detail the Ed Finance review and made some specific recommendations to the department as to what should be done with regard to the Ed Finance review. At that point in time, they also indicated that they would probably not need to meet until such time that the department did the homework that was sort of assigned by the committee.

They really did not meet through the summer of last year as a result of the agreement, if you like, informal agreement, that had been made between the department and the committee to make sure that the advisory committee was not simply meeting for meeting sake; they were meeting with a purpose. In the fall of 1990, I guess, the committee, the advisory committee and the staff did meet and decided to structure the meetings for Ed Finance reform that are running at the present time.

Mr. Chomlak: Has the committee, at this point, met with the intergroup committee? Have they had any meetings or series of meetings with the intergroup committee?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, I think it should be noted that the interorganizational group is an extension, if you like, of the advisory committee, because there are members who are on the advisory committee who also are on the larger interorganizational group.

There have not been any structured meetings between the two groups. However, the advisory committee is struck to advise the minister and the department. Once we have received their report, we will then be structuring a meeting with the interorganizational group to share with them the work that has been done by the department and the advisory committee and to then take it to the next step.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, the minister indicated 18 or 19 meetings throughout the province. Who, basically, will those meetings be with?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, the advisory committee does not meet with other organizations. The advisory committee has been meeting with the department, and they have met 18 or 19 times with department staff to deliberate over the whole area of Ed Finance reform. They have not been meeting with other groups of any kind. They have just been meeting with the department staff.

Mr. Chomlak: Then I must have misinterpreted the information. Who will be meeting with various groups outside of the department?

Mr. Derkach: I have to point out that the advisory committee itself is made up of the various interest groups in education, MAST, MASBO, MASS, MTS. Besides that, Madam Chair, they are the ones who bring the advice from their organizations to the table and they provide the advice to the minister.

Once they have done the work assignment of bringing forth a formula or an approach to Ed Finance to the minister, it will be up to the department and myself to put it into a format that we might be able to share with the larger interorganizational group. That is made up of several members from each organization and school divisions throughout the province with the purpose of getting a broader message out with regard to the approach that might be taken and to get broader representation back to the department. The people who will be meeting with the interorganizational group will be the department staff. There are members from the advisory committee who are also members of the larger group, and they will be present as well to perhaps give input into the approach that is being recommended. It is that sort of structure that we have working at the present time.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, I believe my colleague the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) wanted to query a few at this point, after which I will continue my discussion.

* (2220)

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Chairperson, I have some concerns that come to mind concerning the Transcona-Springfield School Division. I would like to ask the minister a few questions concerning that particular school division.

I would first like to know his thoughts on the right of the taxpayer or ratepayer in the communities throughout the provinces, their right to know detailed financial information about a particular school division where they might have their concerns.

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, that is somewhat of a hypothetical question, in a sense, because it asks for my opinion and my thought on what I feel about an issue.

Let me be very clear. In the High School Review we have included as one of the strategies that we would expect the school divisions would be accountable not only to the department but indeed to the taxpayers and that through the four-year implementation period we will be requiring school divisions to hold accountability days with their divisions to ensure that not only parents but indeed the community and the taxpayers have the ability to pose questions of the school division and get accurate information on such things as programs, perhaps finances and revenues and that sort of thing.

Mr. Reid: If I understand the minister correctly, does that mean that these programs will be in the works some time in the near future and that the individual taxpayer will have the opportunity to ask detailed or specific questions of the school board trustees and/or the administration in the school divisions?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, I guess it should be pointed out that presently school divisions or citizens of school divisions have access to school division budgets and financial statements.

They, if they wish, may get copies of those and, of course, they always have the right to approach their representatives and ask any questions they like of the operations of their school boards.

When I speak about accountability to the taxpayers, I talk about developing a closer link with the communities and with the parents and with people who are in that school division. One of the aspects of the High School Review, as a matter of fact, was to have school boards and administration staff, at some point in time, between now and the time the High School Review is completely implemented, hold days where they can discuss with the public the kinds of programs and finances in the school division, also have the public ask questions of the school board about various aspects of education.

Mr. Reid: The minister indicates that there is information that could be available through the individual school trustees, and I am well aware of that opportunity for the taxpayer.

The concerns that I have and the concerns that were brought to my attention by some of my constituents is that they do not have access to the detailed information. They have a general budget consideration that is given to them or a summary or a condensed version that is there for them to view or for any taxpayer for that matter to view.

The opportunity that I would like to see there and the opportunity that the taxpayers want to see is to look at the detailed estimates that go into the considerations for the budget that would be submitted to your department, so that they would know there are specific considerations that are given for expenditures of funds which they the taxpayers support, that they may not agree with, and that they would have the opportunity to draw to the attention of the school board in the appropriate fashion.

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, if we want to get into that level of detail, that is something that has to be addressed between the school division and the taxpayers or the citizens of that jurisdiction. I think school board meetings are open, and indeed presentations can be made to the school board, requests can be made of the school boards.

Indeed, that is a matter that, as parents, as ratepayers, as community people within a jurisdiction, they should have the full authority to make those requests of the school division. It is up to the school division then and the ratepayers there to decide on what level of information is reasonable to share and to expect from the school board because, as the member can appreciate, you could probably tie up the superintendent and the secretary-treasurer for an entire season just to provide detailed information which may be of no use in the end. So there has to be some understanding of the capability of the division to be able to supply that detailed level of information, but it is really a matter between the school division and the local taxpayers.

Mr. Reid: I thank the minister for that statement, but it does not quite address the concerns that I have. I do not wish, by the statements that I am making here, to indicate that any taxpayer should have the right to tie up the whole school board operation

and/or the trustees themselves by asking for detailed information about the whole budget itself.

The request that was made by—particular constituents in my community of Transcona had requested of the school board information pertaining to one specific section of the budget, a very limited section of the budget, and they were denied access to that information.

I want to know what the position of the Department of Education is on those constituents being denied access to that particular information.

Mr. Derkach: Well, Madam Chair, that is the complete jurisdiction of that school board, but I have to indicate we would encourage school boards to be as open as they possibly can with their taxpayers.

I do not know for what reason they would not want to share that information, except that perhaps the type of information that is being requested is of an internal nature.

We have always encouraged school divisions to be as open as they possibly can because they have to be accountable to the taxpayers and, indeed, they should be accountable. Outside of the aspects that are set down in legislation, in terms of providing the audited financial statements and the budgets, it becomes very difficult for us as a department to specifically indicate what level of detail each school division should supply to its taxpayers.

There is nothing holding the taxpayer from requesting that information. It is really up to the school board.

* (2230)

Mr. Reid: I appreciate the answer that the minister has given to me but it does not address the needs that I have because the school board has been approached for specific, detailed information about the matter of concern.

The people who are involved in this have confided in me on what material or information they are looking for, and they want to determine whether or not there has been some way that this money has not been expended properly or in the best interest of the taxpayers of the community. The only way to determine that is to get the detailed information, and the school board refuses to release that detailed information about that particular portion of the budget.

Are there any specific powers that the Department of Education has that could instruct the school

divisions to release that information to the taxpayers or to the elected representatives?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, I regret to say that there are no powers that I am aware of that the department would have, or the minister would have to force school divisions to give that level of detail. However, as I indicated in the Strategies For Success, if I can just read Strategy 69—and one of the things that we did have to move was the implementation period: “The Department requests, beginning in the 1990-91 school year”—and that is the date we will have to move because of the late implementation of the beginning of the strategies—“that the respective Boards of Trustees host at least one public session annually to provide information about school programs, school division budgets and other relevant details about school division operations.” Hopefully, that is going to encourage school divisions to be more open in terms of the level of detail they provide to the taxpayers when they are asked questions. But there is not any specific power outside of the implementation of this strategy that would force school divisions to give that level of detail.

Now the auditor does make mention about whether or not a school division adheres to certain adopted principles of accounting, and whether or not their expenditures and the use of their money is appropriate, so the public can feel some comfort in that the money is spent wisely through that process. But in terms of trying to force the hand of a school board to deliver this detailed information to the taxpayer, we do not have that power at this time.

Mr. Reid: I was hoping the minister could have steered me in a direction that would have given me some opportunity to seek out the information that my constituents are requesting. I was well aware of what the public schools documents say when they talk about a summary or a condensed version of budgetary information being available. I was hoping that there would have been some way that we could have gained access to that information, because one does not know for sure that the monies are being expended properly.

There has been some question at the school board meetings that I have attended and others that have been brought to my attention. The expenditures of funds have been questioned, but the answers of this particular school board have been in a general way and have no way answered in specifics the questions that were put to them.

This does not afford, in my opinion, the opportunity for the taxpaying public to have the kind of information that they require to determine that the funds are being expended in the proper fashion.

I would hope that the minister and his department would consider some kind of a program. If he has any other suggestions that would allow me the opportunity to gain the information necessary for my constituents, would he would bring it to my attention?

Mr. Derkach: Once again, it is difficult for me as minister to try to impose certain rules upon a school board which we do not have any legislative authority to do, and if we tried to impose or interfere in that way we would be criticized for interfering in local autonomy of school boards. Nevertheless, I think it is important that we continue to emphasize that school boards are responsible to the electorate and that they should be as open as possible to the electorate.

Now there are, I guess, items which cannot be shared with the public, and we have to respect that, but if they are of a general nature, personally I would see no need to hide that kind of information, but I do not know the specific kind of information that the member refers to, so I am really shooting in the dark here. I would be reluctant to interfere in the local jurisdiction of the school board to try and force them to divulge any type of information which is not required under the law.

Mr. Reid: I can appreciate the position that the minister is in. I did not want to put too many facts on the record or cast any aspersions on any individuals who are in the community or working in the community, because without the type of detailed information that we were requesting, we had really no way of verifying some of the statements or comments that had been made in the past, and that is why we were seeking out that information. Maybe it would be best for me to consult with the minister in private at another opportunity on this matter.

One other question that I had was dealing with the different sessions the school board and the school trustees go through, in-camera sessions, and they deal with matters pertaining to the activities in the school division itself. A lot of these decisions come about as a result of reports that are made by superintendents in the school division, the administration itself, and report back to the school boards. Would any of this area as far as the

administration and the school boards reporting on the activities come under the Department of Education? Do you have any control or any authorization of that area?

Mr. Derkach: No, Madam Chair. School boards have the right to go into in-camera when they are talking about sensitive issues which may deal with personnel issues or which may affect specific individuals or cases in the school division, but school divisions do not make resolutions, or do not pass resolutions in in-camera sessions. So they would have to emerge from the in-camera session and pass a motion in the full board meeting.

I might add that we as a department do not have any control over that aspect as well, and indeed that is something that is within the jurisdiction of the school board, and they would judge the matters that would have to be dealt with in an in-camera situation based on the advice of their official, who would be the superintendent or the secretary-treasurer.

Mr. Reid: That is unfortunate, because the school board or its administration can make decisions that affect the people who are in the community. Unless it comes back to the election time for these elected representatives, there is no real recourse back to these people again. They are answerable to no one during that period of time.

Your own Mr. McGinn—I believe it is his name—Mr. McGinn, you have a Mr. McGinn working in your department?—has been involved with the constituents in my community trying to resolve these issues of which I am talking here today. They have not been resolved to the satisfaction of the parties that were involved.

A lot of it has to do with the previous issues of expenditure of funds and also the reporting that is done. There are people in the administration of the school division who do investigations, pretending to staff or employees in the school division, and they report back to the school trustees.

There is no obligation for the administration or the school trustees to release that report to the constituents who went to the in-camera sessions and took part in them. They have no way of finding out any details of the report. There is no way that they can access that kind of information.

So someone makes a decision behind closed doors, and then says, well, this is the result of it but gives no criteria for the reason that the decision was made or was based on.

* (2240)

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, indeed that is true. I mean, the school boards, to a lesser extent, are no different than we are in the Legislature here. We are elected by the electorate to carry out our responsibilities as prescribed. Indeed, the decisions we make in cabinet are not necessarily, are not—the discussions that go on in cabinet are not for public consumption. Indeed we have, I guess, through that process developed a democratic process of conducting our affairs, both as government at a provincial level and to a lesser extent a government at school board levels.

From time to time, it is important to review the legislation that governs these bodies. We do that I think from time to time as legislators, but it is indeed important to do that for school boards as well.

In this document, perhaps a time to address this will be through the consultation process because there is a section in this document that refers specifically to the powers and responsibilities of school boards.

The question that is asked here is what broad powers should school boards be given? Should school boards be given the authority to develop curriculum, provided educational standards are maintained? Indeed this question can be expanded to ask, for example, what kinds of information must school boards share with the electorate? I guess, we can become as specific as we like in the representations that are made.

At this point in time, there is nothing that I can do as minister to interfere in that process because the legislation that we have in place at the present time will not allow me. I am not sure I would want to interfere in the affairs of school boards throughout the province anyway, provided that they live within the act, because if you do, then what is the purpose of a school board?

Mr. Reid: Madam Chairperson, I can appreciate what the minister is saying. I was just under the impression, and maybe naively so, that elected representatives had an obligation to release certain information because they were there to work on behalf of the taxpayer. Like I say, maybe I am naive in my thinking in that sense that we are supposed to be responsive to the needs of the constituents we represent, but I would hope that there would be some changes coming out of this document that the

minister talks about as a result of some of the discussions we have had here today.

It makes me aware as well that Mr. McGinn, who is trying to resolve this dispute, I believe in a fair way, has no real authority or power that will force the school board in any way to release any information. Even if we go to the point where we are going to have that one day a year where any of the constituents or taxpayers can go to the school board and ask for information, they are still going to get the same information that is presently available to them. I can see in no way that is going to improve the situation any. They are still not going to get the detailed information that they are requesting.

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, I cannot judge what is going to come out of the consultation process or out of the Strategy 69 that is in the High School Review, but I would have to indicate that we are attempting to allow the public to have as much input into what goes on at the school level and to also gain as much information as we possibly can.

Now, in the Legislature we have The Freedom of Information Act, which allows access to certain forms of information. There is not that availability to the taxpayer on school board matters and school board information. It will be interesting to see what emerges out of this paper, because perhaps there is a mechanism that will emerge that can be put into The Public Schools Act which will give more meaningful information to trustees or to the taxpayers. Right at this present time, I would have to say that we do not have the capability to be able to address that specific situation that the member refers to.

Mr. Reid: Madam Chairperson, what I will do then is I will take this information back to my constituents and make them aware of it, and also make them aware that there is going to be an opportunity for them to have some input into the system, into this discussion paper, if that is what you call it, some time in the future. I am not sure when this is due to take place.

I would also appreciate if the minister had a spare copy of the document that I could forward to my constituents, then I would appreciate a copy of that.

It is unfortunate that the school boards take this course of action and do not release this information, and that they are under no obligation to do so under present laws in this province. I will forward that

information back to my constituents, and I thank the minister for his statements today.

Mr. Derkach: If the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) would wait for five or 10 minutes, we will have a copy of this document for him.

Madam Chairman: Item 3. Financial Support.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, in fact I think I will use this occasion just to comment, and perhaps make a suggestion to the minister, based on comments of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid). I was going to say my learned friend, but wrong jurisdiction. Although I would suggest he is my learned friend.

The point about legislation, and perhaps it is my legal background, I was struck by the way the minister framed it. This is more of an academic exercise than any necessarily policy suggestion on my part, but the fact remains that the constitutional authority for education rests with the minister and the ministry. The powers exercised by school boards are in fact delegated powers that are delegated from the minister to school boards.

In fact, if the minister wished to put within The Public Schools Act to restrict or expand those particular delegated powers, the minister has the authority to do so. If the analogy drawn by the minister to cabinet and school boards is not a correct analogy on the make-up of those delegated powers to school boards, I just wonder if the minister might want to comment on that?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, I guess one has to use reason and some reasonable judgment when addressing situations of that nature. Indeed, if the minister, any minister, were to undertake that attitude that he or she could change and delegate and take away authority from school boards at any given time, then there would be no purpose in having school boards because the minister, whoever that individual was, would have the authority to run every individual school board in the province.

I do not think we would ever want to take that sort of attitude. We have to comply with the School Act and unless there is some breach of that Public Schools Act or unless there is a situation where the welfare of the students, who are under the jurisdiction of the school division, educational welfare is in jeopardy, I would say that the minister would have to acknowledge and would have to respect the intent of the School Act.

Certainly, I would not want to transgress The Public Schools Act for purposes that perhaps have not been researched properly and perhaps are not warranted in terms of interference.

* (2250)

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, I do not wish to belabour this, but I do feel requirement to discuss this somewhat further. In fact, it is not an attitude problem, it is not a question of attitude. In fact, we make The Public Schools Act, it is a product of this Legislature.

So the choice for adherence or nonadherence by the minister is a reality. The minister must adhere to the Act, but the fact remains that the Act can be changed by members of this Legislature within their jurisdiction. It is certainly within their powers.

I am not suggesting that is necessarily the case, but it is just the tone of the discussion, and perhaps it is my legal training that makes me want to put those particular points on the record.

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, I would have to say that my attitude to this entire discussion is such that I would like to have a process more open so that parents and taxpayers would have easier access to information. I have said that right from the beginning. From the time I came in as Minister of Education and Training, I said that we needed more access to information both by parents and the public. We have achieved some of that.

For example, in the whole area of special needs, it is now a policy that parents have the right to information, and I do not know whether the member recalls the days of the fights between the parents for equal rights in education and the education community in trying to access records of students with special needs. Many times they were blocked. We were able to change the regulation so that it enabled those parents to gain access, meaningful access, to information about their children and to have input into the type of programming that is developed for children.

As we embark on this process here, as we embark on strategy 69, it is my hope that we will achieve greater control or greater access to information for the public, for the people who pay the taxes, for the people who send their children to the educational institutions. I think we are on the same wavelength in terms of what we want to see. It is a matter of how we get there in the legal framework, and indeed the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) is

absolutely correct that it is here in the Legislature that the final document in terms of these particular powers will be decided upon once the act is brought into the Legislature.

Mr. Chomlak: I thank the minister for those comments, and he is correct, we do concur in that observation and I am pleased to hear those comments by the minister.

I thank the minister for providing and tabling these documents today. Last Estimates process the minister also provided an additional document that broke down the categorical and block funding by school division including the change from the previous year. I am wondering if that document can be tabled as well?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, I am pleased to table that document, and if there are any others that we perhaps tabled last year that the member would like to make mention of, maybe this is a good time to bring that information out, that request for it, so that we could either table it now or have it prepared for the next sitting.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, I cannot indicate at this time, I believe, if memory serves me correctly and if my notes serve me correctly, at this point the documentation is quite sufficient and appreciated.

I would like a little bit of explanation on the document entitled Total Special Needs Support, the one that was just handed out. I am wondering if this document contains any one-time or special grants included in the Total Special Needs so that if it does not—and the minister is indicating negative.

Mr. Derkach: No, Madam Chair, there are no one-time special grants given to school divisions. Those are the regular categorical grants for special needs.

Mr. Chomlak: The document has a number of tables. The 1990-91 table says, 1990-91 and budget. I assume—I am not certain what that means. What does that mean?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, if I could just go through the various columns that are here. First of all, the 1989-90 equivalent is what was created by the department because the support that was allocated in terms of special needs was different than it was in '88-89. The 1991 is the budget that was submitted to the department. The 1991-92 is the estimate that we are estimating for the 1991-92

school year. Then the percent change from '89-90 to '90-91 and the percent change from '91 to '91-92.

Mr. Chomlak: The total for the province in terms of Total Special Needs Support for '91-92 estimate is \$50,380,000, but the figure in the other document given to me by the minister indicates \$36 million. I just wonder if the minister can indicate what the difference is. The other document I am referring to is the Breakdown of Funding via Category.

Mr. Derkach: Two differences, one, that if the fiscal year as opposed to the school year and, secondly, one is the government's share. The document that I handed out to the member before is the government's share.

Mr. Chomlak: I am not sure I understand. Presumably, the document entitled Total Special Needs Support is the government's share document, correct? -(interjection)- The document entitled Total Special Needs Support, that is the government's share, no? That is the actual expenditure? -(interjection)- Okay.

I guess, leaving aside the difference in years between fiscal year and school year, the \$50 million, I assume, is the government's portion of special needs financing provided to local school divisions on a division-by-division basis, and that totals about \$50 million.

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, the \$50 million that is indicated at the bottom is the total share that is allocated to the various school divisions.

Mr. Chomlak: Now, I am just trying to come to grips, therefore, and I recognize the difficulty of doing this, but the \$36 million given in the '91-92 government fiscal year from Consolidated Fund figure, the \$14 million difference is based on fiscal year school year?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, it may become a little complicated, but the sheet that the member is referring to has the amount that is based on a fiscal year and, secondly, it is the appropriation amount which does not include the ESL portion.

Mr. Chomlak: I thank the minister for those comments. Can the minister indicate roughly what the ESL portion might be? Just roughly.

Mr. Derkach: Yes, Madam Chair, the ESL portion would be approximately \$15 million or \$15,100,000.

* (2300)

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister, since we are on this topic, indicate what the total ESL portion of government allocation is this year?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, the total ESL amount for this year is \$212 million.

Mr. Chomlak: While the minister is on that chart, does he have last year's amount as well on that chart? Could he provide me with last year's amount as well, if it is handy?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, last year's amount was \$210.2 million.

Mr. Chomlak: Do you want another five-minute break or should we go right on?

Mr. Derkach: No.

Mr. Chomlak: I have all my questions.

Madam Chair: 3. Financial Support - Schools.

Mr. Chomlak: The minister made his funding announcement on January 22, and I want to spend some time on that particular funding announcement because I think it quite significantly impacts on schools and what is happening in the province.

Am I correct in assuming that of the total grants and support to school divisions approximately 15 percent to 20 percent are categorical?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, it is around 17 percent.

Mr. Chomlak: So 17 percent would be basically categorical. I thank the minister for that response.

The minister, when in making his announcement, I believe committed that no school division would obtain less this year than last year. Is that correct?

Mr. Derkach: Yes. In terms of their base that was the commitment that was made that no school division would receive less than they had received last year.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister indicate whether or not that commitment will extend beyond the upcoming fiscal year?

Mr. Derkach: I think it would be only fair to say that is what the new Ed Finance approach or new formula will address. That is a policy decision that will have to be made at that particular time, so I would be reluctant to commit government to that approach at this time, given that we do not know, at this point in time, what the new Ed Finance formula will really look like until it is finalized at the end of the summer.

Mr. Chomlak: The base support formula that was put into effect, I assume, is in reality a temporary situation?

Mr. Derkach: That is correct, Madam Chair. It was a one-year situation for this year alone because of the fact that we found ourselves whereby the GSE was completely out of sync with what the reality in terms of funding allocations to school divisions was.

Mr. Chomlak: The minister had indicated previously that the GSEP was not being utilized by most school divisions. Can he give me a rough idea as to how many school divisions were in the GSEP and how many were not, roughly?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, it is just that the GSE formula did not apply appropriately to most school divisions, and last year there were 45 school divisions in the province, out of 53, that were on the guarantee rather than on the GSE formula.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister outline for us today why he removed the equalization aspect of the GSEP and why supportable expenditures no longer apply?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, when you have 45 school divisions last year who were on the guarantee, it is obvious that the formula is not working appropriately. When you try to apply it this year, there were even more who were not going to be on it. As a matter of fact, it did not apply to any.

So for that reason, we had to use a different approach in funding school divisions this year.

We developed a process, which perhaps does not address each and every school division's needs to the best, but I can tell you that this is a transition year, and we are looking forward to the new formula addressing some of these problems. I guess I could say now that in all likelihood there will be an equalization component to the new funding approach.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, I guess one of my concerns in viewing the interim formula, and considering that the recommendation, or partial recommendation, came from the present advisory committee, is that perhaps the new funding formula will be based on the interim funding formula with its base model and with its component, basically a per pupil component, that means, in reality, if a school division is to obtain increase, the only way it can actually obtain increase funds is via increasing enrollment, rather than perhaps putting in place programs to benefit the students.

I am wondering if the minister can give any indication as to what impact, if any, this interim formula will have on the funding formula that is coming up and what his thoughts are on this interim formula?

* (2310)

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, I would have to indicate in all honesty that the transition formula has nothing to do with a new funding formula approach. It was a transition year, one where we had to find an approach that could be used just for this single year, but it has nothing to do with the new funding approach that is going to be used for the new formula.

Indeed, as I indicated, there will be an equalization component built into the new formula, which is not built in to this transition formula that was in place this year.

Mr. Chomiak: I guess I am searching for some indications as to where the new formula might be. Insofar as the minister indicates, there will be an equalization component contained in the new formula coming out. I am wondering if the minister might not give me some advance information and knowledge about the upcoming formula. For example, since he has referenced the fact that the program people were brought together with the accounting people to look at the funding model, will it be more program based, for example?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, there is not any way that I can really indicate to the member, you know, the sort of frame work of the formula because that has not been established in its final form, and I am looking forward to sharing it and seeing it from the advisory committee. Let me indicate that there were certain principles that were built into the model. They were such aspects as taxpayer equity, student equity, communications ease of understanding and accountability. Now those are very broad principles, but indeed they are important principles in establishing something that is going to provide equal opportunity of education throughout the province. I guess we should admit right from the very beginning that we will only achieve that over time. It is not something we are going to be able to address overnight.

The new formula will be tied to programs, yes, that is true. We have already said that it is important to marry the program side with the finance side so that the two work together. I think formulas in the past

have tended to look at the financial aspects and then have the program fit into those aspects. The approach we have taken is to bring our program people and our finance people together to decide on the type of approach that is going to be used in funding schools.

I am told that at some of the advisory committee meetings it is the program side that has had a great deal to say about the way the formula should emerge, and that is the way it should be because, indeed, the very important part of funding education is to ensure that the programs that are established have adequate levels of support.

Mr. Chomiak: I thank the minister for those comments, Madam Chairperson. The minister stated a number of principles. He stated four principles, I believe. Can the minister elaborate on those principles? Is there a particular written mandate, or written principle of those principles that he could share with us?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, the principles that I have outlined are those that came from the various representations that have been made to the department from the organizations and from the people who we have talked to about education funding, but I cannot elaborate any more fully on any of those in that all of these will be taken into account as the formula is being developed.

If we want to talk about such things as student equity, for example, I have often said that students throughout the province should have access to what we might call—we perhaps cannot make it equal, but an acceptable level of equality of education for them. When we talk about taxpayer equity, we have to ensure that there is fairness to the people who pay the bills, to the people who pay the taxes for the support of education.

When we talk about accountability, we have to ensure that those who are levying taxes, those of us who have responsibility for supporting or for allocating funds to education, are accountable for the funds that are allocated for education purposes. Those are the kinds of fundamental principles that are extremely important.

When we talk about ease of understanding the formula, we have to ensure that the school boards and school divisions, who have to work with whatever formula emerges, will have a good understanding of what they are really working with. If you look at the complex GSE formula, I was

involved with that formula right from Day One. I can tell you that quite honestly.

In 1984, when the formula came out, I was a chairman of the school board, also the chair of finance. I was exposed to that formula right from Day One. I can tell you that it took me a long, long time before I really understood. I would think it took me two to three years before I really had a good grasp of what that formula was speaking about. Even today, there are elements of that formula that are beyond me in terms of my complete understanding of how it addresses—and I sometimes have to shake my head at the way it does address or did address some of the situations.

So we hope that the new formula is not going to be quite as complex, although it will be complex because that is the nature of education funding. I would hope that it will be such that it will be understood better by the field and by those who have to work with it.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, I thank the minister again for those comments. I agree. There is the often-quoted adage that one never wants to see the way wieners or legislation are made, and the third component to add to that is the way that education is financed. I mean, it really has been a perhaps overly complex area.

Returning to the proposed model, the minister indicated earlier that approximately 17 percent of the present formula is categorical-based and the rest is basically block funding which is really based on a variation of enrollments, recognizing that is very simplistic.

Can the minister indicate whether or not—does he have any idea what the mix might be in terms of program-based as opposed to the present system?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, I would have to say these types of questions are somewhat premature in terms of trying to extrapolate that level of detail on the new funding approach. As I indicated, it is still being worked on, and I am not even aware of all of the details that the committee is working on. When they are ready to share with me all of the areas of the formula, then I will be in a better position to answer questions of that nature, but I would say that we are not at a time when we can even share that level of detail with anyone.

Mr. Chomlak: I am wondering if the minister could indicate a little further extrapolation. The small

school funding, does he anticipate it to be continued in the new funding formula?

Mr. Derkach: Again, Madam Chair, I would have to give the same response, because once again it would depend on what the overall formula looks like and how it incorporates the whole concept of small schools.

I cannot say that we are going to have the same type of grant to small schools that we had previously. Indeed, that is again something that we will have to wait and see what the formula emerges with.

* (2320)

Mr. Chomlak: Returning to the document '91-92 government fiscal year from Consolidated Fund, one of the documents that the minister provided us with today, there is under Capital, debt-servicing interest, a component of \$23 million. Can the minister indicate what that is in relation to?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, they say that when you emerge on a building program, the first year is always the painless cost, because you do not have to pay back any of the debt, but that line that the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) refers to is the debentured cost of the capital programs that have been embarked on in the past that are now due and payable.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister indicate what the figure was for last year?

Mr. Derkach: Can I ask the member to hold that question till we get to the Public Schools Finance Board section? Then we can go through that in fairly good detail rather than fragment it in this way.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, when the minister made his announcement of the funding on January 22, he indicated in his speech that Manitoba has the second lowest pupil-teacher ratio in the country. I am wondering if the minister can provide me with those statistics by which he arrived at that particular figure?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, the information was obtained from a document prepared by Statistics Canada. Although I do not have that document with me at the present time I would be prepared to get a copy of it and share it with the member.

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, I thank the minister for that, and I would appreciate that. That will provide me with an opportunity probably for further questions on that specific document.

The minister also indicated at the same time in his announcement that the average teacher salaries in Manitoba were the highest or amongst the highest in Canada. Was that also StatsCan information? Will the minister table it?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, I do not think it was that they are the highest paid. I do not think I made that comment. The level they are at was obtained from a document that was prepared by MAST, and I can share that document with the member as well.

Mr. Chomlak: I again thank the minister. He is correct. He did say, among the highest, rather than actually stating that it was the highest.

I am wondering if the minister can provide me with statistics on the number of teachers, teachers employed and those general statistics in terms of all Manitoba figures?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, the specific number of teachers employed in Manitoba in 1991—estimate—is 12,850. In 1990 that figure was 13,062.

Mr. Chomlak: Does the minister have those statistics via division?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, we do have that information. I could read the figures into the record. There are 12,850, as I indicated, employed. That is an estimate. I would like to table this document for the member.

Madam Chair, let the record show that document has been tabled for the member's use.

Mr. Chomlak: I thank the minister for that particular document and acknowledge that it has been tabled.

Last year when the minister provided me with the statistics on special needs the chart also had the special needs indicated as a percentage of the total special needs expenditure of that particular division. Does the minister have it handy, because I could certainly work it out for the divisions? I am wondering if the minister has that information handy. He had it last year.

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, the special needs as a percentage of allowable expenditures is available for the member for 1991-92, and again I would have to indicate that this is the estimate that is prepared by the department.

* (2330)

Mr. Chomlak: Madam Chairperson, I thank the minister for providing me with that particular document.

I am wondering if the minister has a breakdown of the percentage support on a division-by-division basis as a percentage of the school budgets for each division. In other words, we often make claims that 70 percent of the supportable expenditures are financed by the provincial government or 64 percent or 82 percent, et cetera. I am wondering if the minister has that on a division-by-division breakdown.

Mr. Derkach: No, Madam Chair, we do not have that information available at this time.

Mr. Chomlak: I have heard reference, and I believe it is from the minister as to—I personally do not like using these particular figures—the average grant per child from the Department of Education. I am wondering if he has any kind of figures to that extent on average basis. I am trying to think in what context I heard, I believe, the minister make some comparisons, and it is escaping me at this moment, but perhaps the minister can indicate what figures he does have?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, in terms of block equalization and guaranteed support per eligible pupil, in 1989-90, the equivalent, if you like, on a per pupil basis, was \$2,906. In 1990-91, it was \$3,050—that is the budget figure—and our Estimate figure for 1991-92 is \$3,071. So, as the member can see, it has been increasing slightly from year to year.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister indicate whether or not he has those figures on a division basis?

Mr. Derkach: Yes, we have those on a divisional basis as well.

Mr. Chomlak: I assume the minister will table, as he has kindly done for the other documents.

Mr. Derkach: Perhaps I should just read them into the record, but to save some time I will table this document for the edification of the member.

Mr. Chomlak: I thank the minister for that document, and I am wondering, as it is being prepared if the minister can outline for me the basis on which it is prepared, its categorical block, equalization. Is it the total grant per division divided by a number of pupils, or how is it calculated?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, it is not categorical, it is the base support on a per student basis.

Mr. Chomlak: I understand. I will withhold my further questions on that until I have an opportunity to review the particular document.

I am going to go into another line of questioning. I am wondering if I should continue, or we should perhaps call it—

Mr. Derkach: No, continue, continue.

Mr. Chomlak: That is fine. -(interjection)- It will not be passing today.

I am wondering if the minister—now, you will have to correct me if I am wrong, am I getting a document being prepared that shows the division-by-division breakdown of the percentage expenditures provided to each division? Have I asked for that? I believe I am getting that prepared.

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, we do not have that kind of figure. I am not quite sure what the member means by the expenditure.

Mr. Chomlak: I guess I have heard the minister indicate on occasion that 70 percent or more of division expenditures are met by the provincial government. I am wondering if he can provide me with those specific figures on a division-by-division basis, as opposed to globally.

Mr. Derkach: I am sorry, Madam Chair, that question was asked previously, and I indicated that I did not have that information.

Mr. Chomlak: I am sorry, then I must have misinterpreted.

Madam Chairperson, can the minister give me the figures as to '91-92 percentage of provincial operating support in relation to budgets of all of the school divisions in Manitoba, in other words the global figure? What percentages of supportable expenditures is the government providing to school divisions?

Mr. Derkach: As a percent of supportable expenditures under the GSE formula, Madam Chair, in 1985 we were up to 79 percent. It has ranged since then down to 78 percent in 1987, up to 80.7 percent in 1989-90 and down to 77 percent in 1991-92.

Mr. Chomlak: My figures that our people have put together indicate that in fact the percentage of provincial support, school divisions as a percentage of supportable expenditures, is in fact under 70 percent as a result of the minister's recent announcement.

Mr. Derkach: No, Madam Chair, the percent of supportable expenditures is not below 70 percent. In fact, it is 77 percent.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister table the basis upon which his total figures are made?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, the basis of the figure that I have just given the member is the supportable expenditure as defined under the GSE program.

Mr. Chomlak: I am sorry, Madam Chairperson, I missed that response. I wonder if the minister might not repeat it.

Mr. Derkach: I repeat, Madam Chair, the figure that I indicated of 77 percent is based as a percentage of supportable expenditures under the GSE program.

Mr. Chomlak: My figures indicate roughly that the percentage is actually approximately 68 percent. I wonder if the minister can provide me with the actuals by which he arrives at those percentages?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, I think what the member is speaking about are the net operating expenditures. It is true that the net operating expenditures are under 70 percent, but indeed the supportable expenditures are in excess and at 77 percent.

Mr. Chomlak: Can the minister then give me what his figures are for the net operating expenditures?

Mr. Derkach: Yes, Madam Chair, the figure is 69.2 percent.

Mr. Chomlak: So if I can understand this correctly, 69.2 percent of the actual operating expenditures of school divisions are being met by the provincial government?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, it is 69.2 percent of their budgeted figures or the net operating expenditures.

While I have the floor, may I also table the information that was requested by the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) with regard to comparison of teachers' salaries in Manitoba with teachers' salaries in other provinces, and the maximum salary rates for a teacher with four years at the university, and also the average teachers' salaries within Canada?

Mr. Chomlak: I thank the minister for those particular documents.

Turning to the document that the minister provided to me earlier, that is the summary of grant funding to private schools, can the minister outline for me the basis on which those particular grants, specifically the instruction and services grants are arrived at?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, the figure is arrived at by taking the 1991-92 estimated enrollment and multiplying it by \$2,015 on a per student basis.

Mr. Chomlak: I note I do not have, or perhaps I am misreading it—do I have the enrollment figures on these documents? I am wondering if it is possible to obtain those.

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, I think we have been pretty generous in providing a fairly high level of detail for the member and of course, rightly so. I have to indicate that although he has the figures which indicate what the amount is to each of the independent schools, we do not have available for him the enrollment at each of those schools at this time.

Oh, I am sorry, my apologies. I retract that. My staff tell me that they do have the enrollment figures, and we will supply them for the member.

Mr. Chomlak: I thank the minister for those numbers.

The other question that I have with respect to the funding to private schools is in relation to the Low Incidence grant. Does that follow the regular formula of Low Incidence grant as it applies to the public schools?

Mr. Derkach: No, Madam Chair. The method that is used for independent schools is the old formula, if you like, and the method of arriving at the level of funding for each of the Low Incidence I students is based on a negotiated per case basis. The level of funding is based on the old formula that was in place prior to the change of the Level I funding.

Mr. Chomlak: I am wondering if I could obtain, therefore, from the minister—and I am only specifically interested in the larger numbers—the number of Low Incidence students who are participating at the private schools, and it does not have to be for all of them necessarily, just the larger ones.

Mr. Derkach: The Low Incidence Level I students, there are 42 in the independent school system; that was in 1991. In 1992, the level was 55.

Mr. Chomlak: I thank the minister. Just to clarify, so for '91 school year, 42; for '92 school year, 55—estimates.

Mr. Derkach: For the 1991-92 school year, the estimate for Level I is 55.

Mr. Chomlak: I thank the minister for those comments. Does the minister have the specifics on the Laureate Academy per se?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, the estimate for 1991-92 is 38 students at the Laureate Academy.
* (2350)

Mr. Chomlak: I guess the area that I would like to turn to is the whole question of government prioritization of education and the constant reference by the minister and the Premier and others to the fact that education is a No. 1 priority of the provincial government.

I have statistics in front of me prepared by our group, our research people, which will have to be proved wrong, I suppose, but which are taken from the Main Estimates of the Province of Manitoba, which indicate since the last NDP budget in '87-88, the Kostyra budget, until the present, expenditures in education have increased the sum total of 26.7 percent, which is 13th in the ranking of government departments, behind Environment, behind Rural Development, behind Family Services, behind Health, behind Justice, behind Agriculture, behind the Civil Service, behind Status of Women. I am wondering if the minister might comment on that.

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, I guess in an overall sense if you want to play with figures, you can probably use that ranking to indicate where we were. On the other hand, you would have to do a fair comparison. You would have to see what has happened in the previous number of years as well.

Madam Chair, may I indicate that if you have a small department which has fewer dollars in it, it would be very easy to get the ranking up higher than it is with the department that has the kinds of dollars that Education has within it. Let me indicate very clearly that in terms of our relationship to departments such as Health and Family Services, although Family Services' budget is considerably less, and Health has always taken the giant's share of the budget, we are fairly close in terms of our ranking with Family Services and with Health. Madam Chair, in the last two years we have maintained our position at about 18 percent of the total government's budget. That is significant.

Last year, I believe we received about 24 percent of the total government budget for Education. So although one can play with figures and say that we rank 14th, when you look at departments such as Decentralization, for example, which is the No. 1

department because it has a 400 percent increase and if you look at general salary increases for the entire government, if you look at government-sponsored employee ownership fund, if you look at the Canada-Manitoba enabling vote, allowances for losses, community support programs, employee benefits and other payments, those rank ahead of the Department of Education and Training.

Indeed, when you compare us to such departments as Family Services and Health, we are fairly close to those departments. Departments that are below us are departments such as Environment, Agriculture, Industry, Trade and Tourism, Housing, Highways and Transportation, Rural Development. All of those departments, Madam Chair, are below us in terms of ranking. So, in terms of the share of government funding that Education receives, I would say that overall we have, indeed, done fairly well.

Our government has always indicated that the three most important departments to us were our Health, Education and Family Services. These are the three departments that continue to get the lion's share of the annual budget of government. This year was no exception.

When we see many departments getting zero and less than zero percent, and our department receives something like 3.5 percent overall, it was indeed a credible amount given the fiscal reality that this government faces in the province of Manitoba at the present time.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, when the minister was quoting his figures, I believe he was referring to the last two years. Is that correct?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, I said that for the last two years the Department of Education and Training has maintained a percentage of total government budget at about 18 percent.

Mr. Chomiak: I can indicate for the minister that my figures for the last four budgets indicate that Education and Training is 13th in the cumulative sense in terms of government appropriations as its proportion. I am wondering if the minister would table the document that he was referring to, so that I can compare it with my documents. Perhaps I am inaccurate.

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, I have read it into the record. I am not disputing the position, the ranking. Indeed, I indicated that our ranking was about 14th

out of the total government departments. But when you compare Family Services and Health to Education you find that the amount of money, the amount of budget, they receive from government is the lion's share of budget allocation.

Mr. Chomiak: I am not disputing the fact that, in fact, those three departments do receive the lion's share. The point I am making is that Education is receiving a lesser proportion of that lion's share than the other two departments, and the statistics for the past four budgets bear that out.

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, I would just like to read into the record the percent of the province's total of government expenditures for the Department of Education and Training. In 1987-88 we were 17.5 percent. In 1988-89 we were 18 percent. In 1989-90 we were 18.4 percent. In 1990-91 we were 18.2 percent, and in 1991-92 the estimate is 18 percent. In terms of the total percent of the province's allocations, that is a fairly significant amount and a fairly significant ranking in terms of the amount of share that we get of the total provincial budget. So I am quite satisfied to indicate that we are an important component of the government's priorities, and we are still one of the three top departments in terms of government priority.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Chairperson, did the minister provide me with a sheet of the grant per pupil on a division by division basis, or just on a total basis?

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, I think the member has that information that he has just referred to in a number of documents that we have tabled here this evening.

Mr. Chomiak: If the minister will give me a second, I will attempt to find it.

I guess one of the interesting figures on the basis of this document, of block equalization and guaranteed support per eligible pupil, is the divergence in terms of grants around the various divisions in the province and indeed in the city of Winnipeg. Just on a general basis, can the minister account for that particular divergence?

* (0000)

Mr. Derkach: Madam Chair, that is exactly what we have been attempting to address over the last four budgets. If the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) would have seen the divergence in the grants that were allocated to school divisions at that time, he would have recognized why it was so important to

get out of the GSE formula, because indeed that was what was causing the problem among school divisions.

We have attempted to bend the formula, address the needs of the school divisions to the extent that we have, I guess, abandoned the formula completely and use a base approach to funding school divisions.

Madam Chair, the GSE formula was flawed from the beginning. There was never enough money put into it to start it out in an appropriate way, and the other flaw of it was that it was always based on the previous year's expenditures, so the divisions that spent more kept getting more. Those who were running efficient shops, those school divisions that were low-spending school divisions continued to fall further and further behind to the extent that we have a situation in this province, right at the present time, where those school divisions who were running very efficient and were low-spending school divisions have now been caught by the effects of the GSE formula.

It is not going to be easy to correct that discrepancy out there, but through the new formula we are going to attempt to do that. When we hear screams and cries from school divisions that they do not receive enough, if you take a look at the historical pattern of those school divisions, indeed, the mistakes were made some time ago. I am not pointing fingers at anybody, except to say that we are trying our darndest to address the discrepancies that are out in the education field right now in terms of funding, and we will continue to do that, but it is not an easy fix. Even the new formula, we will probably have some difficulties in terms of trying to address the discrepancies that are out there.

Madam Chairman: As previously agreed, the hour being past 12 a.m., committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Madam Deputy Speaker: The hour being past 10 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Tuesday).

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Monday, May 6, 1991

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